

# UUCS ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 2023 - JUNE 2024

## Operations & Office Report

BY REBECCA ADAMS, OPERATIONS MANAGER

This year the Operations team has been working on several projects around the property and building. A much-needed replacement of the heating system in the Sanctuary was completed in August. The old unit was several years past its life expectancy and repair costs began to outweigh replacement cost. New fire codes required us to replace the two doors in the RE wing. This work was completed over the winter. We also had to replace a few of our aging toilets in both the men's bathroom and the family bathroom. This work was completed this spring. In the next fiscal year, we plan to review our also aging kitchen appliances and hopefully replace them with energy efficient options.

Long-term building rentals have been up this year with renters including the Spokane Camera Club, the Spokane Handweaver's Guild, the Books to Prisoner's program and the Windsong School renting our parking lot for student pick up and drop off. Several other rental events were completed including concerts, recitals, weddings, memorial services, meditation retreats and healing workshops. We look forward to hosting NAUA's first national conference this fall.

Our community outreach continues with the increased popularity of our Little Free Pantry. We have been able to provide hundreds of pounds of food to those in need through donations and produce grown in our community garden. We are happy to see how helpful this resource has been to our local community and will continue to provide it through generous donations from UUCS and neighbors in the area.

We are also happy to announce that the Social Justice Coordinating Council is taking on the coffee cart in the foyer and will be utilizing this as a fundraising opportunity within the next year. Speaking of fundraisers, keep an eye out for the annual Community Auction being held in the fall. We hope to increase donations to the auction, so start thinking about something you might be able to donate. We love those popular items such as cabin getaways, gift cards and tickets to events! Please join us on Sunday mornings for our weekly service and social hour. While you are here, stop by the new Maker's Market for homemade and handmade items by church members for sale in the back of the Sanctuary.

The Operations team meets the second Tuesday of the month on Zoom.

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BY REV. DR. TODD EKLOF

Like other Unitarian ministers, part of my responsibilities include involvement in the broader community and denominational affairs. During the past year I've done so mostly through the Faith Based Committee of Spokane and NAUA (North American Unitarian Association). I spoke at length of my involvement with FBCS in a recent sermon. Here I will remind you the committee is comprised of leaders from nine different faiths who met twice or more each month to develop a proposal on criminal justice and homelessness presented to our civic and community leaders. The committee remains active, meets at least quarterly, and is still promoting our final proposal.

I've spent a great deal more time working in the area of denominational affairs by actually trying to preserve our liberal religion and, by extension, preserve our historic congregation. It became clear to me in late 2022 that the Unitarian Universalist Association no longer represents our liberal tradition and principles, and, as importantly, no longer supports its members in any meaningful way. So, in December 2022, I announced the formation of NAUA. By February 2023, we had our articles of incorporation and were on our way.

Today, little more than a year later, our many committed and enthusiastic volunteers, including several members from our congregation, have provided a growing list of NAUA services like the NAUA Academy, monthly worship services, social circles, book clubs, a budding International Unitarian Alliance, our online Liberal Beacon magazine, our interactive website, lots of committees, and a whole lot more. We're now planning our first annual Yearly Summit, which will take place in October online and in-person right here in Spokane.

As the months and years progress, we'll be establishing many other ways to serve and support what I expect will be NAUA's growing membership, which already has several organizational members, including UUCS, amounting to just over a thousand individual members and subscribers. Ministerial supply is our most difficult current challenge, given the extreme shortage of liberal ministers. We're considering novel nontraditional paths to liberal ministry, but the current reality is that there aren't nearly enough new Unitarian ministers to go around for anybody.

Despite the hardships we have faced over these past few years, including the capture of our religion by extremists, the attempted capture of our own congregation by some of them, as well as the lasting impacts of COVID on the economy, UUCS has survived. Today, we have the best staff ever. Our AV tech, Todd Milne makes our hybrid online/in-person services as smooth as possible, troubleshooting our convoluted technology with the skill of a master. Maura Kegley, who has to be among the very best musicians around, accompanies us each Sunday with music so inspired that it is impossible to take for granted. And Madeline McNeill, our music director, who somehow appeared just when we needed her, leaves us longing for more every time she merely hums a note. Under her leadership, our choir is growing and sounds fantastic!

