

REVISED 5/31/2023

**Unitarian Universalist Community Church  
Augusta, Maine**

**Annual Report  
2022-2023**



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## Current Board and Committee Chairs

For this church year ending June 30, 2023

### **Officers of the Board**

President	Michaela Loisel
Immediate Past President	Kathy Ann Shaw
Vice President	Susan Burnett
Clerk	Catherine Palmer
Treasurer	Nancy Fritz
Member at large-1 <sup>st</sup> year	Hal Booth
Member at large – 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	Terry Cairn
Member at large – 2 <sup>nd</sup> year	vacant
Youth Representative	Vacant

### **Committee Chairs**

Buildings and Grounds	Bill Allen
Communications Work Group	Helen Zidowecki
Finance-Chair	Harry Grimmnitz
Fundraising	Karen and Allison Foust
Invested Funds	Marilyn Dunn
Stewardship	Betty and Terry Cairn
Finance Member at Large	June Zellers
History	Richard Bridges
Leadership Development	Stefanie Barley and Cheryl Ring
Membership	Hannah Faulkner and Denis Thoet
Music	Dale McCormick
Pastoral Ministry	Martha Pelletier
Small Group Ministry Coordinators	Linda Findlay and Helen Zidowecki
Social Activities	Cheryl Clukey
Social Justice	Debbie Mattson and Mary Kane
Augusta Food Bank	Stef Barley & Carolyn Ladd
Worship Associates/Worship Arts	Karen Allen

## **DRAFT Clerk's Report**

### **Minutes of last year's Annual Meeting – June 5, 2022**

10:00 to 11:45 am via Zoom and in person

**Present:** 59 UUCC Members and 2 UUCC friends gathered for the Annual Meeting as Spiritual Practice

**Board Packet:** A packet of information was sent to congregants on May 26, 2022, including the Annual Meeting Agenda, Proposed FY22-23 Budget, Nominations of Board of Trustees & Leadership, and Annual Report 2021-22.

#### **Minutes:**

As congregants gathered in the Church and on Zoom, Stefanie Barley played in-gathering music. John Seksay welcomed all present and Interim Minister Chloe Briede invited the silence. John Seksay invited everyone to join in the chalice lighting and Rev. Helen Zidowecki offered a brief reflection.

*Hymn: Enter, Rejoice and Come In*

**I. Call to Order:** The Meeting was called to order by Board President Kathy Ann Shaw at approximately 10:15.

**II. Establishing a Quorum:** Board Clerk Karen Foust confirmed that a quorum of the membership was reached with 59 UUCC members and 2 UUCC friends participating in the meeting. A 30% quorum for 159 members is 48 members. Members participated on a multi-platform setting that included being physically present at the Church and virtually on Zoom.

**III. Electing a Moderator:** Dale McCormick made a motion to elect Nancy Fritz as the Moderator for the meeting and Hal Booth seconded. All were in favor. Nancy presented the protocols for the meeting. She stated that votes would be observed with a show of hands and that exact counting would only be used if there was a close vote.

**IV. Minutes of the 2021 Annual Meeting:** Stefanie Barley motioned to approve and adopt the Minutes of the 2021 Meeting as written by Susan Caldwell. Hal Booth seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All votes were in favor.

**V. Report of Committees:** Hal Booth motioned to accept the Report of Committees. Stefanie Barley seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All votes were in favor.

*Offering: "From You I Receive"*

**VI. Report of the Treasurer:** Nancy welcomed Martha Naber to report on the status of the FY 21/22 financials. Martha provided a summary of the UUCC May Treasurer's report- 91% of the year has passed with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022. Pledges for this fiscal year have reached 101% of the total pledged and the offering donations have amounted to 54% of the annual budget in the brief time this year that church services have been offered in person. Plate donations prior to being in person were not significant. Total income at the end of May was at 94% of budget and additional amounts will be added in June for the Auction Work Group Fundraiser (\$700) and Dale McCormick's tomato baby sale (\$851). The amount coming from the Adams Trust is added during the month of June so that portion of the proposed income will be noted then. Many operating expenses such as water, sewer and gas have been below budget since the Church building was not being used, but those expenses are increasing now. Staff expenses are slightly below budget. Total income as of May 31<sup>st</sup> was \$227,285 and total expenses were \$192,376 with a difference of \$34,909. Payroll and other expenses to come in June will put the expenses closer to budget.

The question was raised as to whether there is a carryover expected for the FY2022/23. Martha stated that we could not be certain at this time, but that if there is, it will be significantly less than the \$34,909 that is currently reported as income. Terry Cairn offered that the Hannaford Card fundraiser is a great way to donate money to the church without spending any more money than one would ordinarily spend.

Hal Booth motioned to accept the Treasurer's Report. Jill Plourde seconded, and all were in favor with gratitude for all of the work that Martha has done.

**VII. Vote on the Proposed Budget:** Harry Grimmnitz and Martha Naber presented the proposed budget for FY 22/23. Harry shared his screen so that all in attendance, both on-line and in the church could see. Harry and Martha acknowledged that this was a challenging year in which to present a balanced budget with the pandemic, distance worshipping for most of the year, loss of members and continuing discord all playing a role. He also expressed gratitude for the display of support that pledges have been paid to 97% to date for this fiscal year. Although there may be some carryover to the next year, other needs have arisen that will have consumed some of the anticipated carryover.

Income: The goal for pledges this year was \$175,000 and pledges to date, with the latest update have totaled \$146,000, leaving a gap of \$34,000 compared to expenses. An update on the number of pledging units (individuals or households) shows only a slight decrease: from 69 to 67, which is good news. A line item for the Tomato Baby Sale that Dale McCormick has been added as the proceeds have become significant. Total income budgeted for FY 22/23 is \$251,330.

The Finance Committee had to make some difficult choices to present a balanced budget and they opted to recommend to the Board that \$23,000 be taken out of the money market savings account and the rainy-day fund. As a last resort the Board also voted to approve a second recommendation for a one-time withdrawal from the principal of the church endowment if necessary.

Expenses: Staff wages were increased 3%, which is lower than the 5.2% inflation rate and it was felt that as we continue with the transition period between having a settled minister, we want to retain the skilled and knowledgeable staff that we have. A line was added to the budget to retain a bookkeeper to pick up some of the tasks previously done by the volunteer treasurer and/or church administrator. The bookkeeper offered a rate for non-profits and will work up to 8 hours per month.

At this time, we do not know if there will be an Interim Minister or what those expenses would be, so the wages are being left as they are for the purposes of the budget.

Sean Fritz motioned to accept the proposed budget as presented and Harry Grimmnitz seconded. Nancy asked for discussion.

Linda Findlay inquired about the status of the tenant at the Judd House. Harry explained that the tenant had moved out and that the Board was in the process of trying to determine whether the church itself had need for the space since we are now back in the sanctuary and there is the potential for needing space for further programming.

Denis Thoet noted that without an Interim Minister for the next 3 months there would likely be a savings of approximately \$25,000 and wondered whether the church was prepared to proceed without an interim. Others responded that there might be substitute ministers over the summer that would need to be paid and that the average cost for a substitute minister is approximately \$315 per Sunday. Harry explained that the money for an interim was left in as a place holder because there would be a need to arrange for someone to supervise and manage the staff even if there was no paid minister coming in to lead Sunday services. He did state that he expected there might be money left from that line-item expense.

Dale McCormick inquired about the amount of money that would be left in the money market savings account if we were to take \$23,000, and in the endowment if \$11,000 were taken. Nancy responded that there would be \$6,000 left in the money market savings account and that she did not know exactly how much would be left in the endowment because the market has been fluctuating. As of March 31, 2022, there was \$348,868 and she speculated that it was likely closer to \$300,000 now.

Nancy called for more questions and seeing none called for a vote on the motion to accept the FY 22/23 budget as presented by Martha. All were in favor.

**VIII. Leadership Development Report** – Cheryl Ring and Stefanie Barley presented the nominations for Officers of the Board of Trustees:

President: Michaela Loisel

Vice President: Susan Claska Burnett

Treasurer: Nancy Fritz

Clerk: Catherine Palmer

Member at Large: Hal Booth

Member at Large: Terry Cairn (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)

Member at Large: Catherine Emery (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)

Chair of Finance Committee: Harry Grimmnitz

Stefanie and Cheryl presented the Committee Chairs and noted that a few committees had vacancies for leadership but that most had been filled. They expressed gratitude for all who had stepped up to serve on committees and for those who had served and continued to serve.

