



First Unitarian Church of Oakland

Spiritually Alive, Radically Inclusive, Justice Centered



2024 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

(MARCH 2023 ~ MAY 2024)

**SUNDAY, JUNE 2, 2024
10:50 AM**

First Unitarian Church of Oakland
685 14th Street, Oakland, CA 94612

WWW. UUOAKLAND.ORG



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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.



Land Acknowledgement

**We acknowledge the land and the Peoples who belong to this Land,
the Muwekma Ohlone Peoples.**

Our church, institutions, and homes are occupying their lands, ancestral and current.

We acknowledge that the lands were stolen from the Ohlone Peoples, who have an ancestral relationship with this land, the plants, the animals, and the water—for millennia, continuous to the present day.

Ohlone People are still here. We also recognize that the Ohlone ancestors, in spirit and of the Land, are present.

In solidarity with all Indigenous People and their right to self-determination and justice, we commit to working toward accountability of the theft, dispossession, and resulting trauma Native Peoples continue to face.

We commit to being active partners toward the healing of the intergenerational trauma which persists to this day.

Amen. So may we live.





Annual Meeting Rules of Order

Adopted by the Board of Trustees; Revised on March 12, 2011

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. Robert’s Rules of Order apply, except that the above rules will prevail in the event of conflict.



Agenda

10:30 am	Devotion - Rev. Samantha Wilson & Rev. Connie Simon w/ Rev. Laurel
10:50	Welcome and Call to Order - Nicole Fitzhugh, President of the Board of Trustees <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognition of Meeting Secretary (Ingrid Mittermaier) and Parliamentarian (Mark Savage) – Nicole Fitzhugh• Reading of Congregational Covenant - Members of Youth Group• Explanation of Ballot and Voting - Nominating Committee (Kris Wedding Crowell, Katrinca Ford, Ron Weisberg, Sherry Larsen-Beville)• Announcement of Quorum Count - Ingrid Mittermaier• Motion to Elect Laurel Egenberger as Moderator - Ingrid Mittermaier• Review Agenda and Rules of Order - Laurel Egenberger
11:10	Congregational Business - Moderator Laurel Egenberger <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 (2024 - 2025)
11:30	- Introduction to Jorim Rhee (Congregational Administrator) - Recognition of Ordained Minister - Report from Affiliated Community Ministers, Rev. Kevin Mann and Rev. Claire Eustace
11:40	State of The Church - Nicole Fitzhugh
12:05 pm	Financial Report - Dennis Rowcliffe (Board Treasurer)
12:15	Hope For Us Then and Now – Action Planning Team
12:20	Benediction and Closing Words - Rev. Laurel
12:25	Adjourn Annual Meeting and Invitation to Social Time - Laurel Egenberger
12:25 - 1:00	Zoom link will remain live for social time
12:25 - 1:30	Community Potluck & Celebration in Wendte Hall



Board of Trustees Report

Submitted by Nicole Fitzhugh, President of the Board of Trustees

Members and Friends of the First Unitarian Church of Oakland:

It has been quite a year of change for us as a congregation! I want to begin our “state of the church” report by acknowledging that this is a very unusual time to be having an annual meeting. As president I admit that I knowingly and with intention violated our bylaws by rescheduling from March to June. I personally promise never to do it again.

The reason behind this change has a lot to do with what we’ve done this year. At the last annual meeting we told you all that we were going to begin conflict engagement work with the Unitarian Universalist Association’s Hope for Us team. Well, here we are, and we have done a lot of work. Really amazing work. And while this is the end of our engagement with them, it is definitely not the end of our work together!

Here’s a summary of what the board has been doing since last March:

- Following the recommendation of our retiring music co-director, we hired Susan Keiter & Renee Witon to be co-leaders of the Music Team, with the aim of keeping music at the center of worship.
- We hired our wonderful contract minister, Rev. Laurel Leifert. We are so grateful for everything she’s done to bring worship back as a vital point of connection and joy for the congregation, and for helping the Worship Associates program to bring their best, which they do every week.
- We approved a staffing plan, created by stakeholders in the congregation with input from the finance team. The goal is to have an office that is an effective communication hub and truly supports the ministries of the church. We also revamped facilities management in hopes of increasing rental income and improving our role in the community as a useful and welcoming space.
- We hired two church administrators! While the change in staff was unexpected, we rolled with it and found an equally qualified person to fill the job. We strive to be a place where we accommodate people’s needs with love, and when the



position didn't work for Daisy Quan, we came together with her and found a wonderful new person, Jorim Rhee.

- We supported our Director of Religious Education in reviving that ministry. Jef Melcher has been building connections that keep families coming. He was able to run not one but two Our Whole Lives programs, hire a youth group leader, and find a team of nursery carers. He has done programming with other churches in the area, showing our new families that we are part of a wider group of people who believe in a better world.
- We also celebrated! We celebrated the ordination of Rev. Micah Ma and then ordained Rev. Kevin Mann and Rev. Claire Eustace. These were three very joyous occasions!

And we continue to celebrate today as we end our engagement with Hope For Us. You will hear from fellow congregants summarizing what came of our year together. This Annual Meeting is a time for us to do the business of the church— like electing new board members—but also to reflect on how we came together to acknowledge our grief and pain, and admit that none of us were without a role in the events that led to the departure of our called minister. It's time to reflect on how we also came together to say to each other that we are still a community, still a congregation worth committing to, still a work in progress, and that we want to work together. We are moving from the program year into summer. We will take these next couple months while our minister is on vacation and our DRE is taking a well-deserved break to think more about who we are, who we want to be, and what we want to do next.

The board will be building our working relationships, and deciding on the new policies and processes that are needed to govern the church effectively in a different way. We'll till the ground for the work of being stewards to the church. When we come together in September, we'll be refreshed and ready for what is next.



HOPE For Us Action Planning Process

Submitted by Nicole Fitzhugh, President of the Board of Trustees

Action Planning Day - April 13, 2024

Facilitation - HOPE for Us Coaching Team (Revs. Connie Simon, Samantha Lynne Wilson, Jamie Yandle)

Key Themes

Lens: The best is now, is ahead of us, and it is worth trying new things <ul style="list-style-type: none">- New story: <i>the best is now, the best is not behind us</i>- New ideas are worth trying- No more “We can’t do that because we tried it...”	Lens: Joy!!! <ul style="list-style-type: none">- More joy across all roles and spaces- Music festival- Mini-Retreats- Meals	Lens: Prioritize <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Release things without leaders, energy- Risk choosing things together, doing one thing deeply- Having clear understanding of our resources and capacity
Lens: Alignment <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Our “inside” work informs our “outside” work, our “outside” work informs our “inside” work.	Lens: ARAOMC (What does welcome, inclusion mean to us?) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Across all work- Understanding what this means together- Racism, sexism, transphobia, ableism, classism, etc.	<i>A Lens is a way to connect our actions and our values. It informs HOW we do what we do.</i>

1. Multi-generational, cohesive, values-infused service inside and outside of our walls
2. Neighborhood Engagement and First Unitarian’s Sense of Place
3. Request for a Congregational Process around ARAOMC
4. Social Justice Theme
5. Common Understanding of Shared Ministry
6. Conflict Engagement as Community Practice
7. Processes that Foster Connections and Active Engagement

[**Note:** For a longer, more detailed list of practices, questions, and ideas that came out of this process at the Planning Day, please find the full report online [here](#) or at the end of this meeting packet.]



Nominating Committee Report

Submitted by Katrinca Ford, Kris Wedding Crowell, Ron Weisberg, and Sherry Larsen-Beville

As per our By-laws the “Nominating Committee shall be elected for the purposes of conducting recruitment for the subsequent year’s candidates for the Board of Trustees”.

We are thrilled to announce that we have identified five candidates for Board service. Four of these candidates are willing to serve full, three-year terms, and one candidate who was originally elected to serve a 2-year vacancy is willing to fill a one-year vacancy. This is the first time in many years that a nominating committee has been able to recommend a full slate. Credit for this shift belongs to the entire congregation. Thank you. Special gratitude is extended to Nominating Committee Member Sherry Larsen-Beville who made more connections and phone calls with people than the rest of us combined.

We continued to make use of tools set up by the previous committee:

1. Dedicated space on the UUOakland google drive for the Nominating Committee. Whoever is in the boardnomination@uuoakland.org group will have access to that drive space.
 - a. This space is a growing collection of nominating committee notes and resources
 - b. Notes include people who might serve in the future
2. A [Report](#) made by the previous nominating committee after surveying Board members.
3. The [Trustee Job Description](#)
4. The [updated the interest form](#) used by congregants considering running for the Board.

Although not part of our formal charge, we have once again agreed to help run the voting during this year’s annual meeting.



Finance Report

Submitted by Hester Green

Our **2023 team** was Bill Blakely, Hester Green, Jodie Mathies, Laila Ibrahim (Endowment Committee), Molly Hermes, and Dennis Rowcliffe (Board Treasurer), with much support from our previous congregational administrator(s).

Our **mission** is to provide accurate financial information to the Treasurer, the Board and the congregation, assist the Stewardship, Membership (CCT), and Building & Grounds teams, prepare the annual Budget with the Operations Team, and watch for anything that can impact our church's financial situation.

We **meet** on the second Saturday of the month, 9:15 to about 11:15 AM, and as needed. We welcome guests, comments, questions, and suggestions at Financeteam@uuoakland.org or in person when you see us! **Financial Information Availability is always a priority!**

2023 Financial highlights

2023 Results – We did not have the projected Operations Deficit in 2023, due to departure of staff combined with slightly increased rental and endowment income. We are grateful to volunteers and staff who stepped in to take on additional roles in our time of need.

Stewardship revenue continued the decrease of the past several years as membership declined. Our membership is down from pre-pandemic numbers by ~100 people;

it will take time to rebuild membership and associated stewardship, as well as rental revenue.

Endowment Fund(s) Performance – We are well on the way to recovery from the early 2022 shock to investments experienced globally with an approximately 11% rebound during 2023. The Finance Team monitors our funds and their distributions to ensure fund growth and guard it against market adversity. Gratitude to all those who contributed to our funds; the draw from them is crucial to our operational health.



Bookkeeping - costs are lower; processes have been better documented to help keep efficiency and consistency. Breeze continues to ease transferring contribution funds to the bank account, recordkeeping, and generating the 2023 Tax Notices & other reports.