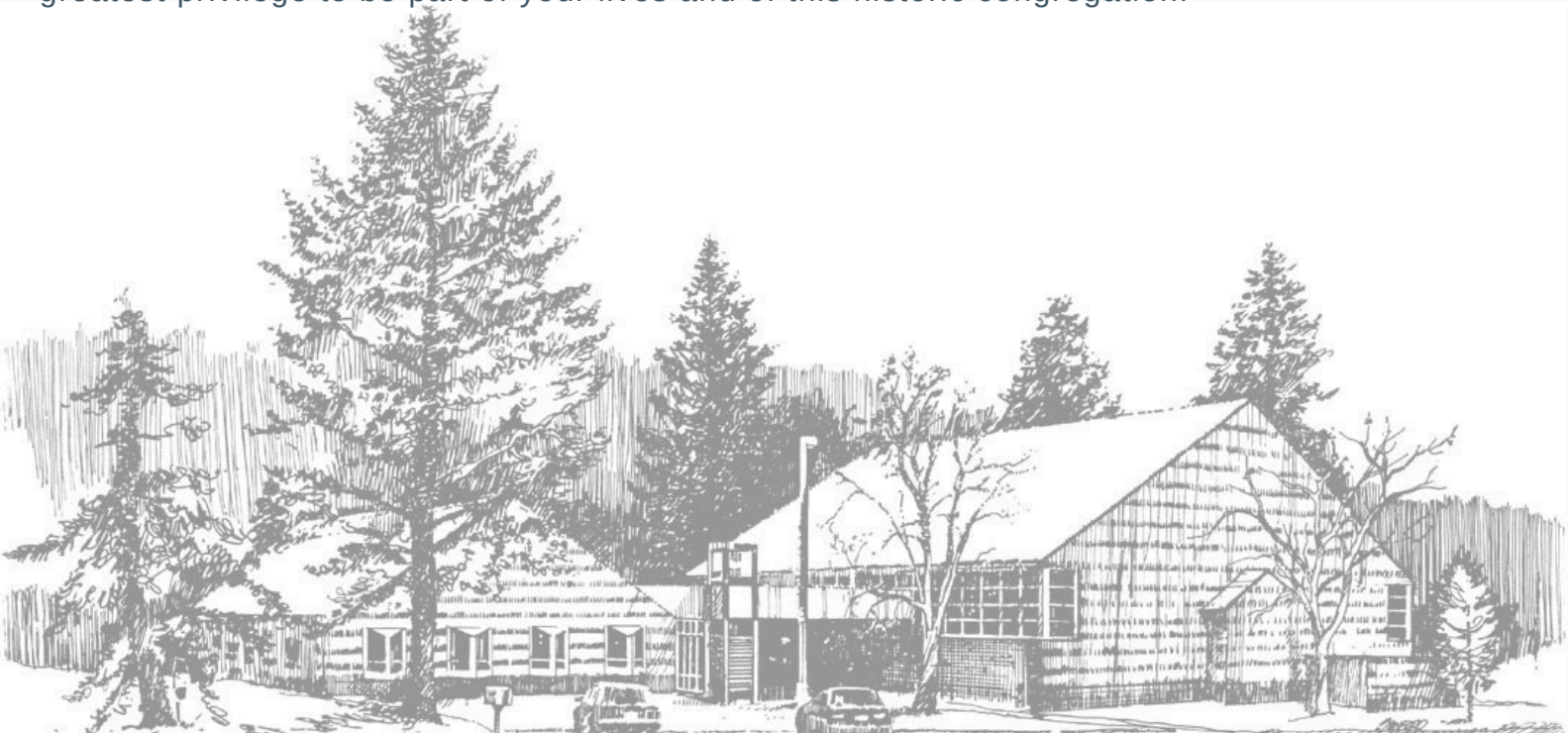
CONT.

Stephanie Gronholz, our Religious Education Specialist, is another familiar face to most of us. For the first time since I've been here, we have a person in her position who has created a program that makes kids want to be here on Sundays, providing them a real sense of community while instilling social skills and values that will help sustain them throughout their lives. We are extraordinarily fortunate to have someone with her professional skills and personal passion working with our kids. Stephanie is supported by our childcare workers, sisters Emma and Isabella Hernandez, two young women who grew up in our church, whom we can all be proud of.

Other faces working behind the scenes include Michelle Caldwell, our outstanding Operations/Communications Assistant, who manages our website, publishes our newsletter, prepares our Sunday slideshow, and lots of other duties. Shelley McLellan, who often fills in as our AV Tech, is also our church custodian, making sure the place is clean for when we're here and cleaned up after we're gone. There's also our bookkeeper, Lynn Hurt whose work it vital to our success.

Last, but far from least, is our incredible Operations Manager, Rebecca Adams, without whom our congregation would be lost. Her competence, poise, reliability, thoroughness, work ethic, and knowledge in a variety of areas, is what keeps our church going on a daily basis during what are not always the easiest circumstances. Rebecca is the manager we need, and we should feel grateful as we are fortunate to have her!

The successes we have achieved during the past church year have largely been because of this incredible staff, the staff we need and deserve, which is why I wanted to spend some time in my report thanking them and reminding you of who they are. Of course, our members who contribute, volunteer, and support our shared ministry also play a major role in our community and its successes. So, as always, I conclude my report by thanking all of you. It remains my greatest privilege to be part of your lives and of this historic congregation.



# Annual Board of Trustees Report

## BETSY RUSH — 2023-24 PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Annual Report 2023-24

A tiny summary of the 2023-24 UUCS Board of Trustees doings:

- Exploring our relationship with the UUA
  - In January, the Shared Ministry team shared the results of their informal conversations on continued membership with the UUA. For the time being, the Board chose no action, recognizing the large amount of communication required for any change.
- Being a charter member to the North American Unitarian Association (NAUA)
  - With the formal support of a survey to the congregation last year, the UUCS joined NAUA in June 2023 as a charter member. This was our first full year of NAUA membership.
- Crafting By Law and Board Policies & Procedures updates
- Reviewing the Operations Team's Communication policy
- Considering the Strategic Plan and it's need for a revision.
- Welcoming Lifetime Membership for Steve Johnston and Shirley Cannon

If I had to characterize this year of the Board of Trustees it would be "Documents and Memberships". This is just Betsy's take on our shared history, and we all know about the subjectivity of history writings. But, if you review the minutes of our meetings or listen to the recordings, you'll see we focused our energies on some very important memberships for our church and some very important documents of governance. For the memberships, consideration had little to do with money since fees are \$0 for NAUA and relatively low for the UUA. It's much more of where do we belong and where is our energy and support best directed as an organization. For now, both NAUA and UUA will receive our support.

As for documents of governance, we addressed the Board's Policies and Procedures including a clear email policy, the Operations Team's Communication Policy, and have several By-Law amendment suggestions to present in our Annual Meeting. As tedious as it sometimes is/was, a solid foundation of written governance is part of our allegiance to the democratic process. A special thank you to Lynn Jinishian and Tom Mosher for thorough BOT P&P revisioning.

Speaking of revisions, late in the year, we noted the need to revise our Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan speaks to long-term vision and action in the categories of "Create Community", "Find Meaning", and "Work for Justice". Sound familiar? Have you heard us speak that together on a Sunday morning? Under Todd's experienced guidance, a year was spent creating this plan shortly after he became our minister in 2011. It's been updated since, but it's time to start from scratch. We hope that this could be taken up by next year's Board.