Nancy Fritz asked if there were any other nominations for Committee Chair positions.

Betty Cairn nominated herself and Terry Cairn to co-lead the Stewardship Committee.

Hannah Faulkner and Denis Thoet nominated themselves to co-chair the Membership Committee.

Debbie Mattson nominated Mary Kane as co-chair of the Social Justice Committee.

**IX/X. Vote of Committee Leadership and Board of Trustees:** Nancy requested a motion to cast one ballot for the Board and Committee Leadership. Martha made a motion to cast one ballot for the Board and Committee Leadership. Dale McCormick seconded. All were in favor.

Much gratitude was expressed for those who nominated themselves during the meeting. Sean Fritz nominated himself to serve on the Committee on Ministry. It was noted that the Committee on Ministry has a separate process for being filled, but it was noted that Sean is wishing to serve on that Committee.

Small Group Ministry and Worship Arts both have vacancies for a Chair. Stefanie and Cheryl will continue to look to fill those positions.

*Commissioning of Church Leaders*

*Hymn: What Gifts Can We Bring*

**XI. Discussion of the State of Ministerial Search:** Kathy Ann Shaw led the discussion with input from Chloe Briede.

Chloe stated that much of what is happening regarding the search for an Interim Minister has to do with the “Great Resignation” of people in service positions and that our congregation may need to wait a year or two for this to right itself. The stress of the Covid 19 pandemic and the shortage of labor have been contributing factors.

Kathy Ann Shaw presented a few thoughts on how the church community might proceed with support from the UUA including a part-time or shared Minister, a remote Minister, sharing a Minister from another liberal faith, a retired Minister who might be willing to fill in some of the role of Minister. She welcomed ideas from the Congregation, and many commented on the ideas presented.

- would staff such as Monique Bergeron would be able to fill in on some Sundays to lead the service. There were many comments of appreciation for the thoughtful reflections that Monique has given during services.
- would inviting a non-UU minister from another faith violate any U rules
- a combination of lay led services
- some liked the idea of retired ministers stepping in

Debbie Mattson expressed concern that with the lack of a Chair for the Worship Committee there would be a need for solid leadership.

John Seksay noted that one of the biggest challenges for Sunday services is the technology component.

Stefanie Barley expressed deep gratitude for what Chloe Briede has done this year and for her continued support throughout the process of the Ministerial Search.

Kathy Ann Shaw asked that any comments that people wanted to add be sent to her via email.

**XII Recognitions:** Martha Pelletier and the Pastoral Ministry Team and Michael Conley and the Small Group Ministry Committee were recognized as instrumental in getting the church community through the pandemic.

**XIII. Adjournment of the Meeting:** Sean Fritz motioned to adjourn the Annual Meeting. Stefanie Barley seconded. All were in favor. The business portion of the meeting adjourned at approximately 11:45.

*Parting Hymn: As We Leave This Friendly Place*

*John Seksay extinguished the chalice and Chloe Briede offered a Benediction.*

*Stefanie Barley played “Carousel Waltz as the postlude.*

*Respectfully submitted by Karen Foust, Board Clerk*

## Nominations for Next Year’s Board and Committees 2023-2024

For the upcoming church year: July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

### **Officers of the Board**

President	Michaela Loisel
Immediate Past President	N/A - term limited
Vice President	Susan Burnett
Clerk	Cheryl Ring
Treasurer	Nancy Fritz
Member at large	Hal Booth
Member at large	Jim Caldwell

Member at large	vacant
Youth Representative	vacant

### **Committees**

Buildings and Grounds	Bill Allen
Communications	Helen Zidowecki
Finance - Chair	Harry Grimmnitz
Fundraising	Karen and Allison Foust
Invested Funds	Marilyn Dunn
Stewardship	Betty and Terry Cairn
Finance Member at large	June Zellers
History	Richard Bridges
Leadership Development	Stefanie Barley and Cheryl Ring
Membership	Monique Bergère, Hannah Faulkner, and Denis Thoet
Music	Dale McCormick
Pastoral Ministry	Martha Pelletier
Small Group Ministry Coordinators	Helen Zidowecki and Linda Findlay
Social Activities	Cheryl Clukey
Social Justice	Debbie Mattson and Mary Kane
Augusta Food Bank	Stef Barley & Susan Shaw
Worship Associates/Worship Arts	Karen Allen

## **Treasurer's Report**

### **Current State of the Budget**

The Treasurer will update UUCC's current budget showing all expenses and income through May, and hand out this most recent report at the Annual Meeting.

### **Proposed Budget for Upcoming Year 2023-2024**

	<b>FY 22-23</b>	<b>FY 23-24</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
<b>Annual Appeal</b>	<b>\$ 13,000</b>	<b>\$ 13,000</b>
<b>Donations</b>	<b>\$ 2,000</b>	<b>\$ 2,000</b>
<b>Fundraising</b>		
Auction	\$ 2,000	\$ 3,500
CLYNK	\$ 600	\$ 700
Hannaford Cash Card	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
Holiday Fair	\$ 1,000	\$ 2,000
Misc. Fundraising	\$ 300	\$ 300
Pie Sale	\$ 600	\$ 700

	<b>FY 22-23</b>	<b>FY 23-24</b>
Tomato/Plant Sale	\$ 700	\$ 1,000
Yard Sale		\$ 500
<b>Fundraising Total</b>	<b>\$ 9,200</b>	<b>\$ 12,700</b>
<b>Investment Income</b>		
Adams trust	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,375
Ballard Trust	\$ 8,280	\$ 9,300
Endowment	\$ 15,800	\$ 16,500
Rev. Carrie Johnsen Social Justice Fund	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
<b>Investment Income Total</b>	<b>\$ 27,580</b>	<b>\$ 29,175</b>
<b>Other</b>		
Miscellaneous	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,200
Offering (Sunday mornings)	\$ 2,000	\$ 4,500
Peaceful Heart Sangha	\$ 600	\$ -
Pledges/UUA Member Contributions	\$ 146,000	\$ 156,500
Religious Exploration (lifespan)	\$ 250	\$ 250
Rentals (use of space)	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Rental to MUUSAN	\$ 600	\$ 600
Rental of Drew House	\$ 12,900	\$ 13,200
Share the Plate	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
From Savings (for Ministerial Search)		\$ 12,000
<b>Total Other</b>	<b>\$ 165,550</b>	<b>\$ 190,250</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 217,330</b>	<b>\$ 247,125</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<b>Administrative</b>		
Bank Fees/ACH/KSB	\$ 120	\$ 120
Copier Lease	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,600
Copying/Printing	\$ 200	\$ 200
Equipment Maintenance	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,600
Miscellaneous	\$ 500	\$ 1,000
Office Supplies	\$ 750	\$ 750
Postage	\$ 700	\$ 700
Publicity	\$ 700	\$ 700
Technology/Website/Database	\$ 3,200	\$ 3,200
Telephone/Internet	\$ 2,700	\$ 2,700
UUA Annual Program Fund	\$ 14,598	\$ 14,664
<b>Administrative Total</b>	<b>\$ 26,168</b>	<b>\$ 27,234</b>

