



First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque

Annual Report
2022



First Unitarian

A Unitarian Universalist Congregation
Meeting in Albuquerque, East Mountains,
and Socorro

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State of the Church

The Rev. Angela Herrera

Prepared for First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque's Annual Congregational Meeting January 29, 2023

It was an incredibly heavy lift for the board, volunteers, and staff to organize our first hybrid annual meeting. And then having to adapt to a broken projector by creating separate handouts for in-person and slides for Zoom! Let's show them our gratitude.

I am deeply thankful for Mikaela's time as our congregation's president. She took that role on while we were still 100% virtual. She has led through an incredibly challenging time in this congregation's history, one that will be remembered for generations. There were no easy answers, people had strong feelings, and the stakes were very high. She, and Vice President Viv Bakula, have led with love, patience, thoughtfulness, a lot of deep breathing, and thankfully their senses of humor as well. Mikaela and Viv, you two have really been though something with your ministers, leading during these last two years. I love and admire you both so much. Thank you for everything.

The first thing I want to say about the year 2022 is: Friends, we stuck the landing. I cannot remember a more joyous year-end in my time at First Unitarian. The image that will stay with me is from our two multi-faith, multigenerational Christmas Eve services, with invocations from the UU and Center for Spiritual Living traditions, the Muslim call to prayer, gorgeous music, a participatory story that got the congregation "baaa-ing" and me desperately trying not to lose my composure laughing, and candlelight from wall to wall. In between, the courtyard was filled with the sound of caroling around a fire pit.

That we arrived at such a magical moment of community spirit is a result of the adapting, growing, and listening for the holy that we have done together.

From our strategic plan goals, we have especially leaned into diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism work, and becoming a more multigenerational church.

The board's Eighth Principle Explorations Task Force has been thoughtful, thorough, and engaged. Members and staff have participated in workshops with Paula Cole Jones. We've had sermons, embodiment workshops, Adult Religious Explorations sessions, and other ways of engaging throughout the year. **And in a few minutes, we'll be voting on whether to join the grassroots, BIPOC led movement of adopting an 8th principle.** It is not simply a matter of words. It is an opportunity to walk our talk by following the leadership of UU people of color. And in doing so, we make multiculturalism, diversity, and dismantling racism central to our covenant as UUs. **Not implied in it. Central to it. It's a big moment.**

Another big moment presented itself last September, when we noticed that it was starting to get a little crowded at our one in-person Sunday service. It was time to consider a second in-person service. That meant incorporating Zoom into a live service in the sanctuary, something we had never done before. Since we were already going to make that big change, it was also an opportunity to change other things up and incorporate our strategic directions into the way we do worship. **Our updated liturgy is now livelier, fully multigenerational, and is loosened from the old, white, Protestant norm of "plug-n-play" worship.** Each piece is more intentional and integrated with the other parts. It takes more planning, collaborating, and coaching to pull off, but feedback has been overwhelmingly positive both online and in person, and attendance is the highest it has been since 2020. We have 130-140 people at the 9:00 am service, and 160 at the 11:00 am. That includes the 80-90 logins on zoom, where we don't count heads because some

people are off camera, so the real attendance number is higher. We often had more 400 people between the two services before the pandemic, so I do think we're still lower—I doubt 100 people are hiding off camera—but we are going in the right direction.

Last week we debuted a “pray-ground” in the front of the sanctuary between the chairs and the platform, a place for babies and young children to play near their caregivers while being right up close to the ministers and music. I expect more mixed feedback on that but I am thrilled to radically embrace multigenerational community and I love to see little ones enjoying a front row view and occasionally interacting with us service leaders. Last week I made so much eye contact with a baby sitting there that by the end of the service we felt like we knew each other and I got to hold her during coffee hour!

Overall, we are coming through the pandemic with a lot to celebrate. We also face some challenges. I noted in last State of the Church report that we had been struggling with near continuous turnover in staffing and a shifting pandemic-scape. We're doing better now, but it's still a challenge to retain staff members. To make First U a more attractive employer, we added an extra week of paid leave between Christmas and New Year, and let staff know that where practical they can continue to blend on-site and remote work. We lost two more staff members after that... however, we now have every staff position filled and that is remarkable after three years of prolonged vacancies and constant recruitment.

Attendance, as I mentioned, is up while membership, which is a lagging indicator, is slightly down from one year ago. We have 737 members now compared to about 760 then. At this point we've followed up with everyone who drifted away while we were all virtual, and have accounted for everyone who moved or died. New people are beginning to sign the membership

book. We are recovering membership, but still discovering where we'll eventually land. We are recovering economically, and still discovering that we aren't quite there yet, and that we have to reset our expectations to match this reality.

So what's the state of the church? It's revelatory. We are learning what's possible. It's **rejuvenated**. Literally. Babies to the front! It's **recalculating**, because we are adaptive. And it's **resilient**, because the spirit of this church is strong.



President of the Congregation

Mikaela Renz-Whitmore

2022 Board Members

Mikaela Renz-Whitmore, President
George ViV Bakula, Vice President
Joyce Etheridge, Treasurer
Dámaris Donado
Kathi Foy
Aroop Mangalik
Melisa Nicoud
Bill Slakey
Maya Stephenson
Carla Williams
The Rev. Angela Herrera, ex officio

Implementing the Strategic Plan

Our church adopted a Strategic Plan for 2022-2026 at our last annual meeting. The congregation asked the board to monitor implementation and share information with the congregation throughout the year. In each quarter, the Board asked church groups to summarize steps they've taken to implement the Strategic Plan, adopted by the congregation in 2021, and posted them on the church webpage for review.

[The full year is now summarized in one document on the church website](#), including an executive summary as well as all the detailed actions from each group captured in the appendix.

The board created two task forces to help implement the strategic plan. The Policy Task Force took on updates to the church's governance documents—the Policy Manual, which can be updated by the Board, and the Bylaws, which must be approved by a vote of the congregation. The 8th Principle Explorations Task Force was charged with preparing the congregation for a vote on adopting the 8th Principle into our bylaws. See more on this below and in separate reports from those task forces.

The board itself began our church year with an anti-racism/anti-oppression training led by Julica Hermann de la Fuente at our annual board retreat. Throughout the year, the board read several books together and had retreats every quarter to discuss them.

- *Subtle Acts of Exclusion* by Tiffany Jana and Michael Barchan
- *Mistakes and Miracles* by Nancy Palmer Jones and Karin Lin

- *Widening the Circle of Concern* by the Commission on Institutional Change

Several of the board members attended the workshop by Paula Cole Jones on the 8th Principle, the debrief of the *Mistakes and Miracles* book groups organized and facilitated by members of the Widening the Circle group, and the workshop on communication through conflict hosted by the Healthy Community Committee and facilitated by Kathleen Oweegon.

Campus Facilities

After purchasing the ARC Building in August 2021, the plan was to decide on the ultimate use of the building through an update of our campus master plan in 2023. In March, the Board voted to rent the building to a tenant that aligned with our principles in order to generate revenue for the church budget, the capital fund to help cover maintenance and upkeep on the rest of the church campus, and the master plan update. The church rented the building to Vanguard Behavioral Health, and that lease will generate approximately \$60,000 per year for the next 3 years.

When the pledge campaign fell short of the goal for the 2023 budget, the board decided to move all the available rental proceeds to cover the cost of programs and staff. A campus master plan update will need to wait for a future year. If the ABQ Center for Spiritual Living and the Minara Muslim Community, who share our campus, decide to continue renting from us, those proceeds may help us to replenish our capital fund. It is possible that the campus master plan could happen in 2024 and still be ready for the church to act on it after the ARC Building lease ends, if the update contemplates a church use for the building that a future budget could cover.

The board also discussed and monitored the application to the City of Albuquerque to host a Safe Outdoor Space on the church campus, south of the ARC Building (with the blessing of our tenant). The City Council has debated whether to allow this use in the City's zoning code, so our application has been pending since September 2022. The City is expected to provide the funds and programming necessary for hosting the Safe Outdoor Space. Any church expenditure over 5 percent of the annual budget would require a vote by the board.

Church Governance

The Board approved new policies that were requested by multiple committees and the Policy Task Force, including the following:

- new COVID policies in October opening the family room, allowing indoor coffee hour, and allowing singing in services, as recommended by the COVID advisory group.
- a new policy requiring gifts or fundraising for an item costing \$5,000 or more to include 10% over the cost of the item to help cover installation, maintenance, and eventual replacement.
- additional paid holidays for staff for the week between Christmas and New Year's and Juneteenth, as requested by the Personnel Committee of the Board, as a tangible token of our appreciation.
- sabbaticals for full-time program directors (e.g. our Director of Congregational Life).
- policies to replace the Congregational Financial Review Committee, which has not operated in several years, with the Board's Finance Committee, which works closely with our new Director of Finance. These changes will not go into effect unless the congregation votes to approve parallel changes in the bylaws. The board also gave the Finance Committee more responsibilities in the Policy Manual to reflect the additional tasks the Finance Committee has been taking on.

The board also voted to send these proposed bylaw changes to the congregation for a vote at the annual meeting:

- adopting the 8th Principle.
- replacing the Financial Review Committee with the Finance Committee.
- reducing the Board from 11 to 9 members.
- eliminating some barriers to participation related to membership.
- adding virtual meetings to quorums and voting.

The Church Budget

Our pledge campaign has fallen short of our church budget for the past 3 years. The first year was covered by a federal grant related to the pandemic. Last year was covered by the radical generosity of an angel household in our congregation. This year, the board had to cut several items that were painful. Our top priority was not to cut staff or programs. As the Rev. Bob LaVallee reminded us in a sermon this year, churches rarely remain vital when they cut the heart out of what makes a church healthy. As noted above, we regretfully moved rental revenue from the capital fund to our operating budget. We slashed our

denominational commitment to the UUA by more than 50 percent. As an outgoing president, I will go out on a limb to say that this is potentially the last year we can continue to maintain our budget if pledges or other sources of revenue do not increase. We've delayed cuts to staff and program for another year, and we are hopeful that as families stabilize after COVID and as our church continues to shine as a beacon of progressive love, acceptance, and faith, our fortunes will turn for the better.

Board Priorities for 2023

There are several priorities that are clear for the board next year. First, if the congregation votes to adopt the 8th Principle, the board will need to decide how to begin implementing the principle and dismantling racism and other oppressions in our church institutions. The Strategic Plan recommends embarking on a churchwide discussion about our mission covenant as one venue for deep discernment and consensus-building. The board may decide to extend the Policy Task Force to review our church governance documents with an anti-racism/anti-oppression lens and recommend changes.

Certainly, the board will need to make hard decisions in the coming year about our church budget. We may not have the support we need to be the church we want. Or, put more joyfully, we may rise in body or spirit to pledge our resources to support the church that we want and need.

My time on the board has been stressful, no lie. What a time we are living through! The key takeaway for me has been how to be grateful for "enough." It's a hard lesson, particularly when it comes with hard choices about what to let go. Thankfully, the lesson also comes with great learning about what to hold onto. Your values become clear when times get hard. I believe our shared values will hold us together, and I exhort us all to let "enough" be enough. It's a kindness to ourselves and each other. To everything there is a season... may we find rest and company in this space.



Treasurer Joyce Etheridge

Summary of 2022 Financial Status

Actual 2022 income from all sources (pledges, miscellaneous and endowment income) was **\$1,068,385 – about 96% of budget.**

Total expenses were \$1,074,477 which was 98% of budget. Transfers to Capital for the mortgage were \$48,084. The deficit was partially covered with our reserve funds from prior year surpluses. The remaining deficit of \$17,059 has been brought forward into the 2023 budget.

