



First Unitarian Society of Ithaca
Annual Report

Presented May 24, 2023

2022 - 2023

Connect. Inspire. Engage.

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Introduction

The 2022-2023 year at the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca saw a return to the first full year of in person programming since the pandemic began in the spring of 2020 and impacted every part of our lives. How we live and interact with each other, how we work and communicate, how we move around and travel, how we come together in community.

This year we lift up with gratitude the teams, committees, staff, and individuals who have come together to help us live into our mission of a community that creates connection, inspiration, and engagement. We have seen growth in all areas of our community, which has been cultivated by the care, time, and effort of our leadership and members.

Thank you for everything that you bring to this community. For showing up each and every day with open hearts and minds, for your willingness to step in and help the community and those around you, for centering love as who we are as Unitarian Universalists. For helping to make FUSIT a place where all are truly welcome. A place where we all belong.

Emily Richards

The 7 Principles of Unitarian Universalism

1st Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person;

2nd Principle: Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

3rd Principle: Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;

4th Principle: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;

5th Principle: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;

6th Principle: The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;

7th Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

And the 8th Principle which was adopted by First Unitarian Society of Ithaca at its Annual Meeting in May, 2022

8th Principle: To affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.

Attendance Record

	In Person Adults	YouTube Views	RE teachers and nursery staff	RE kids	Kids in Sanc/parlor	
Sept						
	74	34	0	0	11	
	83	58	0	0	0	
	57	33	0	0	0	
Oct	84	32	2	14	0	
	85	25	0	0	1	
	84	27	0	0	0	
	81	36	2	12	0	
	87	30	2	14	0	
Nov	78	23	2	10	0	
	80	22	0	0	5	
	59	27	2	9	0	
	54	25	2	12	0	
Dec	72	23	2	8	0	
	70	26	2	15	0	
	77	19	0	0	13	
	No service on Sunday December 25					
Sage Chapel	527	n/a				
Jan	No service on Sunday January 1					
	81	16	2	16	0	
	92	11	0	0	0	
	94	39	2	16	0	
	92	47	2	22	0	
Feb	63	36	5	11	0	3
	111	25	7	22	0	4
	86	56	4	10	0	1
March	61	38	5	10	0	2
	61	46	4	11	0	3
	85	22	2	0	0	1
	78	48	3	4	0	4
April	112	44	6	13	0	4
	81	38	5	13	0	4
	64	26	5	11	0	2
	108	43	4	19	0	6
	105	45	2	0	8	2
May	116	40	5	7	17	3
June						

Minutes of the Annual Meeting on May 25, 2022

Board President Don Barber called the annual meeting of the regular annual meeting of the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca (FUSIT) to order on Wednesday, May 25, 2022. This was our first hybrid annual meeting, with members attending and voting both in-person and virtually.

Scribe: Diana Nier, **Parliamentarian:** Don Barber

Quorum: 71 members present (37 in-person, 34 virtual)

Handouts: 2021-2022 Annual Report and Proposed 2022-2023 Budget

Please note: This is a brief summary of the minutes. To view the complete version, click here: <https://tinyurl.com/2022AnnualMeetingMinutes>

Item #1: Year in Review Presentation by DRE Emily Richards

Increase in virtual attendance, coffee hour has resumed, Celebrations Team organized and led services, successful online auctions, Antiracism Team continued to facilitate Living the Pledge and brought 8th Principle to Annual Meeting for a vote, Adult RE resuming under Preston Wilson, Adult Choir has resumed and Music Team formed new house band, SGM continues to provide spiritual home for members, Stewardship exceeded 92% of their fundraising goal, Buildings and Grounds upgraded our internet connection and repaired Stepping Stones bathrooms.

Year in Review Presentation by President Don Barber

Resignation of Rev. Margaret, 5 of 9 Board members stepping down, interim minister unraveled in the fall, Board finding ways to keep FUSIT united and moving forward, re-evaluation of Partnership Governance structure, creation of MVT (Ministry Visioning Team) and OAT (Operations Administration Team) and creation of Ministry Fulfillment Committee.

Overview of Hybrid Meeting and Parliamentary Procedure

2021 Annual Meeting Minutes - Minutes were presented and approved

2022-2023 FUSIT Budget

Walt Peck presented the proposed budget. At this time, we do not have the funds to hire a full time minister via the UUA. \$80,000 is set aside for the Ministry Fulfillment Committee to find people to meet the needs of ministry: spiritual leadership, pastoral care, and administration We will end the 2021-2022 fiscal year in the black, despite low revenues, due largely to reduced ministerial expenses.

MOTION: That the Proposed 2022-2023 Budget be adopted with spending of \$418,079, of which \$80,000 of expenses are reserved for the Ministry Fulfillment Committee, with the purpose of hiring a person or persons to meet our essential ministry needs for the coming year. Moved and seconded. Floor was opened for discussion, votes were tallied and motion passed. (69 yes / 2 no / 1 abstain)

Candidate Slates for the Board of Trustees and Nominating Committee

Fred Balfour presented a brief explanation of the role of Nominating Committee.

MOTION: Vote on the slate of candidates as presented by the Nominating Committee.

Votes were tallied both in-person and virtually. Results: all candidates were elected. 61 votes for Dick Kurtz for a 1-year term, 61 votes for Elizabeth Bixler for a 2-year term, and 61 votes for Barbara Shew for a 2-year term.

Proposed Adoption of the 8th Principle

MOTION: We, the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca, adopt the "8th Principle," to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.

The floor was opened for discussion. Each person who wanted to speak received a 3-minute slot. After all attendees had had a chance to speak, people who previously spoke were given a second chance to speak, this time for 1 minute.

Votes were tallied both in-person and virtually. MOTION PASSED (61 yes / 10 no / 1 abstain).

Closing Words

Adult Religious Exploration

May 11, 2023

Members: Preston Wilson, Peggy McKernan, MaryPaul Kirkpatrick

The ARE team continues the long-standing church tradition of offering speakers on a wide range of subjects to the congregation in an informal and ostensibly non-religious setting, though the subject covered all tie in well with the goals of the church and its eight principles. It is unique in that it allows participants to discuss with the presenters some of the more wide-ranging aspects of living our faith while satisfying a more general intellectual curiosity in “a true and responsible search for truth and meaning.” The sessions are held on the first and third Sundays of each month in the Annex with coffee and treats starting at 8:45 and the presentation starting at 9:00 am.

I present below the entire schedule for the year with attendance numbers:

- September 18, 2022: Ray Steifel on his experiences as an aid worker in Ukraine - 12
- October 2, 2022: John Gaines on his spiritual journeys throughout his life so far - 17
- October 16, 2022: Filmmaker Sue Perlcut presents his film on UU member Connie Cook - 4
- November 6, 2022: Don Barber on food production methods and sustainability in Tompkins County - 12
- November 20, 2022: Mary Paul Kirkpatrick and Matt Hare on the book *The Dawn of Everything* - 15
- December 4, 2022: Sue Beckley (substituting for Judy Jones) on health care in New York State - 7
- December 18, 2022: Liz Cosentini on the Art of Listening - 11
- January 15, 2023: John Gaines on his recent tour of Vietnam - 22
- February 5, 2023: Kathy and Richard Sholtys on their Pilgrimage walk through Spain - 23
- February 19, 2023: Cindy Scheibe on Media Literacy - 16
- March 5, 2023: Grant Ferrod from Cornell on the situation in Ukraine - 11
- March 19, 2023: Inez Vermaas on anthroposophy - 14
- April 2, 2023: Denise Bodnar on the neurobiology of meditation - 22
- April 16, 2023: Rev. Peaches Gillette on the many ways we grieve - 18
- May 7, 2023: Cheryl Botts on Sufism - 14
- May 21, 2023: Jennifer Savran Kelly on her novel *Endpapers* re gender identity - TBD



Other Information

1. ARE is a small team which as a result can facilitate the organizing and decision making and reduce the need for formal meetings. Much of the communication is either face-to-face or, more efficiently, by email. Each one of the three active members volunteers to be the moderator of a particular session and is responsible for the communication with the speaker, and the publicity of that session in the Order of Service, the Weekly Announce, and the Newsletter. The other active members support with set-up, coffee and treats, tech, and other sundry requirements.
2. The project of coming up with room darkening curtains or shades (for movies and slideshows) is still ongoing. At the moment, it is a labor intensive process that we hope to streamline in the future. The Annex has the potential to be an excellent movie theater for smaller groups (up to around 50).
3. Attendance has averaged around 14 so far this year. At the moment, about 30 would be the outer limit considering the style of presentations we arrange, though dozens could conceivably be jammed in if needed. The problem with too large a crowd is that discussion and Q&A can be difficult. The church's portable sound system is very helpful for soft talkers and to hear the questions and comments.
4. Finally, I would like to point out the utility of having an ARE program as I have described. I have seen people so far this church year coming to church (some coming back to church) because of an offered program, be it provocative, timely, interesting, or in some other way appealing. UUs love to learn and discuss in a respectful and friendly atmosphere. I give special thanks to the board for giving the ARE team the freedom to run our own program without undue worry and oversight.

Submitted by Preston Wilson, team leader

Aesthetics Team

Team members: Magdalen Lindeberg with consultation, assistance, and materials from Dawn Grover, Laura Free, Madonna Stallman, Mariah Prentiss, Gwen and Aly Richards, and several others who kindly donated old calendars and other materials.