	<b>FY 22-23</b>	<b>FY 23-24</b>
<b>Facilities/Occupancy</b>		
Building Maintenance/Supplies	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Electricity	\$ 2,250	\$ 3,500
Heat	\$ 5,500	\$ 8,060
KSB Loan (heating sys conversion)	\$ 3,350	\$ -
Property Insurance	\$ 3,907	\$ 3,907
Snow Removal	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,600
Solar Farm Self Loan	\$ -	\$ 2,387
Water & Sewer	\$ 2,400	\$ 3,000
<b>Facilities/Occupancy Total</b>	<b>\$ 23,807</b>	<b>\$ 27,454</b>
<b>Personnel Expenses</b>		
<b>Ministerial Search</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 12,000</b>
<b>Contractual</b>		
Payroll Service	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,200
Bookkeeping	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000
Cleaning	\$ 10,000	\$ 13,000
Events Sexton	\$ 125	\$ 125
Nursery Care	\$ 1,125	\$ 1,125
Pastoral Care	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Pianists	\$ 4,000	\$ 6,900
UUCCO Director	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Worship Leaders	\$ 5,000	\$ 2,500
<b>Contractual Total</b>	<b>\$ 29,450</b>	<b>\$ 32,850</b>
<b>Minister: Interim (1 month)</b>		
In Lieu of FICA	\$ 474	\$ -
Insurances	\$ 1,051	\$ -
Professional Expenses	\$ 667	\$ -
Retirement	\$ 620	\$ -
Salary & Housing	\$ 6,198	\$ -
<b>Interim Minister Total</b>	<b>\$ 9,010</b>	
<b>Minister: Contracted</b>	<b>1/2 Time</b>	<b>3/4 Time</b>
In lieu of FICA	\$ 2,825	\$ 4,590
Insurances	\$ 7,780	\$ 9,780
Professional Expenses	\$ 3,000	\$ 6,000
Retirement	\$ 3,693	\$ 6,000
Salary & Housing	\$ 36,923	\$ 60,000
<b>Minister Total</b>	<b>\$ 54,221</b>	<b>\$ 86,370</b>

	<b>FY 22-23</b>	<b>FY 23-24</b>
<b>Music Director</b>		
Professional Expenses	\$ 100	\$ 100
Salary	\$ 5,555	\$ 5,833
<b>Music Director Total</b>	<b>\$ 5,655</b>	<b>\$ 5,933</b>
<b>Church Administrator</b>		
Insurances	\$ 900	\$ 900
Professional Expenses	\$ 300	\$ 300
Retirement	\$ 3,054	\$ 3,207
Salary	\$ 30,544	\$ 32,071
<b>Church Administrator Total</b>	<b>\$ 34,798</b>	<b>\$ 36,478</b>
<b>Coordinator of Lifespan Faith Formation</b>		
Professional Expenses	\$ 700	\$ 700
Salary	\$ 15,088	\$ 15,842
<b>Coordinator of Lifespan Faith Formation</b>	<b>\$ 15,788</b>	<b>\$ 16,542</b>
<b>Other Personnel Expenses</b>		
FICA	\$ 3,916	\$ 4,449
Workers Comp	\$ 1,362	\$ 1,300
<b>Other Personnel Total</b>	<b>\$ 5,278</b>	<b>\$ 5,749</b>
<b>Personnel Total</b>	<b>\$ 154,200</b>	<b>\$ 195,922</b>
<b>Program Expenses</b>		
Adult RE	\$ 100	\$ 100
Finance & Stewardship	\$ 400	\$ 600
Flowers/Worship Items	\$ 500	\$ 500
Fundraising	\$ 300	\$ 300
History	\$ 100	\$ 100
Hospitality	\$ 400	\$ 500
Leadership	\$ 500	\$ 600
Membership & Growth	\$ 250	\$ 250
Minister's Discretionary	\$ 400	\$ 400
Music (choir, orchestra, piano tuning)	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Pastoral Care Associates	\$ 200	\$ 200
Public Suppers	\$ 500	\$ 500
Lifespan Faith Formation	\$ 500	\$ 500
Rev. Carie Johnsen Social Justice Fund	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Small Group Ministry	\$ 250	\$ 250
Social Activities	\$ 150	\$ 150
Social Justice	\$ 250	\$ 500

	FY 22-23	FY 23-24
Share the Plate Donations	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Worship	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500
<b>Program Total</b>	<b>\$ 9,300</b>	<b>\$ 9,950</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 213,475</b>	<b>\$ 260,560</b>
<b>Net Change: Income Less Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 3,855</b>	<b>\$ (13,435)</b>

## Board President's Report

From the Board of Trustees June 4, 2023

Serving as President of the Board at UUCC has been one of the most rewarding, inspiring, and growth-filled experiences of my life. We are a community full of love, commitment, hope, and resilience at a time when those qualities are so needed. I am grateful to be part of a community that puts our UU values and principles into action. Two efforts that have made me particularly proud are: the Saturday Breakfasts for the unhoused community and the many restorative justice programs we have engaged this church year. You will see more details about these initiatives in the Social Justice Committee and Restorative Justice Committee reports in this Annual Report.

At the Board's September Retreat, we set five goals for this current church year and kept our commitment to actively review progress toward each at our monthly board meetings. Below is a summary of that progress. The goals are in bold:

**Determine how to live in a time of chronic, endemic Covid:** When we began this church year, it was with windows and doors open, a mask requirement and coffee hour outside on the front lawn.

In anticipation of cooler temperatures, the Board empowered Harry Grimmnitz to research and purchase 10 Hepa air purifiers for the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall so that we could increase safety as we navigate through uncharted waters. By Spring, congregational sentiment suggested making masks an option, not a requirement. Harry, along with Hal Booth and Catherine Palmer undertook a process of surveying the congregation and reported to the Board at its April Meeting. It was decided by the Board that the Church Building and Offices would become masks optional effective May 1.

**Develop a Congregational Covenant:** Unitarian Universalism is a covenantal theology. This means that we make promises about how we will be in relationship with one another. Most small groups, committees, and this Board have created their own covenant.

Since January, a team led by June Zellers has worked on a draft covenant that incorporates ideas from two congregational sharing cafes. Their process was thoughtful, transparent, and inclusive, and the product is inspiring. It has been suggested that this covenant could have helped us navigate the conflict we experienced prior to the Pandemic and that is my belief as well.

**Assess Safety and Security concerns and a plan for building safety.** An unfortunate aspect of living in these times requires that we think about

the safety of our community and the security of our buildings. In recent months, several church leaders and staff attended a workshop sponsored by the Maine Council of Churches in conjunction with state and federal security officials to learn about ways to upgrade our building and internal processes.

Susan Klaska Burnett is leading this effort with a great team of several congregants and staff including Nancy Fritz who partnered with Susan to write a grant request for financial support for these efforts. See Susan's report in this document. Thank you all for your participation in this important initiative.

**Review and revise UUCB By-Laws (Spring):** The By-Laws had a preliminary review this Spring and it was decided that a more comprehensive overhaul will take place over the summer. Kathy Ann Shaw has convened a small team to review and present an updated draft to the Congregation this fall.

**Address matters of our physical plant (window repair or replacement, ventilation estimates for board consideration)** Some aspects of our physical plant will be addressed through the work of the Building Safety and Security Team. The Board will review this goal again next year.

#### **Recognition of Departing Board Members:**

Terry Cairn, board member -at -large, spear-headed the successful initiative for UUCB to go "solar". We will keep you updated when we are connected and reaping the savings while helping our beloved planet. In addition, she, and Betty (Cairn) led a successful stewardship campaign this year and have signed on to do this again next year.

Catherine Palmer, served as our reliable, diligent Board Clerk. Having board minutes in our email in-boxes early the very next morning never failed to surprise! She also helped with the Saturday Breakfasts, serves at the monthly church luncheons, and is a fundraising goddess .

Kathy Ann Shaw, our Immediate Past President also leaves the Board this month after serving as vice-president, and president. Personally, she has been a rock and a mentor to me this entire year and I will miss her by my side. Fortunately, she will remain active with the ongoing work of the Restorative Justice Committee and the working group on by-law revision.

## **Minister's Report**

Dear Church,

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to serve as your part-time contract minister this year. I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know you as a congregation. You are a beautiful community with great integrity and compassion. The leaders of UUCB are a joy to work with as they are highly skilled and committed to the well-being of the congregation. Although you have been through some challenging transitions and conflicts over the past few years, you are strong and resilient which is one of the reasons why I love you.

You have done some powerful work this year: created a covenant; moved towards healing and forgiveness; started and sustained a Saturday morning breakfast for the unhoused; reflected on the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle and multiculturalism; managed to thrive with a half-time minister; developed the choir; created a budget to support a three-quarter time minister for next year; attracted seven new members to join UUCB; created two or three worship services a month without me; graciously moved through another year of COVID issues; renewed community events like the fellowship lunch; supported many small groups; created a search committee for your settled minister; and so much more. But what makes you most amazing are the ways you deeply care for one another and tend to your church.