Activities in 2022

ARC Building – When we discovered the Arc building was for sale, we decided to purchase the building and quickly raised pledges sufficient for the purchase. Vanguard Behavioral Health is currently renting the building for \$5515.25 per month. The first month’s rent was paid in June, then 3 months free rent while they pay for updates to the building, the rent resumes in October. Total rent revenue for 2022 was \$22,061 with 75% of that amount going to the Capital Fund.

Social Hall - The Social Hall remodel loan was paid off in July for \$786,187.

Director of Finance – Bryan Hackett, CPA was chosen as our new Director of Finance replacing Phillip Robinson. Phillip had done a remarkable job preparing financial statements, providing information to the Financial Committee and to the Board. We thank him for his outstanding service and look forward to working with Bryan.

Budget for 2023

The church was facing a potential 8% shortfall in hoped for pledge contribution revenue which led to substantial adjustments to the budget. Pledges for 2023 were \$135,000 below the originally proposed 2023 budget, which was \$977,000

To balance the budget the following revenues were redirected to the operating budget:

- Remainder of ARC rental income moved to operating \$50,751
- Endowment distribution to Operating \$37,955

The following cuts reduced expenses:

- Replace custodial services with hiring of custodian \$8000
- Reduce extra security \$18,800
- Reduce Denominational commitment by \$20,232

These adjustments allowed the Board to present a balanced budget.

Focus for 2023

1. The Finance Committee has added additional members and strengthened our commitment to provide advice to the Board and is functioning well.
2. The bylaws call for a Financial Review Committee, but we have not been able to find volunteers to serve on it for several years. As a result, the Board is proposing to eliminate that committee from the bylaws.
3. The Finance Committee has very strong group of personnel with extensive service to the church including members who have served in the past on the BOD, Radical Generosity Committee, Strategic Planning Force, prior Finance Committees, Pledge Drives, Worship Committee, Religious Education Committees, Treasurer on the Board, Endowment Committee.
4. The Finance Committee has recently taken on additional roles to fill needs the Financial Review Committee was envisioned to be responsible for. In addition, the Committee has enhanced their tasks to ensure all applicable accounting standard are followed.
5. In addition, the Finance Committee plans to be very involved in the anti-oppression, anti-racism journey as we work to implement the 8th Principle.
6. We believe this structure will be more sustainable and better serve the church’s needs than the envisioned Financial Review Committee structure.
7. The Finance Committee and its tasks are outlined on page 10.

2022 Financial Summary

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH						
Operating Fund (Fund 01)						
	2023 Budget	2022 Budget	2022 Actual	Bud/Budget Var (\$)	Bud/Budget Var (%)	2023 Budget
REVENUES						
Contribution Revenue						
Operating Pledges	896,730	977,635	918,048	(59,587)	-6%	896,730
Non-Pledge Gifts	107,208	90,750	106,193	15,443	17%	107,208
Total Contributions	1,003,938	1,068,385	1,024,242	(44,144)	-4%	1,003,938
Other Revenue						
Rental Revenue	113,625	33,450	38,900	5,450	16%	113,625
Miscellaneous Income	-	517	1,116	599	116%	-
Endowment Income	37,955	-	-	-	0%	37,955
Other Income	3,584	4,450	3,745	(705)	-16%	3,584
Total Other	155,165	38,417	43,760	5,343	116%	155,165
TOTAL REVENUE	1,159,103	1,106,802	1,068,002	(38,800)	-4%	1,159,103
EXPENSES						
Compensation Expenses						
Program Staff	601,037	561,808	570,776	8,967	2%	601,037
Administrative Staff	177,491	201,527	159,520	(42,007)	-21%	177,491
Facility/Custodial	45,159	50,174	59,438	9,264	18%	45,159
Childcare	6,000	3,828	-	(3,828)	-100%	6,000
Other Employer Costs	37,885	39,982	37,029	(2,954)	-7%	37,885
Total Compensation	867,572	857,320	826,762	(30,558)	-4%	867,572
Operating Expenses						
Office Expenses	29,672	25,736	29,312	3,576	14%	29,672
HR Expenses	1,350	939	3,577	2,638	281%	1,350
Utilities	25,079	23,933	24,291	358	1%	25,079
Campus Expenses	72,495	58,559	72,924	14,365	25%	72,495
Rental Expenses	7,000	5,628	10,896	5,268	94%	7,000
Total Operations	135,596	114,794	140,999	26,205	23%	135,596
Program Expenses						
Religious Education	8,667	8,667	5,313	(3,354)	-39%	8,667
Music Program	6,500	10,900	7,319	(3,581)	-33%	6,500
Sunday Services	7,342	8,455	3,314	(5,141)	-61%	7,342
Total Program	22,509	28,022	15,945	(12,077)	-43%	22,509
Other Expenses						
Councils & Committees	7,885	7,885	5,534	(2,351)	-30%	7,885
Denominational Commit	31,000	56,232	56,232	-	0%	31,000
Socorro	1,950	2,050	1,948	(102)	-5%	1,950
East Mountain	5,000	3,844	4,911	1,068	28%	5,000
Insurance/Other Professional	14,610	18,000	14,378	(3,622)	-20%	14,610
Service Charges	7,839	6,371	7,608	1,237	19%	7,839
Other	-	1,700	161	(1,539)	-91%	-
Total Other Expenses	68,284	96,082	90,771	(5,311)	-6%	68,284
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,093,960	1,096,218	1,074,477	(21,741)	-2%	1,093,960
Transfers to Capital	(48,084)	(48,084)	(48,084)	-	0%	(48,084)
EXCESS INCOME/EXPENSES	17,058	(37,500)	(54,559)	(17,059)	45%	17,058
Allocated Surplus- Prior Yr	(17,059)	37,500	37,500	-	0%	(17,059)
ENDING SURPLUS / DEFICIT	(1)	0	(17,059)	(17,059)	100%	(1) ⁹

Finance Committee

Finance Committee Members

Joyce Etheridge, Chair

Jan Lee

Kevin Whitmore

Dumas Slade

Michael McDonald

David Steele

Kristen Hyre

1. Is comprised of up to five members including the treasurer. The Chair and members are named by the Board. The Director of Finance serves as staff liaison to the committee.

2. Assists the board in meeting its fiduciary responsibilities. Treasurer provides financial information monthly at the BOD meetings, respond to questions, issues. Advise staff on specific financial concerns.

3. Reviews the annual budget prepared by the staff and makes recommendations to the board for adoption by the congregation.

4. Explains and take comments about the annual budget from the congregation at special meetings in December and at the January annual meeting.

5. Reviews monthly financial statements provided by the Director of Finance at the monthly committee meetings and forwards pertinent information to the Board. The Director of Finance presents quarterly financial reports to the board.

6. On a monthly basis, obtain bank reconciliations, confirm dates/signatures, review consistency, accuracy, and reasonableness regarding balances, deposits, signatures, payees, checks, and ACH transactions.

7. Performs a periodic review of financial operations. Review Accounting Manual to ensure processes are being followed and determine if adjustments need to be made to the Manual to comply with current procedures.

8. Provide the congregation with an annual financial report which details the condition of

the church's finances and information about the operational, capital, and designated funds.

9. Reviews and recommend board action on contracts more than \$25,000.

10. Conducts an annual review of stock and investment account transactions to ensure accuracy of balances reported to the board.

11. Review the annual endowment distribution calculation.

12. Will be aware of compliance with 1.01 Church Governance polices in the areas of care of resources (financial management, asset protection, procurement, and records).

13. Recommend formal audit no less than every five years if financially appropriate. An audit may be recommended sooner if the Finance Committee determines there are issues or red flags.

Designated Funds

First Unitarian Church
DESIGNATED FUND BALANCES DEC 2022

DONOR DESIGNATED

After School Tutoring	656.05
Banks Curtis Scholarship	2,861.17
Covenant Groups	630.92
CFF - Socorro	252.90
CUUPS	22.06
Mural Fund	50.00
Family Promise	4,180.67
CFF - East Mountain	140.81
Food Pantry	30,375.00
Adult Literacy (fka ESL)	2,580.98
Eleanor Bailey Art Award	317.00
8th Principle Fund Balanc	10,656.44
Animal Advocates	2,537.27
Earth Web	2,237.74
Gifts of Hope	265.00
Memorial Wall Plaques	2,831.94
Habitat Landscape	513.57
Kenyan Fund	255.00
Kid's Camp	10,605.60
Kid's Camp Scholarships	9,646.14
Library	727.68
LaAmikoj Youth Group	4,020.04
CFF - FUCOA	5,234.40
CARE Team	936.00
Project Share	1,476.26
RE Playground Upkeep FB	732.55
"I" Ministry Reserve Fund	142.29
SJC Events and Projects	19,396.57
SJC Awards	4,774.97
Pets of the Homeless	104.66
Citizenship Test Fund	2,055.53
Coming of Age	107.15
OWL	488.56
Landscape Fund	686.99
Multigeneration Events	142.89
Realm Project Fund Balanc	3,400.69
Choir Project Fund	1,656.93
One NM Gospel Choir	819.02
UU the Vote	39.41
Immigration Project	2,584.50

Subtotal Donor Designated 131,143.35

BOARD DESIGNATED

Intern	2,322.35
Minister Discretionary	11,332.91
Staff Appreciation	11,709.00
Endowment Holding	70.00
Subtotal Board Designated	25,434.26

TOTAL FUND BALANCE

156,577.61



Associate Minister

The Rev. Bob LaVallee

This was, to be frank, a profoundly challenging year and yet I go into 2023 with a deep sense of optimism and purpose. **Here's what I've been up to:**

So much hiring! Over the course of 2022, I managed the hiring processes for the Director of Operations, the Church Administrator, the Technical Arts Director, the Director of Facilities, and the Director of Finance. Each of those positions took hours of recruiting, responding to applications, conducting interviews, and on-boarding. In addition, I was actively covering for some of those positions while they were vacant, all on top of doing the regular duties of the Associate Minister.

After our Director of Operations left early in the year after six weeks of service, I proposed that we split the job into two positions, creating the ¾ Director of Facilities position with one portion and giving the operations portion to Laira Magnusson as we promoted her to Director of Congregational Life. This division has worked well, allowing each of them to focus on the things that they are good at.

I also **led the process of renting out the ARC Building.** We are delighted to be hosting Vanguard Behavioral Health Services, which will be offering outpatient care for recovery. They aren't open for business yet but they have been a great tenant and are also an important source of revenue.

I continue to **support the congregation in their anti-racism and -oppression work.** I arranged for Julica Hermann de la Fuente to run a training during the Board convening retreat, and also brought in Paula Cole Jones to teach a workshop on the 8th Principle. I participated in a four-week workshop on body-based principles for anti-racism led by Kathryn Fearnside and Mindy Goldberg. **I taught several other classes** as well: UU 101, Creating Theology Together, and a three-part documentary series on masculinity.

I remain the **ministerial liaison to the Radical Generosity Committee.** This year the committee outdid themselves, surpassing last year's totals for both total pledges and number of pledge units. They are a great team.

Staying **engaged in the life of the larger community is very important to me.** I volunteered with Street

Safe NM, served on the board of OffCenter Arts, (sadly) attended several vigils, including those for the Texas synagogue hostage crisis, the invasion of Ukraine, and the Club Q attack. I did an advocacy training with Equality NM and invited them to table in the Social Hall after one of our services. More substantively, **I submitted an application for the city's new Safe Outdoor Space program** that would allow us to create protected overnight parking for ten cars in the ARC building parking lot. As of this writing, we await word on the status.

