

March 13, 2022
Wendte Hall | Online on Zoom

Annual Congregational Meeting

2022

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First Unitarian Church of Oakland

Spiritually Alive, Radically Inclusive, Justice Centered

Our Covenant

We, the people of the First Unitarian Church of Oakland, covenant to build a religious community sustained by relationships of understanding, mutual trust and respect.

Guided by our mission and collective inspiration, we will encourage all our members to participate fully in congregational life and to grow and learn together in faith and love.

Knowing that what one of us does affects the community, we covenant to act with loving kindness in all our endeavors by speaking directly and positively with one another.

We recognize that this calls for honesty in communications, valuing of diversity and inclusive process. We covenant to engage in ethical communications, to take our concerns to those responsible and to refrain from gossip.

Recognizing that conflicts have the power to strengthen or diminish our relationships, when they arise we will handle our disagreements with courtesy, fairness and forgiveness.

We promise to listen to one another, assume good intentions and identify common goals. In support of our shared ministry, we covenant to honor our commitments, keep our decision making processes transparent and give generously of our spiritual goals and material resources. This we covenant together.

Our Mission

We, the members of the First Unitarian Church of Oakland, unite to build a beloved community within and beyond our walls. Guided by individual conscience and wisdom from many sources, we gather in worship and service to nourish the spirit, work for justice and celebrate the divine in all.

Our Ends

The First Unitarian Church of Oakland embodies beloved community as an intentionally multigenerational, multiracial, multicultural, anti-oppressive Unitarian Universalist religious community. We work for spiritual and social transformation within, among and beyond ourselves in support of our vision, mission and ends.

TRANSFORMATION WITHIN

Church members and friends discover and articulate personal spiritual growth. We lead lives of integrity and meaning that reflect our spiritual identity and values.

TRANSFORMATION AMONG

People of all ages who are part of our church community experience caring relationships which connect us to an ever wider circle of life. We use our collective gifts and learning to nurture and expand beloved community. We overcome barriers that divide the human family.

TRANSFORMATION BEYOND

Our neighborhood, the city of Oakland and the world community are more just and compassionate because of our prophetic role and ministries. We generously share our human and financial resources beyond the walls of our church.

Immediate opportunities for service here at First Unitarian Church of Oakland

YOU ARE THE ONES YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR

Most groups, programs and committees are open to any interested congregant, but the following have particularly pressing needs at this time.

| PROGRAM | NEED | IF INTERESTED, CONTACT |
|---|--|--|
| Board of Trustees | 7 open seats on your Board of Trustees. The 7 open seats include 3 three-year full terms as well as 2 two-year and 2 one-year partial terms. | board@uuoakland.org |
| Stewardship | Several volunteers to assist in the areas of communication, program planning, spreadsheet wrangling and event planning and hosting | stewardship@uuoakland.org |
| Operations Team | Seeking representative from Program Council and member from Board of Trustees | operationsteam@uuoakland.org |
| Community Connections Team | Help us reach out to newcomers and existing congregants to deepen and enrich their ties to our church | connectionsteam@uuoakland.org |
| Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Team | 9 members, with Membership maintaining a balance between people of color and white congregants | JTWTT@uuoakland.org |
| Pastoral Associates | Seeking a balance of members to serve our multigenerational, multi-racial congregation | pastoralcare@uuoakland.org |

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Annual Meeting Agenda

Sunday, March 13, 2022

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|--------------|--|
| 10:30 am | Devotion - Pastor Theresa Soto and Worship Associates |
| 10:50 | Break / finish Registration |
| 11:00 | Welcome and Call to Order - Kathy Radez, President, Board of Trustees <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Recognition of Meeting Secretary Nicole Fitzhugh and Parliamentarian Dan Goss - Kathy Radez● Reading of Congregational Covenant● Explanation of Ballot and Voting - Dan Wright, Vice-President, Board of Trustees● Announcement of Quorum Count - Secretary of Annual Meeting● Motion to elect Wes Radez as Moderator - Dan Wright, Vice President and Secretary, Board of Trustees● Review Agenda and Rules of Order - Moderator |
| 11:20 | Congregational Business - Moderator <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Motion to confirm Board proposal to allow Debby Kaplan to serve three years by completing an open 2020-2023 Board term● Election of Trustees<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Presentation of candidates from the Nominating Committee○ Opportunity for nominations from the floor● Election of Nominating Committee Members (2022-2023)● Motion to ordain Alex Haider-Winnett to the Ministry |
| 11:45 | State of Us - Pastor Theresa Soto, Lead Minister, and Kathy Radez, Board of Trustees |
| 11:55 | Financial Report - Debby Kaplan, Treasurer |
| 12:15 | Recognition of Outgoing Trustees (Debby Kaplan, Lucia Savage, Dan Wright) |
| 12:25 | Benediction and Closing Words - Pastor Theresa Soto |
| 12:30 | Adjourn Annual Meeting and Invitation to Social Time - Moderator |
| 12:30 - 1:00 | Zoom link will remain live for social time |

ELIGIBILITY TO VOTE IN ANNUAL MEETINGS AND ALL SPECIAL MEETINGS

In order to be eligible to participate in congregational votes, a person must have signed the membership book and made a pledge by the last Sunday of the month preceding the meeting.

ANNUAL MEETING RULES OF ORDER

1. The quorum for all business meetings of the Membership shall be twenty-five (25) percent of Members eligible to vote as of the most recent record date.
2. In accordance with the bylaws, only members of the congregation may vote. A simple majority of members present will be sufficient to act on behalf of the entire membership.
3. Except where noted, voting shall be by raising hands. Votes are “up or down,” with allowance for minor, “friendly” amendments at the discretion of the Moderator. If there is a need for discussion which cannot be completed within the time allocated on the agenda, the matter will be referred back to the Board of Trustees with the charge of arranging for an opportunity for congregational discussion and vote, if needed, within the next 60 days.
4. Nominations and other voted-upon issues, whether private ballot, show of hands or other means, must be passed by a majority (>50%) of eligible voters present at the meeting, unless a higher threshold has been called for. Only votes FOR are factored into deciding a majority vote. Votes against and abstention votes lead to the same result: a negative vote. For instance if there are 110 voters, a majority is characterized when there are 56 votes in favor. But this is not the case if there are 54 votes in favor, 20 against and 36 abstentions, even though there are far more “yes” votes than “no” votes. Not marking the ballot or not raising your hand will be counted as an abstention and may affect the decision/outcome of a vote.
5. Discussion must be limited, in order to complete the agenda in the time allotted:
 - a. Any person may speak only once to an issue;
 - b. Comments must be brief and to the point;
 - c. The Moderator may limit comment; and
 - d. Any modification of the rules is at the discretion of the Moderator.

6. All speakers at the annual meeting must make use of the microphones to speak [when meeting in person].
7. Before speaking, speakers must be recognized by the Moderator.
8. Discussion will generally continue until all public comments have been heard. If the question is called, the Moderator shall exercise discretion over whether and when to close the discussion. If possible, the discussion shall continue at least until all of those already in the queue to comment have spoken.
9. Robert's Rules of Order apply, except that the above rules will prevail in the event of conflict.

Minister's Report

Submitted by Rev. Theresa Ninán Soto, Lead Minister

Introduction

Kitty O'Meara is a white poet from Wisconsin who wrote about the pandemic in a way that sums up the struggle from the perspective of memory.

In the Time of Pandemic

*And the people stayed home.
And they read books, and listened, and rested, and
exercised, and made art, and played games, and
learned new ways of being, and were still.
And they listened more deeply. Some meditated, some
prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.
And the people healed.
And, in the absence of people living in ignorant,
dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth
began to heal.
And when the danger passed, and the people joined
together again, they grieved their losses, and made new
choices, and dreamed new images, and created new
ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been
healed.*

One of the things Kitty O'Meara could not imagine is all the movement toward worship and connection the congregation would make in a year when being together in person was a challenge.