I have deep faith in you as a congregation, not just to continue to survive, but to really thrive. And I have some advice on how to move forward. Please make it a goal next year to focus on membership, especially families and children. You will not survive unless you create a congregational goal and clear intention to attract younger people into your community. They will eventually become the strength and resiliency you will need over the next few decades to maintain the vitality you have in the years to come. My other piece of advice is

to allow yourselves to become more comfortable with conflict and at the same time create healthy boundaries. This will help you move through the transitions to come.

I feel sadness in leaving your community, blessed to have been on this part of the journey with you, and confident in your continued success.

Much love and gratitude, Reverend Christina Sillari

## **Affiliated Community Minister**

I continue to serve as a staff chaplain at CMMC in Lewiston, providing pastoral ministry to patients, families and hospital staff. This is a full time position serving the general public here in central Maine that leaves me with limited availability for congregational engagement, but I participate as I am able.

Per my agreement of affiliation with the congregation's board, I remain in covenanted relationship with our serving minister (this year, Rev. Christina Sillari) and led worship in late January on the topic of trauma and resilience.

Professional development and credentialing processes continue to be a significant part of my professional work. Thanks again to Stefanie Barley, Jim Caldwell and Cheryl Ring who served on my Ministerial Formation Team. Last fall we submitted my first renewal of Preliminary Fellowship (of three, total) which was accepted by the UUA's Fellowship Committee this past winter. I am currently working to prepare my application for Board Certification as a chaplain, in the hope of interviewing with the Association of Professional Chaplains this fall.

Submitted, Rev. Claire Curole, Chaplain, Central Maine Medical Center, Lewiston ME

## **Lifespan Faith Formation**

UUC Annual Report 2022-2023: Coordinator of Lifespan Faith Formation

*Finding Our Way Forward* seemed to be the theme for this Fall as we entered into our first Church year fully open while following the recommendations of our Covid 19 Advisory Group. We embraced feelings of rejuvenation, hope, new adventures and new twists on older traditions with a new part-time Minister, Rev. Christina Sillari.

I continue my work with our Minister and the Worship Arts Committee planning the Sunday Services, offering a Wisdom Story and collaborating with visiting Ministers for their Services. I look forward to and am honored to share my ministry with the Congregation during Sunday Service.

I connected with our teen youth caregivers in September to arrange scheduling for child care each Sunday. I had 2 teen volunteers available in the fall and was able to recruit a 3rd in the new year. I rarely have 2 teens available at the same time so I join the children's room following the Wisdom Story. We had a few new children come on Sunday mornings but attendance continues to be sporadic and not predictable. I took this opportunity to offer a story, craft, or game with the child or children. This pattern continued into the Spring. We had a fun Easter Egg hunt and some outdoor games in the good Spring weather. We will be having our Annual Youth Bridging Ceremony this year on June 18, celebrating a graduating senior and new driver.

I coordinated with the Augusta Family Violence Project for our Annual Holiday Gift Fundraiser. We collected an assortment of gifts and wrapping supplies from a list provided for a "Holiday Store" the Augusta Family Violence Project created for their families. I set up our Holiday Tree and decorated it with gift tags for our

Congregation to choose and return gifts to be donated. The enthusiasm and support for this Fundraiser is amazing! These donations brought much comfort & joy to these families during difficult times.

In October I was asked to join the Safety Committee and attended the *Protecting Houses of Worship* workshop held in Westbrook by the Maine Emergency Management Agency with other leaders in our church. We are reviewing and accessing current threats to religious facilities, building collaborative relationships between houses of worship and law enforcement, overview of emergency planning and resources, overview of grants for houses of worship security and vulnerability assessments.

I have been and continue to be working with our Membership Committee members reorganizing & revitalizing the committee responsibilities, vision & goals. This was a natural fit for me as CLFF. It offers me an opportunity to connect with new visitors and families quickly. It was arranged with the Board to have rotating Board members volunteer each Sunday as Greeters. I look forward to meeting with the Greeters to discuss how it went for them; what worked well; recommendations for improvement in the greeting process.

We also had a Membership Committee Member, Denis Thoet, welcoming in our community and connecting them with name tags, information and Sunday morning Service Programs.

Our Committee discussed improving and re-organizing our name tag holding area in the coat room. Hannah Faulkner and Denis Thoet had very thoughtful and creative ideas around this project and they did an amazing job renovating and reorganizing it! I was quite the undertaking sorting through all the piles of name tags. Past visitors, friends and members name tags that we have not seen regularly since before the Pandemic have been filed in an accessible "Returning Friends" file they created.

In the Spring the Membership Committee, the Minister and I hosted a Newcomers Dinner. With our Office Administrators assistance, I compiled a list of newcomers dating back to January 2022. I created and emailed a flier invitation to each person/family. The committee members and I divided up the list of names and called to invite them personally. We had a very positive and enthusiastic response. All enjoyed our dinner and discussions together. 10 Newcomers attended. 7 are now new members. We will have a new members ceremony on June 18th, 2023.

I am creating a file in the Church Google Drive for the Membership Committee that contains name tag templates, functions and goals of the committee.

I am coordinating and documenting the history of our current Members and Friends List with a team Rev. Christina has organized. We have been reviewing and updating these lists, creating a final call list of members and friends we have lost contact with. I created a Chalice postcard that was approved to mail out to each person prior to our calls: "Hello and how are you? We will be calling you in the next few weeks to hear how you are and verify your contact information..."

As a team we developed a call script and divided out the call list. All notes from calls are being documented by me in our spreadsheet. We have been coordinating with the Annual Pledge team in this process.

In the new year I was asked by Hillary Neckles to collaborate with the Social Justice Committee for their Annual February Sunday Service. Our focus was on building Beloved Community and the 8th Principle. We centered on an interactive activity on de-centering whiteness and other dominant cultures in UUism, and creating a culture in which everyone feels valued, respected, and comfortable being themselves. Hillary selected Hymns in our Hymnals for our congregation to reflect on and I chose a few children's books. We brought our ideas for this activity along with songs and reflections to the SJ committee for recommendations and completed the OOS for this service. Hilary was unable to attend this service so I stepped in to lead the service and assist with the interactive activities.

I attended the *2023 UUA New Day Rising Social Justice* Virtual event on Feb. 25th with Hilary and other SJ members. I was exposed to some new Anti-Racial curriculum and resources for adult as well as youth programs. I have added them to our supplies and they are already being reviewed by some of our congregation members.

The Mid-Coast Religious Exploration Leaders & I continue to meet 4 times a year. We went on a weekend retreat together in February. We actively support and care for each other as we move forward from the trauma of the pandemic and social unrest. We are brainstorming some collaborative youth and family outings for next year with the idea of rotating locations. There will be a Midcoast Tween night offered in 2024 at the Bangor UU. We are meeting in June before we break for summer.

I am encouraged by the outreach of our ministries and committees to me for creating new connections and reinforcing old ones. As we experience this time of changing Ministry in our Church, let us continue to *Find Our Way Forward* with open minds, curiosity and anticipation.

Sowing the seeds, Monique Bergère

*A seed today is a forest tomorrow*  
Matshona Dhliwayo

## **Music Director**

By Bridget Convey

As my eighth season as Music Director at the UUCC is coming to a close, I reflect on another year of transition and transformation. The choir began their season singing outside, then inside with masks and following other Covid protocols. Our numbers began to slowly rise with the ability to sing inside. We have welcomed new and returning members to the choir and their voices are enriching our services greatly. Many thanks to Hal Booth for supplying his electric keyboard, speaker system, piano stool and backyard for our outdoor choir rehearsals at the beginning of the season.

This year our faithful and fabulous Hannah Faulkner retired as worship pianist, but she continues to serve the church in other ways. Karen Allen continued as our wonderful choir accompanist for the season. Her patience, diligence and support are always greatly appreciated by us all. During the winter, we decided it was time to begin a search for a new choir accompanist for the 2023-2024 season. The search has begun, and we plan to welcome a new pianist to our roster in August.