Aesthetics continues to create displays for the sanctuary, inspired by the Soul Matters themes and primarily using the hanging foam supports covered with fabric. Bright stiff paper such as that used in print calendars is a great material to work with, and gathering people to help lay and pin the designs to the supports has been a good opportunity for congregational participation.

Submitted by Magdalen Lindeberg



December: Wonder



February: The Path of Love



April: The Path of Resistance



January: Finding Our Center

Antiracism Ministry Team

The Antiracism Ministry Team strives for equity, inclusion and justice in our work within the congregation and beyond. We aim to help First Unitarian of Ithaca (FUSIT) evolve into a truly anti-racist community, welcoming for people of all races, ethnicities, and cultures, and actively engaged in work for racial justice.

Here are some of our accomplishments:

- A resolution was introduced and passed on implementing the 8th Principle whereby an ad hoc committee was established to:
 - define a plan to work towards dismantling racism in the larger community of FUSIT, Ithaca and Tompkins County;
 - include accountability measures that will indicate the plan is being implemented; and
 - schedule the ad hoc committee to report regularly to the ARMT on the accountability measures and other results of the plan.
- Living the Pledge workshop was held in October and November 2022 with 12 participants; this was the first program whereby individuals outside of FUSIT were invited to participate.
- UUA Common Read discussions were offered including *On Fire* by Naomi Klein; *Mistakes and Miracles: Conversations on the Road to Multi-Culturalism*; *Justice on Earth: People of Faith Working at the Intersections of Race, Class and the Environment*.
- ARMT invited the Social Justice Council members to a discussion of possibly combining the two entities.
- The team invited Don Barber to provide an overview of a Community Outreach Program, the Tompkins County Community Food System Plan where he discussed food security in Tompkins County.
- On November 4 from 4:00-7:00 pm, students of the Village at Ithaca displayed chairs they created and decorated to represent Black freedom fighters in the FUSIT parlor. This exhibit was part of the First Friday Gallery Night and open to the public.
- ARMT participated in the Volunteer Fair held in the Annex in November.



- ARMT volunteered to deliver Side with Love donations to local groups each month. FUSIT has donated and ARMT has delivered the following:

September: Backpack and school supplies to Family and Childrens' Services

October - Winter clothes to OAR

November – Food items for Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry

December – Cayuga Nation: clothing, supplies

- December's meeting included a discussion of "Shifting Philanthropy From Charity to Justice - We need a new framework for giving to address America's economic, social, and political inequalities" by Dorian O. Burton and Brian C.B. Barnes and published by Stanford Social Innovation Review. The discussion drew individuals from beyond the ARMT; 23 were on zoom to discuss.
- ARMT sponsored and coordinated a **Reimagining Public Safety Presentation** by Marty Hiller on March 5 in the annex at noon. This was because of the discussion in December when the topic was brought up.
- An event is planned to showcase the Tompkins County **Poet Laureate, Janie Bibbie** at FUSIT on **Friday, June 2**, with a reception to follow the poetry reading.

Submitted by joAnn kowalski

Babies First Loan Program



Our Babies First Program is a church sponsored community outreach program that supplies infant and toddler equipment to low-income families in Tompkins County. Requests for these articles come through Tompkins County County Social Service agencies and also from individual families who contact us directly.

Equipment for this program is acquired through several different avenues. All car seats are purchased new. Salvation Army directs people to our program for the drop-off of children's equipment. Pat Gaines is largely responsible for our purchases from garage and yard sales, as well as from online sources. And we receive some direct donations from the public. We have seen an uptick from the public recently.

We support this program through the generosity of our congregation by way of donations, and the annual Christmas Eve offering. We also received a generous \$600 grant from the Presbyterian Church's Wiggans fund.

Our sources of income are:

Special Appeal: \$3,503
 Christmas Eve: \$4,064
 Wiggan's Fund: \$1,000

Our starting balance was \$3,271
 The income for the 2022-2023 church year (4/30/22 to 4/30/23) was \$8,567
 Our expenditures were \$7,251
 Current balance of \$4,587

Distributed Equipment	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022-2023
Car Seats	12	37	60	72	72	27	36	58	88
Pac 'n Plays	13	24	36	31	35	19	9	9	24
Strollers	8	9	31	33	24	8	10	14	31
High Chairs	2	7	22	23	13	5	7	8	15

Other: Baby Gates, Baby Carriers, Potty Chairs, Bouncy chairs, Swings, Activity Centers, linens, etc.

Our numbers show that we are clearly reaching more families and are out of the Covid slump. We are pleased we have a tab to the main page of the FUSIT website so that the Tompkins County community would have an easier time finding us, learning what we are about, how to contact us, and also having a direct way to donate using a credit card. Babies First.

We did an Autumn Appeal this year via the newsletter and during service sharing that was very successful! We were contacted by a sorority at Cornell University who was focusing their outreach project on babies with disabilities. They did a "Baby Shower" and raised funds for The March of Dimes and equipment for Babies First. We were the recipients of baby wipes and diapers which we gladly gave away to our clients. We look forward to more collaborations like this with our community.

Mary Clabby is about to join our team. She has some innovative ideas for fundraising for Babies First and we welcome her ideas and time.

Respectfully, Walt Peck, Sue Rakow (Coordinators), Pat Gaines

Board of Trustees

Prepared by Valerie Graves, Clerk

Throughout the church year, the Board worked on several projects:

- **Transition to a New Governance model:** One of the most significant projects for the Board this year was the implementation of the new organizational partnership governance structure that would help sustain the congregation regardless of the type of ministry currently employed - whether a contract, a part time, or a full time minister was with the church. The organizational structure includes the teams: the Ministry Visioning Team (MVT) and the Operations and Administration Team (OAT) and this year the Board worked with those teams to assess and solidify the new structure. The Board worked to develop and alter policies to support the new structure, including adaptations to the Board Policy Book.
- **Strategic Plan:** The Board also worked to support the finance committee on the development of a five-year strategic plan.
- **Open Questions:** In the fall and winter the Board worked to engage the congregation in Open Questions, to better understand the concerns and areas of interest within the congregation. The questions were:
 - “What would make FUSIT more relevant to your life or the lives of those in your community?”
 - “How can we, as a community, come together to provide transformative opportunities for spiritual growth that would change or affect ourselves and the world?”
- **Vision of Ministry:**
 - 2022-2023:** The Board is in the process of evaluating the work of this year and how well it aligned with the Vision of Ministry (VoM) for this year:
 - * Build and rebuild connection and community.
 - * Work toward collective liberation through justice, anti-racism, and anti-oppression
 - * Provide opportunities for spiritual growth and faith development that inspire transformation in ourselves and the world around us.
 - 2023-2024:** The Board has adopted a VoM, developed by MVT, based on the feedback and engagement from the congregation:
 - * Create opportunities for spiritual growth and faith development by:
 - + Centering Social Justice as a core part of who we are and an avenue to individual and societal transformation.
 - + Inviting more opportunities for connecting with each other in meaningful ways.
 - + Exploring our roots as a pluralistic, multi-faith community, and offering ways to engage in wisdom and practices of many spiritual traditions.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Throughout the church year, the Board reads and discusses reports from the various committees and teams that make up church leadership. As the church year comes to a close, the Board is working to set up systems of evaluation for itself and to support the evaluation process for others in leadership positions. Through this process there can be growth and awareness!
- **Budget Preparation:** The Board spent many hours discussing elements of the budget and how to best plan for growth while acknowledging where we are currently. The Board prepared a budget for the congregation to vote in at the annual meeting.

Board of Trustees Terms of Service and Organizational Chart

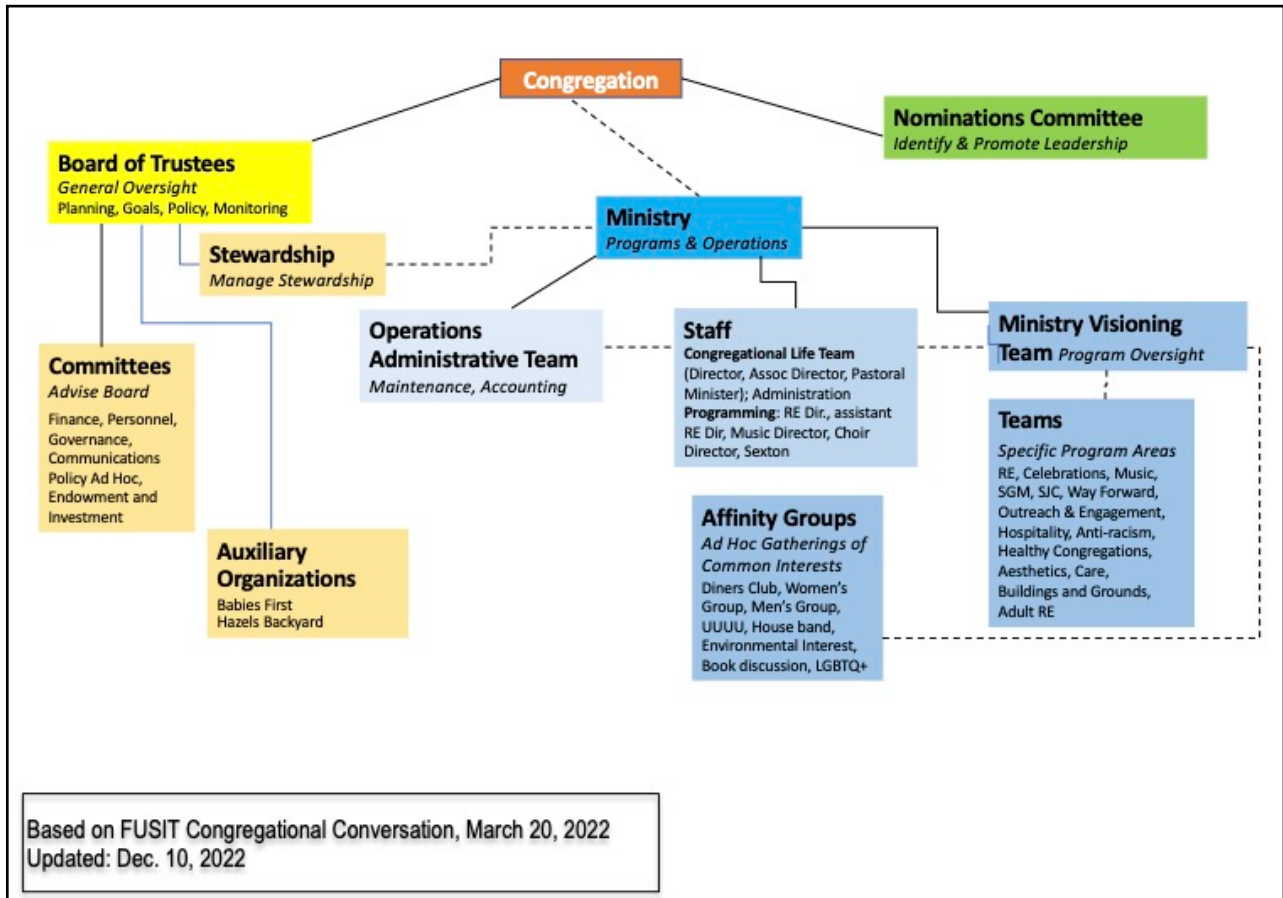
First Unitarian Society - Annual Meeting May 24, 2023