Thank you to everyone who supports the work of this Board, from our new Recording Secretary Marilyn Johnson taking over for the inimitable Dorothy Mehl, to Dr. Todd Eklof, Rebecca Adams and the entire administrative staff, to Lynn Jinishian, Jean Larsen, Sue Stiritz and so many others who come to practically every one of our meetings and keep us all going. Thank you!

## MUSIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT 2023-24 BY MADELINE MCNEILL

This is my first year as Music Director at UUCS after the retirement of the beloved Deborah Jacquemin who led the congregation in music for decades. It has been my pleasure to get to know the congregation and the excellent worship team. I've enjoyed song leading, performing solos with our wonderful pianist Maura Kegley, directing choir and organizing guest musicians for services.

My employment at UUCS is quarter time, which has been a healthy commitment for me so I can give attention to other artistic projects as a performing artist and composer in Spokane. After I was hired in summer 2023, I worked with office staff to organize the music equipment room and we purchased another file cabinet to organize and alphabetize the entire music library. The next step will be to create a digital catalogue of the music, which could be a project for this summer 2024.

Choir rehearsals began in the fall 2023 and we rehearsed Thursdays in preparation for a performance every three weeks. Our numbers varied as our choir members' diverse lives took them on vacations and adventures. Overall, we have maintained an ensemble of ten to fifteen singers covering all four voice types: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. We made a change for choir to only perform second service. I wanted to prevent fatigue for the choir from performing two services. I consider the second service to be when the main congregation is present. By having choir sing only second service, choir members could be present from beginning to end, creating a continuity of community, instead of some leaving after the second song before the sermon, which was the routine in the past. I am considering changing the choir rehearsal starting time from 7pm to 6pm for next year, which will especially be better in the dark winter months.

This year the choir sang in honor of Deb Jacquemin for her retirement. It was a touching service. We also modeled the annual Requiem service after the Cosmic Advent and created a lovely ritualistic event that honored the lives of our past members. The Cosmic Advent service was also a beautiful evening celebration as was our partner church service. Our range of music for the year included choir chants and meditations, fuller and challenging choral songs, guest musicians like Rachae Thomas, Olivia Brownlee, Paul Grove, our own Todd Milne, and UUCS members Daniel Gore, Lyle Morse, Pamela Larratt, Richard Steele and more sharing their talents.

I am looking forward to seeing the music at UUCS grow and thrive.

Madeline McNeill - [music@uuspokane.org](mailto:music@uuspokane.org)

# Annual Treasurer's Report

ANNUAL TREASURER'S REPORT 2023-24  
SUBMITTED BY DICK BURKHART, UUCS TREASURER  
CONTRIBUTIONS BY LYNN HURT, UUCS BOOKKEEPER AND  
REBECCA ADAMS, OPERATIONS MANAGER

As inflation impacts our economy and we experience ongoing losses from multiple events in 2020, we have faced a number of financial challenges over the past few years. We were able to utilize funds from the PPP grants to help us offset some of these losses; however, this year we continue to face fiscal challenges. Due to our generous severance package to Deb Jacquemin following her retirement, we knew right from the start we would be over on our budgeted expenses. In an effort to mitigate this unbudgeted impact, we have kept expenses lower than projected anywhere we could, currently at about \$15,000 under budget.

As our third quarter reports and current financial statements reflect the lowered expenses, they also show we are at 91% collection of pledges, about 4-5% lower than where we usually are for this time of year. This is partly due to church members who have passed away before completing their pledges this year and partly to uncollected pledged amounts from other members. We still have a month in our fiscal year and some members do wait until June to fulfill their pledges.

Generally, across the board revenues are down. Long term rentals and interest income are coming in higher than budgeted amounts, but other facility rentals, Sunday collections and other fundraising have come in lower than expected. We have a line item budgeted as "Other Income" which also includes our budgetary shortfall reserve. We won't know the amount we will need to use from this reserve until the books are closed in July or August. It is important to emphasize that this fund is our contingency fund and is it not sustainable for us to use long term in balancing the budget or covering shortfalls.

We want to express the importance of fulfilling pledges made to UUCS. Remember that your pledge is the amount you promise to donate to UUCS throughout the year ahead. We use those pledged amounts to plan out our year financially and we rely on them being fulfilled. Making your pledge payments on time greatly benefits our budget and our financial health.

As we have been for the past few years, we are currently operating on and planning for a "bare bones" budget\*. This means that we are striving to maintain our daily operations, Sunday worship services and only provide minimal support to our employees. There are not many places left in our budget to cut expenses. Our biggest challenge we face is fundraising, and our goal is to make fundraising a priority this year. Please join us in creating a vibrant environment here at UUCS and participating when you can to our different fundraisers.

\*See 2024-25 budget graph on page 10

# Religious Education Report

## 2023-2024 Religious Education

### Summary for the Annual Report

Prepared by Stephanie Gronholz, RE Specialist

#### Sunday Morning Play Club / Children's Chapel

We began the 2023-2024 church year with our second implementation of "Play Club" during the months of June, July, and August. Play Club is a program developed by Let Grow, a nonprofit formed by Lenore Skenazy, Jonathan Haidt, Daniel Shuchman, and Peter Grey. It is radical in its simplicity: let kids learn through multi-age, unstructured outdoor play with minimal interference from adults. Children's Chapel volunteers served as supervisors, but others from the congregation were able to help too. The children especially enjoyed the new play structure, which was installed in fall 2022.

Back to school in September meant going back to Children's Chapel too. We continued to use the following routines to build community in a multi-age setting: stocking and organizing the Little Free Pantry in the parking lot, lighting our chalice, sharing "peaks and valleys," having snacks, listening to and discussing a story, and doing a craft or game related to the sermon topic or a relevant holiday. We source materials from the UUA, our robust library of quality children's books (which continues to grow thanks to donations!), the Let Grow organization, the Prindle Institute for Ethics, and a variety of education websites. A couple of highlights from this year included a philosophical discussion of Green Eggs & Ham, our third annual cookie decorating party, a trivia game about our partner church in Transylvania, and a special visit from UUCS member Bill Morkill, who shared his recently-published children's book with us. Children's Chapel attendance has ranged from 2 to 14, but the mean is 7, and the mode is around 10. Seven church members have volunteered occasional Sundays; the children really enjoy spending time with the adults in our congregation.