Our season began with the In-gathering service/Water Communion on September 11, 2022 and will end with Flower Communion on June 11, 2023. This season was enriched by the ability to have consistent rehearsals inside. The choir was able to explore more challenging repertoire, as well as collaborate with the UUCCOO for Music Sunday 2022, Easter 2023 and the upcoming Flower Communion service in June. Special thanks to Stefanie Barley for playing violin with the choir in May. Collaboration has been an important part of our music program at the UUCC, we look forward to more in the future.

We are fortunate to have so many talented and generous musicians in our community. I continue to reflect on our choir and orchestra members, David Morris (UUCCOO director), Dale McCormick (UUCCOO manager and Music Committee chair), our pianists (Karen A., Karen F. and Stefanie), and our congregation for raising their voices with us!

The future is looking bright and I am excited to see where we go.

## **Committee Reports**

## **Buildings and Grounds**

Prepared by: Bill Allen

Committee members: Bill Allen, Marilyn Dunn, Matt Foust, Angie Blevins, Becky Harvey, Caroline Ladd

### **Work done this year -**

- Thanks to all who helped with the yard cleanup days.
- Thanks to our lawn mowing crew.
- We stained the south and east sides of the church. Special thanks to all who participated.
- Bill and Marilyn seal coated both entryways.
- Harry, Hal, Dale, and Angie repaired the fellowship hall exit door.
- Hal replaced the garbage disposal in the kitchen, and repaired a rocking chair.
- Angie worked on the door strike plate to the corner committee room, and she got a new door for the garage.
- Special thanks to Marilyn, Becky, and Carolyn Ladd for their work on the garden, and the bushes around the church.

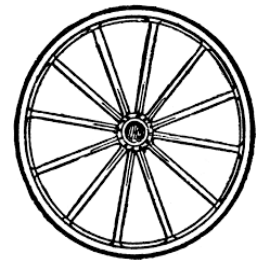
### **Work we want to do and/or plan to continue into the new church year:**

- Members of the church safety committee attended a seminar on protecting houses of worship. Security experts prepared a report to itemize potential issues. Addressing some of these issues could be expensive, but there is grant money which could cover the costs. Nancy Fritz submitted a grant application in April.
- Respond in a timely way to special requests or emergencies
- Repaint the railings and risers of the Judd House ramp.
- Hire someone to repair the Judd House portico roof.
- Anyone interested in painting or staining should contact Marilyn Dunn – [maine2007@hotmail.com](mailto:maine2007@hotmail.com).

## **Communications Work Group 2023**

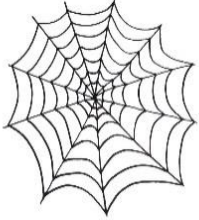
When we begin looking for church, we begin looking at community. We realize the critical role that communication plays in holding a community together. Two pictures of communication flow emerge: we are moving from Wheel to Web!

When we consolidated two congregations in 1992, our communication could be described as a wheel, flowing from the center or the hub, such as a minister, through spokes to specific positions, such as committee chairs or board, and then to the outer rim that held the community together. The hub was central to what was communicated, and the spokes and rim were the solid construction of the wheel. The Annual Reports, for example, came primarily from the minister, staff, the Board and committee chairs. Whatever was noted in these reports was what happened in a year.



Our congregation has been changing for the last 3 decades. Shared Ministry brought Pastoral Associates in Worship and Pastoral Care. Small Group Ministry engaged people in more diverse ways within the community. We have moved from Committees to Task Forces and Work Groups to address congregational needs in more flexible ways. The description is more like a web, still with a center and connected strands fanning outward

toward a rim that is flexible. The major difference is that many strands connect and cross each other. More people are involved with the congregation in diverse ways: Sunday service, Small Group Ministry, fund raising, social justice activities, community meals and so much more. The function of the hub or center is coordinating activities and facilitating communication using multiple threads to keep interested people involved. The Annual Report 2014 started including additional parts of congregational life.



Because of COVID 19 we learned new ways to communicate as a web in holding a community together:

--Communication was coordinated by the minister, the office and leadership recognizing that people were still involved, E-Blast had a new format, and that the church was 'still open'.

--The COVID Advisory Committee kept people informed of the status of the pandemic and ways to cope with its impact.

--Technology was available (such as Zoom and Live Streaming) so that spiritual connections were maintained. We found alternate spaces to meet as we worked toward re-opening.

--Participants throughout the church community kept in contact with each other, helping with needs and keeping each other connected. Activities of Small Group Ministry, Seasoned Souls, reading, study and other groups continued.

We will carry this learning forward and continue to integrate new technology into church life.

Our hope for communication within our community is that:

--Communication promotes sharing within our community and listening to learn from others.

--Planning for use of space and events will center on the UUCS calendar to keep us all connected

--Meeting the needs of the community, for transportation, meals, and other needs will involve new technology as well as old school face to face conversation.

--An openness and receptivity to the diversity within our church and the larger community will thrive with clear and frequent communication and opportunities for connection.

A key element of communication in the near future will be GRACE. Covid and changes in ministry have had major impacts on our congregation. Humans often react to major changes with an increase in anxiety. The desire for certainty grows. At this moment in time, certainly is not possible. Keeping our community strong and vibrant will require the practice of GRACE from each of us. There will be scheduling mishaps. We will have conflicting priorities. We will make mistakes. Remembering that none of us is perfect and we are each doing the best we can in any moment will allow us to manage these challenging times and be as close as possible to being the church we want to be.

## **COVID-19 Advisory Group 2023**

The COVID-19 Advisory Group was originally asked to assist Rev. Carie Johnsen by attending a "one time" meeting in March, 2020. After two and one half years of monthly meetings, the COVID-19 Advisory Group held its final meeting on October 5, 2022.

During the first three months of this church year, the Group recommended and helped implement a system of HEPA air filters for the sanctuary and fellowship hall and based upon input from the congregational Listening

Circles the Group recommended loosening masking requirements except in the sanctuary, hallways and bathrooms. All future decisions on masking policy was left entirely to the Board's discretion.

The COVID-19 Advisory Group: Betty Cairn; Terry Cairn; Harry Grimmnitz; Don Naber; Cathie Nielsen; Marty Soule

## **Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee has oversight of multiple areas of the church's fiscal health and is composed of:

Chair – Harry Grimmnitz

Fundraising – Allison & Karen Foust

Invested Funds – Marilyn Dunn

Member at Large – June Zellers

Planned Giving – Wick Johnson

Stewardship – Betty & Terry Cairn

Treasurer – Nancy Fritz

### **Finance:**

- Louise Allen (the bookkeeper hired by the church) began working with the treasurer and the church administrator. This relationship has been a benefit, reducing the work load on church staff and volunteers.
- The church received \$7,955 through the Employee Retention Credit of the Federal CARES Act thanks to efforts of Committee members.
- The Committee worked with MUUSAN leadership to review and update our Fiscal Agent Agreement with MUUSAN.
- The Committee revised and updated our rental rates for the use of UUCC facilities.
- The Committee recommended and the Board approved the purchase of a share of a solar farm to provide electricity to the church buildings.
  - The reasoning for this action was:
    - Recent significant increases in the cost of electricity.
    - To shield the church from future price increases.
    - Providing green energy in keeping with our UU Principles
  - This was paid for through a self-loan of \$23,580 from the Mark Goldberg bequest (see below).
    - We will use a standard 10 year amortization schedule with fixed payments at 4% interest.
    - Monthly payments of \$238.74 beginning September, 2023 and ending August, 2033.
    - Money will be transferred to the endowment at the UUA in \$1,000 increments (the minimum allowable deposit).
    - Total interest to be paid into the endowment \$5,068.23.
- The Committee formulated a budget for FY 23-24.
  - This includes:
    - A 5% raise for staff.
    - Increased pay of \$75 per session for our pianists.
    - Increased funding to hire a ¾ time contract minister for the coming year.
    - Utilizing \$12,000 from our savings to fund our Settled Minister Search process.

- The Committee's budget forwarded to the Board was balanced through the inclusion of \$14,000 in one time money from a projected carryover from the FY 22-23 budget. This was necessitated because our annual Stewardship Campaign raised \$15,660 less than our goal of \$172,000. At their May 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Board voted to forward a deficit budget to the congregation reflecting the reality of our difficulty in sustainably funding our operating budget.
- The Committee offered the congregation two (2) Finance 101 sessions, one in person and one on Zoom.
- An anonymous donor contributed \$4,052 to pay off our loan with Kennebec Savings Bank for our furnace conversion.
- The Committee formulated a Finance Committee Covenant.