Printed: 1-May-2023

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Slot # 1	Hare, Matt	Hare, Matt	Hare, Matt	Barber, Don <small>President</small>	Barber, Don <small>President</small>	Barber, Don	
Slot # 2	Turner, Andy <small>President</small>	Turner, Andy <small>President</small>	Turner, Andy <small>President</small>	Graves, Valerie	Graves, Valerie <small>Clerk</small>	Graves, Valerie	
Slot # 3	Wilkinson, Kim	Wilkinson, Kim	Wilkinson, Kim	Nichols, Margaret	Nichols, Margaret	Nichols, Margaret	
Slot # 4	Zhang, Angela	Zhang, Angela	T. O'Connor	T. O'Connor <small>Vice President</small>	T. O'Connor <small>Vice President</small>	Megan McCormick <small>On Ballot</small>	Megan McCormick
Slot # 5	Habicht, Oliver	Habicht, Oliver	Catterall, Simon	Catterall, S. <small>(Retired early)</small>	Dick Kurtz	Fred Balfour <small>On Ballot</small>	Fred Balfour
Slot # 6	ss	Salomon, Wendy	Hess, Carsten <small>(Retired Early)</small>	Miller, Nancy	Miller, Nancy	Empty	Empty
Slot # 7	Wiggins, W	Stack, Lyn	Stack, Lyn <small>(retired early)</small>	Gaines, John	Rene Rogers <small>(partial year: Feb-June)</small>	Rene Rogers <small>On Ballot</small>	Rene Rogers
Slot # 8	Streid-Mullen, J	Hall, Elton	Hall, Elton	Hall, Elton	Fred Balfour <small>(Partial Year: Mar-June)</small>	Tom Coakley <small>On Ballot</small>	Tom Coakley
Slot # 9	Benedetti, Marie	Nier, Diana <small>Clerk</small>	Nier, Diana <small>Clerk</small>	Nier, Diana <small>Clerk</small>	Empty	Empty	Empty
ExOfficio Treasurer		Streid-Mullen, <small>Treasurer</small>	Streid-Mullen, <small>Treasurer</small>	Peck, Walt, <small>Treasurer</small>	Peck, Walt, <small>Treasurer</small>	Treasurer	Treasurer
ExOfficio Staff					Peaches Gilette Emily Richards	Peaches Gilette Emily Richards	

From Bylaws:
 SECTION 1. There shall be nine elected trustees, ...
 SECTION 2. Each Trustee shall hold office for a period of three years, and the terms of office for three of the Board shall expire each year.
 ExOfficio
 Definition. 1) Non-Voting; 2) Not counted in quorum; 3) Not elected.

Next Fiscal Year.
 Members are voting for six Trustees:
 - Four proposed by NomCom.
 - Two positions by Nomination.



Based on FUSIT Congregational Conversation, March 20, 2022
 Updated: Dec. 10, 2022

Buildings and Grounds

We meet monthly, with Michelle Waffner, Dick Kurtz and Rachel Seymour. Volunteers don't have to attend! Sara Catterall, team leader, has been less involved this year due to work demands, but will be more available Fall 2023.

Dick Kurtz has been priceless, and has put in scores of hours. He is a bit overburdened – we would love more volunteers with any of his skills in maintenance, carpentry, drywall, HVAC etc! Mary Kirkpatrick is less involved but still available for some tasks and advice. Rachel Seymour has made B&G's job much easier with her devoted cleaning and maintenance attention to our buildings.

- We have had much better turnout for work days this year! Gratifying, fun, and productive.
- A garden team, which includes Dick Kurtz, Madonna, Judy Jones and Deanna English is renovating the parish house garden with pollinator-friendly native plants. We took down the memorial weeping cherry tree, which was dying of old age. The memorial plaque will be relocated under the healthy crabapple by the front steps, where it will also be more visible.
- B&G has worked with our Administrator, Michelle Waffner, on insurance questions, safety needs, elevator concerns, rekeying, and a recent sewage backup into the Parish House basement.
- We collaborated with Fred Balfour on a sorting day for our kitchens to reduce clutter and rationalize our collections of cooking and serving tools.
- We purchased a new electric stove to replace the broken gas one in the main kitchen.
- Sara purchased and hung a Progress/Universal Pride Flag in the sanctuary.
- Sara and Michelle coordinated a roof repair in the garden entrance.
- Sara has coordinated cleaning out of junk from our main basement and the parish house attic – still ongoing, help welcome, but we have taken many loads to ReUse and Solid Waste, and sold some items too, including excess tables.
- Dick has coordinated and done much work on the HVAC system for the first floor of the annex (Stepping Stones) and dealt with two bad leaks from the second floor annex boilers which damaged an expensive fire panel on the lower floor.

In June we plan to paint and refloor the main annex room. Sara is getting quotes to repair and repaint the parish house exterior and stone church trim next year.

Submitted by Sara Catterall, team leader

**More volunteers
with skills in
maintenance,
carpentry, drywall,
and HVAC are
needed!**

Care Team

Pastoral Care – Janet Shortall has continued as our Pastoral Care minister and support to the Care Team. We have several times discussed how to address the after-effects of the COVID pandemic. Next fall we hope to put together a series on grief. Rev Peaches has augmented the Pastoral Care efforts. We are grateful for both Janet and Peaches.

Memorial Services held: Nancy Dolge and Rita Barber continue to coordinate Receptions

- March 25, 2023 – Jim Skaley, 16 volunteers, Approx. 125 attendees
- December 29, 2022 – Polly Joan, 6 volunteers, Approx. 40 attendees
- November 2022 – Connie Hill, 6 volunteers, Approx. 50 attendees

Upcoming Memorial Receptions

- June 17, 2023 - Oliver Habicht. Nancy Dolge has a planning meeting with Amelia Habicht.



Memorial Services Policy – Nancy Dolge has been involved with Therese O'Connor from the Board of Trustees in making a policy that is clear and useful. Issues on Memorial Services have become complex from issues of determining who is actually a member and therefore eligible for waiver of rental fee of the church and minister fee and a reception coordinated by our Memorial Reception Team. The addition of a new sound system and streaming capabilities has also created a need for clear policy and instructions.

Human Needs FUND – A member of the Care Team (currently Nancy Dolge with back up Kathy Hopkins or Madonna Stallmann) is designated as the one who makes decisions about requests for financial help. The church treasurer then disperses the funds. The Fund has given a total of \$652.93 in response to 3 requests since April 2022. The details and names are confidential. The Care Team decided to retain this function while the minister roles are divided.

Easter Flowers – Plants were distributed to local nursing homes thanks to Madonna Stallmann and Paul Weidhass.

Support of Church members – Meals have been provided short term during illness, surgery, or injury recovery. Rides to appointments and rides to do errands have been provided, cards have been sent for birthdays, get well wishes, and condolences to families who have lost loved ones. Numerous calls and visits have been made to check on and support members who have had family deaths or losses or long term physical and mental health issues.

Needs of the Care Team – more volunteers so we could do more to help members in coordination with other Teams to navigate the effects of COVID.

Special thanks to the core members of the team – Kathy Hopkins (contact person + rides), Nancy Dolge & Rita Barber (Memorial Services), Jackie Jablonski, Walt Peck (Babies First), Madonna Stallmann, Carolyn Emerick, Nancy Miller, and Jackie Jablonski. And thanks to Rev. Janet Shortall and Rev. Peaches Gillette for all the care they give to our Beloved Community.