2024 Financial Notes

Stewardship – We anticipate slightly increased stewardship revenue in 2024

Budget – The Board approved a 2024 Budget / Staffing plan that projected a \$24,000 deficit for 2024. As of April 2024, our numbers are better than anticipated. Our 2024 budget numbers are conservative; we will continue to fine-tune the budget based on careful monitoring expenses and exploring revenue opportunities as 2024 unfolds. Some financial processes continue to be performed by a volunteer (Bill); again we are grateful!

Endowment Funds continue to rebound in the first quarter of 2024.

Information Session(s) – Your Finance Team will meet with our new Board to provide financial background, and is ready and willing to offer time(s) to meet with congregants to review financials.

Processes – a goal is to continue to document & improve processes and procedures, including use of Breeze software, bookkeeping, and streamlining financially related administrative processes.

[Note: Please find the Income Statement Chart “Supplement A” and, Assets and Liabilities Statement “Supplement B” at the end of this Annual Report Packet.]



Ministers' Reports

Contract Minister

Submitted by Reverend Laurel Liefert

A Time of Transition

This year I have been serving the congregation as a half-time contract minister focusing on Worship. I think it has been a good year. My overarching goal was to earn the trust of the congregation and to provide meaningful, well planned Sunday services. I usually led at least two services each month and was responsible for coordinating the other Sundays with the worship associates, music, and tech teams. I inherited a well-organized Worship Resource Drive and appreciated the patience of Renee Witon and Sarah Watts as they trained me how to use it. I also appreciated the team of Sarah, Jodie Mathies, and Corless Smith, with the help of Jeffrey Melcher, who worked to keep the worship associate program afloat and to organize the Sunday services from the time the previous minister left in March and I came in August/September.

Rhythm of the Liturgical Year

This 2023-2024 liturgical year had a familiar rhythm. It began with a Water Communion in September, led by Piper Swim since I was on a previously planned pilgrimage to Malta. Piper also did a Samhain/Halloween service at the end of October. I led the Thanksgiving Bread Communion service. The first Sunday in December, Jeanne Rana and I co-created a UU Advent service. I don't know whether it will become part of this congregation's liturgical year. Piper led a Yule service around the Winter Solstice. Then we had three services on Christmas Eve day since this year it was a Sunday. The morning service was mostly singing carols, followed by a spirited, well-attended Christmas Pageant in the afternoon, finishing the day with a quiet, contemplative service in the evening that included beautiful music and a candlelight ceremony singing "Silent Night" at the end.

The new calendar year 2024 began with the traditional Tolling of the Bells service. January also included Emily Stoper and Jane Facente leading a Guest at Your Table service raising over \$7,000 for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. I led an Easter service, which came early this year at the end of March. In May I led the Flower Communion service that also included a Child Dedication with Director of Religious Education Jeffrey Melcher.



Other Highlights

I'd like to lift up a few other highlights of our worship year.

Half-Plate Ministry

We started a half-plate ministry in which we will share half of our collection plate each quarter with a local nonprofit that embodies our values. For the months March through May, the recipient will be the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights. A representative will come to a service in June to receive the check and tell the congregation how the money will be used.

Ingathering of New Members & Child Dedications

We held two Ingathering of New Members services this year. In October we welcomed seven new members. In April we added ten more, though not all could attend the ceremony. We also held two Child Dedication services. In October the congregation dedicated itself to nurture and two children and their families. Just recently in May, the congregation dedicated itself to seven more children and their families. This means that this year we welcomed seventeen new members and dedicated ourselves to nurture and support seven children and their families.

Attendance Numbers

Other numbers that indicate the rebuilding we are doing this year are the worship attendance numbers that ushers provide each Sunday. Attendance at Sunday services ranged from a low of 47 to a high of 94 at the Hope For Us January "workshop." Both the Youthpower service in January and the "Luminous Eyes" service I led with guest musician Jennifer Berezan had the next highest attendance of 90. The "Luminous Eyes" service also included a high of 11 children, which may have been because the Time For All Ages story was read by a youth, Sadie Fitzhugh. The Advent service in early December had 87 and the "Tolling of the Bells" service on the first Sunday in January had 82. In February I led a service called "A Holy Rhythm" that 83 attended. This was the first Sunday after the death of Janne Eller-Isaacs, so some of those who attended the service may have been there to participate in the sharing circle about Janne in the Starr King Room after the service. The average attendance of the past 35 services is around 76. Children attended 22 Sunday services. Their attendance ranged from 1 to 11 children, with an average of between 3 and 4.

Other Services of Note

The newly ordained Rev. Kevin Mann, now a community minister affiliated with UU Oakland, led a service in December about religious pluralism and the proposed revisions to the UU Principles and Purposes in Article II, which puts Love at the center. The service included guest musicians Nancy Henderson and Kerry Parker.



The Youthpower service mentioned above was called “You Don’t Have To Do It Alone: Reflections from Youth Climate Activists.” Orhan Hosten-Mittermaier and Bella Wasserman, two high school students, told us about their Youthpower refrigerant project. The activist duo Emma’s Revolution provided fabulous music for the service. Recently the youth took their service “on the road” and presented it at the UU Church of Palo Alto. I heard from the minister there that it went very well.

There were three Sundays this year in January, February, and March that were called “workships” led by the Hope For Us coaches Rev. Samantha Wilson and Rev. Connie Simon. These Sundays began with a worship service, followed by lunch and a workshop. Attendance these Sundays was 94 in January, 73 in February, and 68 in March. Hope For Us will lead one more Sunday service on June 2nd.

In April, Laila Ibrahim and Suzanne Van Houten, co-chairs of the Committee on Shared Ministries, joined me for a service in which they shared highlights of the results of the congregational survey they sent out. The response to two of the questions – “What programs of the church are most important to you personally?” and “What programs of the church do you see as crucial to the health of the congregation as a whole” – ranked Worship as the highest of all of the programs, with a 5 which means “very important.”

On the first Sunday in May, which was the Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage month, Rev. Kevin and Suzanne explored what it means to carry multiple identities and social locations in a service called “Wandering Between Two Homelands.”

My “Theological” Services

A number of the services I led, e.g., “What Holds Us Together” about UU theology, “A Holy Rhythm” about faith and doubt, “Luminous Eyes” about mysticism, “Reclaiming Grace” and “Amazing Grace” about grace and reverence, and “The Dance of Fate and Freedom,” were explorations of theological topics. I consider this to be part of my role as one of the professional ministers in the congregation. My goal is to have the congregation become more fluent in faith and, as UUA President Bill Sinkford proposed, to consider reclaiming the language of reverence.

Gratitude to the Big Tent Worship Team

There are so many other wonderful Sunday services I would love to lift up and praise. Thank you to all of the talented and dedicated members of the big tent worship team – the worship associates who have led and helped with worship, including preparing and operating the slides, the music team of Susan and Renee and guest pianists such as Vincent Raines and the singers and musicians in the Crescendo Choir, Joyful Noise, and Pop-Up Choir, the audio and



tech team of Zach, Mateo, Lane, now Evelie, the ushers and greeters organized by Maria Bieless, our Director of Religious Education Jeffrey Melcher and his team, the Board members who do the Welcome (as the saying goes, it takes a village).

Worship Associate Program

Sarah Watts is now serving as Chair of the Worship Associate program and has done training on the creation of slides for the service. We have been holding monthly Worship Associate meetings and this will continue. In addition, this year I facilitated a class that is based on a book called The Shared Pulpit: A Sermon Seminary for Lay People by Erika Hewitt. I plan to offer the class again next church year, as well as additional training. We will be subscribing to the Soul Matters Sharing Circle next church year which provides monthly themes and a rich source of materials on each theme for Worship, Small Groups, and Religious Education. The 2024-2025 Soul Matters themes are *The Practice of... Invitation, Deep Listening, Repair, Presence, Story, Inclusion, Trust, Joy, Imagination, and Freedom*.

2024 Summer Services

There will be twelve summer services between my last day on June 9th and my return on September 15th. Jodie Mathies and Leslie Schipa are organizing summer worship and have almost all of the pieces in place already. Well done.

Summary

All of the numbers – new members, children dedicated, Sunday worship attendance – indicate that we are doing something right as we seek to rebuild. The numbers, while quantitative, point to something qualitative and positive. Given the importance of the Worship program to people personally and to the health of the congregation, it is heartening to see these tangible and intangible signs of growth.

I am grateful for having had the opportunity to serve as your part-time contract minister this year. I look forward to another year of service in 2024-2025.

In faith, with love and thanks,
Rev. Laurel



Community Minister

Submitted by Rev. Kevin Mann

Rev. Kevin led or preached at five worship services this past year and served as a worship associate at two others. He was ordained by our congregation on October 1, 2023.

His ministry has emphasized antiracism and community within BIPOC UUs. He assisted the Journey Toward Wholeness team. He stepped up to support the BIPOC community of FUCO after our called minister departed in February 2023.

Rev. Kevin played a leading role in organizing quarterly meetings of Bay Area DRUUMM, whose mission is "to provide a gathering space for Bay Area BIPOC Unitarian Universalists and BIPOC friends that centers our community, with elements that focus on connection with self, each other, our church communities, and beyond."

He has formed ties between FUCO and the UU Church of the Philippines, and has launched an organization to connect Filipin-x American UUs with the UU Church of the Philippines.

[Note: Please find Rev. Kevin's full report online at bit.ly/revkev2024 and at the end of this Annual Report Packet.]



Community Minister

Submitted by Rev. Claire Eustace

My primary area of service to the congregation consists of pastoral care. Over the last year I have engaged in providing individual, couples, and group pastoral care support. During this past year I have also attended and provided support at monthly meetings of the Pastoral Associates. Until Rev. Laurel Liefert began her contract ministry in August 2023, I attended regular meetings of the minister-members of the congregation as we coordinated pastoral care support for the congregation. The minister-members also met with Hope for Us staff a few times before Rev. Laurel began her contract ministry.

In the spring of 2023, I facilitated a listening circle for a group of congregants. I served as the Summer Pastoral Care Minister June 15th through August 15th. In that capacity, along with providing pastoral counseling for individuals and couples, I served as a chaplain at discussions of the JTW common read: "Mistakes and Miracles." After Rev. Laurel began her ministry, she became the lead in responding to pastoral care issues for the congregation and I provided pastoral support as needed. Along with pastoral counseling and regularly attending Pastoral Associates meetings, this included two hospital visits to a dying congregant. In late November 2023 I led a Sunday worship service.