### **Fundraising :**

- Truly a community of people makes fundraising possible and fun while raising money to support the UUC of Augusta. Fundraising has held several events this year that combined will have raised approximately \$12,000 for our church by the end of the fiscal year.
- Wreaths, Swags and Holiday Boutique – Raised \$1939 thanks to the efforts of Nan Bell, Dale McCormick, Marilyn Dunn, Nancy Fritz, Martha Naber, Dennis Maddi, Karen Allen, Claire Curole, Betty Cairn, many cookie bakers, and all those who made purchases.
- Hannaford Gift Card Program – This continues to be a solid money maker that does not cost anyone more than the face value of the gift cards that they purchase. Through the generosity of Hannaford Brothers we have raised more than \$4000 for the UUC through the purchase of gift cards alone.
- CLYNK – Thanks to Hannah Faulkner for keeping this important fundraising activity going. Through the generosity of Hannah and those who fill the CLYNK bags for the UUC this program has raised around \$600 this year.
- Pie Sale – Special thanks to Catherine Palmer and Kathy Ann Shaw who organized the pie sale and raised \$789 through the sale of pies that were generously baked and/or donated by the community for the sale.
- Auction – The silent auction raised \$521 and the live auction, comprised largely of volunteer work crews, raised \$2,395 for a total of \$2,916. Many thanks to Catherine Palmer, Terry and Betty Cairn, Nan Bell, Michaela Loisel, Marilyn Dunn, Dennis Maddi, Martin Spahn, Hal Booth and the Small Groups for all of your work and donations that made the auctions successful. This coming summer and fall we will provide work crews for five community members who have projects that will be made much easier with many hands.
- Tomato/Plant Sale – In process, hoping to raise \$800 from the sale of tomatoes, peppers, other vegetables, flowers and herbs that are happily growing at the homes of Dale McCormick, Nan Bell, Pam Lombard and me.
- Yard Sale – Will happen May 27 with a goal of raising \$700 (hopefully more). This is an event that not only builds a community of people working together, it also provides an outlet and opportunity for people to clean out some of the unwanted but usable items in their homes, and opens the church to the surrounding community.

### **Invested funds:**

June 2022 to March 31<sup>st</sup> (most recent quarter available)

All investment disbursements have been received for the current year.

Balances remain essentially unchanged from a year ago.

- **Ballard Trust** is managed by Maine Community Foundation.

- 06/30/2022 value \$225,132
- 03/31/2023 value \$235,667
- This year we received \$9,370 (\$1090 over budget).
- **Endowment Fund** is managed by Unitarian Common Endowment Fund (UUCEF).
  - 06/30/2022 value \$309,164
  - 03/31/2023 value \$310,069
  - This year we received \$16,898 (\$1098 over budget)
- **Adam Trust** managed by Bank of America. We are a 23% beneficiary (there are 7 other beneficiaries at 11%).
  - 06/30/2022 balance \$300,168
  - 03/31/2023 balance is \$309,363
  - This year we received \$2168 (\$332 under budget).
- **Rev. Carie Johnson Social Justice Fund**
  - Invested with Maine Community Foundation.
  - Account does not impact the church budget as it's distributed \$1000 annually by the Social Justice Committee to a worthy social justice group. This year the group was the Capital Area New Mainers Project.

#### **Planned Giving:**

- The church received an unrestricted bequeath of \$25,000 from the Mark Goldberg estate.
- The Committee adopted the UUCC Guide to Holistic Stewardship formulated by Wick Johnson.

#### **Stewardship:**

- The annual campaign raised \$13,535 including a \$6,000 match from an anonymous donor.
- The Stewardship Campaign resulted in 67 pledge units and \$156,340 (our goal was \$172,000). Of these 29 were increased pledges and 7 were new pledges.

## **Goddess/Earth Circles**

### **STORY OF THE YEAR 2023:**

Goddess/Earth Circles offers opportunity to engage with earth-based spirituality, to learn various nature rather than creed-based connections, rituals and healing practices.

From this perspective we

- --Celebrate the role of women throughout time, in various phases of struggle, evolution
- --Understand the issues facing women and their impact on women's spirituality, including, for example, the overturn of Roe v. Wade
- --Explore spiritual paths that are available throughout the world
- --Feel the energy of being in the presence of women
- --Have rituals and practices that support and enrich our lives
- --Acknowledge the wisdom of women of all ages, with celebrations of Croning and Women of Wisdom – including ourselves.
- --Increase understanding of cycles of the seasons, such as the Solstices and Equinoxes, and points in the turning of the cycles of the earth; and well as the phases of the moon

Through Goddess/Earth Circles, we hope to

- --Develop openness to various goddess and earth based spirituality, especially how these bring a fullness to spiritual expression in UUism
- --Increase music, rituals and spiritual practices available in our gatherings
- --Increase age and gender diversity in gatherings and events
- --Address women's issues, including from spiritual perspective
- --Diversify offerings, such Wicca, Calendar Celebrations, Crones, Samhain
- --Increase participation in planning and leading gatherings

We generally meet the fourth Sunday of the month, at 1pm in person or hybrid. However, we would like to expand the times and locations of gatherings. As we were preparing this Story of Goddess/Earth Circles, we set the May 21 meeting to further consider widening our hopes in this community. Please join us in the great diversity, depth and richness in earth-based spirituality as part of our UU Community.

Contact: Helen Zidowecki

## **History Committee**

"Capturing our History as We Make it"

Richard Bridges, Chair; Heide Munro, Helen Zidowecki, Angie Blevin

The history of the UUCC is more than just the moment—it is our collective journey leading to our present and ultimately guiding us into our future. Since gathering in 2004, the History Committee, through its past and present members, have displayed their interest and passion through such efforts as—

Collecting—since the beginning, the Committee has been gathering and securing our stories, records and artifacts through such projects as the oral history interviews; preserving the writings and teachings of both past and contemporary UU authors; safe storage of record books which chronicle our ongoing church life; and preserving the memory and contributions of past members through our Memorial Book.

Visibility—through the Wayside Pulpit we display sayings that reflect UU values to the wider community as they evolve over the years; update the timeline on the website; and strive to make our history accessible to all. One of our goals for the next church year is to have an Open House where the collection can be displayed.

If you have an interest in our efforts (we hold monthly meetings); or you have something you might consider donating; or you would like to access the collection; please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Committee.

## **Membership Committee**

Membership Committee members have been actively re-organizing & revitalizing the committee responsibilities, vision & goals since the church closed down during the Covid 19 Pandemic.

We arranged with the Board to have rotating Board members volunteer each Sunday as Greeters.

Our Membership Committee Member, Denis Thoet, has also been devotedly welcoming in our community and newcomers; connecting them with name tag forms, new name tags, church information and Sunday morning Service Programs. Thank you Denis!

In the Spring the Membership Committee, the Minister and (CLFF) hosted a Newcomers Dinner. With our Office Administrators assistance, a list of newcomers dating back to January 2022 was compiled. An email invitation flier was sent to each person/family. The committee members divided up the list of names and called

to invite them personally. We had a very positive and enthusiastic response. We did not get a hold of everyone but left messages when we could. We had valued conversations with newcomers that wished to attend but had a schedule conflict. All enjoyed our dinner and discussions together. 10 Newcomers attended. 7 are now new members. We will have a new members ceremony on June 18th, 2023. We have a tentative plan to host a newcomers Fellowship Coffee following our June 11 Flower Communion Service.

During the last week in April, the Membership Committee transformed the nametag rack in the coatroom. We arranged name tags so that if you attend church regularly your nametag will be easy to find on the alphabet peg representing the first letters of your last name. If you are a returning friend who has been away for a while, Denis or Hannah will help you find it in the Returning Friends Name Tag Box located in the Church Foyer or the Committee Room. If you want a new nametag, we'll give you the name tag request form to complete and return to us that day or as soon as you can. Our plan is to provide your new nametag the following Sunday. This plan is flowing nicely and is well received! Hannah Faulkner has been instrumental in making this happen and having fun at the same time! Thank you Hannah!