Looking ahead to summer 2024, Children's Chapel will transition back to Play Club starting June 16. We look forward to enjoying the playground and the woods and inviting even more adults in our community to volunteer and witness the wonders of children at play.

#### Nursery

Since July 2021, our nursery has been staffed almost every Sunday by two childcare providers, sisters Emma and Bella Hernandez. Upon turning 18, Nursery attendance ranges from zero to five; on most Sundays there are one or two. Bella and Emma also provided childcare during Parents Night Out in November. Our February PNO was canceled due to low attendance. We are currently in the process of hiring substitute childcare providers so that we can ensure the nursery is staffed even when Bella and Emma take a well-deserved day off.

## **Our Whole Lives (OWL)**

This year OWL took flight, so to speak. Together with congregants from Inland Northwest Unitarian Universalist Community (INUUC), we identified 13 progressive churches and 2 non-religious organizations in the Spokane area. We sent them informational letters and called them to let them know about the OWL and gauge their interest in it. In September, we held an informational session for members of these churches/organizations and community members at large. Nine people attended, and 33 watched the YouTube recording of the presentation.

UUCS member Kelsey Christiansen volunteered to do intensive online training in the K-1 and 4-6 curriculum, which enabled us to offer a class for kindergarten and first graders from April 7-June 2. Five children participated: 2 from UUCS, 2 from INUUC, and 1 who is unaffiliated with a church. It was truly a team effort, from delivering the lessons, to procuring the updated books, to providing weekly snacks.

In the coming year, we hope to offer OWL to a cohort of 4th-6th graders. Given the ages of children who consistently attend Children's Chapel, there is likely to be a good amount of interest in the program. We just need one more volunteer to do facilitator training.

## **Other Family Events**

In October the church hosted another fall harvest party, for which the children made paper pumpkin centerpieces. The following month we had our annual Thanksgiving dinner, and then in December we held our winter decorating party and cookie sale. We decorated our Christmas tree during the services and enjoyed cookies, some of which were frosted and decorated by RE kids, after the second service.





# Endowment Team Report

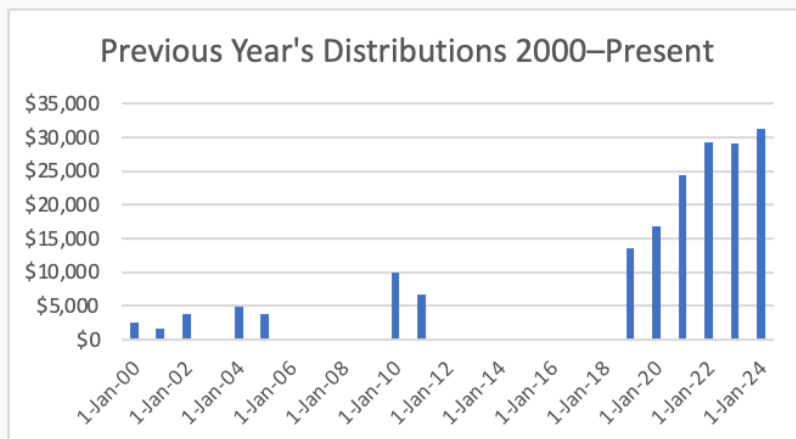
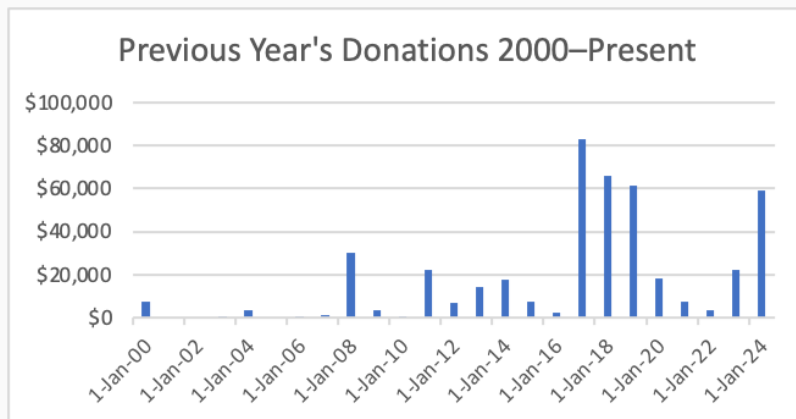
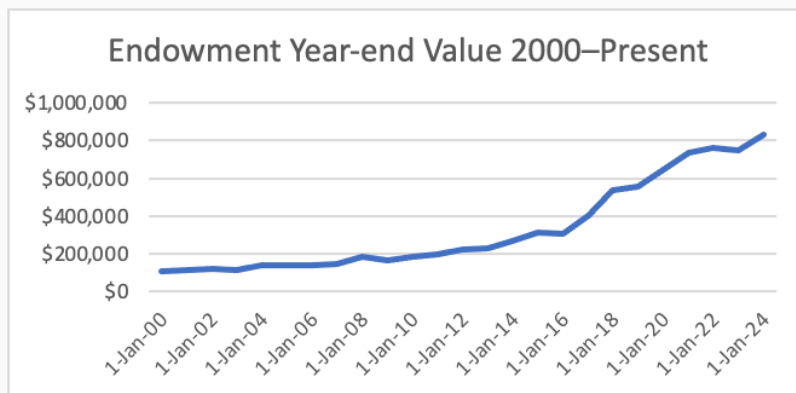
## 2023-2024 UUCS ENDOWMENT TEAM REPORT