The spiritual life of the congregation, even in this difficult time, was characterized by effort to stay connected and move forward with one another, even during challenging and changing times.

Public ministry

Worship and spiritual and ethical practice

Worship continues to be one of the ways that the congregation connects and shares. The structure of the worship program follows worship themes, usually the same as the Soul Matters themes, even though the materials we draw upon are not from the prepared packets.

The pandemic stretched on such that we did not meet in person for an additional year. The total number of Zoom services is roughly ninety-eight. This number does not include creative (for example, outdoor) engagements that might not have been open to the congregation generally.

As we have straddled online and in-person worship experiences, one of the opportunities is to consider who wants to lead worship going forward. To that end, two specific aspects of the team are currently in development. One is that lay reflections have been opened more broadly to congregants involved with ministries of congregational life or with specific areas of ministry; for example, someone might speak about working with the pastoral care team—an association with a specific ministry or they might speak about climate change, a broad area of concern. We have had two trainings to expand the base of people trained to contribute.

I expect to have two more trainings before summer worship begins so that, this year, summer worship is largely led in-house and centers themes of interest to those leading and participating in worship.

As we move back toward worshiping in Hamilton Hall, some of the things that the community has been missing for so long are beginning to reappear. For example, **Joyful Noise** band has been practicing and has played in the soft launch and the Homecoming service. Even if we are still growing into this transition as a community, their presence has been healing, happy, and wonderful.

The pastoral care team will report separately in the annual meeting packet, but it is worth pausing to note their compassionate and dedicated care of people in our community. This year, **John Shinnick, Evelyn Sheridan, and Carol Wood** have all generously and diligently led the team forward.

I also want to pause and mention that this team is one opportunity for people ready to move back to in-person or similarly closer connection with others. People interested in offering pastoral care with the team will receive training and ongoing support. If listening to people and offering them empathy and connection with resources interests you, please reach out to Pastor Ninán at revsoto@uuoakland.org or pastoralcare@uuoakland.org

In addition, reflecting on some recent input, I will be adapting preaching and teaching methods to include additional clarity for participants.

I IF : If this is the case--the premise

T THEN : Then, this is what that can mean for us.

L LOVE : If love is our fuel and our destination this is how that looks

G GO : And this is what it means to make practical use of what we have Discussed.

I will be using this format for at least three months to be able to assess its effectiveness.

Financial and community support

Though not being in the building changes our access and connections with people in need around us, the need to support people struggling with a lack of resources.

The congregation continues to support people with needs in paying rent, buying medicine, and affording things like food, necessary clothing, and crucial services. Specific to this year is the need to support hourly-paid workers with staying home with COVID-19 infection.

Administration

One of my tasks as lead minister is to attend to how the congregation functions in its daily life and in the part of the work that is mostly only visible to those paying attention.

I want to begin here by thanking all the people who have kept operations going during this time when we had to work together, but at a distance. Key thanks go to the Board of Trustees as they kept leading forward in uncertain times.

Stefan Schneider, in his role as facilities manager, played an important role in being able to collect and analyze data related to safety in the reopening process. Also crucial in this process were **Lucia Savage**, assisting the Board of Trustees and reopening team with health information privacy and the Board of Trustees with policy review in general.

Michael Fitzhugh worked to convene the Program Council during the pandemic and helped bring into focus the needs of the Program Council going forward.

Pastor Ninán is now convening the Program Council, which has the chief goal of connecting programs and teams of the congregation to support and communicate with one another. It is an important element of Program Council development that the function and benefit of the team be obvious, for everyone to engage with. Currently, the Program Council is scheduling updates with ministries and projects for people to be able to share with and listen to one another. The Program Council is also offering education in the ongoing practice of compassionate communication. The ongoing need for skill development and the consideration of whether to engage with it brings me to some important questions about **invitation**. In addition, I want to thank **Daisy Quan** for being the Board of Trustees liaison to the Program Council and her collaboration there.

There is sometimes a concern voiced in the congregation that an invitation to grow, become more skillful, or learn new things is the same as being scolded.

It is understandable that an invitation to change could bring up questions about why change is needed or why things can't stay the same. I want to make very clear for our shared reflection as a community that this is only one way to interpret an invitation to growth. In general, as a community, we would be less enriched if we did not consider these invitations for growth. The fact that they are invitations is very important.

An invitation, at its root, is an opportunity that one may accept or decline. It is very important for the invitation to growth to be extended to the congregation, but as individuals, you may accept or decline. It isn't as though in the practice of free thought and liberal religion any of these invitations may be conscripted. However, one thing I am holding with curiosity is whether as the person offering the invitations that I believe to be consistent with the values and mission of the congregation I should be conscripted into not offering these invitations. This is something for us to think about together as a community.

Amazing work on the chart of accounts is the labor of love and precision offered by **Hester Green** and others on the Finance Team. There has been some work with the bookkeeping company (Shining Star) to continue to improve the accuracy and stewardship of the financial information of the congregation. Hester's work was both supported and complemented by the work of **Debby Kaplan**, the Board of Trustees member working in the office of treasurer.

Two other significant changes in administration include **Noemi de Guzman** joining the staff team as the congregational administrator and, generally, the **Software Transition Team**. selecting and implementing Breeze software to help manage and care for congregational data. Special thanks to Clark Sanford for his role on that team and attention to technology, such as the

website, and for paying attention to the congregation's broader communication strategy and needs. We would not have been able to move forward with the tools and clarity that we do have without Clark's care. Thank you, Clark.

Elsewhere in the congregation's report, the process of creating the Committee on Wellbeing. This has been a significant task for this year that required that we build a shared understanding of what, why, and how we are doing the work of the team.

The current needs of the Committee on Wellbeing of Shared Ministries center on team members to do the work. This team is crucial in continuing to strengthen congregational life.

It has been a challenging year. I remain grateful, and, close with the words of Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the director of the World Health Organization about the pandemic, words that will lead us forward.

“Be safe, be smart, be kind.”

At your service,
Rev. Theresa Ninán Soto

Board of Trustees Report

Submitted by Kathy Radez, President

It has been a year of transitions for the Board and the Church. At present, your Board of Trustees is comprised of the following:

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Kathy Radez, President | (2020–2023 term) |
| Dan Wright, Vice President & Secretary | (2019–2022 term) |
| Debby Kaplan, Treasurer | (2020–2023 term) |
| Lucia Savage | (one-year term 2021–2022) |
| Daisy Quan | (2021–2024 term) |

We thank Dan Wright and Lucia Savage, whose respective board terms come to a close this month. And we also thank Claudia Morgan and Meri Lane, who completed their respective Board service terms earlier this year.

Election of Trustees:

The Board recently and gratefully appointed Debby to fill the remainder of an open 2020–2023 term, thus completing a third year of board service, and we will be asking the congregation to confirm this appointment at this meeting. We therefore look forward to filling the following positions at this annual meeting:

- 1 trustee for the 2020–2023 term
- 2 trustees for the 2021–2024 term
- 3 trustees for the 2022–2025 term

We encourage church members to say “yes” to being nominated to serve as a Trustee.. We have worked hard to establish working agreements and practices that allow members with a variety of life situations to participate and contribute well and meaningfully.