A file is being created in the Church Google Drive for the Membership Committee that contains name tag templates, functions and goals of the committee.

It is a rewarding and joyful ministry to welcome newcomers to UUCC! We are delighted to have newcomers among us and like to extend our warmest welcome and encourage ever-unfolding spiritual growth opportunities at UUCA.

*Chalice Blessings,*

*Hannah Faulkner, Denis Thoet, Monique Bergère (CLFF)*

## **Ministry, Committee On**

This has been an unusual year. The Committee on Ministry has taken an unusual shape. Until this year three members of this committee meet monthly with the full-time minister to oversee the life of the congregation. This year we had a part-time contract minister and a committee of one. Nonetheless, very good work has happened.

I met regularly with Rev. Christina, first to orient her to us and then to help her process events as the year progressed. We talked about what was happening each month with an eye to our history to understand how we got where we are, and with an eye to the future, speculating on future implications.

At the same time, The Restorative Justice Committee created a series of discussions to continue the work started with Rev. Paul Langston Daley. You can find a report from them elsewhere in this document.

Rev. Paul suggested we create a covenant to be endorsed by the congregation. Another group worked on that project. We will be voting on accepting that covenant as a guiding document for our congregational life at the Annual Meeting.

We continue to respond to events and realities brought about by the pandemic. Primarily, the plan of having a full-time called minister is still in the future and not assured. Whether or not we have a successful search next year, I have every faith that our congregation is strong and vibrant and will respond positively to whatever comes our way. We are getting good at coping and adaptation.

Kathy Kellison, Committee on Ministry

## Music Committee

### Music is prayer

We, the musicians, of our church are grateful for the opportunity to sing and play in the Choir the Unitarian Universalist Community Church Choir and Occasional Orchestra (UCCCO).

The beginning of this year was a low point in the history of music at the UCC. The pandemic had exhausted us. The Choir was down to four or five members and the UCCCO attracted a handful to rehearsals. Then a miracle happened. Helped along by the US and Maine Center for Disease Control (CDC) we could see the light at the end of a three year epidemic. The Church began meeting in person again and people began coming back to the choir and the orchestra. There is now a full vibrant choir that sounds so good that congregants have to sit on their hands to keep from applauding. The UCCCO had 12 at our last rehearsal and many of us got chills of bliss as we played!

Below are a few reflections from members of the orchestra about what music at the UCC means to us.

The wonderful musicians we've had over the years at UCC have brought me much joy, joy which is very clearly linked to spirituality. ***I remember listening and watching Bill Goldberg's fingers lovingly play Bach, and Dan Sorensen exuberantly share his wonderful voice with us.*** I felt honored to know them both. To carry on their tradition, in the humble way I can, is an honor and a joy, a gift to myself and to the congregation.---Mary, flute

***Music fills my soul and heart,*** and elevates me to a higher spiritual level. Making music with other people is a joy beyond compare, and sharing that joy with our beloved community unites us all. In short, it doesn't get any better than this! I'm so grateful to Dan Gilbert, David Morris, Karen Allen, and Dale McCormick, all of whom have been hugely instrumental (pun partially intended) in creating and sustaining UCCCO.---Stef, violin

***The UCCCO reaches far beyond the UCC congregation.*** It provides people like me to join with others to make music as a form of prayer. I am so grateful for the opportunity to participate!---Barbara, viola

Music at UCC has been a great gift for me. I joined UCC 5 years ago partly because I loved how music is integrated so well into each service. Then I was welcomed into the UCCCO team despite my musical shortcomings and I have enjoyed the fellowship in the group as well as the mentoring and the talent of the UCCCO members. Becoming more fluent in ***music has benefited my health and immersed me into the spiritual flow of the Church.***---Kevin, clarinet

Music is an entrance to spirituality for me. ***Playing with the UCCCO is a source of joy. I am so grateful.***---Susan, flute

Being the Lord High Everything Else for the orchestra, as Gilbert and Sullivan would call it, is a lot of work. But when we're playing a piece by Mozart or Bach and we attain a moment of blending so heavenly that we all get chills, it's worth it.---Dale, cello

I took up horn playing to help cope with severe asthma. The UCCCO provides an additional incentive for playing as it is much more enjoyable than simply practicing on my own. I have also met some very nice people.

The services I have attended have brought a new perspective to Christianity for me. I was brought up Catholic and find myself without a church. What I have learned from the services and reading your literature that my thinking is much more in line with UCCCO.

Music touches the soul. ***Music is prayer.***---Bill, Baritone

## **Pastoral Ministry Team Report**

Martha Pelletier, Chair

Members: Reverend Christina Sillari, Helen Zidowecki, Peggy Lamb

“Ministry is a quality of relationship between and among human beings that beckons forth

hidden possibilities. It is inviting people into deeper, more constant, more reverent relationship with the world and one another.” --Gordon B. McKeeman

While reflecting on our work, we Pastoral Ministry Team members first recognized the ongoing pastoral ministry occurring outside our team, especially in Small Groups. We recalled examples of fellow UUCC members and friends ministering to each other during Sunday service and Fellowship Hour and in other church meetings and activities. We experienced deep gratitude for our beloved community, which routinely makes caring for each other part of its spiritual practice.

We then considered the services that our Team provides: visits and phone calls, compassionate listening, meals in difficult times, and rides to appointments and activities. We discussed seeing needs increase as our congregation ages, especially requests for rides, but also for more specific needs, like help with technology. We know that we can't meet every need and invite you to consider how you can help. We would also welcome another member to our team. The work is often immediately rewarding and always gratifying in the long run, as well.

It's important to recognize that we all minister to each other. Whenever we listen compassionately, we are ministering; whenever someone listens compassionately to us, we are ministered to. As we reach out, as people reach out to us, connections among us and within our congregation deepen. We, the Pastoral Ministry Team, look forward to another year of building community through compassionate care.

There is a lot of pastoral ministry going on outside this team, especially in Small Groups—powerful ways of building community.

We have an aging congregation, and pastoral needs are increasing, especially for rides for our elders.

Acknowledge, honor the help that we give each other. Include the focus on ministry in the community and the fact that we can't do everything people might need. People need a variety of service; think of any way that you can help others. Example: helping someone with technology; can be a one-time help.

Compliment the fact that we have a congregation that can do this and that becomes part of our spiritual practice. We want to move toward where helping each other is part of being a member.

Some of us can help at different times and in different ways. Both the helper and the person being helped benefit; connections are deepened. Each time you help the connection to the person you are helping grows; ex: the ritual of making cards, thinking about the recipient, bringing them to the post office and hand-stamping them.

We are all ministers to each other. Whenever we listen compassionately to another person, we are ministering; whenever someone listens compassionately to us, we are being ministered to. The small things we do to make life easier for each other is ministry.

The Team could use another member.

## Peaceful Heart Sangha

Peaceful Heart Sangha is a free Mindfulness Meditation group in the Plum Village tradition (Thich Nhat Hanh's tradition). We meet every Monday evening on zoom from 6:30-8pm and every Thursday morning in person from 8-9:30am at River Studio, 332 Water St, Hallowell (except the last Thursday of the month which is on zoom). Our gatherings are always open to all.

We support each other as we explore the ways that mindfulness practices can be applied to our daily lives. How can we help increase happiness & lessen the suffering in ourselves, our loved ones, and in the world?

Write to [peacefulheartsangha@gmail.com](mailto:peacefulheartsangha@gmail.com) if you would like the zoom link, more information about our practice, or to be added to our email list.

Some other resources for connecting with our practice include:

- **Plum Village App** which is **Free!**
- <https://tnhmeditation.org>
- **ARISE – arisesangha.org**
  - (Awakening through Race, Intersectionality, and Social Equity)
- **Songs from a Peaceful Heart** <https://lynndeeves.hearnow.com> songs based in our practice shared by our sangha member, Lynn Deeves
- [www.plumvillage.org](http://www.plumvillage.org)

Marty Soule

## Restorative Justice

The Board created the Restorative Justice Committee (RJC) in response to the report from Rev. Paul Langston-Daley following the Restorative Justice (or Listening) Circles he led at our church in the Spring of 2022. The Board saw these Circles as beginning stages of healing for a congregation reeling from deep and divisive wounds inflicted over the previous year and a half. The Board charged the Committee to analyze and begin to implement the recommendations outlined in Rev. Paul's report, presented to the congregation in the fall of 2022.