Karen Dorn Steele, Endowment Team co-chair

This has been a very good year for the UUCS Endowment, owing both to robust appreciation of holdings in our Seattle Foundation Reserve Fund, and to generous estate bequests and donations in honor of deceased members. The following three graphs illustrate, with historical context:

### UUCS ENDOWMENT HISTORICALLY, IN 3 GRAPHS

1-ANNUAL GROWTH; 2-ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS; 3-ANNUAL DISBURSEMENTS

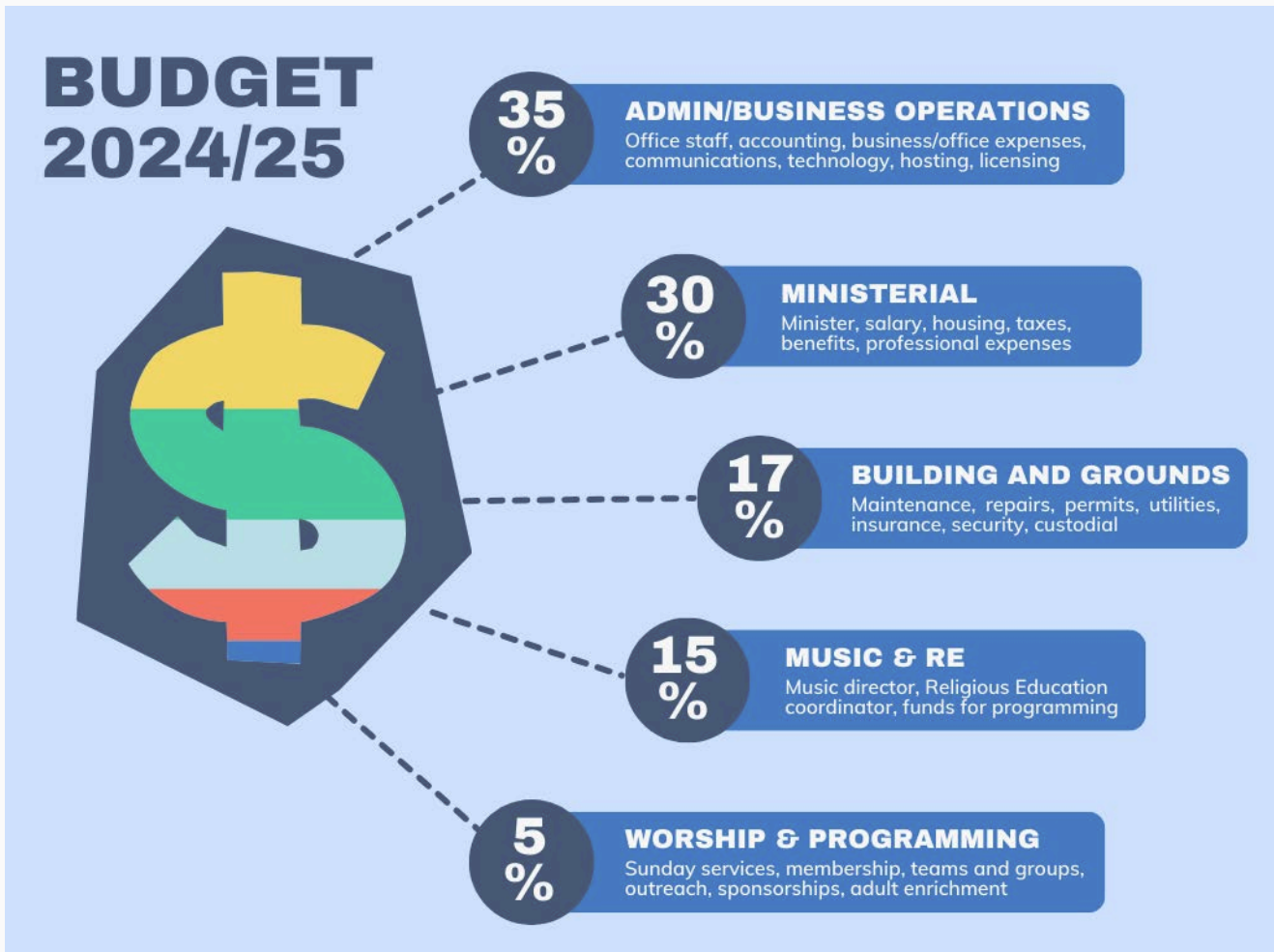


# Endowment Team Report Cont.

By the end of the first quarter 2024 (reported in late May), we will have accrued about \$850,000 in the fund. As the above distribution chart shows, the fund's growth has enabled us to contribute an ever-greater amount to the church's annual budget. In 2024, we're adding \$35,000 over four quarters to the church's 2024/25 operating budget, about 4.5% of earnings. Our church bylaws require us to retain the fund principal in perpetuity.

In keeping with our social justice mission, the community fee that we pay to the Seattle Foundation to manage our assets in a low-price Index Fund increases its ability to have a statewide impact. Grantees include Fair Vote WA, Washington Community Alliance, Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network, Washington Voting Justice Coalition and the Washington Voting Rights Restoration Coalition. For climate justice, the Foundation gives grants to the Transportation Choices Coalition, Washington Conservation Action, Futurewise, and Front & Centered.

This past June 2, the Endowment Team held its annual Legacy Society meeting at the home of Legacy Society members Bill and Barbara Morkill. Any UUCS member can join this group by contributing \$1,000 to the Endowment, or by notifying the Endowment Team of a bequest to the church in your estate documents.



# UUCS Team Reports

## PASTORAL CARE TEAM

BY BETTE BRATTEBO AND SUE STIRITZ, PASTORAL CARE TEAM CO-CHAIRS

This past year, our team has been available to help church members and friends as needed with cards of support and visits to those who are hospitalized or otherwise unable to attend services. We are a very caring congregation with many volunteers willing to lend a helping hand.