Nancy Miller 5/1/23

Celebrations Team

Team members: Magdalen Lindeberg, Jens Wennberg, Preston Wilson, Kimari Johnson, Madonna Stallman, and Sue Roenke with attendance by Stephanie Ortolano, Peaches Gillette, and Emily Richards

Celebrations was so pleased to work this year with Emily Richards, Rev. Peaches Gillette and Rev. Janet Shortall and the larger team of contributors including Stephanie Ortolano, Jayne Demakos, and our tech team members who all contribute so much to the shape and spirit of our Sunday morning services.

- Celebrations Team meets monthly at 7:00 pm on the first Tuesday of the month. Members continue to thoughtfully debate the balance of worship leader and congregant voices to the services. To this end, Matters of our Lives has been re-introduced, and more congregant voices are being included in readings.

- We also continue to tinker with the Welcome and Announcements text to maximize effectiveness of the information conveyed while preserving the flow and momentum of the service
- In addition to the services given by our three ministers, the 2022-2023 church year included 6 lay led services by Jens Wennberg, Magdalen Lindeberg, Amelia Habicht, Phoebe Brown, Kenneth Clark, and Elisa Keeler. Preston Wilson is archiving sermons by lay speakers and others interested in contributing.
- Soul Matters provides guiding themes that help to focus our monthly services and weave a thread of continuity through diverse speakers.

Submitted by Magdalen Lindeberg

Communication Policy Committee

Committee members: Marie Benedetti, Loretta Heimbuch, Nancy Miller, Margaret Nichols (chair), Michelle Waffner

This year the Communication Policy Committee developed, and the Board approved, these policies for FUSIT:

- Digital Communications Guidelines: <http://unitarian.ithaca.ny.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Digital-Communications-Guidelines-final-8-30-22.docx.pdf>
- Social Media Usage: <http://unitarian.ithaca.ny.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Social-Media-Usage-final-8-30-22.docx-1.pdf>
- Database Communication: http://unitarian.ithaca.ny.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Database-Communication-Guidelines-updated-11_22.pdf
- Listserv Guidelines: <http://unitarian.ithaca.ny.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/listserv-guidelines-1.pdf>

The new policies provide for our online communications to continue whether FUSIT has a minister or not. Once these policies were approved, the path was clear for Michelle Waffner, our church Administrator, to activate a new version of the FUSIT listserve. This restored a congregation-wide avenue of communication which had been closed for months.

Other activities of our Committee:

- We reviewed the older communications policies on the FUSIT website, and incorporated their still-relevant parts into the new policies.
- We worked to encourage FUSIT committees and teams to submit monthly reports of their activities to the Board. This helps Board members, committee and team leaders, and others in the congregation keep up to date on what is going on.
 - Michelle sends out a monthly reminder to committee and team leaders to submit their reports.
 - Fred Balfour contributed a useful template to ensure that reports are clearly identified, with a title, date, names of the committee or team and its members, and submitter's name.

We hope that these changes to policies and practices will help FUSIT's communication channels remain active, foster respectful dialogue, and build community for years to come.

Submitted by Margaret Nichols

Community-Wide Online Auction



This was an exciting event that took place the last weekend in April. The 210 Bidding Owl auction items included over 80 gift certificates and baskets from community vendors and over 120 wonderful items and services donated by our FUSIT members and friends. The generosity of our 80 bidders and donors resulted in our raising approximately \$7,700! Congratulations to all the happy winners and a special thanks to our Auction Coordinator, Marie Benedetti, and her dedicated team which included Simon Catterall, Alice Churchill, Jessica Brown, Fred Balfour, Loretta Heimbuch, and Michelle Waffner.

Submitted by Marie Benedetti

Congregational Administrator's Report

I have recently finished out my second year at FUSIT and want to thank everyone for an enjoyable year. Some highlights from the office are below.

- Gayle Garin, Nick Garin, Richard Russell and Friede Sander joined FUSIT as members this year. The total number of active members is currently 285.
- 48 people filled out newcomer cards (and were added to the Weekly Announce list and to Breeze).
- A Team and Committee page was created on the website to help people who are looking for group information.
- A 50+ page operations manual was created to make things easier for the next Administrator to learn all the ins and outs of the position.
- Building rentals and usage has started picking back up.

—The building was used for FUSIT activities approximately 140 times (not counting Sunday services).

—The building was rented out for non-FUSIT activities approximately 180 times.

I would like to take a moment to honor the passing of the following long-time members, as well as attendees: Connie Hill, Kay Durant, Jim Skaley, Polly Joan, Marion McPheeters, Helen Ackerman, Rebecca Elgie and Hans Fleischmann. We are grateful for their time with FUSIT and will carry them in our hearts.

*Warmly,
Michelle Waffner, Congregational Administrator*



48
people filled out
newcomer
cards

Engagement and Outreach

After several years of not having a paid Engagement and Outreach coordinator serving the congregation the board approved a shift in the budget to allow for this position to be reinstated.

- A 10 hour per week position has been created and a job description approved.
- This position has been advertised locally and online.
- A team has been formed and several interviews have been held with potential candidates.

A huge thank you to Jessica Brown for managing our social media during this time period and to Madonna Stallmann for ensuring that our Welcome Table has a friendly face there to greet newcomers and members each Sunday.

Submitted by Emily Richardson

Finance Committee

The Committee met monthly during the Church year. Members included: Walt Peck, FUSIT Treasurer; Jens Wennberg; Rich Dolge, Endowment Chair; James Skaley (through his death in November 2022); Elton Hall (through his resignation in January 2023); Patrick Jordan, Endowment Treasurer; and Nathan Fawcett, Committee Chair. The Finance and Endowment Committees continued to meet jointly in 2022-23, and both the Chairs of the Stewardship and Buildings and Grounds Committees were invited periodically to coordinate finance-related matters.

On a regular basis, the Committee reviewed FUSIT monthly financials and discussed with the Treasurer progress to date on budget vs. actual income and expenditures. Due to unanticipated vacant positions FUSIT is projected to end the year with a small positive balance. This has been an important year to assess financial performance, as experience is gained with a new ministerial structure and oversight. The Committee also reviewed quarterly Endowment reports, and coordinated stock gift receipt procedures and transfers from and to the Endowment with the Endowment Committee.

Work on a Five-year Strategic Financial Plan was interrupted by the untimely death of Jim Skaley, who was in the process of collecting information for the Plan. To be most meaningful, input for the Plan is necessary from the FUSIT Board on strategic program aspirations, such as the size of the membership, composition of the ministry team, and physical plan priorities. The Committee will restructure resources to continue progress in drafting the Five-Year Strategic Financial Plan. Among other items to be addressed will be a more aggressive program to solicit gifts to FUSIT's Endowment, additional strategies to raise funds for the operating budget, and efforts to maximize existing resources, among others.

In recent months, efforts have focused on supporting the Treasurer's drafting of a proposed budget for 2023-2024. Finally, given the loss of Jim Skaley and resignation of Elton Hall, priority is being placed on recruiting new members of the Committee, ideally reflecting a younger demographic.

Submitted by Nathan Fawcett

Governance Committee (GovCo)

The primary purpose of the Governance Committee, as a committee of the Board, is to oversee the policies of Partnership Governance and to ensure that those policies align with our practices at FUSIT.

This year, we've addressed some inconsistencies in the Board Policy book at the behest of the Board, suggesting adapted language for the Board to approve. Aside from this, our primary task was to ensure that the Board Policy book reflected what was learned this past year as the OAT and MVT were fully implemented. This spring, we met with the members of the OAT, the MVT, and with the Staff, to discuss how responsibility was allocated to each group. Based on this feedback, and the suggestions that all brought to us, we crafted suggestions for the Board that would create a more streamlined organizational hierarchy and clearer staff reporting structure, and proposed language changes to the Board Policy book to reflect these suggestions.

Submitted by Laura Free

Hospitality Teams



Summary for 2022-2023

Starting in 2016 and extending to early 2020, John Gaines designed and built a solid and successful Hospitality Teams model. Covid forced in-person Sunday Services to cease in early 2020. In 2021, Fred Balfour gleefully acceded to the Interim Chair of Hospitality Teams. Folks signed up and we quickly grew to full fledged implementation.

Report

1. Summer services in the parlor at 9:30 am starting in June 2022 were served by a small team making coffee, setting up and cleaning up. George and Pat Henkel deserve special mention for their consistent staffing.
2. September 2022 brought Sunday Services in the sanctuary with some pandemic rules and guidelines. A temporary team, dubbed the Aurora Street Irregulars, provided the full set of Hosp Team services: Set-up, Coffee making; Ushing; Clean-up and Snacks. N.B. Many Board Trustees joined the Irregulars.
3. In December 2022, as "normal" became normal, we recruited three Co-Captains: Cheryl Botts, Andy Turner, and Jack Zinda.
4. In January 2023, the Co-Captains started recruiting weekly participants from the original four terms in the Breeze Database: #1 through #4. The Co-Captains resuscitated the Web App, Sign-Up-Genius, originally implemented in 2018 by Russ Charif. Teams #1 through #4 began to respond "pretty well".

5. The Co-Captains, Andy, Cheryl and Jack were joined by Fred and made two Sunday Service “announcements” on the importance of all First Unitarian members signing up for weekly HT tasks a couple times a year. Clad in aprons and using coffee urn covers as cymbals, the announcements were enjoyed by all and weekly participation picked up.

6. The Hospitality Teams also assisted in several all-church lunches after Sunday Services as well as a number of memorial service events.

Hospitality Teams are looking forward to Church Year 2023-2024 and the joy of serving our community in ushing, snack prep, and the all-important Unitarian ingredients - Keith Perry's fresh bread and strong coffee.