As I went through my formation as a minister I benefited from the generosity of the ministers before me, so I like to pay it forward. **I serve as the Secretary for the Mountain Desert District of the UU Ministers Association,** and I assisted in leading an in-person retreat in Colorado this fall.

2023 is my sabbatical year and I will be away from mid-July to mid-October. After the year I just had, plus two bouts of COVID, I am so ready to rest, reflect, and renew. Regardless, it's a pleasure and an honor to serve First Unitarian.

Sermons Preached by Rev. Bob LaVallee in 2022

8th Principle Redux (discussing the anti-racism work of the congregation in 2021)

The Meaning of Love - Tribute to Thich Nhat Hanh

The End is Near: Faith during the apocalypse

Some of the Time: An Agnostic's Faith

Good Friday Service

Men at War

Blessings Created by Religious Communities

Revisiting Healing the Heart of Democracy

Hungry Ghosts: Addiction and the Spirit

Learning from Isam

Within, Among, Beyond - Theology for Community

Our Thing (Generosity Sunday)

Putting Our Bodies in the Way

Changing How We Love: Attachment Theory

What's So Bad About Being Woke? (Resisting Christo-Fascism)

Christmas Morning *Los Posadas*



Director of Music

Susan Peck

The mission program is to inspire and support worship through high quality music in a variety of styles, encourage members to participate in congregational music, and build connections with the wider community through music.

The music program includes three paid staff members:

- Susan Peck, Director of Music (full-time)
- Nicia Rae, Pianist/Choir Accompanist (part-time)
- Lydia Clark, Pianist/Singer (hire in progress)

Regular volunteer participants include:

- **Chalice Choir:** 15-30 singers. Rehearse in person every Thursday evening, Sept-May. Sing in worship once a month in coordination with worship themes, still masking to protect one another's health.
- **Sol Singers, pastoral care choir:** 12-20 singers meet every Monday evening, in person and on zoom, to sing healing chants, justice music, and seasonal songs. Still masking to protect one another's health.
- **Spare Parts, contemporary band:** 3-7 musicians, rotating roster of singers. Rhythm section: Vance Bass, Keith Morris, Chris Paul, Susan Peck, Jayson Capps. Play in worship once a month in coordination with worship themes.
- **String Band:** 8-12 musicians rehearse after church every Sunday in a low-key drop-in setting. Play in worship 3-4 times/year.
- **Come As You Are (CAYA) Choir:** ad hoc choir singing in worship with one rehearsal.
- **RE song-leaders:** volunteers help teach a song-of-the-month during RE classes.
- **Campfire Songs:** summer/fall gathering on Friday evenings, hosted by Torre Near.

Guest musicians and featured church members:

Guest musicians: Gabriel Longuinhos and Shea Perry, Donese Mayfield (harp), Lowell Burton, Amanda Udis-Kessler and Phoebe Lostroh, Tom Godfrey/guitar, Jazz Brasileiro/bossa nova, Giovanni Quartet, Lara Manzanares and Tanya Nuñez, David Berkeley, Issa Noor/hand pans, Natalia Tikhovidova/classical pianist, Michael Mandrell/guitar, LasOtras/bilingual justice music, Gamelan Encantada/Indonesian, Francisco Ruíz/circle song and Spanish hymns, Laura Pirard/trombone, Clarissa Crowe/CSL songleader

Members: Becky O'Boyle, Linda Myers, Vance Bass, Pauline LaBar-Shelton, Elya Arrasmith, Sharon Stepler, Dave Edwards, Sue Spaven, Laura Bartolucci, Tania Hopkins, Torre Near

Key events and accomplishments for the year:

- Susan worked with the tech team to create multi-platform worship for two in-person services, and is actively collaborating with worship team on a new liturgy that includes more flow between spoken word and music.
- In May, the One New Mexico Gospel Concert rocked the UUABQ sanctuary with a city-wide choir that included a number of our members, local gospel soloists, and local gospel band. The event included a tribute to singer DeWitt Bolden, who passed away last year.
- Susan attended the AUUMM annual conference in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and was a presenter in the Songleaders Convergence. Susan is serving as Program Chair for AUUMM's Living Tradition committee, which is gathering and archiving oral histories of long-time members of the organization.
- Susan attended a retreat/workshop with Emily Jaworski/Koriath, on Trauma-informed Teaching/Singing in Lafayette CO, and attended follow-up classes on Zoom in the fall.
- Local social justice band, LasOtras, played in the courtyard for the Social Justice Fundraiser.
- In October, the music program sponsored a coffee house concert in the social hall, featuring Boston-area bilingual duo Sol y Canto (Rosi and Brian Amador).
- In November, we hosted artist-in-residence Francisco Ruíz, Director of Music of the Long Beach UU Church, who led several workshops on circle singing and songs from Las Voces del Camino, gave a concert with local artist Issa Noor, and led music in worship. The residency was funded through the Choir Project Fund.
- Gamelan Encantada presented a concert in our sanctuary in December, also playing for our worship services in a rental exchange.
- Chalice Choir, Sol Singers, String Band, and Spare Parts joined forces for a musical winter solstice service on December 18. Choir members from UUABQ and ABQCSL joined forces for two well-attended Christmas Eve services, which also included caroling in the courtyard led by Torre Near.



Director of Congregational Life

Laura Magnusson

This year, my job title changed. There have been questions about what the Director of Congregational Life actually does (and doesn't do!), so here is a brief summary from the official job description:

The Director of Congregational Life oversees the smooth and healthy functioning of the church community in support of the First Unitarian Mission Covenant and the Congregation's Strategic Plan. The DCL's primary areas of focus are Administrative Management, Membership Development, and Communications.

In short, we added administrative and operations management to my membership and communications duties. This allows me to oversee the "people" part of First Unitarian's operations. My wonderful cohort Miguel Perez, our Director of Facilities, manages the physical property part of our operations.

Administration

One of my first duties as Director of Congregational Life was working with Rev. Bob in the **interviewing, hiring, and training of our church administrator**, Tanya Kallan. This was an easy ask for me, since I started my work at the church in this position 8 years ago. Tanya brings amazing warmth and the innate sense of order which the job requires.

I've worked closely with Tanya on **streamlining our rental program**, an important source of income for the church. She has hired and trained a great facility host team to support events, and created easy to understand packages for renting our facilities. Together we created a new online system for rental requests and room reservations that greatly reduced the size of her email inbox and provides efficient customer service to our members and those in the community seeking a rental space.

In the fall, I worked with her on finalizing the details of our **long-term campus share with the ABQ Center for Spiritual Living and the Minara Muslim Community**. This partnership brings much-needed income, as well as fulfilling key parts of our Strategic Plan, namely:

Social Justice: Joining forces with community partners and our youth to work for social, economic,

and environmental justice.

Welcoming Campus: Putting our campus and technology to work to serve our values.

Anti-racism/Anti-oppression/Multiculturalism: Embracing multiple cultures in our church and building our relational skills to be fully inclusive.

This partnership is continuing into 2023 after a wonderful multi-faith Christmas Eve service that brought our three communities together to end 2022.

Communications

Much of my weekly work can be qualified as "communications"—from updating the website, to creating the weekly Broadsheet and monthly Messenger, to producing Sunday's Order of Service, and keeping our social media pages humming.

Our email list grew by 12% in 2022, with a total of 1419 people receiving our 52 weekly and 12 monthly publications.

We had 83,637 individual visitors to our website in 2022.

Our number of social media followers over our three active pages have continued to grow; with **1743 Facebook page likes, 477 Instagram followers, and 102 Twitter followers.**

In the last half of 2022, I started working with Rick Held, our Information Technology Systems Manager, on **plans for an update to our website**. We are in the process of working with a consultant on a modern site that will be much more mobile-friendly and will appeal to those who are searching for a new church home.

This becomes easier to do as more of our church groups move their resources and information to our new web-based church database, Realm, which I officially launched to the congregation in August with the volunteer help of Meghan Shattuck. Thus far, **374 people have started to use Realm**: looking up other church members, browsing groups and committees to join, finding volunteer opportunities, and making financial pledges or contributions. Meghan and I held **two trainings in August for small group leaders** and many of those groups are now using Realm regularly to connect and communicate. **In September, we started using Realm for the pledge drive**, and it made the

entire process easier for congregants and staff. **In November, I started scheduling and tracking Sunday volunteers on Realm.** I hope to use Realm's extensive capabilities more fully and offer many more trainings for congregants in 2023.

Thanks to an anonymous donor, I was able to purchase print advertisement this year in an effort to reach communities that might not yet know about us. **I designed ads that ran in two special issues of UNM's Daily Lobo, and were included in 3 programs for productions at our neighbor, the Vortex Theatre.** These efforts had the effect of reaching thousands of possible new congregants with our values of welcoming, inclusion, and social justice..

Membership Development

In 2021, I worked with the chair of the Membership Committee, Gwen Sawyer, to create the **Journey of Membership Coalition**, which allowed representatives from different groups at the church to put our heads together about creating a clear journey from visitor to church leader. In 2022, we were able to see the fruits of this idea.

Our Hospitality & Inclusion team continues to warmly welcome newcomers to our community on Sundays. **We had 230 visitors who filled out a visitor form at our Welcome Table in 2022, and 18 of them have already officially joined the church!** This shows me our warm and genuine welcome is creating a feeling of community and inclusion for our visitors, so that they are ready to make a commitment to the future of the congregation.

Another part of the coalition is **the Adult Faith Formation Council (formerly the Adult RE Council) who reconvened this summer.** In 2023, they are launching Circle of Trust, a new drop-in group based on Covenant Groups, led by Lea Ann Boone; and are supporting me and the ministers in other classes for new members (stay tuned!) Angela Merkert continues to lead Sunday Explorations every week, which has become a great first group for many newcomers.

Finally, the Leadership Succession Committee has been an important part of the coalition meetings. I have been able to directly communicate with its chair, Marilyn O'Boyle, about potential leaders among new members. In fact, **one-third of 2023's nominees for congregational leadership have been members of the church for less than 3 years.** This is an exciting development for the future of our congregation!

Our newer members are taking on leadership roles in

other important aspects of the church, as well. They are on board committees like Membership, Landscape, and Buildings & Grounds; they are volunteering on Sunday mornings to make and serve coffee, greeting everyone on the front steps or at the Welcome Table, running sound from our technical booth; and they are starting, leading, and actively participating in small groups like Young Adults, Recovery Ministry, Sip and Sup, and the new Trans & Nonbinary Support & Advocacy group. Our new members are everywhere you look!

In July, I sent out my first quarterly New Member update by email to everyone who had been a member for less than 3 years. This abbreviated communication allows me to give our newest members a short, targeted update on groups and upcoming events that might especially interest them.

One of the best parts of my year has been the planning and execution of multi-generational events with Alana Rodriguez, our Religious Education assistant and youth programs coordinator. These included:

an **Easter Sunday party** with easter bonnets, an egg hunt, and music;

the **all-church BBQ** on the playground, with great food, a wonderful band, and a jumper for the kids; a fun float entry with participants of all ages for the **ABQ Pride parade** in June; and a group of 40 that braved a rain storm for a double-header at **Isotopes Park for Pride Night.**

Two well-attended Connections Sundays (one in person and one virtual) with over 40 groups tabling;

An all-ages, all-gender, all-sizes **clothing exchange**; and

A fun after-church **Halloween party** with lunch, music, and some truly creative costumes.