Update on Board Work:

This has been a challenging year for your board. Working with fewer members, we focused on our efforts on a few key areas, which we highlight here along with our thanks to those who contributed to this important work:

- **Focused on financial health and clarity:** We are grateful to the Finance Team (Leslie Brandt, Hester Green, Bill Blakely, and Jane Voytek, with ongoing support from Jodie Mathies) for their faithful work on our finances. Please see the separate update on finances in the annual report.
- **Paid attention to our COVID response and reopening plans:** Thank you to Vincent Raines, our worship associates, and all who kept the spark going for more than 100 consecutive Sundays of virtual worship. We are especially grateful to Stefan Schneider for chairing our Reopening Team. In February 2022, the Board approved a proposal to return to in-person services, beginning with our long-awaited Homecoming Sunday on March 6, 2022.
- **Rechartered the Committee on the Wellbeing of Shared Ministry:** Throughout the past year, Noemi de Guzman, Sarah Letson, and Bev Smrha partnered with Pastor Ninan to reimagine our Committee on Shared Ministry. In December 2021, we gratefully adopted the charter they drafted for a new Committee on the Wellbeing of Shared Ministries (COWSM).
- **Supported the transition to a year-round Stewardship program:** We successfully started the transition this year to a model of year-round stewardship, thanks to the work of Rinda Bartley, Tamara Haw, and Dan Wright. In 2022–2023, we look forward to convening small group stewardship gatherings to continue our practice of year round support of the congregation.
- **Continued our policy review:** We approved a new endowment policy and began the work of collecting and reviewing our existing church policies (current ones are available on the church website) as well as looking at where updates may be needed (work to be completed in 2022–2023).
- **Participated in Pastor Ninan Soto’s Ministerial Fellowship Renewal:** In partnership with our lead minister, the Board solicited input from congregants and completed an evaluation of their ministry as part of the UUA’s ministerial fellowship renewal process.

This has been a year filled with unprecedented challenges, profound learning and opportunities stemming from crisis. To name a few:

- Declining volunteerism, leading to overreliance on a smaller number of active volunteers
- Less financial soundness and lower pledge totals
- Loss of significant tenants (and associated rental income)

- Repeated transitions in the religious education program and a lack of continuity for children & family ministries
- Reduced choir participation

But there are many things to be proud and grateful of during this time of renewal. The First Unitarian Church of Oakland, consistent with its history, has stood firmly grounded in its mission, striving to learn and continuing to grow. Thank you for the opportunity to serve the church during this pivotal time.

Operations Team Report

Submitted by Rev. Theresa Ninán Soto and Stefan Schneider

The operations team supports the day-to-day business of the congregation, including care of facilities, care of finances, and other business decisions. The biggest development of the year is that **Noemi de Guzman** has joined the staff team as the congregational administrator. Noemi's extensive experience with processes and projects will continue to support the congregation in moving into the future where things run smoothly to support the mission.

A key element of the operations work this year was the work of **Stefan Schneider** to prepare the congregation to worship and congregational life in Hamilton Hall and congregational life in the rest of the building. Stefan shared the reopening team which also included **Steve Thomasberger** and **Jef Melcher** contributing for children and family ministries. **Stefan** kept track of the circulation of the air to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and created procedures that contributed to safety.

One important task in the work coming up is to replace part of the fire safety sprinkler system in older parts of the building. Although it is not an inexpensive project, the money for it will come from the facilities endowment and will not change the allocation of funds in the congregational budget.

A crucial need for the coming year is lay people willing to serve on the operations team. There's a history of concern about who does what on this team, but the team will move forward with the following:

- maximum transparency
- explicit policies and task distribution
- accountability to the mission of the congregation

People interested in serving can reach out to Stefan, Noemi, or Pastor Ninán.

It is with deep gratitude that I close by offering thanks for Stefan's dedication and **Frank Tabor's** faithfulness in taking care of the building for these two years where we have not been able to use it. It's true that buildings that aren't used tend to decay but we have less worry for this because of their diligence.

Children and Families Ministry Report

Submitted by Rev. Theresa Ninán Soto

The function of the church for both young and old is not to give us on Sundays certain kinds of experiences different from experiences of the every day. The function of the church is rather to teach us how to put religious and ethical qualities into all kinds of experiences. -Sophia Lyon Fahs

This quote sums up some of the really important connections the congregation can make with the children and family ministries program. In fact, this is a season in which we are returning to in person activities for every age, including children.

This year, students have had the challenge of online school which had an impact on their ability to participate with online church. Factors like extended eye contact, feeling close in space to one another, lack of mobility while meeting and seeing oneself on the screen all make people less able to endure ongoing video chat. All these things were true for the congregation's students of every age as well.

There were some ongoing opportunities, but some families reported their children feeling disconnected from church experiences. This is understandable and something we must continue to give careful attention.

Jef Melcher has been doing thoughtful, enthusiastic, and values and community-centered ministry with children, youth, and families in his role as religious education transition coordinator. It has been a challenge for Jef to build and connect in the ways we need it with only 10 hours a week. The next phase of leadership in the program will be to undergo a staff search for a person to serve in that position at half-time (20 hours). We are open to Jef being the best candidate and leave room for that possibility.

The bulk of the search will happen in April, leaving time for any follow up to happen in May so that the plan is in place by the time summer begins.

Jef's update of February 8 was as follows, with the good news of a new Club UU leader:

Club UU Update (grades 6-8).

We're excited to welcome **Judy Schonebaum** as our new Club UU leader for the next three months. She has a strong UU background and many years of experience working in a great variety of arts and crafts with middle schoolers, teens, and adults. She will use creative arts projects drawing on many cultures to enable Club UU members to explore questions of identity and meaning and to have lots of fun. Thanks go to the hiring team of Rev Soto, Jef Melcher, **Matt Goldsmith, and Emily Stoper.**

Two important notes:

1. A Youth Service will happen on June 5.
2. **Displacement and Human Rights: All In for Climate Justice**

April 22 - May 1, 2022 | UU@UN Intergenerational Spring Seminar

Cosponsors: UU Ministry for Earth, UUSC, Side With Love

The 2022 Intergenerational Spring Seminar will take place online April 22 – May 1. In addition to short blocks of virtual programming, it includes an opportunity for congregations to host local gatherings, allowing Seminar attendees to connect in person with others who live nearby. Addressing the theme “Displacement and Human Rights: All In for Climate Justice,” this event aims to instill in UU youth and adults a commitment to global engagement and the skills to take action locally for climate and migration justice. Registration (with flexible rates!) is open through April 3.

It would be a great opportunity for our congregation to host a local gathering in Wendte Hall; that gathering could include participants from First Unitarian Oakland as well as any folks from nearby congregations interested in responding to these issues. Registration and seminar information is available [here](#).

I would like to conclude this report with the last email Jef sent to families with information, logistics, and support because it shows both what is happening currently and the direction in which programs are moving. Additional features and support will continue to unfold as we staff the program to center on in person experiences.

In service to our mission,
Pastor Ninán

From the desk of Jef Melcher, RE Transition Coordinator:

Hooray!! RE classes are in-person and on-site!.

This is a double special Sunday. -- The first Sunday of RE **and** an Annual Meeting.

- We are still masking
- Please bring a backpack with water, snacks and lunch. ***Especially if you are staying for the full meeting.*** (see **FOOD** below)
- Everyone checks-in at the table on the plaza and picks up their name tag.
- Regular Childcare and RE classes for Nursery-8th grade begin at 10:30 (*for locations see below*)
- Annual Meeting childcare provided for Nursery through 12-years-old. [special Annual meeting instructions below the regular instructions.]

In general for most Sundays:

10:20 - Joyful Noise Band starts - All are welcome

by 10: 30 - bring your children to the following areas.

0 to 4.75-year olds - Start in the **Nursery** where you will sing them in. We are not serving food or drink per Church Covid Policy. After Check-in this group will be out on the bricked patio outside of Wendte Hall. You may pick them up there after service. Dorothy will be providing childcare 0-5 for the Annual Meeting.

K-5th - Jef will receive this age group outside on the Museum Driveway. [Down the hall past the Women/Transgender bathroom.] You will sign the kids in and then out again when you pick them up there after the service/Annual meeting. Elliot Ingle will assist with this group.