Submitted by Fred Balfour

LGBTQ+ Group

The SGM for the FUSIT LGBTQ+ community was formed in March of 2020 with twelve people attending and with Kevin Moss as facilitator. The group has continued to meet monthly since that time, and while some of the original members have left, others have joined; thus the group has consistently maintained a level of 10-15 members – though typical meeting attendance is around half that. When COVID restrictions eased, the group resumed in-person meetings, though in the winter time we have switched back to meeting on Zoom so that members didn't need to be out after dark and on potentially bad roads. Interestingly, some of those participating in the Small Group are not regular attendees or members of FUSIT, which is a clear indication of our Society's reach extending outward into the larger surrounding community. All individuals on the LGBTQ+ continuum are welcome in this group and can find connection, community and support in a safe, confidential and nurturing environment.

Kevin will be stepping down as facilitator of the group at the end of the current church year, following the June meeting. The group has not yet decided if it will continue as a SGM with a different facilitator, disband, or continue to meet in some other capacity.



Submitted by Kevin Moss

Men's Group

We invite all who identify as a man to join us in our monthly meeting. The Men's Group meets monthly in the Arch Room for discussion on issues that mostly pertain to men's lives. After the slowing of COVID and the opening up of the church to groups, meetings were started again. Since food was prohibited the attendance was not good, but after the addition of pizza, again attendance increased. Now 10 to 15 men gather each month. The leadership of the group is fluid. At the end of each meeting someone agrees to lead the next month and another person will pick up the pizza.

Submitted by Jens Wennberg

Women's Group

The Women's Group has been meeting via Zoom at 7:00 pm on the 4th Monday of each month. We usually have about 6 attendees. It has been a wonderful forum for sharing concerns, both personal and societal. It continues to be valuable to those of us who attend as a friendly and supportive group.

Submitted by Nancy Miller

Library Team

Library Re-Opening

Over a 6-month period, a dedicated library team organized and cataloged over 800 library books that had been in various collections over many years. In January, our official library had been re-opened on the second floor of the Parish House where members are now encouraged to browse or to search the LibraryCat online catalog from home. This online catalog includes 14 categories of interest. Items may be borrowed for a 1-month period, in a self-serve fashion. Many thanks to the library team which includes Barbara Shew, JoAnn Kowalski, and Marie Benedetti.

Submitted by Marie Benedetti

Music Team

The mission of the Music Team is to provide a variety of high quality music for Sunday Celebrations and to encourage and facilitate musical participation from the church community. Our Music Team members are Stephanie Ortolano (chair), Jayne Demakos, Jack Roscoe, Sue Roenke, Emily Richards, Tim Ball, and Kevin Moss.

Adult Choir

Our big news this year was the hiring of our new choir director, Jayne Demakos, who started in January 2023. Jayne brings a wealth of experience in sacred and secular music spaces and such care for our choir members. It has been a real joy to get to know her and to see how she can bring out the best in all of our voices!



Sage Chapel on Christmas Eve

Thanks to the hard work of many people behind the scenes, FUSIT returned to Sage Chapel to host the Community Christmas Eve service. DRE Emily Richards did a phenomenal job of selecting music and rehearsing our expanded choir for this special event. Unfortunately, she was unable to enjoy the fruits of her labor due to a positive COVID diagnosis on the morning of Christmas Eve! Choir member Adam Perl stepped in to conduct with very short notice and did a great job. In addition to the choir, we also had several guest musicians: trumpeter Frank Campos, oboist Erica Howard, and string players Tim Ball, Kathy McHugh, Megan Barber, Jesse Bates and Josephine and Cecilia Jenkins-Ortolano.

Beacon on Aurora

This year we started a monthly concert series, titled "Beacon on Aurora", with a nod to our street address and the title of the original newsletter of the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca. The goal of the concert series is to bring people together to enjoy music in the folk/indy folk tradition from artists touring regionally and nationally. While the series is still a work in progress, we have already hosted several groups - The Sea The Sea, Sean Rowe, and Julian Taylor - with a terrific final show of the first program year with Garnet Rogers. Members of the wider FUSIT community have helped with baking, coffee-making, ticket sales and more.

Special Music Sundays

With the return of more people using our church facilities, we have had many more diverse musical guests on Sunday mornings. This year we have had violist Roberta Crawford, cellist Josephine Jenkins-Ortolano, vocalist Tracy Robertson, string players from Ithaca Talent Education, piano duets from Charlotte Greenspan and Carrie Regenstein, VOICES Multicultural Choir, the Freeing Your Voice singers led by Elisa Keeler, the Children's Choir of Ithaca, violinist Kate Wyly, pianist Russ Posegate, and organist Sondra Wayman. Our house band, FUUnion, led by Kevin Moss, will be playing at our final service of the church year at Stewart Park.

Elisa Keeler was our guest for the Music Team's Music Service on April 23 and along with fantastic music, she gave an inspiring sermon about breaking through our inner resistance in order to achieve our dreams.

Submitted by Stephanie Ortolano

Ministry Visioning Team (MVT)

In our initial year of living the new Adapted Partnership Governance model, MVT as a newly assembled team has accomplished much and learned a lot. Our team consists of Nancy Miller (Board of Trustees liaison), Emily Richards (Director of Congregational Life and Religious Education), Rev Peaches Gillette (Associate Director of Congregational Life), joAnn Kowalski and Don Rakow. We are tasked by the Board of Trustees “to guide and coordinate the work of the ministry and serve as governance partners with the Board to implement the goals articulated in the annual Vision of Ministry”.

Accomplishments:

- Supported/monitored the ministry teams through the monthly Team Leadership Council meetings, reviewing monthly reports, checking in with Team leaders throughout the year.
- Collaborated with the Board on the two (fall and winter) Open Questions.
- Crafted a Vision of Ministry which was approved by the Board for the 2023-24 church year.
- Negotiated with the Treasurer and the Board for funds to hire a part time Engagement and Outreach Coordinator to be a regular congregational welcoming presence. Interviews for the position are in process.
- joAnn Kowalski has recruited volunteers to staff the Sunday Morning Welcome Table. Thanks to joAnn, Madonna Stallmann, Loretta Heimbuch and Michelle Waffner who have carried out the bare bones of E&O tasks for most of the year.
- Worked with the Social Justice Council to re-imagine Social Justice work which has been reconfigured under the leadership of the Social Justice Leadership Team consisting of Rev Peaches Gillette, joAnn Kowalski, Matt Franke-Singer, and Mary Clabby.
- Communicated with the Board of Trustees through monthly written reports and MVT Board Liaison present at Board meeting.
- Communicated with OAT through sending monthly reports/meeting notes to OAT, had a joint meeting in February and will meet again with them in June to discuss overlapping issues.
- Recruited Donna Roberts to coordinate Art In the Parlor.
- Met in January with OAT, Board, Staff, and Governance Committee to identify what is going well and where the gaps are in the new model. Met with GovCo this month to make suggestions for needed changes, especially in supervision of ministry staff.
- Recruitment of volunteers for the ministry teams is an ongoing issue. A Team Fair during coffee hour was held in November.
- Support the congregation in making a commitment to complete the Welcoming Renewal Program next year, helped recruit a team to lead that effort.

Areas for more work:

- Recruit more volunteers.
- In the big picture, where are the gaps in ministry? Ministry to our elders? What are our congregation’s needs coming out of COVID?
- Improve connection with the staff as a whole.
- Improve connection and communication within the congregation.
- How can we reach out more effectively to the greater Ithaca community and be more welcoming?

Nancy Miller for MVT

2023-2024 Vision of Ministry

Adopted by the Board of Trustees – April 19, 2023

- **Create opportunities for spiritual growth and faith development by:**
- **Centering Social Justice as a core part of who we are and an avenue to individual and societal transformation.**
- **Inviting more opportunities for connecting with each other in deep and meaningful ways.**
- **Exploring our roots as a pluralistic, multi-faith community, offering ways to engage in, wisdom and practices from a variety of spiritual traditions.**

Nominating Committee (NomCom)

Summary for 2022-2023: Nominating Committee (NomCom) worked to fulfill its Bylaws charter:

- We recruited four trustee candidates for the 2023-2034 church year: Fred Balfour, Tom Coakley, Megan McCormick and Rene Rogers;
- We developed and tested a number of new approaches for Leadership Recruiting.
- We missed targets coming up short on two board positions and two Nominating Committee positions.

Background: NomCom started the year with four conditions:

- Three vacant Trustee positions;
- In-church attendance down by 60% (comparing the pre-Covid year with 2022);
- Several new or re-staffed committees and Teams representing a new governance structure, reducing the number of recruitable Society members;
- A noticeable number of long-term members stepping away from the Society.

Accomplishments: NomCom developed and upgraded its practices to focus on its Bylaws charter to:

“... assure that the Society has effective and diverse leadership to guide the future operations of the Society.”

An example of changing practices is member meetings to discuss serving:

- We meet with individuals and couples in a relaxed setting.
- We acknowledge 2 pandemic years and 2 departing ministers. And asked;
 - What do you need from our Society as we recover and grow?
 - What areas can you contribute to the Society?
- We discuss the Society’s new Leadership Organization Chart (See Chart)
- We discuss First Unitarian Leadership Areas. (See Chart “First Unitarian Leadership Areas”)
- We discuss the person’s style of working. (see Leadership Areas Chart)

Another example of changing practice is considering the makeup of Board representation:

- Young families, singles, and seniors?
- Gender and race?
- Team interests such as: Anti-racism, Social Justice, and Buildings & Grounds?