Membership by the Numbers

Current Members: 740

Contributing Friends: 105

2022 Changes in Membership

New & Returning: **41**

Resigned: 24

Deceased: 13

Inactive: 33

Upcoming Sabbatical

I am very grateful to be taking a 10 week sabbatical starting on February 20. After 8 years of service to the church and the last 3 in a programmatic role (during a global pandemic!) I am ready for a time of rest and renewal. I have many ideas and plans for 2023 and beyond and will be ready to return on May 1 with a renewed sense of purpose and joy. Look for information about my time away in the February 2023 Messenger.



Director of Religious Education

Mia Noren, Credentialed DRE

Staffing

Mia Noren completed her 8th year as DRE, Alana Rodriguez completed her 8th year as RE Assistant, and her 3rd year as Youth Programs Coordinator. Although we have started in-person classes, the RE Aide position remains out of our budgetary reach for now. We currently employ 6 childcare workers and are still hiring. We struggle to fill all the times they are needed.

Mia continues a 2nd year holding the advisory position of Past Chair on the MDD LREDA Board. She also runs one of the two monthly Religious Professionals Support Group meetings online.

Mia participated in virtual and in-person workshops, trainings, and retreats including the MDD Annual Retreat in Boulder, CO; General Assembly and LREDA Professional Days in Portland, OR; the LREDA Fall Conference in Birmingham, AL; completed the Pastoral Care for Religious Educators series begun in 2021; Two of the Skill Up UUA/UUMA Supporting Neurodivergence Series 1 learning modules; numerous OWL Taking Flight webinars; and LREDA White Caucus group meetings.

Mia joined the First U Worship team in November. Later in the year she was invited to be on the Unitarian Universalists for Jewish Awareness (UUJA) Sermon Judging Panel—accepting, discussing, and rating sermons submitted to the panel, winner to be announced at the next GA.

Registration Numbers

Our registration term runs September 2021 through August 2022. Registration for 2022 opened in August 2022 and will continue into 2023. Most unregistered participants registered sometime during the year.

Prior to August 2022, a total of 4 families were registered.

- La Amikoj- 2
- Mid-high – 1
- Elementary – 4
- Nursery - 0

Since August 2022

- La Amikoj – 18
- Mid-high – 20
- Elementary – 26
- Nursery – 4

Volunteers

Prior to August 2022

- Youth Advisors – 2
- Elementary volunteers – 3

Since August 2022

- Youth Advisors – 4
- Elementary volunteers – 10
- Music volunteers - 4

Attendance numbers

Youth

Events prior to August 2022: 2
Attendance – 16

Events August 2022- December 2022: 11
Attendance – 130

Elementary

Lego Sources summer sessions: 7
Attendance – 55

Of these, 2 were registered and 12 weren't. Of those who still attend, all are registered

Rainbow Principles fall sessions: 14
Attendance – 95

OWL

7th-9th grade class, 11 registered, 3 facilitators

OWL facilitators willing to teach in January 2023 – 2,
agreed to sub – 1, run the parent group – 1

Normally I wouldn't mention who is willing to teach next year, however, these numbers are insufficient to continue our OWL program. I will need to schedule and fund an OWL Facilitator Training this year.

Camp registration

- Adults – 8
- Young Adult Mentor (YAM, 18-25) – 1
- Counselor-in-Training (CIT youth 14-18) – 13
- Mid-hi – 10
- Elementary – 4

Fundraising

Total amount raised – \$0
Total amount scholarships issued - \$2,425

Multi-generational community events (new) – 4 and *estimated* attendance

- Easter Party - 200
- BBQ - 150
- Clothing Exchange - 20
- Halloween Party – 150

Religious Education Programming

Elementary summer programming was Lego Sources, which was very popular and increased our attendance.

In September, youth continued their mostly Soul Matters themes and discussions along with worship attendance and guest participants. More details are in the Youth Programs Coordinator report.

Elementary attendance was such that a One-Room Schoolhouse approach was needed. We started Rainbow Principles, a program Mia fashioned on Rainbow Principles programs that other congregations had offered, the idea being that so many of our elementary children were new to the church and to RE, along with singing every week. In December, the RE Council and Mia decided to change back to Soul Matters offerings in January. We are still in a One-Room Schoolhouse setting.

Worship

After offering Time for All Ages stories most of the year, in November Mia joined the Worship Team and continues to offer stories to all ages whenever appropriate to the service theme. Children are beginning to return to the Sanctuary.

RE Council – please see the RE Council report offered by Benita Terrell, chair.

Community – with the introduction of a closer focus on a more multi-generational church, we are working with Laira Magnusson to create and produce multigenerational events, which are mentioned in Attendance.

RE Buildings and Grounds

Mia purchased some non-permanent playground enhancements- a set of Big Blue Blocks, two saucer swings, and a replacement baby/small child swing seat. All can be brought inside when not in use. Mia worked with the Facilities team to outsource a major cleanup for a playground that was mostly unused for the last two years, and so in rougher shape than usual. It was also discovered that a fungus has invaded some of our trees, and unfortunately, we lost our climbing tree, long a part of playground tradition.



Youth Programs Coordinator

Alana Rodriguez

It is with a lot of pride and a heart full of joy that I can report on **what a successful year we had with the youth community of our congregation.** Beginning in January, Sunday gatherings continued to have consistent attendance with about 4-6 youth coming every week.

After a long hiatus, and with a lot of enthusiasm, we were able to have an **OWL (Our Whole Lives) class for 7-9th graders**, where I was able to co-facilitate, alongside long-time volunteer, Lisa Johnson, and our then Ministerial Intern Matt Parteger-Villarreal. One of the most wonderful things that happened during this time was witnessing the connections between the youth form. The parents also witnessed and were fond of these friendships, and worked to foster them, even after OWL ended by hosting get-togethers.

This momentum continued well into the summer, and into camp season where most of the campers were middle and high schoolers. Come September, when our program year began, the youth were as excited as I was to begin. As the year before, our Sunday gatherings continued to be at 10:00 am, in between services, so there wasn't any conflict for youth who wanted to attend the in-person service. **Connection, connection, connection.** That was my primary goal for the year. I continued to offer as many opportunities as possible for the youth to continue strengthening their friendships with each other by having several social events. These included roller skating events, an outdoor BBQ with a slip-n-slide, a taco and karaoke party, movie nights, and bowling.

Bridging the gap between the La Amikoj room and the sanctuary has been a long-time desire of RE staff. With the help of our Director of Congregational Life, and a new strategic plan that was voted on and adopted, this became more possible than ever before. I helped plan several multi-generational events that included youth and children of all ages. Members and volunteers were also invited to the youth space to talk about meaningful ways to serve our community. For instance, we wrote letters with UU the Vote volunteers, discussed sermons over pizza with our senior minister, and talked about the possibility of becoming ushers in the service. Speaking of, we are attending services more often than ever before, sitting together—but often they do so on their own.

Lastly, **I worked with other religious educators within our cluster to have our youth meet each other.** The Los Alamos Director of Religious Education, Tina DeYoe, brought about 15 youth to Albuquerque where we went roller skating then played games at the church. For Las Cruces Pride in October, we caravanned to attend their parade and festival and stay overnight at their church with some of their youth. Both of these events were well-received and will likely happen again in the future.

As part of **my professional development this year**, I attended Finding Our Way Home, a gathering of religious professionals of color, in Long Beach, California in April. I took a Pastoral Care for Religious Educators virtual class, where Mia and I learned how to help families in need of extra care during times of transition and change. At the beginning of June, Mia and I drove to Boulder, CO for the Mountain Desert District Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) retreat, which I was on the Planning Committee. I will continue to serve MDD LREDA as their treasurer until our next business meeting in 2023. At the end of the month I went to Portland, OR for LREDA Professional Days and General Assembly where I attended several workshops and BIPOC caucusing spaces. Then, in October, I attended the LREDA Fall Con in Birmingham, Alabama, where the focus was on the proposed 8th Principle, and how to have anti-racist, anti-oppressive curriculum and spaces for children and youth. I have also continued to attend UNM where I am majoring in Family and Child Studies.

I am looking forward to what this next year is going to bring and will continue to work diligently on shaping young people in our church to be advocates and fantastic contributors to our faith as they grow into young adults. **We're lucky—very much so—to have these fantastic youth among us.**



8th Principle Exploration Task Force

Dámaris Donado, Co-Chair

Members

Dámaris Donado (co-chair)
Gary Carlson
Heather Clark
Rev. Jane Davis (co-chair)
Maya Stephenson.

The 8th Principle reads: **“We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant 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.”**

Unitarian Universalism is a living tradition. It is time for us to make changes so that we are living into the Unitarian Universalism of the future, a religion that holds us in times of great need and ethical, moral, and spiritual crises. We are in one of those times now.

At our annual meeting in 2022, our congregation decided to embark in a year-long exploration of the 8th Principle. The board created an 8th Principle Explorations Task Force comprised of 5 members of this congregation, Rev. Jane Davis, and I as co-chairs, Heather Clark, Maya Stephenson, and Gary Carlson, a group representing a diversity of social and cultural identities.

In May of last year, [we began working on the board's charge for our exploration's task force](#). Our goal was to guide the congregation to explore the benefits and challenges of diversity, inclusion, and equitable church practices with love and compassion for where we are, even as we hold each other accountable for the ways that we can do better.

Our volunteer group researched other congregations embarking on this work. Like other UU churches, we quickly realized that our first step needed to be an exploration of our congregation's capacity for intercultural relationships.

We hired a consultant, Julica Hermann de la Fuente, who is an anti-racism/anti-oppression educator and trainer in a variety of capacities over the past 2 ½ decades. She served as our administer of [an assessment called the Intercultural Development Inventory \(IDI\)](#).

And what we found is consistent to what other UU churches have found. Of 64 individuals who participated in this inventory, most believed themselves to be

in Acceptance of cultural differences. However, responses to the inventory revealed an orientation towards Minimization, reflecting a tendency to highlight commonalities across cultures that can mask important cultural differences in values, perceptions, and behaviors.

Individuals who took the inventory were invited to explore their results in small group discussions to learn more about their orientation and how they can develop acceptance of cultural differences. As Dr. Maya Angelou once said, “Do the best you can until you know better, then when you know better, do better.”

We also held a churchwide 8th Principle discussion where more than 60 individuals participated. [If you were unable to attend, a link to the recording is referenced on this page](#).

By the end of last year, our 8th Principle Explorations Task Force met with over 28 key church groups. What we learned is there's overwhelming support for adopting the 8th Principle. Out of 121 individuals who answered our survey question “What do you think about the church adopting the 8th Principle?”, 105 stated they support its adoption, 14 had not yet formed an opinion, and only 2 opposed its adoption.

As a person of color, I am deeply moved by our congregation's willingness to become an anti-racist, nurturing church that will be more representative of this beautiful state of New Mexico that we all live in.

Our vote to adopt the 8th Principle represents our **commitment** towards becoming a Beloved community that embraces cultural differences and that will challenge us to do better.