Club UU - 2nd floor, second room. Judy will engage with prayer flags and decorating prayer flags for those who started on a few weeks ago. At least for the next few sessions I am asking that parents also come pick up their youth from Club UU on the 2nd floor second room back. We may eventually let the kids find their way to you after service lets out. (Probably once we have some kind of coffee hour again.)

HS Youth are encouraged to attend the Annual meeting or offer to help with one of the younger age groups. (Contact Jef to volunteer.)

10:45 - pick up your kids from their classes. [*unless you are staying for the Annual meeting.*] Our teachers have planned lessons and activities that finish with a closing and

clean-up. If service ends at 11:30, please enjoy some time talking on the plaza until it is time to pick up your children (Nursery-5th grade and sign them out with the teacher.)

FOOD - We are not providing food for children or adults per current church COVID policy. Please bring a labeled bag/backpack for them with a snack, bottle, water and anything else they might need. (Hungry kids are no joke.) No food or drink in the building, but outside they can consume what you send with them.

Special Childcare for the Annual Meeting:

- Per Board policy childcare will be provided (hired by the Board) for the Annual meeting. There is an expectation that the Annual Meeting will end by 1pm.
- We will provide safe activities and care for Nursery through 12-years-old.
- Dorothy, Jef, and Elliot are the care providers.
- **Please, please, please, send lunch with your child. We will not be providing food.**

Reports from the Congregation

(Reports listed in alphabetical order)

ACCOMPANIMENT TEAM

Submitted by Amy Carlson

In April 2021, First Unitarian Church of Oakland formed an accompaniment team in response to the call of Rev. Dottie Matthews of the Congregational Accompaniment Project for Asylum Seekers (CAPAS), a project of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. The call was to accompany a Guatemalan mother, E, as she reunited with her daughter here in Oakland after three years of separation. E and her daughter were cruelly separated by the US government in 2017 at the U.S./Mexico border.

The “core” accompaniment team members are currently Noemi de Guzman, Janet McFarland, Nancy Breslin, Emily Stoper, and Amy Carlson. Our “second circle” of support consists of Katrinca Ford, Megan Wachpress, Helen Duffy, Claudine Tong, Leslie Brandt, and Sherry Weston-Vigil.

E arrived in Oakland in May of 2021 and since then the core team and the second circle have answered the invitation to show up, witness, listen, and support E as she navigates starting a new life in the United States. It has not always been easy, and as the CAPAS handbook states, “accompaniment is the practice of being human together in the face of extremely dehumanizing systems and circumstances.”

We have had to learn and are still learning how to sit with our discomfort and be patient, especially when answers don’t come easily.

Over the course of the last nine months, the team has gotten to know E through social gatherings and helping her with various tasks. We have accompanied E to medical appointments, taken her to food banks, helped her set up a bank and Venmo account, and connected her with organizations for English classes and employment services.

E has struggled financially during her first year here due to health complications, and First Unitarian Church of Oakland and its members have stepped up to help ease her burden. In August the board approved a grant of \$2,500 to help E get settled into her home, a studio apartment in East Oakland. Individual members of the congregation give monthly to help E to assist E with rent, groceries, and other necessities.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

Submitted by Emily Stoper

This year’s Adult Faith Formation Program took on the question of how to have meaningful opportunities to engage as spiritual beings in a broken world in a

manner that is both safe and significant. For the most part, we took an attitude that the things that are working well should not be fixed. And there is nothing wrong with doing less during these trying times.

Several monthly meetings were offered throughout the year:

- Buddhist Sitting group with Carol Emert
- Book Group with Emily Stoper
- Poetry Circle with Ron Weisberg

We have also teamed up with our neighbors at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Livermore to offer short classes and one-off workshops including:

- Unitarian Universalist American Roots: a four session course offered by Emily Stoper in March and April 2021
- Unitarian Universalist Trivia Night
- Interim Religious Education Workshops

As we look toward reopening, we will be discerning the future needs of our adults to best offer classes that foster leadership, deepen spiritual identity and build transformative Unitarian Universalists who engage with the world. We will also consider the lifespan needs of adulthood and the need for more multigenerational interactions within our faith community.

BOOK GROUP

Submitted by Emily Stoper

The congregation's book group meets once a month online, usually on the 4th Thursday evening, to discuss highly readable nonfiction books, generally under 400 pages. There's a lively core of regular attendees, but drop-ins are always welcome, provided they have read that month's book. Favorite book topics include politics, psychology, history, race relations, ecology and science. If you would like to attend a meeting or to be placed on the group's email list, contact bookgroup@uuoakland.org.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS TEAM

Submitted by Clark Sanford | Team members: Maria Bielass, Clark Sanford, Noemi de Guzman, Rev. Theresa Soto

Newcomer Outreach

- Since the last Annual Meeting, CCT received over 100 online Guest Connection Cards. From these submissions, we sign people up for Chalice Chatter, alert the minister of requests to speak with them, notify church groups of newcomer's interests in them, answer questions and provide information about our church. We are now checking whether the group notifications have been effective, and whether to expand notifications to other groups.
- CCT hosts Newcomer Welcome breakout rooms most Sundays, and Starting Point sessions most months to get to know newcomers and

introduce them to our church. Turnout for these has been very, very low, often with no one attending. But when a newcomer does attend, we have fruitful, meaningful conversations. So we plan to continue them, and are looking for ways to increase participation. We are also looking at other means to connect with newcomers, and how this should adapt to re-opening.

- We had a book signing in November, where 2 newcomers joined our church, the only ones to do so in the last year. Just in the last week, 3 other newcomers said they would like to join too, so we hope our membership will improve with our re-opening.
- With the transition to hybrid church services, we are working with church staff to provide greeters to welcome people and check their Covid vaccination/test status.
- We are now working with Stewardship to handle the pledging of new members. We hope to reconcile membership versus pledge status, to assure accurate member rolls for both UUA reporting and voter eligibility at congregational meetings.

Connecting Congregants

- CCT held a virtual Connections Fair after church service back in May. Turnout was very good, with about 20 church groups participating, and lots of attendees.
- We are working with church staff and the Software Transition Team (STT) to sort through our people records in our various church systems, to reconcile those systems, and consolidate the information in our new church database, Breeze. Our goal is to have good basic congregant info – correct names, family members, contact information, church status, etc. – which is crucial for effective church communications. But we still have a lot of cleanup to do here.
- To support the upkeep of Breeze people records, CCT has been learning how to use Breeze and customizing it to support our needs. We are now developing the work procedures we need to use the system, maintain the records, and keep them in sync with other systems. Key to this will be good work coordination between CCT, Stewardship, Finance, and church staff – how this will be done is not yet determined.
- CCT maintains our records in the UUA mailing list for the UU World magazine.

- We recently started working with church staff to maintain the church mailing list for Chalice Chatter, now kept in MailChimp. In addition to basic email updates, we have solved problems causing dozens of people from getting these mailings.

COMMITTEE ON THE WELLBEING OF SHARED MINISTRY

Submitted by **Sarah Letson**

During 2021, the Committee on the Wellbeing of Shared Ministry (CoWSM) re-formed, rechartered, and restarted ourselves, drawing on the work of the previous committee, which was known as the Committee on Shared Ministry. Per the new [charter](#), The CoWSM represents the whole of First Unitarian Church of Oakland and monitors, evaluates, protects, educates, and advises in respect to the effectiveness of the fulfillment of the Church's mission through the total of its ministry, inclusive of both professional and lay leadership functions.

The CoWSM met virtually in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Because nothing was in-person, we had fewer opportunities to interact with congregational life. Still, we did our best to pay attention to the well-being of the congregation, staying connected with seminarians and affiliated ministers, supporting those experiencing conflict, highlighting areas of work that could use attention, and offering empathetic listening.