We have added three new members to our team. These new members bring energy and new ideas for reaching out to church members who might need a phone call or a visit. Many church members have not returned to attending in person services since the pandemic and now attend through zoom. One of our goals is to reach out to those we haven't seen at church for some time and offer a call or a visit.

We sponsored and coordinated a class entitled "Dementia Friends". This workshop was held on March 10, 2024, in the chapel. Cindy Fine facilitated the class through Aging and Long-Term Care of Eastern Washington. Eighteen members and friends attended the presentation and discussion of dementia concerns and the impact on the family.

Our team has been honored to assist in providing memorial services at UUCS for three congregants who passed during this time. Time spent planning and organizing these services is our gift to the families of those who have lost loved ones. Our team thanks all the volunteers who have baked, served and cleaned.

Also, the Wheel of Life column in the SUUN newsletter has been restarted. Sue Stiritz felt very strongly that the communication of joys and sorrows between church members was needed on a more regular basis. This column can be seen in the SUUN monthly and more if needed. Please send information to Sue Stiritz or Bette Brattebo and we will take it from there.

The year has been busy for members of the Pastoral Care Team. We look forward to being an integral part of the life of our congregation going forward.

## PARTNER CHURCH TEAM

Team Mission: To foster our relationship with our partner church in Felsőrákos, Romania through communication, education and support.

Team Members: Julie Jose, Chuck Elsen, Kialynn Glubrecht, Linda Greene, Jan Wingenroth, MaryLou Lewis, Stephanie Gronholz, Karen Wilson-Bell (Westminster UCC)

Team Activities: The team organized a partner church service including a video interview between the Rev. Mónika Kerekes and Jerry and Julie Jose during which we met her husband, Sabolcs, and baby son, Zádor. She spoke about her many activities to bring the church community together, including a village-wide advent calendar of windows in houses. She is the first woman minister in Felsőrákos and has been warmly welcomed, especially by the younger families. We served a Hungarian style lunch after the services, raising \$507. We are grateful for the participation from staff members Stephanie Gronholz and Madeline McNeill in the Sunday service.

We also raised \$2,071 from special collection during March. Contributed \$900 to the Women's Group and \$600 to the Youth Group in Felsőrákos, and \$4,000 toward building repairs.

We facilitated six scholarships for village youth to attend universities (\$300 each) paid by individuals in our congregation.

We have Skyped with the Kerekes family a few times. They are warm, welcoming and eager to continue the partnership. They look forward to hosting members of our congregation when we can visit. They told us about roof repair needed on the historic church and water damage repair needed in the guesthouse.

Team Plans for 2024 - 25: We hope for members of our congregation to travel to Felsőrákos in September. We'll continue the scholarships. The team needs cooks and helpers to continue serving lunch or a dinner!

## SHARED MINISTRY TEAM

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY LYNN JINISHIAN

This Annual Report is presented on behalf of the Shared Ministry Team for the fiscal year 2023-2024. The Shared Ministry Team's responsibility is to observe and evaluate aspects pertaining to the church's life and ministry. We share our insights, concerns, and recommendations with the Board of Trustees at least twice annually. Additionally, we offer counsel and support to the Minister as needed to prevent or resolve potential issues.

The Shared Ministry Team, including Rev. Eklof, currently comprises five members: John Beaton, Dick Gammon, Barbara Nelson, and Lynn Jinishian. Our meetings are held monthly via Zoom, each lasting approximately 1.5 hours.

At the beginning of the year, we compiled a list of potential issues for consideration. From this list, we selected two priorities:

1. Membership with the UUA: We gathered feedback from congregational members and documented the pros and cons of remaining affiliated with the UUA. Our intention was to present a comprehensive overview rather than make a specific recommendation. This report was submitted to the Board of Trustees during the January 2024 meeting.
2. Fundraising for Operations Budget: Collaborating with Office Administrator, Rebecca, we conducted a congregation-wide survey using Breeze software. Participants were asked to provide fundraising ideas through a single open-ended question. The compiled list of suggestions was briefly discussed during the February 2024 Board Meeting.

Lastly, we identified an issue concerning email communication that was affecting the transparency of Board of Trustees communications. To address this, the Shared Ministry Team proposed an email communication policy for the Board of Trustees. This proposal was unanimously approved during the April 2024 Board meeting and will be integrated into the UUCS Policy Governance (Policy & Procedures) document.

## PRIDE TEAM

We continue to provide a safe place for social and support groups of the LGBTQ+ community to meet. The LGBTQ+ Seniors of the Inland Northwest meet at UUCS the 2nd Saturday of every month for a potluck. They also continue to use the church's Zoom account to meet online every Friday. UUCS is a sponsor for PRIDE. This year the Spokane PRIDE festival and parade was held in person on June 8th. The parade always begins at noon and is held on the second Saturday in June.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL REPORT 2023-2024

The Social Justice Coordinating Council current members are: Pam Davies, Barb Stuebing, Karen Dorn Steele, Maurina Ladich, Susan Tyler-Babkirk, Peggy Eklof, and Nancy Avery. New members are welcome.

### **Special Collections**

This year our Social Justice Coordinating Council coordinated special collections for many local charities, such as Shalom Ministries, Crosswalk, Transitions, Spokane Aids Network, NAMI, The Ministerial Discretionary Fund (Sharing Fund), Odyssey Youth Movement, Veterans for Peace, Our Partner Church, Lewis and Clark High School Environmental Club, and City Concerns Meals on Wheels. Many of our Special Collection opportunities were also coordinated with our Guest Speaker Team.

### **Meaningful Movies**

We are a small group, and welcome new interested members. This year we hosted or co-hosted 7 events. We moved back to the church because of limited participation. Our focus was on housing, healthcare, nuclear power, prison reform. Most recently coordinated with the newly formed Black prisoners caucus in Airway heights to show *Since I've Been Down*. We are open to suggestions on films and new members. Contact us at [meaningfulmoviesspokane@gmail.com](mailto:meaningfulmoviesspokane@gmail.com).