Endowment Committee

Gary Norris, Chair

Members

Gary Norris, Chair
Peter Chestnut
James Gilson
Tim Nisly
Peggy Whitmore

Endowment Fund Activity 2022

01/01/2022 beginning balance	\$1,051,633
Market Loss in 2022	-\$168,229
Contributions added in 2022	\$0
Annual Withdrawal	<u>-\$35,000</u>
11/30/2022 ending balance	\$848,440

The Annual Withdrawal of \$35,000 was designated as follows:

\$20,000 for 8th Principle
\$15,000 for Campus Care



Leadership Succession Committee

Marilyn O'Boyle, Chair

Members

Marilyn O'Boyle, Chair
Sue Coates
Judy Goering
Jordan Jones
Martha Ketelle
Nancy Kilpatrick
Lucy Silva

The Leadership Succession Committee reports that we have achieved our primary goal for 2022, as we offer qualified and dedicated church members for the congregation's vote to serve in First Unitarian Church's leadership through the Leadership Succession Committee, the Endowment Committee, and the Board of Directors.

There were several opportunities to reach out to the larger church community in identifying potential leaders. We delivered this message in a Leadership Moment during services one Sunday, we submitted an article in the Messenger to educate the congregation about leadership opportunities, and we asked people to contact us if they were interested in serving. We also had a table at both "Connections Sundays" events in the fall. If there are people reading this who are interested in serving on one of the Standing Committees of First Unitarian Church, please contact me!

We continued our commitment to working toward a diverse and inclusive Beloved Community. We moved forward on our path to be responsive to the goals of the 8th Principle and the creation of inclusive, anti-racist leadership. Several of us participated in the *Mistakes and Miracles* book study and some of us took the assessment for the Intercultural Development Inventory. One of the co-chairs of the 8th Principle Task Force visited us at a meeting to explain their efforts.

We used the services of our church's Healthy Community Committee to help resolve some misunderstandings and appreciated Nancy Bowen's attendance at a meeting to help us resolve these issues. Because our meetings have been only on Zoom, we felt we needed more personal connections with each other, so we decided to meet individually with each other to develop our team cohesiveness. Thanks to committee member Jordan Jones, we are

now using Notion, a software database program for tracking contacts and potential leaders. We can easily add a category for demographic data when that becomes available. Our goal of encouraging diversity in leadership was limited by a lack of demographic data, and we are hoping there might soon be a remedy for this.

There were some goals that have not yet been met, and we will continue to work on these in 2023. One of these is Leadership Training for as many members of the congregation as possible. We intend to have a training event sometime in the first half of the year. Another is the coordination of mentoring relationships between experienced and new committee members and/or staff to ensure good understanding of First Unitarian processes and procedures.

We wish to thank Lucy Silva, who is leaving our committee after serving for four years. Her thoughtful questions, insights, and suggestions have been very valuable, and we appreciate her being a representative of the People of Color group at First Unitarian. We will miss her!

LSC members who continue for a second year of their term are Marilyn O'Boyle, chair, Martha Ketelle, Sue Coates, Judy Goering and Nancy Kilpatrick. Jordan Jones will begin serving a second term on the committee.

Our appreciation also goes to **departing Board members** ViV Bakula, Kathi Foy, Melisa Nicoud, and Board President Mikaela Renz-Whitmore.

Board members who are continuing to serve are Damaris Donado, Joyce Ethridge, Aroop Mangalik, Maya Stephenson, Bill Slakey, and Carla Williams (2nd term).

The Endowment Committee includes Peter Chestnut, Peggy Whitmore, Tim Nisly, James Gilson, and Chair, Gary Norris.

Congregation members nominated to serve on the First Unitarian Church Standing Committees:

Board of Directors: Chris Mayo, EmmaLia Mariner, Sally New

Leadership Succession Committee: Jordan Jones (2nd term), Jacob Shull

The Endowment Committee: Gary Norris (2nd term) with no vacancies this year.



Buildings & Grounds Committee

Stephen Phillips, Interim Chair

Committee Members

Jake Barkdoll
David Bouquin
Steve Phillips
Dumas Slade

Long time committee members welcomed David Bouquin as a new member in 2022. We thank Mark Boldman for his several years of service on the committee. It is worth noting that Jake, Steve, and Dumas have extended their service to the seventh year on the committee because of the lack of interest in contributing to its work. The chair welcomes inquiries about committee activities.

The committee is delighted First Unitarian Church hired Miguel Perez as Director of Facilities. The committee has established an excellent working relationship with Miguel and looks forward to continuing our work together. We also continue our close working relationship with the Landscape Committee.

The Committee continues to maintain a spreadsheet of Campus Care Projects. [The spreadsheet is available here](#) and currently contains 15 entries.

High priority projects include the following:

1. New Roof for RE Building and Office Building

RE Building roof needs immediate attention.

Project bids are being sought.

2. Exterior of RE Building and Office Building

Repair and paint exterior stucco and window frames. Project cost to be determined.

3. North Parking Lot Improvements Paved surface deterioration is extensive and requires immediate attention. Project cost to be determined.

4. Church Sign and Landscape Improvements

a. Planning in process for our important marquee sign at the corner of Comanche and Carlisle.

Funding pending.

b. To conserve water the Landscape Committee has proposed conversion of the landscape around the church sign, the north end of the Sanctuary and swale to a more xeric type while preserving the trees in the area. Project cost to be determined.



Landscape Committee

Melisa Nicoud, Chair

Accomplishments

- 4 major cleanups (March 19, April 23, October 22, December 3)
- Clean-up of RE Playground and deadwood pruning of campus trees by outside firm
- RE Playground upgrades (new chains for tire swings, added two 40" rainbow saucer swings, one infant-toddler swing and wood climbing structure was sanded and sealed)
- Major clean out of Landscape Committee Closet (faces RE playground)
- Added promotional info to website regarding Landscape Committee and recreated poster board with pictures and signup to attract more volunteers
- Swale cleaned out of 2-3 years of matted grasses, and shrubs pruned
- ARC building lease to Vanguard Health who will maintain exterior of building landscape and all of parking lot
- Connection Sunday (August 28) was a success in recruiting a few more volunteers for at least major cleanups, and those who have worked a couple of times a month with another volunteer. Ideally, we'd like to get back to a volunteer or two adopting an area to maintain on a regular basis, from pruning to weeding, trash pickup etc.
- We had a plant sale when we held the in-person Connection Sunday making \$60 that was deposited into dedicated Landscape fund.
- Conversations regarding making modest improvements to Wildlife Habitat (until proposed deck can happen) so members can visit the area on Sundays will occur Spring 2023. Bee and Pollinator Garden will be started and mobile planters added with xeric plantings will be added.

On-Going Landscape Issues/Projects

- In-ground irrigation system limps along with no confidence the various zones are adjusted for seasonal watering and length of time given climate changes
- Mulberry tree (climbing tree) on RE playground must be removed as it is dying from inside out
- Shade structure forms (2) to be removed by Ben (arborist who maintains trees on campus)
- Cholla Cactus on southeast corner of La Amikoj must be removed
- Cottonwoods (4-5) on RE Playground need to be removed as they have a significant fungus
- "South 40" cleanup
- Wildlife Habitat Deck and landscape



Healthy Community Team

Sara Wofford, Chair

Members as of December 2022

Sara Wofford
Cheri Plavnick
Katerina Azhdaji
Carla Williams
Angela Herrera

We thank Shelley Alonso-Marsden, who left the committee earlier in the year. We also express gratitude to Cheri Plavnick for two terms of dedicated service. Her term will end in February 2023.

The Healthy Community Committee (HCC) is a Committee of the Board. At First Unitarian, the Healthy Community Committee has been charged with assisting, in a confidential manner, our church community with appropriately managing conflict when it arises between or among church members, or between the senior minister and church members. The committee recommends policies to the Board, maintains a conflict resolution procedure, and educates the church about healthy ways to handle conflict.

2022 Activities

The HCC continued to meet on Zoom at least once each quarter. We added to our list of trained mediators and assigned a mediator to one case of conflict. No other issues were brought to the committee. There appeared to be less congregational anxiety overall this year than in 2021.

Sara and Angela gave a sermon on the subject of “How and When to Apologize” in August, which was well received, and the HCC

had a booth at Connections Sunday the same day.

We hosted a workshop on “The Art of Peaceful Dialogue” conducted by visiting facilitator Kathleen Oweegon in October.

The HCC also visited with members of the 8th Principle Task Force and were introduced to the Intercultural Development Inventory. The HCC will work with the 8th Principle Task Force as the congregation continues to explore and work through the ramifications of this principle.

Many members of the congregation are mindful of the struggles we face as we take on issues such as privilege and institutional racism, and are trying to engage in these struggles with integrity. But conflicts occasionally arise, and the HCC is here to help the congregation work through them. We look forward to the opportunity to continue working for and with the beloved community in the coming year.



Membership Committee

Gwen Sawyer, Chair

Committee Members

Pat Diem
Kenny Jones
Torre Near
Cheri Plavnick
Gwen Sawyer, Chair
Kathi Foy, board rep
Laira Magnusson, ex-officio

The main result of a survey the committee sent to all members who joined in the past 3 years is that new members want more people to interact with them at church and in the social hour after church.

We ask that ALL church members greet the new members for a chat during coffee hour.

For the first time since the pandemic began, we were able to resume our regular new-member events, and 34 of the 100+ who joined the church since 2019 joined us in a separate dinner and luncheon in the social hall in late fall. Everyone reported enjoying playing background bingo where they had to talk to everyone else to fill out their cards. Thanks to Kenny Jones and Becky Steele for their tireless work in the kitchen, and to everyone who participated in getting to know each other.

New Member Joining ceremonies now take place every other month at 10:15 am, and the members who join are introduced at the 11:00 service in the sanctuary.

The Journey of Membership Coalition continued to meet monthly in 2022 to share information and ideas about greeting visitors, helping people find what they are looking for in our church, and progressing to membership, education, service, and (if desired) leadership. The groups involved are:

- Hospitality and Inclusion team (turquoise stoles)
- Welcome Table volunteers
- Welcoming Conversations team
- Membership Committee
- Adult Faith Formation (formerly Adult RE)
- Leadership Succession Committee

We always need more volunteers to staff our Sunday services. Stop by the Connections/ Membership table in the foyer if you would like to join our efforts!



Personnel Committee

Geri Knoebel, Chair

Members

Geri Knoebel, chair
George Bakula, Board Representative
Maya Stevenson, Board Representative
Rev. Angela Herrera, Senior Minister

The Personnel Committee serves the Board in an advisory capacity about personnel administration. The Committee works to ensure that the Church follows the federal and state laws and church policy regarding personnel matters. The Committee works with the Minister to create an effective, efficient, and responsive working environment, as well as fair compensation and benefits packages, that will attract and retain employees.

The Committee operates like a human resources department in that they do not hire, manage, or supervise staff. Instead, they advise the Board and the Senior Minister on best practices in developing and updating personnel policies included the Personnel Policy Manual. Goals for the year included strengthening the Personnel Committee through the lens of the Church's anti-oppression work, codifying the church's hiring procedures, and stabilizing staff via retention measures. The work of the Committee was limited by the lack of Committee members and the energy required to hire many new staff.

Many thanks to George and Maya who have been active members of the Personnel Committee. We have been attempting to add more persons to the Committee but have been unsuccessful. We appreciate Steve Phillips (Buildings and Grounds Committee), Phillip Robinson (former Director of Finance), and Rev. Bob LaVallee serving on interview committees as we hired new staff.

Staff Hirings

Over the past year, the Committee has been challenged in hiring new staff as has been the case with many organizations post-COVID. These challenges resulted in reorganization of some staff positions. In 2022, the following persons were hired:

- Tanya Kallan, Church Administrator
- Miguel Perez, Director of Facilities
- Bryan Hackett, Director of Finance
- Laira Magnusson, promoted to the Director of Congregation Life
- Justin Engel, Technical Arts Director
- Kenny Jones, Sunday Facilities Staff
- Nicia Rae, Accompanist
- Event Facility Hosts – various part-time staff

Retention Measures

In addition to the hirings, the Committee also worked on retention measures to help stabilize church staffing through actions that would encourage longevity. The Board approved increasing the number of paid holidays from 8 to 14 days by adding Juneteenth (June 19th) and days between Christmas and New Year's. Also approved was the expansion of the sabbatical leave provisions for program directors to include the Director of Congregation Life.