In service,
Rev. Claire Eustace



Children & Family Ministries Report

Submitted by Jeffrey Melcher, M.Div, Director of Religious Education and Exploration

When I came on as part-time Director of Religious Education (DRE) in the post-pandemic period, the RE program started back with Nursery Care every Sunday and with RE programming twice a month. This past year we made a decision to ramp up the programming to every Sunday. This was a leap of faith and a lot of hard work on the part of many people.

The RE Spark Team and I continued to support the 4th Sunday Potlucks with the addition of games and puzzles for children and adults. We organized two OWL cohorts that included youth grades 4-11 and caught up our students and families to the age appropriate level in this life affirming curriculum. These were the first OWL classes since the winter of 2020 due to the pandemic shut-down. We are still in recovery and rebuilding mode. Some other congregations in the UUA did not survive the pandemic and have closed. My intention is to rebuild UU Oakland using the RE program as the ground of our being to grow the future church. To accomplish this we use multigenerational programing such as the church picnics, Oakland PRIDE booth, fun multigenerational worship collaboration with Piper Swim, Solstice party with Dances of Universal Peace and wish candle making, No-Rehearsal Christmas Pageant, OWL Parent Group, Parent and Teen meeting to jumpstart a youth group, youth and adult hiring team for Lead Youth Advisor, East-Bay UUs potluck and game evening, pancake and waffle breakfasts for RE families.

Note: All the above is in addition to the regular Sunday programming for children and youth.

So much of our programming is only possible from the dedicated volunteers who support, plan, organize, and show up to help. I want to especially lift up the RE Spark Team (Kris Wedding-Crowell, Katrinca Ford, Matt Goldsmith, Ingrid Mittermaier, and Alexis Wielunski, as well as the OWL Teachers and assistants (Janet McFarland, Gabrielle Lochard, Jef Melcher, Alexis Wielunski, Darin Jensen, and Lucia Kenworthy from UU Oakland. Help from UU Church of Berkeley came from Carla McCasland, Paul Hudson, and Michael Armstrong.) A big thanks to Dave Ruede and Carol Layne for taking the lead on the RE breakfasts.



Religious Education Spark Team

Besides the monthly Zoom meetings to support the program and give constructive feedback to me, this dedicated group has organized events themselves. They organized and staffed the UU

Oakland booth at the Oakland PRIDE Celebration with multi-generational participation, and the church Halloween party. They also helped with the multi-congregational picnic last fall and the Solstice celebration. Together we are capping off the year with an All RE Families Breakfast on June 9th. This is for families, RE volunteers and staff. Our RE breakfasts also double as casual membership book signing events.

Our Whole Lives

- This life saving and culture-shifting program is a jewel of the UUA children and youth programming. It is labor intensive, but worth the resources needed to have a successful program. This year UU Oakland children and youth had the opportunity to participate in the 7th-9th grade OWL and the 4th-6th grade OWL.
- We enrolled eight youth in our 7-9 OWL cohort co-taught with the Mt Diablo UU Church in Walnut Creek. Classes happened at both locations. We hosted the Saturday workshops and the graduation/celebration party with a movie night and spinning some LPs. (remember those?)
- We just finished our 4-6 OWL where we had nine families participate, children and parents alike. The parents had a weekly half-hour check-in 10:00-10:30 and then went to service. The children had class from 10 - 11:45, then stampeded up to the second floor to play Foosball and games. We finished with a family celebration potluck and bowling night.
- Six of the above seventeen children and youth were tangential to UU Oakland, friends of our member families. These families have now had a solid introduction to some of the UU values we hold dear. Two of those families are considering membership.
- We charge a modest fee for the OWL classes. We are net positive income for the program and these funds go to support training of more OWL teachers and in support of the OWL program.
- Our current families have been caught up with OWL education. The next program year we plan on holding a K-1 OWL program.



The City of Oakland has its own PRIDE parade and event in the fall. It is more family friendly. UU Oakland had a booth last year and it was a successful outreach event. Several youth took a shift in the booth, then got to walk around. We plan on doing this again in the Fall of 2024. However there is a price of admission. Last year it was \$20/person.

Youth Group Revival

Building upon the OWL 7-9 class cohort, I worked to revive and rebuild a youth group. It is a rare opportunity to get a youth group started in a congregation where there is none. Its success is not guaranteed. This is still a fragile restart. It needs support to flourish.

The hiring process for our Lead Youth Group Facilitator was set up as a leadership development activity w/ several youth (Kade and Sadie) on the hiring team from beginning to end. We successfully hired Tracey Hickey in February of 2024. The Youth Group meets twice a month.

Several youth and adults attended a regional Youth Revival Saturday retreat: Reenvisioning Church with UUA PWR staff - PCD remake (Tracey, Jef, Ilana, Clem, Kade) to envision and empower youth to leadership. Several relationships were built and a vision of youth led Sunday services were planted in our brains.

Kinder Room/Nursery (ages 1-5)

Our long-term Nursery Care Provider, Dorothy Paul retired this year to care for her mother. We took up a collection for her and delivered a beautiful card with nearly \$500 as a thank you for her years of service. London Reid is now our lead Nursery Care Provider. Kudos to Katrinca Ford for being a lead volunteer and Kinder Room program consultant. We are upscaling the activities here from safe active playtime to now include a modicum of themed RE programming through check-in, story, music, and art. The majority of children attending range in age from 3-6.

Outreach and Collaboration

Multi-congregational cooperation and collaboration makes us stronger and more vibrant. Initially it is more work to coordinate and schedule with other congregations, but the pay off in dividends of joy and fellowship begins to flourish. Our OWL program and recent Potluck and Games Night are the perfect examples. For OWL we worked with MDUUC and UUCB.



For the Potluck and Game Night I worked with Ariel Smith-Iyer, DRE at MPUUC (Fremont). This was billed as an All East Bay UU congregations event. We had over 50 people in attendance with 5 congregations including the regional youth contingent, YRUUP. YRUUP led an evening interactive youth-style worship to close out the evening.

The youth service organized by Heather McLead and myself, then presented by Orhan and Bella with Rev Laurel as their WA, was a collaboration between UU Oakland RE and the Youth Power for Climate Action teen group. They were invited to UU Palo Alto for an encore.

This is a model that works!

Future Growth

Building UU Oakland as an East Bay hub for UU events and activities.

- ❖ We are centrally located.
- ❖ We have BART and AC Transit close by
- ❖ We have a large beautiful building with enough room to host
- ❖ We are a growing and dynamic congregation with a vibrant RE program
- ❖ We are close to the Federal Building for related justice events, Oakland PRIDE, Black Joy Celebration, etc.

Young Families Outreach and Cohort Development

This Winter and Spring there was a focus on programming and outreach to young families with these events:

- ★ No-Rehearsal Xmas Pageant
- ★ Egg Dying
- ★ Easter Pancake and Waffle Breakfast
- ★ New Member Ceremony
- ★ Child Dedication Ceremonies
- ★ June 9th all RE Breakfast

This is our future population of congregants and brings a vibrancy to the community. More support is needed to sustain this cohort of families and continued growth.



Volunteer and Staff Needs

The decision to ramp up the programming to every Sunday increased the work and the need for more volunteer coordination. We regularly struggle to get enough trained and background checked volunteers to meet the needs of Sunday morning and OWL programming. I am often leading a class, which I love to do, but this spring when we had five groups on many Sundays, it was a struggle.

- Kinder Room
- OWL 4-6
- OWL Parent Group
- Youth Group
- And then any other kids not in any of the above groups

To manage the load we combined the Kinder Room and the “not-in-any-on-the-above” into a multi-age group. This only works if there aren't any actual 0-2 year olds. We were flying by the seat of our pants many Sundays. It all worked out thanks to London, Esther, and Katrinca being regular Sunday RE teachers. Having paid staff available was the only thing that made this doable.

- We need to hire another Kinder Room Staff person
- We need to add to the budget the funding to hire several youth for the Summer RE Program
- We need to add to the budget a part-time RE Admin Assistant starting at 3-4 hrs/week
- We need to add to the budget another part-time RE Teacher to help build the Tween Cohort that graduated from the OWL 4-6 class. With outreach, organizing, and follow-through we can start to build the next generation of the youth group.

In summation:

This is a crucially poignant moment in the life of the congregation. It is a critical time for the RE program now at a tipping point of growth. The RE program has blossomed with creative and consistent care this past year. Going beyond Sunday morning 10:30 to 11:30 has been critical to this success. Family and multi-generational programming has enriched the lives of individual members and the congregation as a whole. To continue this trend, significantly more resources of time, talent, and treasure will need to be channeled to support this program.

This is how you build an RE program. This is how RE is a pillar to revitalize a congregation.



Program Reports (in alphabetical order)

Accompaniment Team

Submitted by Frances Kendall

This year, the Accompaniment Team provided support to Enelisa as she navigated various systems to address health concerns, employment and immigration. We also provided some monthly financial assistance. We enjoyed several dinners together. She gave back to us one wonderful day where she taught us how to make tamales, Guatemalan style, as well as delicious pupusas. We have included a photo of this event.

In the coming year we anticipate continuing to provide a similar level of support. We also hope to share more days together in the kitchen and dining room.



Book Group

Submitted by Emily Stoper

The congregation's book group was discontinued in 2023 after meeting for about 20 years.



Breeze (Database) Oversight Advisory Team

Submitted by Bill Blakely, Clark Sanford, Maria Bielass

We aren't meeting on a regular basis as a team - we've been maintaining the database, granting access to church leaders, and experimenting with using it for various purposes:

- Redesigning the database to reflect church processes
- Developing forms and evaluating them in terms of their usefulness with various church programs and activities, for example:
 - Our online newcomer card which is connected to Breeze
 - Ordinations
 - Pledge form
 - Church leader access agreement

The church is successfully using the financial component of Breeze to create and track donations, and the automatic recurring donation transactions that people use to pay their pledge.

Also, the Breeze Team has supported the Stewardship Committee in the annual pledge campaigns, and we are supporting the Board of Trustees and program groups in providing the information that they need to help operate their programs, such as the Women's Retreat, the recent ordinations, and collection plate sharing.

Building and Grounds Committee

Submitted by Tom Smith and Bill Blakely

When the Facilities Manager Stefan Schneider retired in June 2023, the Building and Grounds team became a volunteer organization. Bill Blakely became organizer and prime mover of the Building part and Jane Facente continued (since 2018) as Chief Landscaper for the Grounds part.

Stefan gave at least two tours through the dark side of the building to all interested persons. Stefan also recorded video tours and room setup instructions as well as prepared a binder of notes and photos - *The Big Red Book*.