### **UU Justice in the Middle East**

It's been a busy year providing education about Palestine. National UJME hosted a 4-part education class on *Why Palestine Matters* in the fall. Several members of our church attended. The sessions were recorded and are available online. We have sold many bottles of Palestinian olive oil through the year. Several members worked on the Washington state vote ceasefire campaign. We also worked with the inland northwest coalition for Palestine liberation to put on a 5-film series this winter at our church and the magic lantern. We are looking for new members please contact us at [UJME@uuspokane.org](mailto:UJME@uuspokane.org).

Barb Stuebing

### **Spokane Zero Waste**

Spokane Zero Waste is working on reduction of plastics. Currently focusing on the reduction and repurposing of textile waste because of the amount that goes to landfill and the number of plastics that goes into synthetic fabrics. We also have another project, *Woven*, working with Afghani refugees sewing purses, tote bags and jackets using rescued fabrics. This allows the women to make money at home, while taking care of their children. A boutique of *Woven* products was at church this past year and hopes to be at church this fall.

## SPOKANE ALLIANCE TEAM REPORT 2023-2024 SUBMITTED BY KAREN DORN STEELE

Our church is a dues-paying member of the Spokane Alliance, a nonpartisan group representing 36 local churches, unions, health care organizations, day care centers and other nonprofits. Its goal is to transform the “world as it is” into the “world as it should be” through study and action.

Since last year, some UUCS members have participated in two Spokane Alliance projects: a training series on the troubling impact of white settler colonization on Native American tribes in our region, and an “action” at our church on May 2 to push city leaders to build more affordable housing.

Starting last November, the Spokane Alliance launched its local version of “Wrestling with the Truth of Colonization,” a five-session virtual training created by the Spokane Alliance’s parent organization, the Industrial Areas Foundation Northwest. It was developed by an international team of U.S. Native Americans, Indigenous/First Nations Canadians, Aboriginal Australians, and Maori New Zealanders.

Participants were invited to reflect and learn about the truth of colonization, including land theft, broken treaties and the forceful removal of Native children from their families to White settler-run boarding schools.

The training was followed by three in-person sessions with local indigenous leaders, including Spokane Tribe history expert Warren Seyler, American Indian Community Center leaders, and the pioneering Salish School of Spokane.

With this training, the Spokane Alliance’s hope is that “Wrestling” graduates will be motivated to engage their organizations to partner more effectively with local Indigenous groups.

The Spokane Alliance housing initiative that culminated in a large “action” at our church on May 2 was organized by members of HEART, the group’s Housing Equity and Action Research Team, including West Central neighbors.

This has been a years-long effort. In 2020, the Spokane Alliance organized and won funding from the Washington Legislature through HB 1590, a local option sales tax, and then convinced the Spokane City Council to use that taxing authority. A majority of the money in the fund, \$11 million, has not been spent.

A record crowd of approximately 225 people assembled in our sanctuary to support prompt use of the money. Several local people who’ve struggled with homelessness told their stories, saying safe and stable shelter is essential to rebuild lives. Local medical students described unsanitary conditions leading to an outbreak of highly infectious shigella at the Trent Avenue shelter, a large warehouse with no running water established by former mayor Nadine Woodward which Mayor Brown wants to shutter.

The “action” secured a pledge from Mayor Brown to act by May 15 to begin to release funds through an RFP process while working with local housing experts and developers, and also allow grants for smaller organizations. The city’s progress will be outlined in annual reports, she noted.

Brown also pledged to lobby the state Legislature for additional housing funding, saying she would name her new Olympia legislation the “HEART bill” in honor of the hard work of the Spokane Alliance team.

## MEALS ON WHEELS TEAM

This team works to provide food security to man in our community by delivering hot meals every Tuesday to senior citizens in the near northwest neighborhoods of Spokane.

Team Coordinator: Judy Gammon

Team members: Mary Ann Bosky, Roger Bosky, Jim Webster, Mary Webster, Kialynn Glubrecht, Suzanne Rivers, Darl Vander Linden, Shirley Carlson, Jan Wingenroth, Dennis Fredrickson, Tom Mosher, Mark Hammer, Marion Hammer, Dick Gammon, Judy Gammon

## LITTLE FREE PANTRY

Our Unitarian Universalist Church has joined hands with Growing Neighbors and now has a Little Free Pantry onsite. This neighborhood resource helps those dealing with food insecurity. It provides a safe place, free of judgement to come and get a little extra food when in need. UUCS has long committed to being a place that helps those less fortunate in our community. From participating in Bite to Go and fundraising for 2nd Harvest, we now can stock our own Little Free Pantry with nonperishable food items to help our neighbors and people in our community.

This year we have provided hundreds of pounds of food to our community in need. We still have neighbors in need and supporting our Little Free Pantry provides an accessible option for resources. We are continually collecting food donations from those who are able to do so and restock the pantry with items listed below. You can leave items in the donation box in the foyer or place directly into the Little Free Pantry. Please try to donate unopened and unexpired nonperishable foods only.

### MOST NEEDED ITEMS:

#### FRUITS & VEGETABLES

Canned fruits and vegetables, canned or boxed juices, boxed mashed potatoes, dried fruit

#### PROTEINS

Peanut Butter, canned meat (ham, chicken, tuna, etc.), hearty soups (chili, stews, etc.), macaroni and cheese, boxed dinners, beans (kidney, pinto, navy, black, refried, etc.)

#### GRAINS

Pasta, rice, healthy cereals (low sugar and fat), flour, baking mixes, stuffing mixes, oatmeal, cream of wheat

Other helpful items might be feminine products, baby formula, new and unopened hygiene products.