You can find an updated staffing chart on our website by [clicking here](#) or going to <https://uuabq.org/church-governance/resources-and-documents/>.



Radical Generosity Team

Kristen Kennedy, Chair

Members

Kris Kennedy, Chair
Caitlin Anderson
Christina Yovovich
Eric Renz-Whitmore
David Wilson
Althea Atherton
Meghan Shattuck
Bill Slakey, Board Liaison
George Bakula, Board Liaison
Rev. Bob LaVallee, ex-officio

In 2022, the Radical Generosity Team continued to fulfill the charge received from the board:

“The Radical Generosity Team is an ongoing committee of the board, tasked with overseeing the pledge drive and fundraising for the annual operating budget, and helping First Unitarian refine its stewardship practices and develop a culture of generosity.”

With the rollout of the new CRM Realm, the Radical Generosity committee launched the annual pledge campaign online once again. A full web page was developed and dedicated to outlining the campaign objectives and progress. Campaign communication included weekly reminders from the pulpit; email reminders to folks who’d not yet pledged – some including video clips of skits and pulpit editorials; a postcard mid-campaign; paper pledge packets to those without email; letters to folks who didn’t pledge in 2022, but had pledged in prior years; social media posts; calls from board members and more.

While the 2021 campaign was able to close a rather substantial gap through the generosity of an anonymous gift, the 2022 pledge drive saw the same gap in funding from the prior year, coming in at roughly 86% to goal. This shortfall may have been a result of the loss of members during the pandemic due to death, moving away, and frayed connection to

the church community. The difficult economy—both in financial markets and significant inflation—may have also played a role.

In addition to the annual pledge drive, the Radical Generosity team:

- offered financial literacy and other educational opportunities to members
- worked with staff to acknowledge and thank members for their pledges
- welcomed new members by attending new member signing events each month
- wrote articles for the Messenger recognizing acts of radical generosity
- reached out intentionally to branch congregations to connect

We continue to look for ways to expand the definition of radical generosity and the ways that members give of their resources, time and talents for the benefit of all.

Each act of generosity is a gift.



Policy Task Force

Geri Knoebel, Chair

Members

Geri Knoebel, Chair
Mikaela Renz-Whitmore, Board Representative
Joyce Etheridge, Treasurer
Amy Sun, Congregation Member
Ruth Ann Cooper, Congregation Member
Sara Wofford, Congregation Member (resigned August 2022)
Rev. Angela Herrera, Senior Minister

Background

The Board's charge to the Task Force is to focus on "structural barriers to inclusion or oppressive impacts in existing policies/bylaws as well as areas that might benefit from addressing anti-racism/anti-oppression and multiculturalism more explicitly." In addition, the Task Force was charged with developing a proposal to replace the Financial Review Committee with a different strategic approach to ensure effective and adequate oversight of the church's finances.

Discernment Process

The Task Force encountered a steep learning curve to familiarize itself with the complex governance processes of our large congregation and the enormous number of policies needed to manage a church of our size. Ensuring consistency in our governance documents and processes is essential to assure accountability and transparency in our governance practices. The Task Force has been focusing on issues that have been brought up by the board and various committees because of conflicting provisions, lack of clarity, and evolving considerations.

The Task Force's discernment process included reviewing First U's current bylaws and policies as well as identifying UU churches that have adopted the 8th principle with similar membership sizes. Provisions in certain areas (such as membership, board sizes, etc.) were evaluated and recommendations made as to what changes should be recommended to First U's bylaws.

Issues Addressed to Date

In addition to working on proposals to replace the Finance Review Committee, the Task Force has been responding to requests to address eliminating barriers to engagement, clarifying roles and procedures, improving governance, specifically accountability/transparency. The Task Force worked with the Board, Finance Committee, Healthy Community Committee, and the Leadership

Succession Committee.

Summary of Amendments to Governance Policies

Bylaws – Amendments approved by the Board that still require approval by the congregation at its January 2023 annual meeting:

Article 1 Congregation Amendments

- Eliminating barriers to engagement
- Adopt 8th principle
- Refine "attaining membership" provisions
- Participate in congregation meetings in-person or virtually
- Include minister's ability to waive "identifiable financial contribution"
- Refine "termination of membership"
- Add "friends" of the church
- Improving governance, specifically accountability/transparency
- Remove the Financial Review Committee
- Clarify office terms and filling Board or standing committee vacancies

Article 1 Board Amendments

- Improving governance
- Reduce Board size from 11 to 9
- Clarifying roles and procedures
- Adopt uniform office term beginning and ending dates for standing committees
- Clarify naming chairs and members of board committees and task forces, terms for filling committee vacancies
- Add ministers and staff are ex-officio members of the Board and committees
- Refine type of committees, task forces formed by the board

Policy Manual – Amendments approved by the Board

- Change Director of Operations to Director of Facilities
- Change Stewardship to Radical Generosity Committee
- Delete references to Financial Review Committee in Policy Manual
- Adopt additional responsibilities for the Finance Committee to strengthen accountability and oversight
- Add a requirement that gifts and/or fundraising for an item more than \$5,000 is to include an additional 10% above the cost to cover installation and maintenance

Policy Task Force and the 8th Principle

The 8th Principle Explorations Task Force is leading the congregation in a year-long discernment process, which will inform the congregation's vote on adopting the 8th principle at its January 2023 annual meeting.

The Policy Task Force is just scratching the surface of necessary work to review our church governance documents (bylaws and policies) through the lens of the 8th principle. The Task Force has researched other churches of similar size that have adopted 8th principle concepts into their governance documents. Surprisingly, of the 221 churches as of October 2022 that had adopted the 8th Principle, the number of churches of our size that have followed up with adopting governance changes is very few. Task Force members have contacted these UU congregations to learn about their process.

- All Souls Unitarian Church (DC)
- Unitarian Universalist Church (Annapolis)

In October, the Policy Task Force met with the chairs of the 8th Principle Explorations Task Force (Dámaris Donado and the Rev. Jane Davis) and agreed that reviewing and revising our mission statement and our church's governance documents to integrate the 8th principle's anti-oppression, anti-racism values will need to be at least another year-long process with the congregation following the vote in January.

In December, the Board endorsed the adoption of the 8th principle and voted to send the proposal to adopt the 8th principle into our bylaws to the Congregation for a vote at its January 2023 Annual Meeting.

Next year's Board will need to decide whether to extend the charge to this Policy Task Force or address next steps in a different way.



Social Justice Council

Bethe Orrell, Chair

Members

Elly Van Mil, Secretary
Bob Mueller, Treasurer
Milagro Padilla
Dale Padilla
Nancy Harmon
Sarah McCord

We have had many members who left, and we added several. We still have a few more that we would like to add in the coming year. We should have about 9 or 10 members total.

In March of this year, pursuant to the boards strategic planning initiative, we as a council held a retreat at Bethe's home in Tijeras. All members of the council at that time were present. **We worked on setting five year goals that we started working on this year.**

1. Return to live auctions. Also to set an annual schedule that the committee would keep.
2. Set general dates for the activities of the council,
 - a) Social Council sponsorship of the potluck for members of social justice committees.
3. Set activities and goals to advance the cause of Social Justice work in the church
4. Use some of our equity finds to:
 - a) equip one room in the ARC building with equipment and furniture for Social Justice Meetings of any type (this is on hold due to current rental agreement of the larger church.)
 - b) establish a social justice coordinator for the church. This was deemed a primary concern of the group.
 - c) Set up a course on grant writing for members of social justice organizations .
5. To flesh out our goal of adding a social justice coordinator to staff at the church, we decided and agreed the Kenny Jones would volunteer in this capacity to establish a job description and estimate the number of hours such a coordinator would need. We also discussed the justification of our need that would address missing pieces of the church's general Social Justice work.

Calendar of the Social Justice Council

1. End of January we assist the general meeting by having Change for the Future candidates participate

by answering questions and having other interactions with members of the congregation. We tally votes and set up the schedule of quarters for each approved organization.

2. April - We organize and hold the Social Justice Potluck. We provide a dinner and tell them about what each committee is doing in the community and answer questions that council members or others have about each committee. We also ask for assistance from each committee on the auction. We should have a date for the auction by this time, but did not this year, due to COVID uncertainties.

3. August /September - This is the time that we hold the Auction. In the months preceding the auction we have much planning to do, such as music, food, and other auction preparation.

4. October through January – Start advertising and other work for Change for the Future. We suggest, contact, and collect applications, then approve or not each application, and set up the voter tally sheet for the congregation.

Fund Collection and allocation

We have four areas of funding.

1. Through the Church Budget. We receive a small amount of funding through the budget to assist in specific projects. These include After School Tutoring, Adult English Literacy and Citizenship, Food Pantry and Family Promise. Food pantry has an endowment fund so that we have not had any requests from them for several years.

2. Auction Proceeds. Several years ago we as a council voted to segregate our Auction funds into current need-based funding, and a set aside funds for larger asks from the church or community.

This year we held our first live auction after two years of COVID. We were one of the first large events that was held indoors, so this year we provided a dinner for attendees, which is not our common practice. We usually do potluck dinners. The cost of the dinner cut into our auction proceeds this year. Our gross proceeds were \$8440, with food costs of \$2655, which left net proceeds of \$5785..

3. In the past we supplied start up funds for **Faithworks**, with a \$5000 grant to allow First Unitarian to be a founding member of this organization. At the beginning of the pandemic, we also designated our entire \$11000 equity fund to address any ministerial funding for members of our congregation. They utilized \$2500 for supplying funding to congregants.

4. Change For the Future Fund administration - As each quarter accumulates funds they are accounted for separately in a church account. At the end of each quarter, we request a check to be cut for the organization that is designated for the quarter. We send the check to each recipient to match the amount collected. This year, giving for Change for the Future jumped from \$2000 or so per quarter to nearly \$3000.

Publications and marketing

We keep a brochure on the church website under the justice tab. This brochure was initially established by Beth Elliot during her time as Social Justice coordinator. The Brochure was updated by Geri Knoebel during her time as member of the Council. We attempt to keep it up to date, noting changes in committees or leadership as they occur.

Grants for this past year and the fund area from which they were disbursed.

1. Change for the Future

March, April, May

Transgender Resource Center: \$2760.11

June, July, August

Family Promise of Albuquerque: \$3889.20

September, October, November

Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless: \$3099.83

December, January, February

Street Safe NM: TBD

2. Grant Awards

Southwest Women's Law Center: \$650.00

Habitat for Humanity: \$2000.00

3. Budget Allocation (\$3000)

After School Tutoring: \$2000.00

Adult Literacy and Citizenship (projected): \$600.00

SJC Expenses (also out of this fund): \$3998.35

Current funds available

1. Equity Fund: \$16529.11

2. SJC Awards Fund: \$9940.96

3. Operating Budget Fund: \$1.65

Needs

We have missed greatly having a Social Justice Coordinator and Ministerial Representative during the past year. This year we will also be looking for a Chair of the Social Justice Council as Bethe will be stepping down. This is one of the reasons to add new members to the council.