CoWSM members during 2021 were Noemi de Guzman, Sarah Letson, and Bev Smrha, with Pastor Ninan serving as a consultant. In early 2022, Noemi left the Committee due to her new position as church staff, and Bev reduced her participation due to health concerns. Since the committee should have 3-5 members, we are actively recruiting for new members. If you are interested in joining CoWSM, please contact sharedministry@uuoakland.org.

COVENANT AND AFFINITY GROUPS

Submitted by **Emily Stoper, Covenant Group Coordinator**

Over 30 members and friends of our congregation attend one of four covenant groups, where they deepen relationships with each other and discuss the monthly themes as well as other personal, social and spiritual topics. One group meets on the 2nd and 4th Monday mornings of every month. The other groups meet one evening a month: on 3rd Tuesdays, 1st Thursdays, and 3rd Thursdays. There is also a Pagan Interest affinity group led by Piper Rowanoak Swim and Zia Swim. All these groups are open to anyone who wishes to join. For more information about any group, contact covenantgroups@uuoakland.org.

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

Submitted by **Tom Haw and Laila Ibrahim**

Our three congregational endowments will ensure and strengthen the vision, mission and presence of First Unitarian Church of Oakland for the future. In addition to our congregational accounts the UUA holds two

trust accounts for us that we have no oversight or control over.

As of December 31, 2021:

The Wendte Endowment for Building Maintenance and Improvement

Grew from \$1,755,892 to \$1,918,950.

The congregation took a distribution of \$41,056 for general building maintenance and repairs thereby fulfilling the requirements of the endowment.

The Aurelia Henry Reinhardt Endowment for Justice

Grew from \$211,634 to \$234,682.

The congregation is not getting distributions until we get this account to \$250,000.

First Unitarian Oakland Memorial Endowment Fund

Grew from \$218,127 to \$229,974 \$4,070 was distributed to the congregation for general expenses.

We are continuing campaign to educate the congregation about the endowment to ensure this building will still be a thriving liberal religious congregation 150 years from now! Contact Laila (laila.d.ibrahim@gmail.com) or Tom (tomhaw04@gmail.com) to learn how to contribute to our funds now or in your estate planning.

FINANCE TEAM

Submitted by Finance Team and Debby Kaplan (Treasurer) Your dedicated Finance Team in 2021 has been Bill Blakely, Hester Green, Jane Voytek, Jodie Mathies, Laila Ibrahim (Endowment Committee representative), Leslie Brandt, and Dan Wright (Stewardship liaison). Even though Jodie Mathies officially rolled off in September 2021, she continues to be extremely helpful in helping us with the budgeting process and elsewhere when needed. We would like to thank Jane Voytek for her dedicated service to the Finance Team over the last 3 years, and wish her all the best as she joins her family in Massachusetts.

1. Bookkeeping Challenges, Triumphs, and Hopes –

- a. **Accounting costs were significantly higher this past year** due to high turnover in past bookkeepers with the costs of training/orientation plus the additional efforts needed to coordinate accounting recordkeeping systems with Breeze (our new software replacing Fellowship 1 product) caused our. Currently, however, we have made progress in developing a rhythm in handling the ongoing details.

We are making significant progress in improving the timeliness of recordkeeping and reports.

- b. **Implementation of Breeze database software** will help lower Bookkeeping costs. Breeze will be used easily by Volunteers to manage individual donor details and reporting ourselves thereby minimizing Bookkeepers' hourly billing with the potential trade-off of more volunteer time needed. Our recent experience of the annual 2021 tax-letter mail-out was that it was much easier compared to previous years.
- c. **PPP (Payroll Protection Program) Loan Forgiven** – the 70k PPP loan that we took out in May 2020 was forgiven which eliminates the future burden of repaying the loan. This forgiveness also added just over \$70k to the net worth of FUCO's unrestricted financial resources. Its purpose was to allow employers to keep employees on payroll, which we did, during the COVID shut-down.

2. FUCO's Endowment Funds –

- a. **First of all we want to thank Meri Lane and Lucia Savage** for contributing their professional skills and hard work in documenting our endowment history and developing the current Endowment Policy – providing valuable guidance in managing our UU Common Endowment Funds (UUCEF). This policy, covering all 5 of the UUCEFs, was adopted by the Board in June 2021.
- b. **Wendte Building Fund** – we received gifts totaling \$79,180 from two donors in 2021: a bequest from Robert Schulz and from Debbie Brown and Michael Stevens. This amount given is projected to add almost \$14k to the periodic distributions over the next 5 years for the TLC of our building. Also, the above contributions are projected to add nearly \$10k to the reinvested investment earnings and gains over that same 5-year period. Furthermore, the above described additions will continue beyond that period, indefinitely with the original donated amount remaining in the fund.
- c. **Aurelia Reinhardt Justice Fund** - \$5,600 was donated to this fund. Based on this contribution and assuming no additional donations we estimate that the fund will reach the \$250K threshold in 2024 at which point we can begin receiving distributions for Justice oriented donations and activities. The initial estimated distribution would be over \$4,500.
- d. **Overall 2021 Fund Performance** – Our portfolio of 5 UU Common Endowment Funds' investments earned approximately 8% during this past year.

3. 2021 Financial results and Initial 2022 Budget

- a. **2021 Budget Deficit** - annual operating expenses exceeded annual income by \$18.4k. This deficit amounted to less than 1/3 of the deficit anticipated in our initial 2021 budget (65.7k). A large portion of the deficit was due to inability to open our doors for congregational community experiences and for rentals (a significant income source) due to continued Covid restrictions. We were able to reduce some operating expenses due to loss of employees, many of whose duties continued to be performed by volunteers.
 - b. **2022 Budget** – Working with the Operations Team’s input we anticipate increased expenses as we open the doors and ramp up to pre-pandemic congregational activities. We do anticipate some savings in our bookkeeping costs and reduced/deferred contribution to UUA. Our initial 2022 budget numbers are deliberately conservative to avoid unpleasant surprises but we also hope to fine-tune the budget based on careful monitoring as year 2022 unfolds. This will also involve exploring possibilities for increasing revenue and reducing expenses while, to the best of our ability, minimizing reduction of our congregational services and community experience.
 - c. **Additional Administration** - Finance Team volunteers temporarily took on extra tasks such as bill payment and donation processing and investment during the time when the Church Administer position was unfilled.
 - d. **Breeze Development** - provided two members to the Software Transition Team and learned about Breeze church management software.
4. **Moving forward into 2022** – additional planned Finance Team activities
- a. Review and continuous improvement of processes and procedures, especially exploring what Breeze church management software has to offer.
 - b. Work with Bookkeeping to improve efficiencies for processing transactions and reporting
 - c. Work with the new, Congregational Administrator, Noemi De Guzman to clarify, streamline and automate financially-related administrative processes.
 - d. Work with the Community Connections Team and a permanent Stewardship Team to integrate FUCO’s person side with its pledge side using the Breeze software. This should make it easier to provide timely reports to our Board Secretary and to the national UUA.

We welcome any questions and comments from all of you regarding what we have reported and would be happy to organize supplemental meetings with all who want to explore FUCO finances in more depth.

The Finance Team's mission is to help the Board Treasurer provide accurate financial information to the Board and the congregation, assist the Stewardship and Membership (CCT) teams, prepare the annual Budget with the Operations Team, watch for anything that can impact our church's financial situation and collaborate with our Bookkeeper and Congregational Administrator in their financial duties.

Finance Team regular monthly meetings are on the second Saturday morning from 9:15 to about 11:00 AM and as needed. Meetings have been sometimes more often as we have chosen to take on some bigger projects for our financial health and transparency. We are looking for more of you who would like to join our team! One does not need to be an accountant or to know accounting software.

Respectfully submitted and open to comments, questions, and suggestions at Treasurer@uuoakland.org, Financeteam@uuoakland.org or at the meeting via Chat.