In March 2024, the Building and Grounds team became an official Committee of the Board of Trustees. At the same time, the Board approved a Records Retention Policy, developed by Meri Lane, to help the Administrator and the BaG to determine what documents to keep, how long to keep them, and where and how to retain them.

The Board had asked Stefan and EJA to develop a plan to replace all gas equipment with electric equivalents. The gas stove with seven giant pilot lights was replaced with an electric stove and oven. EJA with the aid of California Interfaith Power and Light prepared four grant proposals for government funds to replace the seven gas furnaces and the one gas hot water heater with electric heat pumps, but no wins yet.

Architectural drawings of the building, from the remodeling and reconstruction (R and R) of 1999 and 2009, were collected and organized. Twelve additional file boxes are yet to be culled and organized.

The BaG meets weekly for three hours sorting through a half dozen of the many, many boxes of documents in the basement, sorting them, using the Records Retention Policy for guidance, into Archive, Recycle, and Shred piles. The large piles of un-necessary documents pose a fire hazard.

Volunteers cleaned up the third floor rental space for California Interfaith Power and Light, who occupied it in November 2023.

Building and Grounds Steering Committee began regular meetings with the new Administrator in September, 2023.

In December 2023, a spreadsheet itemizing needed maintenance, repairs, and capital was put into the BaG Google Drive. This will be the record of what needs to be done and what has been done.

GROUND

Landscape maintenance and planting for the church grounds included weeding, watering, planting (replacement and new), garbage cleanup and occasional hauling of plant debris. Jane had hired a small landscape crew twice, and some church members, including her well-trained assistant Gary Facente, have provided substantial help. Through persistent contact with our District 3 Councilmember Carol Fife's office, a cleanup of the block-long Castro St. burned debris was accomplished last Fall.

THE FUTURE

The Building and Grounds of our church call for several different approaches to solve the problems that come with a 135 year old building. Some are long term projects, some very specific jobs that can be completed in a half hour.



Community Connections Team

Submitted by Maria Bielass

Members: Maria Bielass, Clark Sanford, Martha Silverspring [part of the year], Emily Stoper (10 minute orientation)

One of our main activities is welcoming people to our church, finding out more about them, and connecting them to programs and activities in which they would like to get involved. We also facilitate their process of exploring membership. We've had at least 140 newcomers who have filled out either our online or paper newcomer cards over the last year or so. Thank you to everyone who has engaged with all these newcomers, answered their questions, and welcomed them into your groups! We've had 16 new members since last March and 2 ingathering services to covenant with them.

Highlights:

- We developed a new online newcomer card which is linked to our Breeze database. We're experimenting with different methods for making these cards accessible and streamlining the process
- Exploring Membership sessions with Clark Sanford - opportunities for newcomers to get to know each other, share their journeys, and learn more about our church community and Unitarian Universalism. They're also an opportunity for them to sign the membership book and become members of the church.
- Attended the Easter brunch (sponsored by the RE program for parents and children) at which 2 parents became members
- Organized the sign-up of people who serve as greeters and ushers on Sunday morning. We're in the process of changing 2 aspects of this process: moving some or all of this responsibility to Worship and changing our sign-up method from one which is associated with our database Breeze to Sign Up Genius
- Emily Stoper has been offering 10-minute orientations almost every Sunday after the service. This has been so valuable for newcomers to learn more about our church and how to get involved.
- Maintained our "people" data in Breeze - adding and updating information about the people in our community and improving the database to reflect our processes
- Maintained our records in the UUA mailing list for the UU World magazine
- Maintained the church mailing list for the Chalice Chatter which is in MailChimp
- We are continuing to use the infochange@uuoakland.org email as a way for people to let us know about changes to their contact information or other life changes.



Committee on Shared Ministry

Submitted by Suzanne Van Houten and Laila Ibrahim

Currently the COSM consists of church members, Laila Ibrahim and Suzanne Van Houten. We began meeting in the summer of 2023. We identified three areas of focus:

1. Church Evaluation
2. Minister Support
3. Conflict Resolution

Church Evaluation:

- Created an annual on-line evaluation process that includes an in-person session and a zoom session.
- We plan to hold congregational wide in person forums every three years.

Minister Support:

- Created an Ministers Affiliation Agreement and signed said Agreement with Reverend Kevin Alan Mann
- Supported two Minister Ordinations, Reverend Micah Ma and Reverend Claire Eustace
- We are in the process of creating an Emeritus Minister Agreement.

Conflict Resolution:

- TBD

New members: we are in the process of adding one more member to our committee.

Our current minister Reverend Laurel Leifert also attends the now monthly COSM meetings.

Covenant and Affinity Groups

Submitted by Emily Stoper

About forty members and friends of our congregation attend one of five 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. Another meets once a month on Friday afternoons. **The other groups meet one evening a month: on 3rd Tuesdays, 1st Thursdays, and 3rd Thursdays.** All these groups are open to anyone who wishes to join. For more information about any group, contact covenantgroups@uuoakland.org.



Earth Justice Advocates

Submitted by Heather MacLeod, Jack Macy, Bret Andrews, Barbara Atkinson, Tom Haw, Tamara Haw, Tom Smith, Josh Rose, Corless Smith

CY 2023 was a busy year for building electrification, grant proposal writing, and our usual climate action programing.

In late 2022, EJA embarked on planning and scheduling a program to convert the building's seven (7) gas furnaces and one (1) gas hot water heater to electric-only operation. It was a large task and it would be costly to implement. The City had declared a Climate Emergency and the State had set a goal that half the buildings in California be electrified by 2030 and the remainder by 2045. Thus we set our goal to electrify the church in eight years - by 2030.

We began collecting historical utility data and facility construction documentation; evaluating electrical HVAC and hot-water heating technology; and formulating conceptual cost and schedule plans.

In early 2023, the Federal government announced forthcoming energy efficiency and planning grants for nonprofits. EJA initiated contact with 3 churches in West Oakland exploring the option to team with them on a government grant to reduce carbon emissions.

The details of the government grants were slow to come, but by the end of August we had prepared four proposals to California Interfaith Power and Light, a potential prime grantee to several funding agencies: EPA, DOE, Canada, and PG&E. Three grants were awarded elsewhere and one remains in evaluation. Grant opportunities are expected to continue for the next few years. We will continue our pursuit for grants.

In April, we provided our annual Earth Day service and throughout the year, we tabled information on climate change, climate action, and various technical fliers.

For more information, contact earthjustice@uuoakland.org.



Endowment Team

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.

Because of the general decline in the stock market our endowments decreased this year.

As of December 31, 2023:

The Wendte Endowment for Building Maintenance and Improvement

- went from \$1,513,166 to \$1,601,204
- The congregation took a distribution of \$93,401 for general building maintenance and repairs thereby fulfilling the requirements of the endowment.

The Aurelia Henry Reinhardt Endowment for Justice

- went from \$196,314 to \$220,816
- The congregation is not getting distributions until we get this account to \$250,000.

First Unitarian Oakland Memorial Endowment Fund

- Went from \$183,771 to \$196,800
- \$9176 was distributed to the congregation for general expenses.

Our endowments ensure this building will still be a thriving liberal religious congregation 150 years from now! We could use more members on our team. Contact Laila or Tom (endowments@uuoakland.org) to join us, with questions or to learn how to contribute to our funds now or in your estate planning.

[Note: Please see the Fund Summary Chart “Supplement D” at the end of this Annual Report Packet.]



El Club de Español

Submitted by Corless A Smith

For two years now the Spanish Club has met by Zoom every Thursday 4:30-5:30. We usually have 8-10 participants. We choose a theme for each meeting and often prepare short responses to it. A different person leads each meeting. Generally, participants are intermediate level in their knowledge of Spanish, though some are higher level speakers and some lower.

Themes vary widely. Sometimes we all watch a particular video and talk about it. Sometimes we choose a poem in Spanish to discuss. We've talked about our families, food, books, music, movies, and many other things. This has proved to be an excellent way to get to know each other. We've had one in-person fiesta, and will have another in June.

All are welcome to participate. The administrator, Corless Smith for now, sends out a notice on Tuesday to alert the group to the Thursday meeting. Then on Thursday she sends everyone a Zoom link. Olé!

Guided Autobiography Group

Submitted by Karen Axelsson

This group grew out of a workshop at the annual Women's Retreat in 2023.

The guided autobiography group was a group of eleven women who met for ten sessions to complete a course of reflective autobiographical writing, as outlined in a text about guided autobiography by James Birren. Each session addressed a different theme (major branching points, family, spirituality, etc). For each session, the group members would write a reflection of 2 pages and then read their work aloud in the group meeting. The group was deeply meaningful by all attending, and we have decided to continue meeting on an ongoing basis, every month or two.



Hiring Team

For the past year (mid-2023 to mid-2024) the church's biggest hiring need was for a new church administrator, and it turned out we needed to hire two in succession. The Board formed a team that was led by Sharon Dolan, and the other members for the initial effort were Gary Facente, Emily Stoper, Marilyn McMahon, and Dennis Rowcliffe. This team interviewed a few candidates and had success by initially hiring Daisy Quan.

However, after doing a good job for a couple of months Daisy decided to take another job. She gave us notice and agreed to stay in the job until we could find her replacement. For the second round the hiring team was Sharon, Rinda Bartley, Marilyn, and Dennis. We got a good response to the job posting, including a few really strong candidates. However, we did only a little interviewing on the second round because the first candidate we talked to was Jorim Rhee, who was clearly so well suited to the position. We hired Jorim and are so glad we did.

Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Team

Submitted by Janet McFarland, Linda Propert Sanford

This past year has been particularly busy for your Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Team—a special committee of the Board of Trustees charged with leading our congregation's racial justice work. Following the departure of our minister just before the last annual meeting, we reached out to a group of congregants who encouraged us to continue our work. We offered several First Sunday gatherings last spring that saw an increased attendance (25-30 people) interested in our work, which also gratified and encouraged us.

We normally lie fallow and rest in the summer, but last year JTW decided to capitalize on the spring enthusiasm for antiracism work by hosting a summer common read of *Mistakes and Miracles*. This book is a thoughtful consideration of the successes and shortfalls of attempts to address racial equity issues that have arisen in UU churches like ours. In response to popular request, we added to our three planned zoom discussions, three more in-person book discussions. These six discussions were well-received, attended by between 12 and 20 people.