We used to do the work to have various social justice programs during the 10:00 hour of each Sunday morning, which was managed by a sub-committee of the Social Justice Council. This sub-committee was chaired by our Social Justice Coordinator who would try to poll all justice committees for organizations to present these programs. Although some of the workshops have to do with justice issues, they are not distributed through our various committee mandates. This is work that the SJC would like to get back, however we currently do not have a large enough group to take this on.

We anxiously await the turning over of the ARC building to the church to enable our mission to outfit one of the rooms in that building for the above mentioned workshops and for all social Justice entities in the church and the wider community to use, with chairs and tables, projectors and microphones and lecturn and white boards or other needs as expressed by committees. The Arnold or Wesson rooms are not well suited to any of these purposes.



Arts & Aesthetics Committee

Pamela Livingston, Chair

Members

Graham Bowkett
Bobby Jones
Carol Hobart
Bruce Little
Pamela Livingston
Sarah McCord
Sally New
Nic Provenzo
Richard Sauls
Eliza Schmid

Key Accomplishments for 2022

- Hosted three art exhibits with total sales of approximately \$2,100. Of that amount, over \$700 was donated to the church, with one artist donating his total sale proceeds to the church and the rest donating 30% of their sale proceeds.
- Welcomed two new members and two re-turning members to the committee.
- Scheduled an African-American History art exhibit for January -- February 2023.

Summary

The Arts & Aesthetics Committee resumed onsite exhibits in the church Social Hall in June 2022 after a two-year Covid-related hiatus. In a regular calendar year, the A&A Committee hosts seven art exhibits. In 2022, the A&A Committee hosted three.

Of the three, the first was an exhibit by the church artists group, Friday Painters, who were scheduled to exhibit before the Covid-related church campus closure.

The second was an exhibit featuring landscapes by Albuquerque artists. The committee recruited new artists for this exhibit, scheduled before the church campus closure, to replace those who were no longer available.

The third was the church's All-Member Art Show.

Held annually November through December, this exhibit displays the artworks of church artists.

The committee dismantled its Virtual Art Gallery due to the high overhead in maintaining it. The gallery may be rebuilt at some future date.

The committee conducts business meetings on the third Sunday of every month. Visitors are welcome. Membership is open to all church members.

About Exhibits

The Arts & Aesthetics Committee typically schedules seven exhibits a year for display in the church Social Hall. Art works are displayed on Social Hall walls and in a glass display case at the southwest corner of the hall. Most artworks are for sale, with 70% of sale proceeds going to artists and 30% going to the church's general fund.

Most exhibits include a mercado, held on exhibit opening day. Artists sell smaller, less expensive wares at mercados and are present to discuss their art.

Recruiting artists and artist groups to exhibit is an ongoing process. Committee members identify possible candidates for exhibits throughout the year and invite them to jurying, held every August. Artists are also recruited through "calls to artists" posted with artists groups and through social media.



Coyote Willow CUUPS

Sara Wofford

Coyote Willow CUUPS (CWCUUPS) is a chapter of the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans. We support the practice and understanding of modern Pagan and Earth centered spirituality, with a focus on Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources. We also provide outreach to the Pagan community, which is very active locally.

Coyote Willow CUUPS has an open, drop-in style membership. Officers this year were Sara Wofford as Coordinator, Victoria Rosquist as Contact Person, and Elya Arrasmith as Media Tech Person. The Contact Person provides announcements to the Church publications (Messenger, eBroadsheet, etc.), maintains the group's Facebook and Google Group sites, and serves as first contact to answer questions about CWCUUPS from church members and the public. The Coordinator provides internal group organization, represents CWCUUPS to outside groups, and reserves Church spaces for in-person meetings. The Media Tech Person sets up Zoom meetings and runs the cameras and microphones for hybrid events.

CWCUUPS continued actively in 2022, holding online or hybrid meetings every month on the second Friday at 7:00 pm, and online, hybrid, or in-person rituals for all eight of our regular seasonal holidays: Imbolc, Ostara, Beltaine, Litha, Lughnasadh, Mabon, Samhain, and Yule.

We also had a booth at Pagan Pride Day in September, which brought in just under 2000 pounds of food for the First Unitarian Food Pantry, and we held our third Virtual Divination Night in October. Several new individuals joined us this year, both from the church and from the wider pagan community.

At Beltane, intern minister Matt Pargeter-Villarreal preached a Beltane sermon on May 1, followed by Coyote Willow CUUPS hosting a maypole dance ritual in the RE playground. The maypole dance was attended by about 40 people and was streamed to additional viewers via Zoom. After the ritual, the wrapped maypole ribbons were given to a couple who were expecting a baby.

For Samhain, we held an in-person ritual in the courtyard in which the names on the Memorial Flower Altar (which had been at the back of the Sanctuary) were read aloud and offered to a sacred flame. The ceremony was attended by approximately 50 people, several of whom had not had any other opportunity for closure or ritual remembrance of their departed loved ones.

Our Yule ritual in December was a hybrid event in concert with a local pagan church called CASHEW. 21 people attended in person and another 8-10 on Zoom. Individuals from CASHEW (some of whom are also in CUUPS) played integral roles in pulling the ritual together as some of our CUUPS volunteers got sick with the flu.

CWCUUPS had an active year, and we look forward to continuing in 2023 to support both the church and the pagan community.



Memorial Wall Committee

Margo Milleret & Linda Skye

This is the first annual report of the Memorial Wall Committee. The committee includes Margo Milleret and Linda Skye. Karen Deaton volunteers her time to prepare and mount each tile. Margo and Linda accepted this role in late 2019. Since then, we have connected with 47 families whose loved ones have passed away. The families complete a form giving permission to the church to place the tiles on the wall and confirming the name and dates to be placed on the tile. The committee prepares biography pages that consist of a photo and a short summary of the honored member's life. The biographies are kept in two notebooks in the Minister's office and contain all the records of those whose tiles are held on the wall.

The committee also works with the senior minister to prepare the Memorial Ceremony held each year in November. That work involves inviting family members, setting up the Memorial Hall with displays of each person who passed that year, and being present for the ceremony to provide support for the guests. Occasionally, we also assist families as

they prepare to place ashes of the deceased in the Cinerarium.

We have also contacted twenty-three widows/widowers whose loved ones have tiles on the memorial wall to ask if they would like a tile reserved for themselves. At this time, there are 520 spaces for tiles on the wall and of them 301 or about 58% are used or have been reserved for partners/spouses.



People of Color

Amy Sun

POC group continues to have a strong presence within First U. Nonetheless, its core membership shrank in 2022. In the first half of 2022, the POC group read and discussed *White Fragility* by Robin Diangelo. Themes laid out in this book substantiated systemic racism through behaviors and arguments of our dominant culture. This led to more discussions related to the importance of maintaining a safe space for POC members by examining the article by Kelsey Blackwell – “Why do POC need their own space?” As our own missions overlap with a newly formed 8th Principle Exploration Task Force, how can the POC group help cultivate a multicultural, beloved community?

In our self-assessment, we have learned that most of us serve on different committees, groups, or task forces within First U. Without our POC space, where

our voice is the majority, we sometimes find difficulties expressing our ideas in other spaces. Below is a diagram that summarizes our sphere of influence, which rests on a core belief that this First U POC group feeds our souls and enables us to serve. Without the POC group as an anchor, a mothership, a haven, we would not have the strength, intellect, compassion, and support to carry out our work in this congregation. We ended our year gathering in the home of a generous POC member for an in-person potluck.





Religious Education Council

Benita Terrell, Chair

Members

Carol Cowan - Curriculum Portfolio
Eric Keiter - Secretary
Chris Mayo - Youth Programs Liaison
Anna Eder - member at large

Ex-Officio Members

Mia Noren, Director of Religious Education (DRE)
Alana Rodriguez, Youth Programs Coordinator

The RE Council provides lay leadership to the church's Religious Education programs. The RE Council is responsible for organizing, promoting, supervising, and evaluating the religious education programs for First Unitarian children, youth, families, and volunteers. The RE Staff collaborates with the RE Council concerning issues of policy and direction.

The Council above kept meeting all year, transitioning to in-person meetings in November. They worked on transitioning from a pandemic-focused program to an in-person format. Projects included assisting with decisions about curriculum and activities and taking the lead on enhancing the welcome people feel when they come to RE, sponsoring a parent coffee time at 10:00 and getting a banner project going to put at the entrance. Anna Eder joined the committee in December.

RE for elementary children started in-person in the summer with first, free play, and then a program called Lego Sources, which increased attendance, not usual for summer programming. In September it started with a program called

Rainbow Principles, which extended until the end of December. It was deemed not a success and a strain on the DRE, who was writing it, and the decision was made to return to the Soul Matters materials which are provided to RE already. Carol and Mia could see that the Soul Matters RE material had improved much since last year's offerings.

In July, we returned to Sacramento for the 6-day UU Kid's Summer Camp. Overall attendance was down from average numbers, but the campers and adult leaders all had a wonderful experience, and most committed to returning in 2023.



Adult Literacy & Citizenship Program

Connie Molecke & Cathy Intemann, Co-Directors

Mission

The Adult Literacy & Citizenship Program continues its mission to promote the worth and dignity of all beings through education, advocacy and assistance by teaching adults who wish to improve their general English speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. In some classes, our goal is also to enable them to pass the US Citizenship Exam. Before Covid, we additionally provided some informational workshops about community resources and advocacy to build relationships with people and other organizations in our community. We hope to resume this type of community outreach when the pandemic is under control.

Volunteer Staff and Students

We paused all in-person adult literacy and citizenship classes from March 2020 until March 2022. We continued to work with some adult literacy and citizenship students online with Zoom or by telephone.

Spring Semester 2022

On March 7, in-person classes were reopened with registration of returning and new students. We required all volunteers and students to be fully vaccinated and wear masks. We had 12 volunteers. Classes were held throughout the RE Building on Monday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30. We registered 27 students. Some volunteers and students continued online or remote learning.

We conducted classes for 8 weeks, ending with a small party on May 16, 2022. At the end of the spring semester, we still had 17 students. Some had dropped out because of transportation, internet problems, or reasons unknown. 3 students passed their citizenship test and no longer needed classes, and 2 students moved.

Fall Semester 2022

During the summer of 2022, Connie Molecke's husband Martin developed severe life-threatening illness. It became apparent that Connie could no longer lead or assist in the leadership of this program. Cathy Intemann volunteered to become the Interim Director and the volunteer tutors agreed to assist running the program as needed. Maura Lewicki served as advisor for the

Citizenship program. Martin Molecke died on November 9, 2022.

September 12 was the first class for new and returning students. There were 11 tutors and 32 Students. There were 12 weeks of classes, ending on December 5. Student participation decreased over those weeks as students dropped out for various reasons. Without students, several tutors also dropped out. Final number of students was approximately 17. Some attendance declined during Ramadan.

Childcare Note

We had planned to offer childcare, as was our practice pre-Covid. For the spring semester, we were not able to offer childcare. We did offer childcare for the fall semester and we had volunteers for the first two weeks. The church was not able to provide childcare workers. Uncertainty about covid and other illnesses and the lack of childcare probably was responsible for declining student and tutor participation.

Internet Note

In the past, we have used tablets and phones for classroom teaching and translation assistance. Teachers and students were not usually able to log onto the church WIFI system. Tutors and students can access internet via cell phones but cannot access using devices such as tablets using the username and password provided by the church. We need to explore WIFI future use.

Financial Report 2022

Expenses totaled \$260.67 for office supplies such as ink, paper, and notebooks. In the pre-Covid past, we averaged expenses of about \$1600 a year. The program used to be larger and childcare expenses were deducted from our account. Projected expenses for 2023 are closer to previous years if childcare expenses are resumed and charged to our program.