FIRST SUNDAY POETRY CIRCLE

Submitted by Rev. Soto and Ron Weisberg

The First Sunday Poetry Circle met every month during 2021-22 with a variety of monthly themes. The best experiences for the group have been the several newcomers who have joined the Circle with great enthusiasm and appreciation. The group has used poems presented to share about personal life experiences and connect with others in the group and arrive at meaning together.

The Poetry Circle had themes for Black History month and Women's History. For the former, the Poetry Circle discovered several Black poets new to everyone; and for the latter folks included poems from Iya Kiva, a Ukrainian poet presently still in Kyiv.

JOURNEY TOWARD WHOLENESS

TRANSFORMATION TEAM

Submitted by the Team: Donna Fujioka, Janet McFarland, and Linda Probert Sanford

In 2021, the Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Team (JTWTT) maintained a steady focus on the work to which it is dedicated: Keeping the vision of being an actively anti-racist, anti-oppressive, multicultural congregation front and center in the life of the Church. The Team's mission is to further the Church's transformation toward its goal of being a multicultural, anti-racist institution.

The JTWTT stayed highly involved in the life of the Church during 2021. Our work included these activities:

- We participated in the Multicultural Advisory Council (MAC) formed by

Pastor Soto. In that grouping we continued to plan and facilitate the First Sunday gatherings in collaboration with Pastor Soto, who joins the church service and the First Sunday meeting by means of a common theme. Pastor Soto most often engages other ministers to facilitate the White allies caucus during those meetings. First Sunday attendance remains high with about 25 participants per meeting. Since we have been meeting on Zoom, the toll of the pandemic has taken a toll on participation. The Team also joins Pastor Soto in creating the church services on First Sundays.

- Following up on the late 2018/early 2019 Assessment Team's Report on the Church's progress toward becoming a fully anti-racist, anti-oppressive, multicultural institution, we undertook sponsoring, educating and approving, as a congregation, the 8th Principle as proposed by the pre-cursor to the Article II Study Commission. The text was approved by the congregation at a special Congregational Meeting on December 12, 2021.
- We added one member and lost two, both just after the year ended. Long-time member Dennis Rowcliffe resigned. Noemi de Guzman resigned to take on the position of Church Administrator. Linda Propert Sanford joined us. The team is seeking another BIPOC person to join us.

- Several members participated in Beloved Conversations Online.
- We continued to provide a process monitor for nearly all Board meetings, as we have for several years.

In 2022, the JTW Team plans to continue or begin the following activities, some of which call for help from others. We can recruit help from outside our team when we need it, but we would also welcome the chance to add three new members; two from Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and the other from the dominant culture.

- Support First Sunday church service and anti-racism practice meetings.
- Support Interim RE Director to develop curricula for all ages anti-racism training.
- Interview three of the church's ministries to follow up on Assessment Report.
- Follow up on the church's adoption of the 8th Principle by engaging members in envisioning a new way.
- Contribute funds to movement building for racial justice beyond the congregation.
- Support BIPOC individuals who seek to attend anti-racism and multiculturalism-related trainings.
- Support church member enrollment in Beloved Conversations (virtual) classes

with recruitment efforts and by offering scholarships to those who need them.

- Train and engage new process monitors.

Respectfully submitted by The Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Team: Donna Fujioka, Janet McFarland, and Linda Probert Sanford. Dan Wright is the Board liaison to the Team, and in that role contributes significantly to our monthly meetings.

JUSTICE TEAM

Submitted by **Janet McFarland**

The Justice Team has kept moving forward in spite of the church's closing and general suspension of in-person gatherings starting in March 2020. We have met regularly. Heather McLeod stepped up to convene the Justice Team meetings which occur on the second Tuesday of each month. Janet McFarland is the online Zoom host. She also is liaison from the Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Team and sometimes attends the Program Council, representing the team. These relationships are helping to overcome the tendency toward siloing we have observed in the church. Claudine Tong is the liaison to Genesis, an interfaith community organization which we joined in 2021. Micky Duxbury is liaison to Interfaith Coalition for Justice in the Jails, of which FUCO is a sponsor.

The following people have been occasionally or regularly involved: Heather McLeod, Janet McFarland, Emily Stoper, Helen Duffy, Bev Smrha, Corless Smith, Megan Wachspress, Bill Chorneau, Claudine Tong, Amy Carlson, Meri Lane, Reverend Mary Foran and Micky Duxbury. Steve Thomasberger provides photo-documentation for events, when they are possible.

Team members are active as individuals in many different areas. Helen and Bill have been very active in housing issues centered around an encampment threatened with removal, with ACCE and with the work in their District inspired by Carol Fife's leadership in the city council.

The team sponsored the creation of the Accompaniment Program, in its current iteration, by bringing it to the Program Council for approval. Justice team members Janet, Amy and Megan were founding members. Emily and Claudine have also participated.

Micky kept a relationship with Ella Baker Center alive by collecting donations as requested for the Community Giveaway days. She raised \$500 for supplies to be donated. Several team members attended the annual celebration event online on October 27.

Some of our activities this year:

- FUCO became a member of Genesis, a faith-based regional justice initiative.

- Members of the Team offered reflections during the 10/17 worship service on Justice in the Time of COVID.
- A number of church members participated in Black Lives Matter demonstrations and actions in response to the police killing of George Floyd.
- We supported the sending of a letter of support to Asian members of our congregation in response to virulent anti-Asian violence and sentiment provoked largely around COVID origins.
- We supported the efforts of the Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Team focused on the adoption of the 8th Principle.
- Individual team members often participated in First Sundays for Racial Justice events at our church.
- Our church is an active member of the Interfaith Coalition for Justice in our Jails.
- We responded to inquiries by about twenty visitors to the church regarding our social justice activities.
- We sponsored a zoom town hall community event on Oversight of the Sheriff attended by 30 or so community members.

The team was encouraged by the Board to recommend the disbursement of Designated & Restricted justice funds included in the budget to particular causes. The team approved a grant to the Accompaniment Team's sponsee to assist her in getting established in this country and to the Water Defenders (Migizi Camp) in Minnesota. Several church members joined the camp in support.

Due to the many responsibilities of the board we were unable to make progress on the goals of 2019 (stated in last year's report) to strengthen Board support of justice activities.

In 2022, the team will focus on building its membership by outreach and engagement with several individuals who have expressed interest in Justice work over the last year.

Sincerely,
Janet McFarland, On behalf of the Team

MUSIC MINISTRIES

Submitted by Renée Witon and Stefan Scheider

Crescendo Choir and Joyful Noise

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Choir and Joyful Noise continue to meet weekly via Zoom, hosted by Stefan Schneider and Renée Witon. These weekly Zoom meetings help members maintain a connection to the Church, promote fellowship and allow our members to "keep in touch" with each other regularly. When we meet, we check in and frequently have a "question of the week" to share. Members of the choir also

support each other emotionally during this time of crisis. As to be expected, singing and playing is a part of every meeting.

Crescendo Choir has added to its virtual video collection for use in worship services. Susan Keiter and Vincent Raines assist with the production of these virtual videos. In addition, other choir videos from past in-person services are also used during online worship.

Vincent Raines has created high quality “Karaoke style” hymn videos featuring lyrics for use in online worship, reflecting the racial diversity of our mission.

Various members and Crescendo Choir also celebrated a successful online video “concert” last December.. Musicians in the congregation contributed to a joyful and celebratory evening of music that served to unite the congregation during the holiday season. The event was coordinated and hosted by Renée Witon and Susan Keiter.

Music Team members continue to develop an audio and video library of music performances for use in worship services. These recordings are continually posted for use by worship planners on the Worship Music Drive.

First Unitarian Oakland Chancel Choir’s three albums (Bring Many Names, Music in the Air and Wake Now My Senses) continue to be available for streaming on all major platforms (Spotify, iTunes, YouTube, Pandora, etc.). CD versions of these recordings continue to be sold online

through the UUA Bookstore and are selling out regularly. Due to the pandemic, UUA congregations across the country are using our recordings for worship services now more than ever. The Music Team hears weekly not only from these congregations, but from individuals as well, expressing thanks for their quality and availability.