In these first months after our minister left, your JTW team was deeply engaged in our antiracism work. In the fall, we again began hosting our monthly First Sundays for racial justice lunch gatherings for 25-30 attendees. Over several months, congregants offered thoughtful, powerful perspectives as part of our “Othering and Belonging” series. We also posted weekly entries to the Chalice Chatter and made monthly reports to the Board about our work. We met with Rev. Laurel Liefert and with our church administrator, shared our concerns with the Hope for Us team, assisted in the ordination of Rev. Kevin Mann (our pastoral advisor), and supported Bay Area DRUUMM’s December Ceasefire events and its May worship gathering for people of color. We sponsored people of color to assist them in attending General Assembly. Twice each month, JTW met to plan and prepare for all these efforts.

This work—so vital to our congregation’s antiracism progress moving forward—is always physically and emotionally challenging, particularly in the past year. JTW has been active here for many years, and was once a large team of congregants, some white, some people of color. With our current membership down to two members and one of those joining our Board soon, our existing team can no longer support JTW going forward. We are saddened and disappointed by this reality.

Our congregation’s antiracism work can continue in a re-envisioned form. We have suggested various possibilities to the Board of Trustees under the guidance of new leaders, including: hosting quarterly or annual gatherings, instead of monthly ones; acting as an antiracism liaison from the church to outside groups in the community and in the UUA, like DRUUMM; forming a white allies group to learn how to better lift up the work of antiracism within the larger congregation; and tapping into UUA antiracism programs like Beloved Conversations or Mosaic Congregations.

We wish to express our deep thanks for the ongoing assistance of JTW emerita Donna Fujioka, ministers Rev. Kevin Mann and Rev. Claire Eustace, white ally Jef Melcher and board liaison Dennis Rowcliffe during a long and challenging year. We could not have done the important antiracism work we have done without their help.



Men's Fellowship

Submitted by Dave Ruede, Ron Weisberg

The Men's Fellowship hosts brown bag lunches on the third Friday of each month beginning at noon. Most gatherings are held outdoors in neighborhood parks in good weather or at restaurants and last about an hour to an hour-and-a-half. Mostly we take turns letting each other know what is going on in our lives as well as stories about the personal histories in order to get to know each other better.

When milder weather came this past year we again met at Mosswood Park near the Oakland Kaiser Hospital. The lunch was moved to The Gardens at Lake Merritt later in the summer and this has become our new outdoor venue. When colder and rainy weather returned, Ron Weissberg's apartment function room became a winter month venue, which was appreciated by all.

The lunch regularly attracts about four to six guys. During the second half of the year new faces joined the group and we occasionally have eight or so attendees. New men are always welcome. We are also looking at the possibility of moving the lunch to a day that can accommodate those working during the week. Interested? Contact Dave Ruede or Ron Weisberg for more information.

Monthly Community Potlucks

Submitted by Ron Weisberg

Since resuming in 2023, the monthly potlucks have been a highlight of the church calendar. Attended by 50 to 75 congregants, all enjoyed the tasty variety of dishes contributed by our member cooks. RE Director Jeff Melcher also added spice to the events with games and art for the children. Plans are afoot to introduce themes to some of the potlucks, such as food from various ethnic backgrounds represented within the congregation. Yum!



Music Program

Submitted by Renée Witon and Susan Keiter, Co-Directors of Music

Music at UUOakland continues to be a source of inspiration and continuity for the congregation, spiritually ministering in ways words cannot. Considered the largest volunteer group at the church, the Music Program provides an important home for members and attendees who desire a place to make music in a community of like minded people. These individuals and musicians joyfully volunteer countless hours toward making worship meaningful and enjoyable. We are indeed a “musical family” of sorts, creating and working together in a way that is rewarding for all.

After Stefan Schneider’s retirement, Susan Keiter and Renée Witon took on the roles of Co-Directors of Music. The transition has been smooth and fluid. Each Co-Director is responsible for specific roles and responsibilities, and they support each other’s artistic and administrative efforts in serving the larger vision and mission of music at UUOakland.

The Co-Directors provided critical musical and administrative continuity for the congregation during the transition between the departure of Rev. Soto and the arrival of Rev. Laurel Liefert. Rev. Laurel, a talented musician herself, loves to contribute musically to church services on a regular basis. The Co-Directors enjoy collaborating with Rev. Laurel in planning and participating in worship.

In 2023-24, **guest musicians returned to perform at church services.** These musicians, diverse ethnically and musically, served to vary the musical offerings for the congregation and to support the mission of the church. In addition, **we welcomed piano accompanists** Ariana Querubin, Ian Llacer-Chamberlain and Vincent Raines; they supported Sunday worship once each month.

This year, the Music Program was pleased to provide musical support for the **ordinations** of Micah Ma, Kevin Mann and Claire Eustace. Also, the Music Program **flexibly worked with the Hope for Us Team** in producing worship services related to the Team’s goals and mission. The Music Program also provided music for **memorial services** for church members.

Crescendo Choir continues to have a dedicated core group, and we are welcoming new members into the group. Dedicated members rehearse every Wednesday evening and sing twice monthly during services August through June. Choir membership mirrors the declining



church membership post-COVID and after Rev. Soto's departure. As church membership and enthusiasm increases, we foresee the Choir and the other musical groups at the church increase in membership.

Utilizing monthly themes that celebrate different ethnic groups in the United States (Hispanic Heritage Month, Arab American Heritage Month, etc.) the Choir sang in **multiple languages** this year. In addition, the choir increased their repertoire by learning **1-2 new songs each month**. The Choir also **welcomed back former choir members** who sang in the Easter service and will sing in the upcoming annual all-music service in June.

The **musicians of Joyful Noise Band continue** to inspire and offer their talents as pre-service music. The Band also played in the annual holiday concert and will perform at the annual all-music service. Stefan Schneider occasionally returned to play with the Band and to provide mentorship to Susan Keiter in her new role as Band leader.

Pop-Up Choir resumed performing in monthly services in January 2023 with great expectation and much participation, and continues to be a popular musical outlet for the church. In particular, individuals new to UUOakland frequently participated in Pop-Up Choir. It offers a low-commitment, fun opportunity to participate in church music and check out Sunday services.

The Music Co-Directors **produced the eclectic and popular Holiday Concert** in December. Occurring annually for decades, the Holiday concert fosters community during the holiday season and continues to contribute to the financial health of the church. Musicians in the congregation contributed to a joyful and celebratory evening of music that served to unite the congregation during the holiday season.

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, contributing to the church financially.

The Music Program looks forward to creating meaningful worship music to minister to the congregation – not only during Sunday services, but also in the weekly rehearsals where camaraderie and community are developed and established. We continue to strive to reflect the mission of the church in culturally and stylistically diverse musical offerings.



Neighborhood Beautification Team

Submitted by Steven Thomasberger

For the last year-and-a-half 5-10 members of this congregation have participated in neighborhood beautification days together with the Friends and Stewards of the African-American Museum and Library of Oakland. Every other month there have been as many as 15 volunteers working together around the library and the church. The work has involved picking up trash, recycling, raking leaves and pulling weeds, planting, and covering graffiti. This has been a great opportunity to work together and talk with volunteers from the museum and library and to meet others in the neighborhood. It also provides visibility for our church as an active part of the community, as we deal with the trash that often accumulates. This cleanliness sets an example for others in the neighborhood to keep things clean.

We have also discussed engaging in more projects, including: murals, covering more graffiti, signs encouraging pet owners to pick up after their dogs, and waste bag disposal stations. Working together with our neighbor is just one example of what we can do to live up to our commitment (from our Church *Ends Statement*) to “generously share our human and financial resources beyond the walls of our church.”

Our next clean-up is June 15, from 10:30 AM-1:30 PM.

Pastoral Associates

Submitted by Evelyn Sheridan

UU Oakland has had a committee for the support of the congregants of the church by providing comfort, practical assistance, and a sense of well-being since 1991. Due to the attrition of this group, once shortly after the current chair joined in 2019 and again in this post-isolation era, we are now five regular members who are Judith Hunt, Annette Williams, Claire Eustace (in a ministerial capacity), Sherry Larsen-Beville and Evelyn Sheridan as the chair. The Rev. Laurel Leifert was also able to attend our meetings frequently this past year and was quite helpful. The group is at 50-75% capacity. We meet monthly via Zoom.



This past year we have assisted with memorial services, post-surgical support, other hospitalization support, supportive home visits, in-person and telephone conversations, decluttering help, delivering the Helping Hands Quilt to members, rides for people needing transportation assistance, and bringing food to members and their families in times of need.

Our focus remains finding and actively recruiting more members to PA, rebuilding our Lend-a-Hand list, and procuring some training sessions. We are participating in a Worship Service this summer in hopes to make everyone familiar with the group. To be a member of Pastoral Associates we prefer that you have been a member of the church for at least one year. Our Lend-a-Hand list provides opportunities for new members to participate by cooking meals, visiting, writing notes, providing transportation or decluttering support.

A proposed project for next fall is the creation of another caring quilt with the guidance of Laila Ibrahim.

Personnel Committee

Submitted by Rinda Bartley

From the written record, the Personnel Committee has not officially met as a group since 2019 and informally dissolved in 2020 since they were not called upon for any tasks since the writing of the Personnel Handbook, which was a huge project that took 4 years to complete. The church benefits from this Handbook; much gratitude to Danny Schottenfeld and Roxie Kellam, former Personnel Committee members who created it.

When our current Congregational Administrator was hired, the Board asked Rinda Bartley (a member of the Hiring Team) to come onto the Personnel Committee in April of this year in order to function as her job supervisor. Rinda is enjoying the process of providing supervision to Jorim Rhee, and is also assisting with resolving some compensation issues related to another employee. However, in order for the Committee to take on major portions of its charter, at least another 2 members will be needed, as the charter calls for 3-5 members to share the workload.



Poetry Circle

Submitted by Ron Weisberg

We of the Poetry Circle greet you
With rhyme and steadfast clarity,
Meeting monthly in ever growing chorus
Of voices clear and original,
We bring our offerings
To the larger congregation
As soon as we have savored.
Be well, we say, and join us
Some summer Sunday on high
Where truer truths are spoken, and
Fellowship runs mighty.

Stewardship Team

Submitted by Dave Ruede

This year's Stewardship Campaign was conducted by the Team of Debby Kaplan, Dennis Rowcliffe and Dave Ruede with help from many others. The Pledge Drive began on October 8, 2023 with the ambitious goal of raising \$350,000 for our 2024 church year. Inspired by a Sufi parable shared by Rev. Liefert during her first sermon we employed the theme "Be The Wind" that carries us across the desert to our goal. The Team announced over \$66,000 in Seed Pledges had been raised from church leadership.