Targets for 2023-2024:

1. Fill the remaining two Trustee positions using mid-year adds to the Board.
2. Fill the two NomCom positions using mid-year adds to the Committee.
3. Continue to promote long-term leadership development across our Society.

Submitted by Fred Balfour

Operations Administrative Team (OAT)

The Operations Administrative Team (OAT) is a part of Partnership Governance and is charged by the Board of Trustees with managing church operations, including staff supervision and evaluation.

Members are appointed by the Board and include Michelle Waffner, Rod Howe, Walt Peck, and John Gaines. OAT is lead collegially by all members.

Major accomplishments and areas of work this year include:

- Developing and implementing a plan for supervision of all church staff;
- Developing and implementing a plan for performance reviews of all church staff;
- Developing and implementing a plan for revision and approval of all church staff job descriptions;
- Working with the Governance Committee to revise the Board Policy Book;
- Creating a Safety Team and working with Buildings and Grounds to address building security concerns;
- Providing a presence at weekly Staff Meetings;
- Working with other teams and committees to revise policies and procedures, e.g. Memorial Services, Building Use and Rentals, Incident Protocols, and Operating Budget;
- Approved staff hires and made recommendations to the Board;
- Communicating intentionally and working with the Mission Visioning Team (MVT).

Respectfully submitted, John Gaines, 04/26/2023

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee continued its work this year, meeting almost every other week throughout the year (along with a joint meeting with members of the Board of Trustees.) Membership includes Carolyn Emerick, John Gaines IV, Dick Kurtz, Susan Murphy, and Jenna Rosenberg, chair. Michelle Waffner, Congregational Administrator, met with the committee, as needed, throughout the year.

The committee addressed the following issues:

- Created a process and appropriate templates for offer letters to employees of FUSIT. All employees will have current letters of appointment.
- Continued work on alignment of FUSIT policies with New York State law, particularly Paid leave, and PTO. Also updated the policy regarding jury duty service and pay from FUSIT.
- Created a job description template to be used for all jobs and worked with the Ministry Fulfillment team on the job descriptions for the new Congregational Life positions. Also provided input into the job descriptions for the RE Assistant and the Engagement and Outreach Coordinator.
- Provided suggestions for the job performance review process to be conducted by OAT this year.
- Reviewed the topic of Core Competencies that have been included in previous job descriptions. The committee recommended modifications to them and recommended that they be removed from job descriptions and be included in the performance review process, instead.
- Revised the charge to the Committee from the Board of Trustees and proposed the new charge to the Board for approval. In doing so, the committee is clarifying its role as a resource to the Board and Staff and that it does not participate or interfere with supervision of staff.
- Continued review and update of the Personnel Manual, which will revert to its old title of Employee Handbook. The goal will be to have any policies regarding Personnel matters delineated in the Board Policy Book while the handbook will serve as a resource to staff for guidance concerning the policies and other operating processes and procedures. Among some specific protocols the committee reviewed were a new incident reporting protocol, background checks and reference checks.
- Reviewed the new Board Policy Book being recommended by the Governance Committee and provided recommendations on the topics pertaining to Personnel.

The committee thanks the many volunteers in FUSIT who have been involved in the hiring and support of staff, especially members of OAT, the Ministry Fulfillment Team and MVT. The committee also thanks all the staff who have gone above and beyond this year in creating community and a spiritual home at FUSIT for our members and guests.

*Respectfully submitted, on behalf of the committee
Susan H. Murphy
May 12, 2023*

Religious Exploration

2022-2023 has been an exciting year for our Religious Exploration (RE) program. Here are some of the highlights.

- FUSIT is thrilled to welcome Madeline Natale as our new RE Assistant.
- After an almost three year hiatus the Nursery is back open on Sunday mornings.
- Regular Sunday morning RE programming has resumed three times a month this fall.
- 80 children and youth from 56 families receive emails on the themes of Soul Matters, UU Identity, Monthly Meditations, and Justice and Anti-Racism.
- We have welcomed thirteen new families to RE this year.
- Two sessions of Our Whole Lives (OWL) were offered, one for middle school and high school with 19 youth participating.
- Music for Little People was offered each week for free for the Ithaca community beginning in October.
- Pub Theology ran each month on the fourth Tuesday.
- Spiritual Yoga Series offered in the spring
- Community events offered this year include:

- Holiday Decorating Party
- Winter Solstice and Yule Celebration
- All-Ages Holiday Sing
- Holiday Cookie Decorating
- 3rd Annual StUuffy Sleepover with 28 stuffies
- Blanket Making Workshop for The Advocacy Center
- Love Month Crafts and Cookies
- February & April Movie Nights
- Kids Yoga
- Family Playtime
- Separate Youth, All-Ages, and Drop Off Game Nights
- Playdate in the Park
- Trick Or Treating at FUSIT



- Attendance at Sunday morning RE hit an attendance high of 30 children and youth between the nursery and classroom, with classes focusing on our Soul Matters themes, along with special holiday classes throughout the year.
- A Share Your Wisdom RE volunteer campaign to encourage volunteers for the 2023-2024 church year so that the growing RE program can have three classrooms starting in the fall was run in the spring.
- In addition the DRE has completed the Religious Educator Credentialing Program through the UUA and is now a Credentialed Religious Educator.

Emily Richards, Director of Religious Exploration



Safety Team

The Safety Team was convened by the Operations Administrative Team (OAT) this year to continue work on safety and emergency planning that had begun in 2019 and was suspended due to the pandemic.

Members who volunteered to serve include Scott Grover, Geoff Dunn, Maria Benedetti, Sara Catterall, Andy Turner, Rev. Peaches Gillette, Fred Balfour, Rachel Seymour, and John Gaines. John Gaines took lead of the Team. The Team met infrequently, but pursued their work largely through email.

Major accomplishments and areas of work this year include:

- Implementing revised door locking procedures;
- Reviewing and implementing, along with Buildings and Grounds, enhanced building security, particularly with the Parish House door;
- Reviewing and implementing Disruptive Behavior policies with respect to one individual;
- Developing a process of having at least one designated Safety Team member on duty each Sunday;
- Implementing the US Department of Homeland Security's "Power of Hello" document for Safety Team members on Sunday duty;
- Revising the FUSIT Evacuation Route Site Plan and having Safety Team members be familiar with the Plan;
- Beginning work with the Ithaca Fire Department on developing a comprehensive Fire Safety and Evacuation Plan that complies with International Fire Code.
- Reporting on our work at OAT meetings.

Respectfully submitted, John Gaines, 05/09/2023

Sage Chapel Ushers

Steve Hand coordinated the ushers for the annual Christmas Eve service at Sage Chapel. There was one service at 5:15 pm. The attendance at the service was 527 including the ushers and the choir. Michelle Waffner and Rachel Seymour smoothly transported all the necessary materials from the church to Sage Chapel. The following people generously gave of their time and extended their hospitality to those who attended the service:

Pat Gaines, John Gaines, Kathy Hopkins, Carl Hopkins, Therese O'Connor, Earl Rose, Rita Rosenberg-Barber, Don Barber, Rod Howe, Fred Balfour, Andrea Dutcher, JoEllen Bailey, Elixabeth Bixler, Betsy East and Steve Hand.

We are thankful to all of these folks as well as any we may have inadvertently missed.

Respectfully submitted, Stephen O. Hand



Small Group Ministry (SGM)

Small Group Ministry (SGM) has been an important part of the FUSIT community for 21 years!

SGM embodies FUSIT's mission:

- In our groups, confidentiality, deep listening and thoughtful sharing of life experience and wisdom allow members to form deep **connections**.
- We explore topics important to our lives and these explorations **inspire** us to lead more deeply intentional lives.
- Small Groups perform at least one service project each year **engaging** either the FUSIT community or the greater Ithaca community.

At this time at FUSIT there are 7 SGMs containing about 65 people. SGM topics are drawn from Soul Matters topics, from the UU Small Group Ministry Network website, or from suggestions of members. Groups meet in-person (inside or outside) or on zoom, or a combination of all of these. Groups meet every other week, twice a month, or once a month, either on Sunday morning, Sunday evening, Monday evening, Tuesday evening, Wednesday evening, and Friday morning. All groups welcome new members as their size allows.

Facilitators this year are Andrew Quagliata, Sue Rakow, Mike Mann, John Gaines, Judy Jones, Marsha Kardon, June Locke, Kevin Moss and Sue Roenke. The facilitators' group, which provides support, mentoring and training for facilitators met in January and March this year on zoom led by Emily Richards. A new SGM will form in the fall 2023 facilitated by Robin Cisne.

Service projects are an important part of SGM. This year's service projects include:

- Working with the Village at Ithaca by collecting and delivering food and household products to families that are supported by the Village
- Caring for Hazel's Backyard
- Preparing lunches for St. John's food services quarterly
- Volunteering for Trees Up Tompkins: planting native trees to replace invasive plants to improve the environment and support both migrating and resident birds.
- Packing food for shipping with the organization "Feed My Starving Children"
- Providing food for the OWL facilitator training weekend
- Preparing for new residents at Second Wind Cottages (for people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness)

On March 12th Emily Richards led a Sunday service called "*An Invitation to Deeper Connection*" with the goal of raising awareness of SGM at FUSIT. Those present in-person or on zoom spent much of the service in a one-time small group. John Gaines, Kevin Moss, Sue Roenke, Marsha Kardon, Stephanie Ortolano, Margaret Nichols and Loretta Heimbuch volunteered to lead these groups.