Pop-Up Choir is featured in worship services on video recordings from past services.

The Music Program looks forward to the planned in-person reopening on March 6, 2022. Rehearsals will resume in late February for Joyful Noise and early March for Crescendo Choir. Joyful Noise Band and Choir schedules have been planned for the remainder of the church year. Pop-Up Choir led by Susan Keiter is also included in our in-person music future. Endemic phase protocols are in place, featuring plexiglass barriers for musicians, a riser plan for choir Sundays, specialized singer masks, and masking and vaccination and booster mandates for all participating musicians.

PASTORAL ASSOCIATES

Submitted by John Shinnick

The Pastoral Associates program was started in 1991, a vision spearheaded by the late Mary Ann Haw as a means of providing congregants in need with comfort, support and practical assistance by fellow church members. Since that time, dozens of congregants have stepped forward in hundreds of situations to smooth one another’s journeys in times of stress.

The pandemic certainly made our mission more difficult, but we continued to provide support including (with all due caution) visits to those in need, meals, transportation to medical appointments, and other various services. We have had to rely more on phone and email contact than we would like, though as more became known about Covid-19, our personal contact increased significantly.

Contact restrictions led to a diminished role for Lend-A-Hand volunteers. Lend-A-Hand is a somewhat informal group of church volunteers who are available to step forward to assist congregants with short-term, practical needs. We look forward to their continuing support as conditions improve. To that end, we recently undertook a survey to see who on our list of Lend-A-Handers were still interested in being active members, and will be initiating recruitment efforts shortly.

We have continued with rotating our chair on a six-month basis, with John Shinnick currently serving in that position through March. Carol Wood is serving as his primary backup.

Over the past year, as with the other groups within the Church, we have held our monthly meetings via Zoom. Since last year's report, our membership has remained constant. Current Pastoral Associates are Carol Wood (chair), Evelyn Sheridan, Judith Hunt, Scott Magness, John Shinnick, and Annette Williams. This is a bit misleading, however, as the previous year

saw the departure of four Associates, none being replaced.

As we emerge from the serious pandemic restrictions of the last two years, the Pastoral Associates will be focusing on defining its role in the Church community, and whether and how much an increase in our numbers is required. We will also, as stated above, be validating and hopefully growing our list of Lend A Hand volunteers.

SOFTWARE TRANSITION TEAM

Submitted by Jane Voytek, Manager

The software transition project, initiated in May 2021, has met its goal to implement a software solution to better support membership, bookkeeping, and stewardship functions, and the team is now disbanding. This report identifies the team's accomplishments and recommendations for the work that remains.

Accomplishments:

- Selected Breeze Church Management Software to replace Fellowship One church member database and additionally to manage giving records.
- Migrated people data from Fellowship One to Breeze. Community Connections is now entering newcomer data directly in Breeze and implementing processes to assure data are accurate.
- Configured Breeze Follow Ups to facilitate newcomer follow-ups by church ministry and program leads.

- Migrated 2021 pledge data to Breeze. Breeze is now the system of record for member pledges. Stewardship has now entered the 2022 pledges.
- Moved recurring auto payments from Vanco to Stripe, Breeze's payment processing partner.
- Migrated 2021 contributions data to Breeze. 2022 contributions are now being entered in Breeze, eliminating the multiple steps in the bookkeeping process.
- Created accounts and trained users in Community Connections, Finance Team, Stewardship Team, and Children & Family Ministries.
- Created a COVID proof of vaccination precheck form on Breeze.
- Began ongoing effort to develop, maintain, and document workflows and procedures to capitalize on Breeze features.

Out of scope of this project:

- Congregant access to maintain own records and view member directory.
- Migrate bulk-email mailing lists, to be maintained in one place and automatically synchronized with other bulk-email tools (e.g., Mailchimp).
- Develop capability to send other bulk mailings.
- Incorporate church events into Breeze calendar, for automatic

synchronization with church website calendar.

- Automatic event sign-ups.
- Tracking historical group participation.
- Tracking skills and interest.
- Group email distribution lists.
- General ledger, payroll, and human resource management.

Recommendations:

Benefits of the Breeze implementation will be realized only with diligent maintenance and management of the tool, including critical tasks of data cleanup, procedure development and documentation, user training and support, integration of processes across functions. The structure that would enable this includes:

- **A Breeze oversight team** to take responsibility for the above, to consult on potential new Breeze application projects (e.g., retreat registration and payment processing), and to hold responsibility for convening regular meetings with Breeze users to discuss how they are using the database and, if a group wanted to make a change, how it affects others, etc. The Breeze advisory team would be a technology subteam (see below) and would initially be populated provisionally by the congregational administrator and software transition team alumni.

- **A technology team** with clearly delegated authority and accountability for administering not only Breeze but also other information systems and technology tools in use at church. Responsibilities would include: prioritizing and recommending technology adoption and maintenance projects to the operations team; managing approved projects; and assuring system users are trained and maintain current procedures.

We have many people to thank. First, our thanks go to the church groups and

stakeholders who gave input to design the data structures, welcomed training to use the new tools, and are starting to use the system. We also thank the congregation for their support in the transition from Vanco to Stripe. And last but not least, we thank the Operations Team for entrusting us with this important work on behalf of the congregation.

Software Transition Team members:

- Jane Voytek, project manager
- Bill Blakely
- Clark Sanford
- Noemi de Guzman

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Submitted by Rinda Bartley and Dan Wright

Rinda Bartley and Dan Wright led Stewardship efforts again this year, with fabulous communications assistance from Tamara Haw and of course the Finance Team (especially Bill Blakely) and Clark Sanford who provided technical assistance and website maintenance. During 2021, we planned steadily for the intended small group Stewardship process that we have so long envisioned, but by the late fall it became clear that COVID would not yet allow in-person meetings and by winter Omicron was on the horizon. We therefore chose to run the Stewardship campaign similar to 2021, using online tools and communication. We are very grateful to those congregants who responded readily to the need despite continued constraints, and for new member Dave Ruede, who joined us in providing follow up support for the campaign.

The Software Transition Team contributed ideas, expertise and time to customize Breeze to make Stewardship information easier to save and retrieve moving forward.

| Pledge Year | Total number pledge units | Average pledge | Median pledge | Pledge Total* | Total pledge income |
|-------------|------------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|------------------------|
| 2019 | 182 | \$2,626 | \$1,320 | \$433,733 | (no data) |

| | | | | | |
|------|-----|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| 2020 | 172 | \$2,306 | \$1,250 | \$416,404 | \$410,000 |
| 2021 | 145 | \$2,631 | \$1,440 | \$381,439 | \$389,114 |
| 2022 | 126 | \$2,682 | \$1,486 | \$337,945 | |

* These pledge totals are not taken from budgets but rather from Stewardship pledge records / accounting software.

- There are two new pledge units for 2022, one is a new family and the other is a family that did not pledge in 2021 but were members.
- Twenty one pledge units from 2021 did not pledge in 2022. At least 4 pledge units moved out of the Bay Area, two have passed away and a few are now attending other local churches. We do not have a firm idea of why the remainder did not pledge.
- For 2022, 10 pledge units pledged a lower amount than in 2021. From all indications, this was due to financial hardship rather than church dissatisfaction.

The Board and Operations Team will determine the style and approach for the Stewardship Campaign for 2023. It is anticipated that the new Breeze database will greatly increase the ease of data collection, logistical planning, record keeping and congregational communication associated with the Stewardship process. The Stewardship Team sends gratitude to the Software Transitions Team and especially Jane Voytek who led the effort.