Testimonials during Sunday services from Sharon Dolan, Charles Keatts, Martha Silverspring, Meri Lane and Debby Kaplan highlighted the importance of each person's pledge to the health of our church. Volunteers Jodie Mathies, Rinda Bartley, Carol Wood, Meri Lane, Marilyn McMahon, Molly Hermes, Evalyn Seidman and Nicole Fitzhugh joined the Stewardship Team to call those who had not yet filled out their pledge. Additional support from Clark Sanford, Bill Blakely, Molly Hermes and Jodie provided valuable support to track progress toward our goal.



Be the Wind Stewardship Poster designed by Abhaya Keatts shown in this photo of Abhaya's father Charles Keatts and Rev. Laurel.

On November 19, 2023 we celebrated the generosity of congregants who had so far pledged over \$278,000 with a delicious soup and bread lunch hosted by Jodie Mathies and her band of soup mavens. But the work did not stop there.

Over the next several weeks many more calls were made and many more pledges came in, so that on February 25, 2024 we were able to announce a total of over 115 pledges, including 15 from new donors, for a total of \$322,600, a miraculous achievement.

Your Stewardship Team thanks all volunteers who made achieving this result possible, and special thanks to those of you without whose pledge our church could not exist. Thank You!

Women's Retreat

Submitted by Emily Stoper

In July 2023, the congregation sponsored its annual all-weekend women's retreat at Redwood Glen Retreat Center. The retreat included fabulous crafts projects, singing and poetry workshops, a tai chi session, a Nonviolent Communication workshop, walking a labyrinth and much more. Evaluations were stellar; 100% of attendees said they'd like to return next year. Planning is already underway for this year's retreat on Aug. 23-25.



Worship Associates

Submitted by Sarah Watts, Chair

The Worship Associates (WA) group consists of about 10 active members, co-led by Sarah Watts and Josh Rose, for part of the year, now led by Sarah Watts, with the active support and guidance of Rev. Laurel Liefert. The team has supported Sunday worship each week, providing guidance to guest speakers, coordination, stage managing, and volunteer wrangling behind the scenes, and contributing personal reflections and other readings during the services. We hold monthly meetings to discuss previous services, share tips, and concerns, and talk about staffing for upcoming services. Also under our umbrella are the slides creators and slides operators, many of whom are also Worship associates, but not all them. We are working on folding the Ushering Team into the Worship team (previously it has been part of hospitality).

During this year we reorganized and cleaned up the documentation on the Shared Worship Drive, updated the list of duties for WAs, and created easier to use, more consistent slide templates. We updated the ushering instructions with help from Carol Wood. We have simplified the announcement selection process with help from Daisy, and we cleaned up the Worship Associate email group and associated drive access with help from Clark Sanford. We are working on simplifying the sign up process and making it consistent for Ushers, Slides Creators and Operators, and Board Member welcome. A Sermon-Writing class is also in progress, and we hope to hold it again next year.

We continue to assess what works and what doesn't and as such we are working on how to best connect with zoom participants, and how to best present announcements and the Invitation to Greetings.

Next year we hope to increase numbers of trained volunteers for all positions: WA, Slide creator, slide advancer, and usher. We hope to hold trainings in public speaking, use of microphone, writing, staging, and presentation.

The work of the Worship Associates team is integral to the continued high quality of our Sunday services. When we do our job well, most of that work is invisible. Thank you for this opportunity to share what this wonderful team does.



Additional Documents

Supplement A - HOPE for Us Planning Day Report

Submitted by Nicole Fitzhugh, President of the Board of Trustees

Action Planning Day - April 13, 2024

Facilitation - HOPE for Us Coaching Team (Revs. Connie Simon, Samantha Lynne Wilson, Jamie Yandle)

Key Themes

Lens: The best is now, is ahead of us, and it is worth trying new things <ul style="list-style-type: none">- New story: <i>the best is now, the best is not behind us</i>- New ideas are worth trying- No more “We can’t do that because we tried it...”	Lens: Joy!!! <ul style="list-style-type: none">- More joy across all roles and spaces- Music festival- Mini-Retreats- Meals	Lens: Prioritize <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Release things without leaders, energy- Risk choosing things together, doing one thing deeply- Having clear understanding of our resources and capacity
Lens: Alignment <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Our “inside” work informs our “outside” work, our “outside” work informs our “inside” work.	Lens: ARAOMC (What does welcome, inclusion mean to us?) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Across all work- Understanding what this means together- Racism, sexism, transphobia, ableism, classism, etc.	<i>A Lens is a way to connect our actions and our values. It informs HOW we do what we do.</i>



Action Planning Process - Key Themes

- 1. Multi-generational, cohesive, values-infused service inside and outside of our walls**
- 2. Neighborhood Engagement and First Unitarian's Sense of Place**
- 3. Request for a Congregational Process around ARAOMC**
- 4. Social Justice Theme**
- 5. Common Understanding of Shared Ministry**
- 6. Conflict Engagement as Community Practice**
- 7. Processes that Foster Connections and Active Engagement**

Multi-generational, cohesive, values-infused service inside and outside of our walls

- Integrated across the full life of the congregation
- Children and youth are engaged, part of, receiving ministry
- Honoring congregational elders and their wisdom/roles
- Ask families what they need, care about
- Create activities that work for families (rather than creating activities and asking families to stretch – orient to the family groups)
- Middle-aged and elder members will need to do 80-90% of the work to make this possible and make doable/welcoming for families/younger members.
- “Create the container.”

Outside: Neighborhood Engagement and First Unitarian's Sense of Place

- *This one was related to the “Multigenerational Values-Infused Service” and “Social Justice Theme”
- Using our space as a place in the neighborhood
- Known in the neighborhood
- Public facing energy, investment
- Ideas from the breakout group:
 - Talk with neighborhood survey people (Care 4 Community)
 - What do congregants know/need/want?
 - What theme does congregation want to choose/work on?
 - Inform members and new visitors/joiners what we are about:

Steps:

- Call Care 4 Community to have a convo.
- Share what we learned with congregation and Board.
- Lead discussion on what people most interest in engagement.
- Contact City about “resilience” program.
- Engage with City Council, School Board, etc.



Inside: Request for a Congregational Process around ARAOMC

- Composting, wisdom, release of JTW - how do we celebrate and learn from what we have already done fully? Honor the work and participants, release the model to make space for something new.
- ARAOMC: What does this word mean to us? How do we help create a shared understanding, aware of our history.
- MOSAIC Possibility - a clear and communal container for engaging our understandings of ARAOMC across multiple aspects of the congregation - worship, congregational culture, leadership, social justice
- Supporting Bay Area DRUUMM

Social Justice Theme

- Choose a focus that unites us and guides us across multiple groups/functions (worship, RE, Music, action beyond our walls and in partnership with other organizations)
- Ways that SJ is infused across congregational life, and sense of prioritizing what we do together
- What excites about this:
 - Opportunities to have deeper relationships in the church and build trust through experience
 - Communication and coordination across silos and all parts of the congregation
 - Help us prioritize and experience the benefit of prioritization

Common Understanding of Shared Ministry that informs Governance, Communication, Collaboration, Transparency, and Fosters our Ability to Discuss and Understand Each Other

- Facilitated congregation wide convo on shared-ministry and what it means
- Intentional cross-pollinating
- Cross-pollination and cross-functional leadership conversations and leadership development
- Clarity of roles and decision-making
- Communicating across all parts of the congregation
- Children and youth are seen as part of doing and receiving shared ministry.
- Trust and clarity on how power is exercised and decisions are made (who decides) in worship and governance.
- Recognize and utilize our lived experiences.



Conflict Engagement as Community Practice

- If we developed deep skills in discussing disagreements
- Everyone understands the tools and uses them
- We had a group trained and trusted to assist in conflict
- We picked tools and learned them (nonviolent communication)
- Introverts are supported to share.
- Ways of encouraging trust to speak.
- **** Wondering what would happen if we developed deep skills in discussing disagreements, if we had commonly understood tools.

Processes that Foster Connections and Active Engagement (FUN)

- Proactive processes for New Members
- Processes for engaging current members
- Processes for connecting/deepening congregational relationships
- Mini-retreats
- Reinvigorate the Program/Coordinating Council
- Church social once a month.
- FUN ideas!
 - Monthly events
 - Cultural affairs festival
 - Crafts
 - Events to bring in young people
 - Dances
 - Mini-church retreats at church
 - Sing-along and karaoke
 - Knitting club
 - Bingo
 - Improv
 - Block party
 - Cooking classes



What are we asking people to commit to next year?

- Learn and try new ways of being together (Conflict, decision-making, governance, multigenerational needs, membership, worship, etc.)
- Learn and redefine together definitions of familiar words (shared ministry, social justice, etc.)
- Show up (surrender to?) to experimental explorations in our shared priorities
- Experiment with (surprise ourselves with) ways to do whatever we do together
- Do anything and everything with the real focus at the center: joyful, purposeful, relationship with each other and our community.