Evaluation of Our Program

Adult Literacy (ESL)

We work with each student on language needs and their personal goals. In the past, we evaluated each student using NM approved assessments. This year,

due to shortened number of weeks in each semester and inconsistent attendance, it has been more difficult to measure student progress.

Citizenship

In 2022, our program helped five of our students become Naturalized Citizens.

Current Community Partnerships

- ReadWest Inc.:** A nonprofit in Rio Rancho that teaches Basic Literacy, ESL and computer skills.
- New Mexico Immigrant Law Center:** A nonprofit which collaborates with our program to complete the N-400 Citizenship applications and as a legal resource.
- Encuentro:** A nonprofit which provides classes in Adult Literacy, Citizenship, Computer Skills training, and Financial Literacy .
- El Centro:** A nonprofit which educates, advocates and advises the community and individuals regarding their human rights.
- Montezuma Elementary School:** We were not able sustain this partnership during 2021 or 2022. We are resuming this partnership because most of the children who live near First U attend this school and some attend our After School Tutoring program.

Please contact Connie Molecke at conniemolecke@gmail.com if you have questions about this program, report, or the funding.



After School Tutoring Program

Carol Oslund

I am happy to report that the After School Tutoring Program has had a terrific year so far. We began at our normal starting date in September with many returning tutors and several new people, including Torre Near, Cecelia Dunbar, and Cheryl Romanek. We welcomed back former students and many new ones, too, so our student enrollment number is up to 19. We have 24 tutors and 7 people who are substitutes, PE, and Art volunteers.

Our Wednesday afternoon Arts/Enrichment period has included two special events. In October, a docent from the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology presented a program on Ancient Tools; and in December, the Hawks Aloft organization brought three raptors and taught the children about the birds. We have had an interesting variety of art projects, including three sessions of weaving with Christine Robinson, and music with Torre Near.

Our holiday party was on December 19. Families were invited and all younger siblings also received a book gift. Tutoring resumes the second week of the new year.

We are finding that families are experiencing more stress and financial difficulties. Four of our families receive food from the food pantry each week. Some children do not have sufficient clothing and have missed school days for lack of clean clothes. We intervene in these cases by communicating with the counselor at their school, Montezuma Elementary.

We have faced challenges this year: kids getting sick—no COVID, just an assortment of illnesses, so they miss school and tutoring; various "family emergencies" probably related to stress and economic issues. New children enrolled this year are at an even lower achievement level, with two exceptions. We saw second and third graders still being essentially at Kindergarten level at the beginning of the year. We all do our best to remediate and get them on a learning curve.

A brighter note: children are very engaged with their tutors and really trying. We provide them with opportunities for socializing, which they also missed during COVID times. They get along well with each other, help one another, and are very good little citizens.



Animal Advocates

A Chapter of the Unitarian Universalist Animal Ministry

Sharon Hall, chair

Animal Advocates celebrated its 12th anniversary in 2022, returning to in-person meetings and moving forward from the limitations of the pandemic.

In May we partnered with the Earth Web Sustainability Fair to begin a new season of our Animal Advocates Arts & Crafts Fairs. Our “Artists for the Animals” donate a 30% portion of their sales, which in turn allows us to support local animal welfare/ rescue.

Each month members vote to donate \$100 each to two individual organizations. This year they included: Me and My Shadow Dog Rescue, Peace of Mind Rescue of NM, East Mt. Companion Animal Project, Sunflower Sanctuary, Desert Haven Animal Rescue, the Longears Safehouse Donkey Rescue, NM Horse Rescue at Walkin 'n Circles Ranch, APD Horse Unit Fund, Dew Paws Rescue, June's Senior Cat Rescue, Bridges to Home, Santuario de Karuna, Kennel Kompadres, Fabulous Felines, Desert Paws Animal Rescue of NM, Haven for Hamsters, Straight to the Horses Mouth, Humane Society of Ruidoso, and the Animal Welfare Coalition of Northeastern NM.

Animal Advocates sponsored two amazing field trips: one to the APD Horse Unit barn/training center in Albuquerque and one to The Longears Safehouse Donkey Rescue in Estancia, NM followed by lunch in Cedar Crest.

In October we hosted a heart-warming Animal Blessing Service in Memorial Hall with Reverend Angela bestowing the blessings and Music Director Susan Peck providing the music. We also collected food for Pets of the Homeless.

In November Animal Advocates sponsored a team for Animal Humane's “Doggie Dash and Dawdle” fundraiser, and in December we once again collected food, toys, treats and blankets for Albuquerque Animal Welfare's “Silent Night” and delivered them to the Eastside Shelter.

Animal Advocates is a chapter of the national UU Animal Ministry and meets monthly on zoom with Executive Director Rev. John Millspaugh and other chapters around the country. We are also a Social Justice Committee of First Unitarian and participate annually in Connection Sundays.



Earth Web

Marilyn O'Boyle, Chair

Earth Web began the year with our monthly meetings continuing to be held on Zoom. Here are some of our activities: We offered a four session book study, discussing Laura Pascus' book *At the Precipice*, which is about how climate change is affecting New Mexico. Many of us worked on legislative advocacy, with post cards, phone calls, and emails to our representatives. We worked especially hard in support of the New Mexico Green Amendment, and made progress, which we hope to continue this year and get it passed and signed by the Governor.

Our Change for the Future nominee, Covenant Pathways, did not win, so we decided to support them in other ways and sent them some funds from our Earth Web account. We also hope to visit their place sometime this year.

In May, we teamed up with Animal Advocates and had our Sustainability Fair again after a hiatus of two years during the pandemic lockdown. It was a big success with information tables, plants for sale and a solar company.

In the fall, we had two meetings in "hybrid" mode, but have now gone back to meeting in person. We have also resumed shared responsibility for meeting roles, with volunteers doing the Chalice Lighting, Reading and Opening Question. We developed a nine-point plan to support the church's Strategic Plan and Earth Web's participation in it. We have now made progress on two of these goals as we have revised our flyer and are going to start our meetings with a "land

acknowledgement".

We continue to post our "Green Corner" in the Messenger with announcements, hints and advice about environmental issues. We have decided to use some of our funds to put markers on plants on the church campus, emphasizing xeriscape and low water use plants.

The New Mexico Green Amendment continues to be a focus for our advocacy and we have had a post card signing table after services in December and January, urging representatives to support it, as well as other environmental bills.

All are welcome at our meetings, which are on the second Sunday of every month from 12:15 – 1:45.



Family Promise

Peggy Whitmore, Coordinator

Leadership Team

Jenny Parsons
Kevin Whitmore

First Unitarian is one of 21 congregations that provide meals and support for families experiencing homelessness. During 2022, we provided meals and support on four separate occasions to Family Promise guests, either at the Church of the Good Shepard (COGS) or the Montgomery Church of Christ.

For many years, Family Promise of Albuquerque (FPA) hosted guests at each of its member churches, moving them to the next church each week. At the beginning of the Covid pandemic, FPA moved its guests into a semi-permanent facility at COGS, and more recently the Montgomery Church of Christ. During the pandemic, FPA limited volunteer interactions with its guests for safety. Currently, FPA is asking its First U volunteers to provide meals to the guests and stay with them to have dinner and conversation. Jenny Parsons is our very able food coordinator and has continued to arrange for meal preparation and delivery to FPA guests during 2022.

As our church is no longer physically housing FPA guests, we emptied our storage unit at First U and donated the unit to FPA for storage in October 2022.

FPA purchased a permanent location at 1516 San Pedro NE a couple years ago and plans to make that location into a permanent shelter. Unfortunately, the cost of renovating the new building is very high (more than \$1M) and FPA has been working to raise funds for the renovation. FPA received a grant of \$500,000 from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development recently and hopes to begin the renovation in 2023.

Our Family Promise account is financially stable due to the generous donations of the congregation and the Social Justice Council, but we need additional volunteers to provide meals during our four assigned weeks in 2023. Please contact anyone on the leadership team if you want to volunteer. Thank you all!!!



Food Pantry

Rebecca Gracey & Jessica Tafoya

The food pantry **gave out a total of 4,412 sacks of food in 2022**, averaging 84.8 sacks of food per week. One hundred sacks are prepared each week by a subcommittee of ten people chaired by Kathy Kwait. The number was increased from 80 sacks per week to 100 in September when the numbers of recipients started to increase.

The average in 2021 was 72 sacks, 98 sacks in 2020, 108 sacks in 2019, 124 in 2018, 119 in 2017, and 103 in 2016.

The food is handed out once per week on ednesday afternoons from noon until 2:00, and is done outside from the church parking lot. There is a subcommittee of 14 people who help with this job. Some help once per month, and some are there every week. They add the nonperishable food to the sacks and take the food from the pantry to the parking lot. The distribution aspect of the committee is coordinated by Jessica Tafoya.

A third subcommittee comes to the pantry on Tuesday mornings to receive any food delivered by Roadrunner. They package the produce and place the nonperishable food on the pantry shelves. There are eight people who do this task, some weekly and some biweekly. The coordinators are Rebecca Gracey and Torre Near.

Rebecca Gracey gets the names and keeps the records of the recipients of the food each week. She also does shopping for paper supplies and food from local stores. The pantry still obtains food from Roadrunner Food Bank but Roadrunner's offerings have been greatly limited for much of 2022. Roadrunner has another avenue of food allotment that gives our pantry free food once every six weeks through a Food, Farm, Hunger Grant as long as Rebecca turns in a monthly report of the number of people coming for food and the ages of people in their households.

Jessica Tafoya orders food online from Roadrunner each week. Dog and cat food is provided each week to our food pantry recipients. Chewy delivers the food to Bud Shafer who repackages it into one-pound

sacks. Rebecca pays Chewy for the pet food and is reimbursed through funds in the food pantry account.

The total income for the pantry in 2022 was \$24,215.26.

The total expenses were \$44,871.59. A big expense of the pantry this year was a new heating and cooling system for the La Amikoj room where the food pantry is located. That was at a cost of \$10,888.20. \$33,933.39 was spent on food and supplies.

The pantry has a healthy balance in the account thanks to contributions to the pantry from church members, the past Christmas Eve service collection, Pagan Pride Day donations of food and money, contributions from the yoga classes of Ann Walton and Alon Carter, and \$12,000 a year that comes from the estate of Nolan and Elaine Smith.

The pantry ended the year with a balance of \$28,887.34.



Socorro Unitarian Universalists

Lia Atherton, Steering Committee Chair

We held weekly Sunday afternoon services in person throughout the year, some members continued attending First Unitarian's virtual worship and vespers services, some attended both in-person and virtual services. Attendance at regular weekly services ranged from 6 -13 people. Our accompanist was absent for several months recovering from a fall and while we explored various alternatives from singing a *capella* to bringing in local musicians, we were very happy to welcome her back in November.

We continue to send out weekly announcements which now include the worship calendar and sign-ups not only for refreshments, but also for transportation to accommodate the changing needs of our membership. We continued the practice initiated last year of meeting at 4:00 pm during MDT and 3:00 [, during MST so members with compromised night vision can get home safely before dark.

We continue to collect Change for Change, choosing

a different local non-profit to receive the funds every six months. We continued our semiannual adopt-a-mile highway clean-up and our typical summer schedule of one service plus one social event a month. Theology on Tap is on hiatus as we consider how to make it accessible for everyone.

SUU member Len Truesdell died in December. No new members have joined this year.