To find out more about SGM or to join an SGM contact Marsha Kardon (mfkardon@gmail.com) or 607-272-6582 or call the FUSIT office. SGM is a great way to develop significant connections with others in our congregation.

Marsha Kardon, Team Leader SGM

Social Justice

Social Justice efforts at FUSIT promote the 2nd Unitarian Universalist Principle of "justice, equity and compassion in human relations" by identifying important social and humanitarian needs in our community and beyond. The SJC takes constructive action to positively impact the lives of individuals and groups.

For the past year, the Social Justice Council (SJC) has been in a period of transition. Jackie Jablonski, who had organized the group's efforts and served as the point person for six years, resigned as the SJC's leader. We thank Jackie for her steadfast support of the SJC over the years.

As a result, the Ministry Visioning Team (MVT) met on several occasions with the SJC to plan the future path of the group. In addition, the MVT hosted two Congregational Conversations to gather input from members to collectively envision short-term and long-term opportunities and actions that the FUSIT community can commit to further our goal of promoting social justice.

A recommendation was presented to establish a **Social Justice Leadership Team (SJLT)** to lead and coordinate efforts, both within the SJC and in conjunction with the general membership. The SJLT consists of the following members: Mary Clabby, Matt Franke-Singer, Reverend Peaches Gillette and joAnn kowalski.

The charge for the SJLT is:

- Create and maintain an organizational structure that supports our social justice teams and projects.
- Work together to identify congregation-wide projects each year.
- Collect and distribute a list of local organizations and ways to support them.
- Assist with communicating opportunities for social justice work to the FUSIT community.

Despite the transition, efforts continued in the following areas:

DOVE (Demonstrating Our Values Through Eating) led by Amie Hamlin. The SJLT held a Social Justice Sunday in April with Amie providing plant-based salads for all those attending. Tables provided information on various ways to get involved in social justice initiatives both within FUSIT and the surrounding community.

Veterans Affairs/Peace: Jim Murphy continues to help find service and housing for veterans in Tompkins County and has also remained active in the Warrior Writers program.

Volunteers to reduce food insecurity: SJC coordinates FUSIT's participation in Area Congregations Together (ACT) by providing lunches to the St. John's Community Day Center as well as coordinating efforts at the Ithaca Kitchen Cupboard.

Ithaca Sanctuary Alliance: After the successful transition of a family in sanctuary at the First Congregational Church to the community, another family is planned to be housed in sanctuary. Many volunteers assist with supporting the family by donating time, money, and goods.

Single-Payer Health Care: Efforts continue to fight for the passage of the New York Health Act. It is with sadness that we note the passing of a long-time supporter of these efforts, Rebecca Elgie. Rebecca, a retired teacher, served on the Tompkins County Health Care Task Force for many years. She continued to be involved despite personal health concerns. We will miss Rebecca's energy and enthusiasm and will continue to fight for passage of this important legislation. Judy Jones has capably assumed the lead for this effort.

Sharing Sundays Recipients

Fall 2022 - Spring 2023

11.27.22 Southside Community Center \$420.60
12.24.22 Babies First \$2,874.65
1.22.23 Advocacy Center \$450.69
2.26.23 Planned Parenthood \$538.25
3.26.23 Second Wind Cottages \$312.85
4.30.2023 Open Doors English \$731.00

Submitted by joAnn kowalski

Stewardship

During February and March 2022, the Stewardship Team conducted the "Connect•Inspire •Engage" Stewardship campaign to raise funds for the 2023 - 2024 church year.

Our opening celebration on March 5, a week after pledge letters were mailed, included an inspiring sermon about vulnerability and generosity by Emily Richards and spirited music as congregants danced their pledge cards down the aisle. Virtual attendees also were invited to send in their pledges and grow the numbers of paper butterflies & hearts on a large sanctuary wheel on display through March, April and May. As we go to press, pledges total \$285,463 toward our goal of \$350,000. So far pledges have come in from 126 households (44% of households). These included 6 first time pledges, 64 with an increased amount, 42 the same as last year, and 14 with a decreased amount. We are about \$15,000 behind where we were last year at this time.

This year the Stewardship Team had some turnover. Rich Andrusis retired from the team and we thank him for his service. Amelia Habicht joined and added fresh eyes and energy - thank you! Other members include Wendy Schaerer, Jack Roscoe, Jeanette Knapp and Board Liaison Margaret Nichols. We thank team alumni Sam Weeks and Terry Starr for generously pitching in with the campaign tasks they are so practiced and good at. The Stewardship team is very grateful for Kathy Hopkins' work making connections on the pledge phone, Lorretta Helmbuch for help with the campaign graphic, and Michelle Waffner for excellent management of the member list and pledges. What a team!

Pledges can be made at any time, but each year the Stewardship team encourages everyone who can to make their pledge (promise of some \$\$ amount) by the end of April, so the Treasurer, Finance Committee, and Board can settle on next year's budget in time for the Annual Meeting in May. As of this writing, we continue to contact by phone those who have not yet pledged this year, and to thank the many who have.

We are looking for additional team members. FUSIT members with graphics skills, copy editing skills, and/or lots of social connections within our congregation are especially encouraged to contact Matt Hare, Stewardship Chair, for more information at stewardship@uuiithaca.org

Submitted by Matt Hare



Treasurer's Report

- For fiscal year 2022-23, the church's financial standing is good. A number of income sources are meeting or exceeding expectations. Pledge receipts are solid, as are rental income and plate collections. Receipts from the auction were fantastic. (But please note one caveat; the most current statements that we have are dated April 5, as our esteemed bookkeeper is home with her newborn! But there is no reason to think that the rest of the year will not continue just as well as it has.)
- Our Stewardship team has done yeoman work, once again. But the projection is that we will fall about \$30,000 short of a very ambitious goal.
- The church itself is doing very well. Attendance is up. Our staff is strong and programming is expanding.
- Given all this, as an institution we are at a very important point when it comes to finances. If we want to continue our upward trajectory, we need to retain and reward staff, with a solid 6% cost-of-living increase. And we need to continue to invest in ways that further our expansion.
- The result is the proposed budget that you will be voting on at the annual meeting. Please note, for the last several years, the budget has included every line for public review. In this age of intense digital communication and out of respect for individual staff privacy and dignity, this year's budget does not explicitly share individual staff salaries.
- The proposed budget does include continued funding for the following line items that have been added or restored in recent years:
 - Assistant to the DRE
 - Outreach and Engagement Coordinator
 - Choir Director
- The three Directors of Congregational Life are retained in the proposed budget, though the specifics of their job responsibilities are being shuffled somewhat as we get a better sense of what the congregation needs and what these professionals can best offer. This topic is an ongoing discussion that has not been fully finalized.
- In order to balance the proposed budget, three strategies are being implemented on the income side of the ledger.
 1. We have a moderate fund available on the operating books of about \$60,000 that resulted from the cost savings that resulted from not having Reverend Johnson for much of the 2021-22 church year. We had hoped that this money would go toward future efforts to find and finance a full-time minister at some point in the future. And perhaps it still will. But, given the need for next year, we will be allocating \$25,000 of this account to the operating budget as a "One-time Cash Carryover." It is important to recognize that this money is not an ongoing income source. So we need to avoid becoming dependent on it in future budgets.
 2. We added a \$5,000 income line called "New Fund Raisers". What are they? Who knows? Remember the Cabaret? The Recycling Sale? We, as a congregation, could get creative here!
 3. We have increased the Rent income line by \$14,000. Some of that reflects the ongoing increase in rental revenues due to inflation and to a strengthening demand as the community emerges from the Pandemic. And we also need to take advantage of our competitive advantages; we have a well-maintained building space in a central location. With the help of congregants who know the market, perhaps we can find a way to leverage our assets into greater rental returns?
- One final aside; do not interpret the subcategories of expenses (e.g., 'ADMINISTRATION' or 'MINISTRY') as hard and fast categories. There is a lot of overlap and ambiguity in where expenses belong. Consequently, please do not put too much stress on comparing expenses by category!

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these matters. This budget is ambitious and reflects our faith that we can thrive as a Society. I hope you will embrace that vision and join in supporting our promising future.