Summer:

- Board develops their relationships and agreements for how they want to work together and explore the next step
- Board develops some prioritization and ideas for how to move forward

Early Fall:

- Program Council/Stakeholder retreat to create shared prioritization process/practices



Supplement B - Income Statement Chart

Submitted by the Finance Team

	2023 Actuals	2023 Budget	
Revenue			
Contributions			
Stewardship	\$ 287,880	\$ 300,000	96%
Collection Plate - One Time Gifts	\$ 42,934	\$ 10,000	429%
Trust and Endowment Distributions			
Unrestricted - George Grant, BRUML	\$ 22,375	\$ 22,000	102%
Restricted - Wendte Endowment, Clara Belle Hamilton	\$ 131,049	\$ 106,000	124%
Rentals	\$ 27,436	\$ 12,000	229%
Program / Event Income	\$ 17,248	\$ 4,000	431%
Other	\$ 2,779	\$ 1,000	278%
Total Revenue	\$ 531,701	\$ 455,000	117%
Expenses			
Personnel			
Wages	\$ 243,645	\$ 213,093	114%
Benefits and Payroll	\$ 39,009	\$ 72,259	54%
Professional Services	\$ 25,294	\$ 36,770	69%
Programs	\$ 20,948	\$ 10,000	209%
Denominational Support	\$ 9,000	\$ 14,000	64%
Facilities	\$ 106,476	\$ 90,000	118%
Administrative	\$ 25,212	\$ 26,000	97%
Other	\$ 7,960	\$ 12,000	66%
Total Expenses	\$ 477,544	\$ 474,122	101%
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ 54,157	\$ (19,122)	283%



Supplement C - Asset and Liabilities Statement

Submitted by the Finance Team

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES STATEMENT AS OF 12/31/2023

Assets		2023
Total Bank Accounts	\$	449,152
Total Fixed Assets	\$	2,565,367
UUCEF Memorial Operations Endowment	\$	247,919
UUCEF Wendte Building Endowment	\$	1,601,205
UUCEF Aurelia Reinhardt Justice Endowment	\$	220,819
Other UUCEF Endowment Funds not controlled by FUCO	\$	37,545
Prepaid Expenses	\$	7,645
Total Assets:	\$	5,129,651
 Short Term Liabilities		
2000 Accounts Payable	\$	8,960
2135 Accrued Vacation	\$	994
2130 Accrued Payroll	\$	2,792
 Long Term Liabilities	\$	-
Total Liabilities:	\$	12,746
 Funds for Special Programs		
Musicopia	\$	16,728
Manse Fund	\$	50,000
Fund for Social Justice	\$	20,779
Intern Fund	\$	23,146
Green Sanctuary Fund	\$	4,127
Total Funds for Special Programs:	\$	114,780



Supplement D - 2023 Endowment Fund Summary Chart

Submitted by the Endowment Committee

2023 (January - December) UU Oakland's UU Common Endowment Fund Portfolio Activity (UU CEF)

Endowment Fund	1/1/2023 Mkt Value	Distributions from the Funds to Operations 1/1/2023 to 12/31/2023	Balance as of 12/31/2023	Balance as of 4/30/2024
610195-George E Grant*	\$15,920.19	\$808.04	\$17,067.61	\$17,616.22
610196-George E Grant Memorial*	\$31,801.75	\$1,593.55	\$34,050.68	\$34,733.62
610420-Memorial Operations Endowment	\$183,771.02	\$9,177.57	\$196,800.43	\$200,752.53
611177-Wendte Building Endowment	\$1,513,166.00	\$93,404.03	\$1,601,204.71	\$1,633,278.02
611184-Reinhardt Justice Endowment	\$196,314.77	\$100.00	\$220,818.69	\$227,916.49
Total Value:	\$1,940,973.73	\$ 105,083.19	\$2,069,942.12	\$2,114,296.88

*For these funds we are recipients of periodic distributions but have no ownership or management control

*Please note that UU CEF cannot receive additional deposits of less than \$1,000.00 to a single fund.



Supplement D - Rev. Kevin Mann's Full Report

Submitted by Rev. Kevin Mann, Community Minister

**This Space is Left Intentionally Blank.
See next page for the report.**

bit.ly/revkev2024



Community Ministry Report 2023 - 2024

Rev. Kevin Alan Mann

First Unitarian Church of Oakland

Prepared for the June 2nd, 2024 Annual Congregational Meeting

2023 - 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 - FIRST UU OAKLAND
- 2 - ORDINATION
- 3 - BAY AREA DRUUMM
- 4 - INTERFAITH CEASEFIRE PILGRIMAGE
- 5 - UU CHURCH OF THE PHILIPPINES
- 6 - PILIPINX UU SOLIDARITY ORGANIZING
- 7 - COMMUNITY MINISTER RESOURCES

THANK YOU!

I have been part of the First UU Church of Oakland since October 2010, the first weekend my partner Noah and I moved to the Bay Area. You became our spiritual home and helped nurture the earliest foundations of my ministry.

You supported me as a young adult, as a Community Organizer, as a Starr King seminarian, as a Chaplain and on October 1st, 2023, the first day of both Filipinx and LGBTQ History months, you ordained me into UU ministry!

What a joy and honor it is to serve this past year as one of your Community Ministers! Thank you for all you've done to build Beloved Community in the heart of Oakland! Salamat!



*with faith & love,
Rev. Kevin Alan Mann*

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF OAKLAND

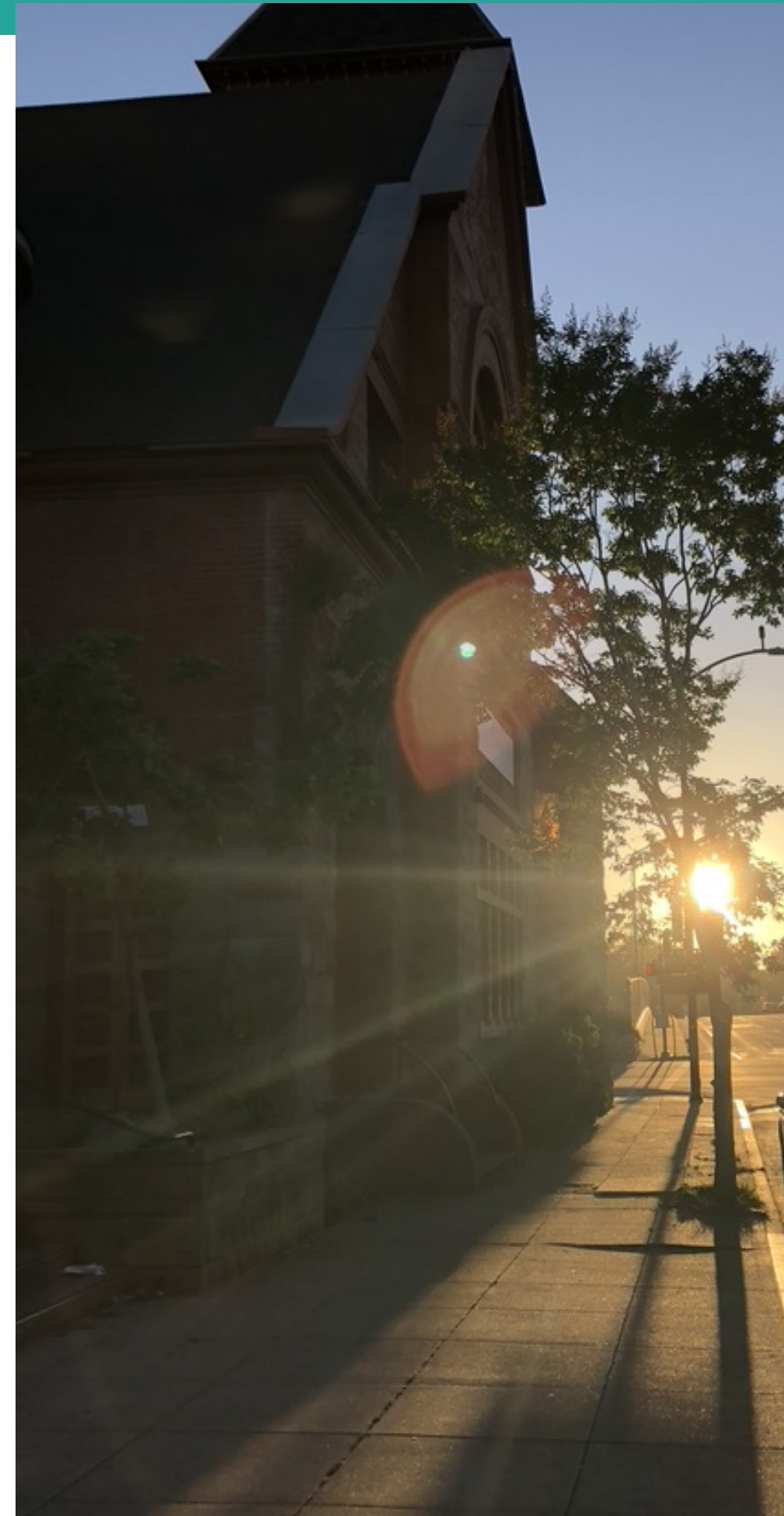
Mission

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.

Vision

To build a radically inclusive community, to grow the beloved community by expanding the welcome table and deepening our commitments to countering oppression as an intentional multiracial, multicultural, multigenerational congregation.

– Adopted by the congregation on March 18, 2001

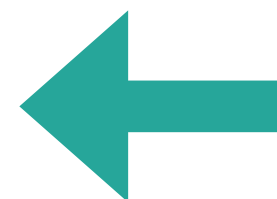


REV KEV'S UU OAKLAND PORTFOLIO INCLUDES:

Journey Towards Wholeness Anti-Racist, Anti-Oppression Transformation Team

During the past year I stepped in as the ministerial lead for JTW as the official component of the board holding the AR/AO portfolio. With JTW disbanding, how will the work of anti-racism and anti-oppression continue at UU Oakland? At the April 13th Hope for Us Action Day, many in the congregation were excited about the

[UUA's "Mosaic Congregation"](#)



which will be a "renewing certification program similar to the Welcoming Congregation program, emphasizing lifespan learning in diversity, equity, and inclusion and anti-oppression."

BIPOC Caucus (Black, Indigenous, People of Color)

After the resignation of our previous minister, the UU Oakland BIPOC caucus came together to support one another and continue to build BIPOC UU community within the church and with the wider Bay Area DRUUMM. The church's BIPOC Caucus met in March 2023 and was supported by Rev. Connie Simon from Hope for Us for gatherings in July 2023 and January 2024. The BIPOC caucus also met during several of the JTW Othering and Belonging series and other Antiracist 1st Sunday post worship events.