# UUCS Team Reports Continued

## MEMORIAL GARDEN TEAM

The purpose of the Memorial Garden team is to maintain and steward the UUCS Memorial Garden in perpetuity. In the last year we have engraved the names and life years of 14 members of the church on our basalt columns. We updated the Memorial Garden policies and procedures. In anticipation of the October 2023 service showcasing the garden, we revised and updated the Memorial Garden brochure. At both services we gave a brief history and an invitation to peruse information at our table and to take guided tours through the garden after the service. Since the Memorial Garden is an integral part of the church, and should be recognized as such, the team put forth an amendment to include the Memorial Garden in the bylaws. It will be considered by the congregation at the next annual meeting.

Members: Linda Greene, chair, Jean Larson, Lynn Jinishian, Jan Strobeck and Judy Gammon

## BOOK CART TEAM

-Maintains the carts of used book in the Friendship Hall. Do you have any books to donate to the weekly book sale? If so, please bring them to the church!

-Team members: Millie Roberts, Mary Lou Lewis, Judy Gammon

# UUCS Fundraisers

## ANNUAL FUNDRAISERS AT UUCS

### **Community Auction:**

Each year in the fall we hold a Community Auction. This event relies on donated items from our church members and community to provide items to then bid on and buy. Popular items include: parties, concerts and social events, cabins and weekend getaways, tickets to events like the symphony and sporting events, gift certificates to local restaurants and shops, homemade baked goods, meals and treats, handmade (by you!) arts and crafts, service items such as yard work, fitness classes or lessons, and themed gift baskets. There are so many possibilities. How creative can you get and what can you donate? Start thinking about it now, donations open in August for the auction in the fall. This is our church's biggest fundraiser of the year, we hope you will participate this year!

### **Maker's Market**

Join us every Sunday in between and after services for the new Maker's Market. From fresh baked breads to hand made crafts, come see what you might find at the Maker's Market!

### **Generosity Campaign**

Each year in the month of April we hold our annual generosity campaign. Filling out your pledge form each year helps us to plan for the next fiscal year. This is an important part of being a member (and friend!) of UUCS. This month long drive is when you let us know what you plan on donating for the next year and allows us to set our budget accordingly. Knowing what we have helps us to know what programming we can offer in the next year.

## GET INVOLVED AT UUCS!

There are a number of teams and groups you can participate in to enhance connections and create community here at UUCS. Below you will find a list of some of these. For more information please visit our website at [www.uuspokane.org](http://www.uuspokane.org).

## OUTREACH - IMPLEMENT OUR VALUES IN OUR LARGER COMMUNITY

- **Spokane Alliance** - works with other churches and organizations to promote positive change in our community
- **Partner Church** – working with members of other local churches, coordinates support of communication and sharing with our partner church in Felsorokos, Romania
- **Social Justice Coordinating Council** – coordinates social justice efforts conducted by various teams within the Spokane community
- **Pride Team** – resource for our LGBTQ+ members, friends, allies at UUCS and in the larger community. Participation in PRIDE Spokane each year.
- **Meals on Wheels** – coordinates delivery of meals to seniors and others in need
- **UUJME** – UUs for Justice in the Middle East - working with UUs worldwide to promote a peaceful and just resolution to the Israel/Palestine conflict
- **Meaningful Movies** – coordinates screenings of films regarding social justice and environmental issues at local theater. Currently being held in-person in our Chapel.
- **Bite-2-Go** – encourages and coordinates donations to provide food to Balboa elementary students in need
- **Raised Beds** – adopt a garden bed in our community garden and grow fresh food for our local food banks, community kitchens, and our very own Little Free Pantry.

## ADULT ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

For more information on the groups below, please visit the "**Programs**" section of our website at [www.uuspokane.org](http://www.uuspokane.org)

- **UU Women's Group**
  - **Second Wednesday Lunch** – opportunities for UUCS women to socialize over lunch
  - **Third Thursday Book Club** – monthly book discussion group for women
- **UUCS Men's Breakfast, Third Saturday** – breakfast and discussion group for men
- **Problem Solvers** – weekly coffee and discussion on various topics
- **Tuesday Talkers** – small group ministry with monthly discussions
- **Buddhist Meditation** – weekly meditation sessions led by nuns from the Tibetan Buddhist Sravasti Abbey
- **Kerdcera Dojo** – The Kerdcera Dojo means, "The practice of heart and mind," meets weekly on ZOOM. Rev. Dr. Todd Eklof guides participants in the practice of logic and Emotional Intelligence techniques.
- **Senior LGBTQ+** – gatherings welcoming all, especially those identifying as senior LGBTQ+
- **Zoom Room Sundays First Service** - join near or far for an interactive online viewing experience!

## DONATE TO UUCS TODAY - YOUR NOURISHING LIBERAL RELIGIOUS HOME

Making your pledge to UUCS....

A pledge is your promise to the church of what you will donate for the year. This can be fulfilled as a monthly payment, a quarterly payment or a one time annual payment. However you want to complete it, the pledge is what you will be giving to UUCS for the fiscal year (our fiscal year runs from July - June). A pledge is an important part of being a member at UUCS. This allows us to plan annually for our operations and fund our many valued programs in order to fulfill our mission: Create Community. Find Meaning. Work for Justice. If you would like to make your pledge or update your current pledge, please fill out the online pledge form on our website at [www.uuspokane.org](http://www.uuspokane.org) or send us an email. Questions about your pledge? Please send an email to [bookkeeper@uuspokane.org](mailto:bookkeeper@uuspokane.org).



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OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY - THURSDAY 10AM - 2PM

MINISTER: REV. DR. TODD EKLOF

OPERATIONS MANAGER: REBECCA ADAMS

OPERATIONS ASSISTANT: MICHELLE CALDWELL

BOOKKEEPER: LYNN HURT

MUSIC DIRECTOR: MADELINE MCNEILL

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SPECIALIST: STEPHANIE GRONHOLZ