Respectfully submitted,

Rinda Bartley and Dan Wright

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SERVICE COMMITTEE

Submitted by Emily Stoper

Emily Stoper and Marilyn McMahon led our congregation's annual Sunday service to inform our congregation about the remarkable worldwide work of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), a human rights organization. Emily Stoper and Jane Facente are members of the Stewardship Circle of the UUSC and regularly attend its national meetings. With the church building closed, we couldn't run

a full-scale Guest at Your Table fund-raising campaign, but our members did contribute over \$1000 to UUSC during and after the service.

WOMEN'S RETREAT

Submitted by Emily Stoper

The Women's Retreat is a beloved annual event of this church, when as many as 50 women get together for a July weekend under the redwoods at Redwood Glen, a beautiful retreat center in the Santa Cruz

Mountains. Because of the pandemic, the retreat did not go to Redwood Glen in 2020 and 2021. After a one-day online retreat in 2020, there was a joyful one-day in-person retreat on the grounds of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Marin in June 2021. Plans are already under way to return

to Redwood Glen for a full weekend in 2022.

The organizing team: Leslie Brandt, Angela Craven, Hester Green, Marilyn McMahon, Emily Stoper, and Sondra Schwartz.

Additional Reports and Documents

2022 APPROVED BUDGET

| First Unitarian of Oakland 2022 Initial Budget | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------|--|
| | | | 2022 Notes / Assumptions |
| Income | | | |
| | Stewardship | \$338,000 | Anticipating reduction in pledge donations due to latest Stewardship input. Includes \$10k of additional unspecified fundraising |
| | Rental Income | \$25,000 | OYC leaving; Urohas uncertain but possible strong demand for celebratory events |
| | Collection Plate/One Time Gifts | \$22,300 | In-person services combined with increased options for plate giving such as via text encouraging increased generosity |
| | Income from Trusts / Endowments | \$154,277 | |
| | Program / Event Income | \$6,845 | |
| | Miscellaneous Income | \$6,730 | \$4500 from Social Justice fund + misc. |
| | Total Income | \$553,153 | |
| Expense | | | |
| | Wages (Ministers/Staff) | \$314,690 | |
| | Benefits & payroll costs | \$83,584 | |
| | Professional Services (all 1099) | \$34,330 | We assume bookkeeping costs will be lower due to reduction in individual donor recordkeeping costs |
| | Program / Event Expenses | \$20,500 | |
| | Denominational support | \$14,000 | |
| | Facilities | \$92,256 | assumes utility costs near pre-pandemic levels; some capital improvements |
| | Administrative | \$32,094 | |
| | Other | \$13,500 | Budget for external donations = 4500 |
| | Total Expense | \$604,954 | |
| | | | |
| Net Deficit (Operations Expenses exceeding Income for 2022)* | | -\$51,801 | Presently FUCO has sufficient cash reserves to maintain cash flow. However, this is the third year of deficit budgets and is unsustainable in the long run. The Board, along with the Operations and Finance Teams, should closely monitor our finances and discuss potential efforts to increase revenues and/or reduce expenses. |
| * per BoT 6/2020 Deficit NOT TO EXCEED 25% Operations funds in excess of 3 months expenses | | | |

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES

| 2021 INCOME AND EXPENSE STATEMENT | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| BUDGET TO ACTUALS | | | | |
| | | 2021 Actual | 2021 Annual Budget | Actual as a % of Annual Budget |
| Income | | | | |
| | Stewardship | \$ 389,114 | \$ 399,000 | 97.52% |
| | Rental Income | | \$ 12,500 | 0.00% |
| | Collection Plate/One Time Gifts | \$ 9,560 | \$ 22,300 | 42.87% |
| | Income from Trusts / Endowments | \$ 130,655 | \$ 129,592 | 100.82% |
| | Program / Event Income | \$ 325 | \$ 5,520 | 5.90% |
| | Miscellaneous Income | \$ 8,431 | \$ 16,830 | 50.09% |
| | Total Income: | \$ 538,086 | \$585,742 | 91.86% |
| Expense | | | | |
| | Wages (Ministers/Staff) | \$ 305,745 | \$ 330,329 | 92.56% |
| | Benefits & payroll costs | \$ 69,500 | \$ 87,843 | 79.12% |
| | Professional Services (all 1099) | \$ 42,594 | \$ 32,750 | 130.06% |
| | Program / Event Expenses | \$ 2,354 | \$ 21,000 | 11.21% |
| | Denominational support | \$ 28,766 | \$ 30,739 | 93.58% |
| | Facilities | \$ 81,516 | \$ 104,000 | 78.38% |
| | Administrative | \$ 16,136 | \$ 32,394 | 49.81% |
| | Other | \$ 9,900 | \$ 12,400 | 79.84% |
| | Total Expense: | \$ 556,510 | \$651,455 | 85.43% |
| Net Deficit * | | \$ (18,424) | -\$65,713 | |
| * per BoT 6/2020 Deficit NOT TO EXCEED 25% Operations funds in excess of 3 months expenses | | | | |

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

| | |
|---|---------------|
| ASSETS AND LIABILITIES STATEMENT | |
| AS OF 12/31/2021 | |
| Assets: | |
| Total Bank Accounts | \$ 449,602.00 |
| Total Fixed Assets | 2,972,207 |
| UUCEF Memorial Operations Endowment | 229,974 |
| UUCEF Wendte Building Endowment | 1,918,949 |
| UUCEF Aurelia Reinhardt Justice Endowment | 234,683 |
| Other UUCEF Endowment Funds not controlled by FUCO | 59,858 |
| Manse Fund loan to Rev. Soto | 8,758 |
| Prepaid Insurance and Bookstore Inventory | 7,650 |
| Total Assets: | \$ 5,881,680 |
| Long-term liabilities: PPP Loan forgiven in August 2021 | |
| | \$ - |
| Funds for Special Programs: | |
| Musicopia | \$ 16,239 |
| Manse Fund | 37,558 |
| Fund for Social Justice | 18,279 |
| Intern Fund | 20,646 |
| Green Sanctuary Fund | 2,202 |
| Total Funds for Special Programs: | \$ 94,924 |

2021 ENDOWMENT FUND REPORT

| 2021 UU Oakland's UU Common Endowment Fund Portfolio Activity (UU CEF) | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|---|---|--|--|--|--|---|
| Endowment Fund | 1/1/2021 Mkt Value | Distributions from the Funds to Operations as of 12/31/2021 | Additional Contributions Invested | Investment gain/loss, earnings, less fees | December 31, 2021 Value per UU CEF Statements | January - December 2021 Donations Invested in Endowment Funds just after 12/31/2021 | December 31, 2021 Value of UU CEF Reserve | Approximate Annualized Investment return |
| 610195-George E Grant* | \$19,308 | \$782 | \$0 | \$1,490 | \$20,016 | | \$20,016 | 7.88% |
| 610196-George E Grant Memorial* | \$38,462 | \$1,542 | \$0 | \$2,922 | \$39,842 | | \$39,842 | 7.75% |
| 610420-Memorial Operations Endowment | \$220,926 | \$7,784 | \$0 | \$16,832 | \$229,974 | | \$229,974 | 7.76% |
| 611177-Wendte Building Endowment | \$1,780,499 | \$75,936 | \$0 | \$135,205 | \$1,839,768 | \$79,181 | \$1,918,949 | 7.62% |
| 611184-Reinhardt Justice Endowment | \$146,894 | \$0 | \$65,400 | \$16,789 | \$229,083 | \$5,600 | \$234,683 | 8.05% |
| Total Value: | \$2,206,089 | \$86,044 | \$65,400 | \$173,238 | \$2,358,683 | \$84,781 | \$2,443,463 | 7.77% |
| *For these funds we are recipients of periodic distributions but have no ownership or management control | | | | | | | | |
| 2021 Approximate Annual Investment Return on our overall portfolio: | | | | | | | | 8% |