WORSHIP 2023-2024

@ THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF OAKLAND

As Worship Leader and Preacher

July 2, 2023 | From the Margins to the Center: Solidarity and Liberation For UUs Of Color

with Donna Fujioka and Josh Rose as worship associates

December 10, 2023 | Love Will Guide Us: Religious Pluralism and Why the UUA Article II Matters

with Rev. Laurel Liefert as worship associate

March 17, 2024 | Diyos sa Gugma (God of Love): Building Bridges with the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines (UUCP)

with Emily Stoper as worship associate and
Evelie Delfino Sãles Posch as guest musician

May 5, 2024 | Wandering Between Two Homelands

with Suzanne Van Houten as worship associate

As Worship Associate

March 12, 2023 | Awen and the associate of the (Rice) Sower

Led by Piper Rowanoak Swim with myself as worship associate

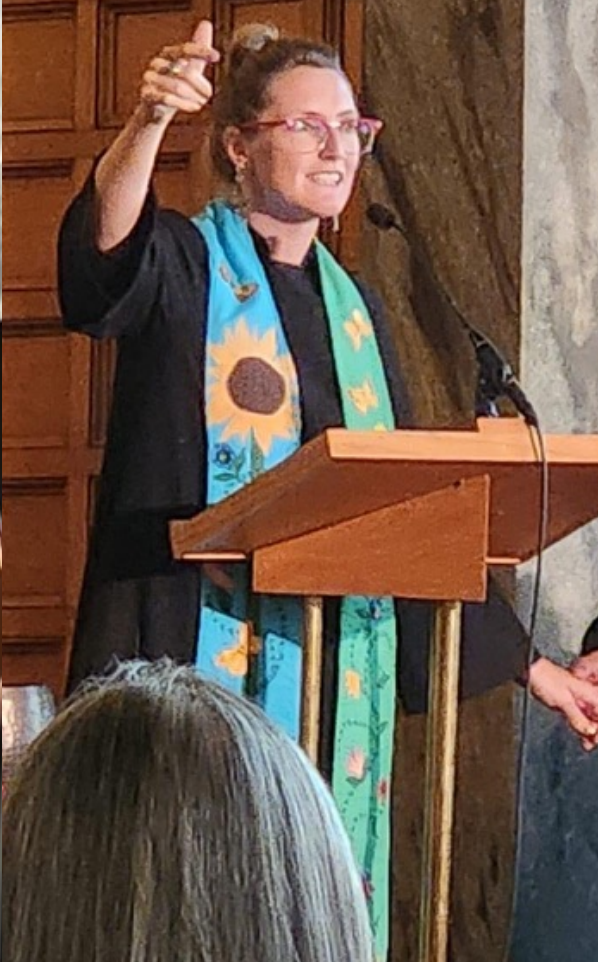
August 6, 2023 | Who Owns the Conversation?

Led by Rev. Tet Gallardo, Minister from the UU Church of the Philippines with myself as worship associate



ORDINATION | SUNDAY OCTOBER 1ST, 2023

@ THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF OAKLAND



Diverse Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries

DRUUMM has been serving BIPOC Unitarian Universalists since its founding in 1997. Bay Area BIPOC UUs have gathered in congregations and across the region for decades.

BAY AREA DRUUMM



Last Spring in April 2023 with the support of Rev. Joseph Santos Lyons, DRUUMM Community Minister, over 40 BIPOC UUs, representing over 15 congregations gathered for the 1st Bay Area DRUUMM Gathering. Since then we've met quarterly rotating among our local congregations. The organizing vision is expanding into other regions of California as a way to focus ministry to and with BIPOC UUs. First UU Oakland is the center of this growing movement!

Our most recent Spring Retreat was called "Echoes of Belonging: Home, Connection, and Spiritual Sustenance," A Bay Area DRUUMM gathering for BIPOC Unitarian Universalists. Our mission is to provide a gathering space for Bay Area BIPOC Unitarian Universalists and BIPOC friends that centers our community, with elements that focus on connection: with self, with each other, our church communities, and beyond.

*"Come, come, whoever you are
Come with your wild imaginings
of a better world,
Wanderer, worshipper, lover of leaving
We will make a place for you,
We will build a home together.
Ours is no caravan of despair.
We travel together;
Come, yet again come."*

*- Rev. Leslie Takahashi
Mt. Diablo UU Church, Walnut Creek*

April 5, 2023 @ First UU Oakland



July 22, 2023 @ First UU San Francisco



December 31, 2023 @ First UU Oakland



February 10, 2024 hosted by UU Berkeley

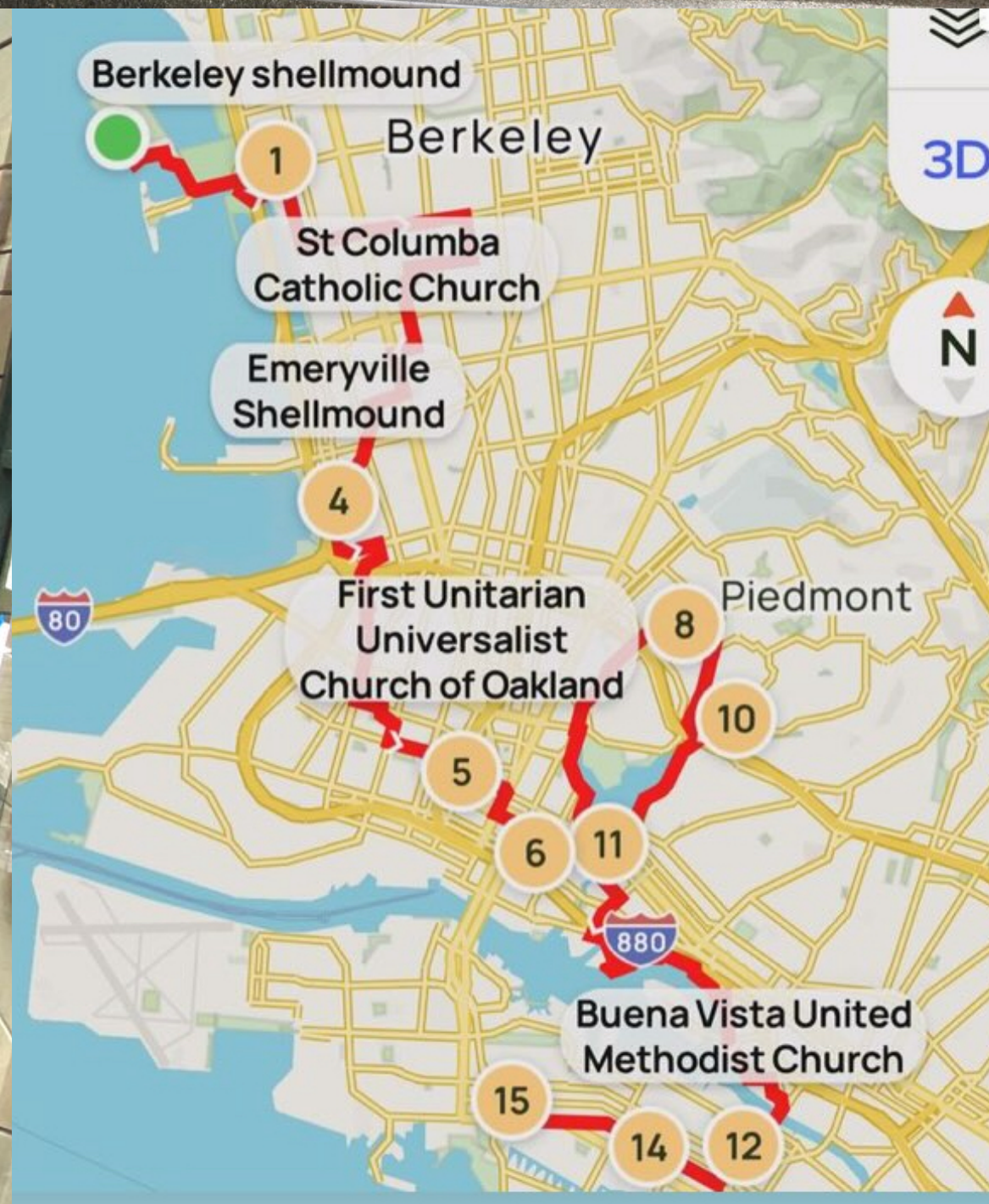


May 4, 2024 @ First UU Oakland



INTERFAITH GAZA CEASEFIRE PILGRIMAGE

Saturday, March 23, 2024



EAST BAY, CA

GAZA CEASEFIRE PILGRIMAGE

A Prayerful Journey of Interfaith Solidarity

**Hospitality for Pilgrims @ the
First Unitarian Church of Oakland
11am to 1pm**

Saturday, March 23rd (7am-7pm)

bit.ly/gcpeastbay

On Saturday, March 23rd First UU Oakland hosted hundreds of people on the interfaith pilgrimage dedicated to calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. We used our bodies to map the 22 miles of Gaza onto the East Bay, turning grief and rage into action as we pilgrimage together in unity, urging for an immediate and sustained ceasefire in Gaza. This pilgrimage is part of a broader global movement of solidarity pilgrimages, taking place in 145 cities in 18 countries, including a pilgrimage on every continent!



Pilgrimage from January 25, 2024 with my mom, dad, sister and cousin!



THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF THE PHILIPPINES



There are over 2,500 Unitarian Universalists in the Philippines in 25 congregations and 10 newly forming fellowships. Most of the churches are located in remote rural farming and fishing villages. What can UUs from the Philippines teach us about their unique expression of our shared global liberal religious faith? How can building bridges of mutuality guide American UUs on our path of becoming the anti-racist, multicultural, multi-racial church we know our faith calls us to be?

The UUCP board of trustees voted to make me their "consultant for partnership" and I launched a new international UU organization to connect Filipinx American UUs with the UU Church of the Philippines called PUUSO (Pilipinx UU Solidarity Organizing) meaning "heart" in Filipino.

PUUSO

PILIPINX UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOLIDARITY ORGANIZING

**Join us for our Kick Off Event:
Reflections about our Pilgrimage to the
UU Church of the Philippines!**

**Sunday, March 24 @ 5pm PST / 8pm EST
(Monday, March 25 @ 8am Philippines)**



Rev. Joan Javier-Duval

Rev. Kevin Alan Mann



Rev. Joseph Santos Lyons



Nico Van Ostrand



Zoom: <http://uuma.zoom.us/my/santoslyons>

**An International Collaboration Project
with the UU Church of the Philippines**

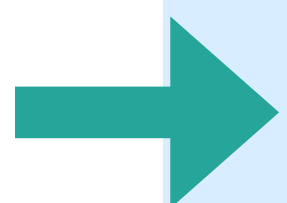
Rev. Kevin Alan Mann

COMMUNITTY MINISTER
FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF OAKLAND



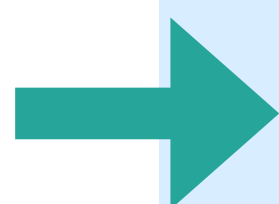
Salamat & THANK YOU First Unitarian Church of Oakland!
I am the minister I am today because of you!

Email: revkev@uuoakland.org



[Community Minister Affiliation Agreement](#)

adopted by the Board of Trustees March 26, 2024



[Current Resume](#)

"Our theological forbearers rejected a world with limited options for rich vs poor, us vs them, saved vs damned.

Our theology of universalism frees us from the fear of hell and allows us to focus on the collective liberation needed here and now in this world, this sacred breath, all of us saved.

Unitarian Universalism says there's a place for everyone at the welcome table. Collective liberation means all of us are saved or none of us will be. No one left behind. No one forgotten. No one oppressed."

with faith & love,

Rev. Kevin Alan Mann



**Thank you for participating in the 2024 Annual Meeting
at First Unitarian Church of Oakland.**