Sincerely, Walt Peck
May 2023

23-24 Budget Proposal

23-24 Budget Proposal

	20-21 Budget	21-22 Budget	22-23 Budget	23-24 Proposed Budget
INCOME				
Pledge and Grant Income	363,000	317,000	330,000	310,000
Auction	12,000	12,000	10,000	14,000
Endowment	14,000	14,000	14,000	14,000
Total Rent	36,848	37,000	38,600	52,136
Plate Collections	15,000	15,000	10,000	12,000
Christmas Eve Collection	4,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Shared Plates	0	0	5,000	5,000
New Fund Raisers	5,000	0	0	5,000
One-time Cash Carryover	0	0	0	25,000
Other Income	<u>22,000</u>	<u>2,000</u>	<u>2,000</u>	<u>2,000</u>
TOTAL INCOME	471,848	400,000	412,600	442,136
EXPENSES				
ADMINISTRATION				
Administrative Personnel	67,381	62,141	72,234	76,299
Contingency	400	400	0	400
Copying	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
Database Fees	0	0	0	2,000
Denomination Contributions	27,987	13,090	12,000	12,000
Disability Insurance	1,800	1,800	2,000	2,000
Office Equipment	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200
Office Supplies	1,300	1,100	1,200	1,400
Payroll Accounting Service	2,200	2,100	2,400	2,400
Payroll Taxes	10,617	10,968	16,685	17,686
Postage	1,800	1,500	1,500	800
Startup Retreat	500	200	0	500
Stewardship Committee	3,000	3,000	3,000	1,000
Tech Support	1,800	1,500	1,500	1,500

23-24 Budget Proposal

Telephone/Internet	2,800	2,800	2,800	2,800
Workers' Compensation	<u>3,200</u>	<u>3,200</u>	<u>3,400</u>	<u>3,400</u>
Total Administration	127,485	106,499	121,419	126,885
CHURCH MAINTENANCE				
Buiding Pesonnel	20,942	16,041	24,780	26,866
Annual Inspections	4,000	4,000	5,000	5,000
Buiding and Liability Insurance	8,800	9,100	9,500	10,000
City Sidewalk Assessment	500	500	500	700
Debt Service	8,400	8,400	8,400	8,400
Garbage/Recycling	500	500	500	500
Housekeeping Supplies	1,100	1,300	1,300	1,500
Repairs and Routine Maintenance	16,000	12,617	20,000	20,000
Utilities	<u>17,300</u>	<u>18,500</u>	<u>19,800</u>	<u>19,800</u>
Total Maintenance	77,542	70,958	89,780	92,766
MINISTRY				
Ministry Personnel	129,770	131,315	60,360	66,241
Celebration Supplies	1,700	1,800	2,500	2,500
Christmas Eve Service	600	600	600	3,000
Communications Equipment	800	500	600	600
Enhancement and Aesthetics	200	100	200	200
Guest Honorariums	1,200	0	3,900	3,000
New Mission-Driven Ideas	1,700	0	0	0
Newsletter	700	700	700	400
Parking	480	0	0	0
Reverse Offering	<u>1,500</u>	0	0	0
Total Ministry	138,650	135,015	68,860	75,941
MUSIC				
Music Personnel	23,437	20,619	32,431	34,318
Christmas Eve Music	500	500	1,000	1,000
Equipment and Supplies	500	350	600	600
Guest Musicians/Workshop	500	500	700	700
Music Service	450	450	700	700

23-24 Budget Proposal

Organ Repair	1,200	300	1,400	1,400
Piano Repair	500	0	500	500
Sheet Music	<u>700</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>500</u>
Total Music	27,787	22,719	37,831	39,718
RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION				
RE Personnel	68,474	61,163	83,033	89,946
Adult RE	400	400	400	400
C & Y Arts Enrichment	450	450	450	450
Children's Programming	675	675	675	675
Library	0	0	200	475
Parent Outreach	400	450	450	450
Shared Ministry Service	250	250	250	300
Sunday Snack	350	400	400	400
Supplies	600	600	600	600
Teacher Appreciation	300	300	300	300
Teacher Training-OWL	1,000	0	1,000	1,000
Texts	475	475	475	475
Youth Group	<u>500</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>500</u>
Total RE	73,874	65,663	88,733	95,971
SOCIAL ACTION				
Anti-Racism	0	1,200	500	800
Area Congregations Together	0	0	0	150
Charitable Giving	7,900	8,000	8,000	8,000
Childcare	200	380	380	380
Membership	2,500	0	700	700
Rental Docent	600	300	300	300
SJC Programs	850	850	850	850
Website Communications	<u>150</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Social Action	12,230	10,730	10,730	11,180
TOTAL EXPENSES	471,848	411,583	417,578	442,461
NET INCOME	0	-11,583	-4,978	-325

Endowment and Investment Committee

Endowment and Investment Committee Results for the Year Ended June 30, 2022

As shown on the balance sheet that follows, the Endowment Fund ended the fiscal year with a total fund balance of \$742,176, as compared to \$942,573 in the prior year resulting in a net decrease of \$200,397 for the year. Total income for the year amounted to \$(166,333). This included \$6,002 in contributions, \$310 in semi-annual distributions from the Hare Trust, \$8,174 in interest and dividends, and \$(180,819) in realized and unrealized losses on investments for the year. Total expenses for the year amounted to \$34,065. \$22,630 was paid to the Operating Fund, which was used for organ repairs; \$6,002 was spent on life insurance premiums paid for with contributions by the donor of the policy; and \$5,433 was spent on investment custodial fees.

Fund Balances

As shown on the balance sheet, the Endowment Fund is comprised of a general endowment as well as individual funds restricted for specific purposes at the request of the donors.

Investments

The Committee's investment policy was for the investment of the endowment funds in a conservative mix of index funds, with low volatility, low maintenance and low custodial fees. Restricted funds were separately invested in an intermediate-term bond index fund for accurate tracking and income allocation. During fiscal years 2013 - 2019, the Committee elected to reposition \$305,000 of the Endowment Fund's Assets to the Unitarian Universalist Common Endowment Fund (UUCEF) and utilize its investment management program.

Gifts to the General Endowment

The Committee encourages friends and members of the congregation to increase contributions to the general endowment. It is vital to provide income with regard to future operating budgets. The Committee has also developed a program of planned giving to encourage various methods of giving that would be beneficial from income tax effect to the donor and help facilitate participation and growth in the endowment contributions. Information regarding this program is available at the church.

Rich Dolge, Chair

Patrick Jordan, Treasurer

Endowment Fund Balance Sheet

	JUNE 30 2022	JUNE 30 2021
<u>ASSETS</u>		
<u>UNRESTRICTED</u>		
CASH - CHECKING	16,693	19,525
ALTERNATIVES CD, SAVINGS	-	-
INVESTMENTS	19,647	21,461
CASH		
MUTUAL FUNDS (VEXMX) @ COST	74,702	74,702
UNREALIZED GAIN (LOSS)	168,149	274,854
MUTUAL FUNDS @ MARKET	242,851	349,556
UU COMMON ENDOWMENT @ COST	187,601	192,333
UNREALIZED GAIN (LOSS)	52,151	101,091
UU COMMON ENDOWMENT @ MARKET	239,752	294,505
MORTGAGE RECEIVABLE - OPERATING	46,670	53,825
TOTAL UNRESTRICTED	565,614	738,872
<u>RESTRICTED</u>		
SPECIAL FUNDS CASH	43,473	40,218
UUCEF / COST	104,139	106,766
GAIN (LOSS)	28,950	56,117
MUTUAL FUNDS @ MARKET	133,089	163,482
TOTAL SPECIAL FUNDS CASH AND INVESTMENTS	176,562	203,700
TOTAL ASSETS	742,176	942,573
<u>LIABILITIES</u>	-	-
<u>FUND BALANCES</u>		
UNRESTRICTED	561,701	735,666
RESTRICTED - RE	2,150	2,150
RESTRICTED - LIBRARY FUNDS	1,057	1,057
SPECIAL RESTRICTED FUNDS		
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS FUND	60,783	69,846
CHAMBERLAIN TRUST	54,573	62,711
HAZEL'S BACKYARD	5,649	6,492
PERRY ESTATE (IN RESTRICTED MUTUAL FUNDS)	48,873	56,160
PIANO FUND	7,389	8,491
TOTAL RESTRICTED FUNDS	177,268	203,700
TOTAL FUND BALANCES	742,176	942,573
TOTAL LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCES	742,176	942,573

Endowment Fund Balance Sheet Income and Expenses For the Period 7/1/21-6/30/22

	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED CHALLENGE PLEDGE	SPECIAL RESTRICTED							TOTAL
			CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS	CHAMBERLAIN TRUST	HAZEL'S		PERRY ESTATE	PIANO FUND		
					BACKYARD MAINTENANCE					
INCOME										
CONTRIBUTIONS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CONTRIBUTIONS - RE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CONTRIBUTIONS - LIBRARY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
HARE TRUST	310									310
LIFE INSURANCE PREMIUM	6,002									6,002
INTEREST/DIVIDENDS UUCEF	2,733									4,250
INTEREST/DIVIDENDS TTC	2,655									2,655
INTEREST - CHECKING / CD	6									6
INTEREST - MORTGAGE	1,264									1,264
REALIZED GAIN (LOSS) TTC	(47,659)									(74,114)
GAIN (LOSS) UUCEF	(106,705)									(106,705)
UNREALIZED GAIN (LOSS)										
TOTAL INCOME	(141,394)	-	(8,551)	(7,678)	(843)	(7,294)	(1,103)	(6,876)	(1,040)	(166,333)
EXPENSE										
OPERATING PLEDGE	-									-
OPERATING TRANSFER	(22,630)									(22,630)
TRANSFER TO CAPITAL PROJECTS	-									-
CAPITAL PROJECTS EXPENSE	(6,002)									(6,002)
LIFE INSURANCE PREMIUM	(2,690)									(4,184)
BANK FEE UUCEF	(1,249)									(1,249)
BANK FEE TTC										
TOTAL EXPENSE	(32,571)	-	(512)	(460)	(48)	(412)	(62)	(412)	(62)	(34,065)
NET INCOME	(173,965)	-	(9,063)	(8,137)	(842)	(7,287)	(1,102)	(6,876)	(1,040)	(200,397)
FUND BALANCE 6/30/21	738,873	-	69,846	62,711	6,492	56,160	8,491	48,873	7,389	942,573
FUND BALANCE 6/30/22	564,908	-	60,783	54,573	5,649	48,873	7,389	48,873	7,389	742,176