The Committee consisted of Rev. Christina Sillari, Board President, Michaela Loisel, Board Vice President, Susan Burnett, Board member, Kathy Ann Shaw, Finance Committee member, June Zellers, and our youth member, Allison Foust, who had been involved in early congregational covenant work, one of the recommendations in Rev. Paul's report. More recently, Monique Bergère, Coordinator of Lifespan Formation, has joined us, providing us with a visionary gentleness to what we are trying to accomplish.

Rev. Paul's report cited that participants in the Listening Circles felt that *"the process used by leadership was extremely helpful."*, so the RJC got right to work selecting the four recommendations that we felt could be converted into relevant, powerful, and healing actions steps.

1. **Consider a formal, regular Town Hall process.** The RJC sponsored a series of eight Sharing Cafes. The initial Cafes focused on what the congregation felt it needed to heal. Another Café focused on Non-Violent Communication, which was primarily a "how to listen" workshop. Yet another focused on the Covenant drafted by the Covenant Writing Group from the input of the earlier Sharing Cafes.

2. **Consider hiring someone to provide trainings in responding to conflict in healthy ways to improve emotional and spiritual competency in this area.** The Board hired Leah Boyd of Peaceful Communications to lead an afternoon training session in Nonviolent Communication. This was essentially a deep-listening training, which many attendees found helpful.
3. **Develop a covenant that clearly and simply lays out who and how you wish to be together and find ways to affirm that covenant regularly.** The Board appointed a Covenant Writing Group, (CWG) in January which undertook that work. By the end of March, they drafted a Covenant from the above-mentioned congregational input. That draft was then discussed at the April Sharing Café. Although no congregational member indicated that they could not make the promises set forth, members did offer constructive revisions. The CWG made several revisions and forwarded the completed Covenant to the Board in late April 2023.
4. **Develop and engage rituals that can help people make amends and allow the congregation to let go.**

Rev. Christina's first service with UUCC was our annual Ingathering Service where members infused vessels of water with their desires for the future of the church. She also guided church members through a powerful fire gathering and meditation on a cold December night. She invited participants to toss something representative of a deeply felt pain into the fire in the hopes of releasing a sense of forgiveness on the other side.

**What's Next:** It's been nearly a full year of congregational involvement in the implementation of Rev. Paul's recommendations. The energy feels positive, and it's not time to stop! It's true, that at every monthly meeting of the RJC we assess and address our successes, what we have accomplished, and what we need to do step by step to continue to provide healing opportunities for the congregation. That's seems to be the mission to which we are drawn and with which we have been charged. Then, all of a sudden, we looked up in our April meeting and thought two things: phew are we done and/or hell no we can't disband.

That's where we leave you now our Beloved Community. After the RJC retreat in May to discuss new directions, we will break for the summer as do so many of our church activities. But Ingathering will bring many transitions for the community. So as we restructure (and draw on one more of Rev. Paul's recommendations: "*[build on a] fair process and transparency wherever possible will help build trust*") what can we do for you in this community, where is there a need in community renewal that has yet to be fulfilled, what would help our church grab onto this new momentum of positive energy to burst with joy? You now know who is on the committee ... contact us with ideas!

With peace and hopes of joyous connection, The Restorative Justice Committee.

## Safety Committee

The Safety Committee was established after multiple members of UUCC attended a Protecting Houses of Worship seminar. It was presented by Maine Emergency Management Association (MEMA) and Homeland Security.

Susan Claska Burnett is the chair of the Safety Committee. Nancy Fritz, Harry Grimmnitz, Angie Blevins, Monique Bergère, Christina Sillari, and Bill Allen make up the committee. We were drawn to this seminar and committee by multiple reasons:

- hearing stories around the country of violence and especially violence toward houses of worship,
- it has been on our radar screen for years that we need to do something at UUCC for safety,

- we want a safe place for people to explore their spirituality,
- we need to be aware and awake-don't live in a bubble,
- we tend to think nothing will ever happen but it has in Yarmouth and Portland at UU churches.

We joined the committee as we had various skills to offer:

- experience with grant writing
- experience with security assessment
- experience in disaster planning
- knowledge of the physical building
- strong desire to make our facility safe

This combination has made for a very active and focused team. A Safety Assessment was completed by a combination of MEMA, Homeland Security and the Augusta Police. We were given two written assessments. There was a grant available which Nancy and Susan completed with input from the team.

Funding will be available in September 2023. We are asking for funding for protective sealant for the windows to keep glass from breaking in shards, new keys and an electronic key for those that require minimal access, better outdoor lighting, and a security system.

Our next goal is to establish safety procedures and policies. Our hope is to have a balance of safety and protection while being able to explore our spirituality for the upcoming years.

Respectfully submitted, Susan Claska Burnett

## **Small Group Ministry**

Small Group Ministry groups started at UUCC in 1999. Over 200 people have been part of groups, including a first group and one of the original members who are still involved! Over the years, people have remained in groups, left the program and/or restarted, or changed groups because of life changes. Several people have or are in the process of joining.

What we bring ourselves and receive in Small Group Ministry:

- There is no place where we can talk about spirituality and matters of the heart as comfortably as in the small group setting. This was especially noted when the Men's Group started over ten years ago.
- Groups meeting once or twice a month over several months or years help connect newcomers to the church community and celebrate life's milestones. Diversity such as age, gender and sexual orientation, background, experience, spiritual orientation, and abilities broadens the group experience. We determine our own meeting arrangements, session plans, service, and special activities. Connection with a small group leads to other connections within the church community, in addition to Sunday service.
- When new people join a group, we introduce ourselves, tell our stories of how we got to UUCC or where we are spiritually. Each person brings different perspectives on topics, on life needs, and spiritual paths. We have time for sharing what is going on in our lives (bonding) and allow time to go deeper with various topics.
- We consider and respect the needs of each member—mobility, sensory concerns, allergies, time commitments, economics, transportation and location, etc. Groups found alternate ways to keep connected during the pandemic, with weather challenges, work and life schedules. We helped each other adjust to use of zoom and hybrid meetings. No groups stopped during this time.

- We come to church to receive; in small groups we share of ourselves and learn from the sharing of others.

Our hope for the community through the dynamics of small groups:

- Small Group Ministry participants offered a service on December 11, 2022, that focused on the basic parts or “Building Blocks” of Small Group Ministry, such as bonding or connections, going deeper on topics, values and covenant and the ways we are with each other, and what Small Group Ministry has to offer the congregation. The Service itself and the Building Blocks are on the UUC website <https://augustauu.org/minister-staff-and-church-life/small-group-ministry/> and click on Meetings. And, looking ahead, the Small Group Ministry Service is planned for October 15, 2023.
- Through commitment to our groups, we have commitment to the congregation and the larger UU community through Service. Joint activities are a way to learn about each other’s interests, increase the connection with the congregation. Our service supports the congregational functions (buildings and grounds, meals and hospitality, programs) and enhances connection with the wider UU world. This year several groups created Spring baskets as an Easter fundraiser. We are looking for multiple ways of providing service that engages the interest and abilities of the participants.
- We have five ongoing groups with a present total of 38 participants. We are considering ways to expand Small Group Ministry, possibly with introductory sessions, or starting new groups as people express interest in joining. Contact Linda or Helen if you are interested.
- The commitment, integrity, and right relations within our groups evolve from shared values. Our actions, our promises, being together in respect, sharing and caring and what we offer is how we live our values

Thanks to the Small Group Ministry Leaders and participants for the discussions that lead to this story of Small Group Ministry at UUC this year. We look forward to a more ongoing involvement as the community moves forward.

## **Social Activities**

This year the UU Social Activities collaborated with the Social Justice Committee and Lifespan Faith Formation to offer movies (and popcorn) with a social justice theme; i.e.

- September:..... LOVING
- October: .....FROZEN RIVER
- December:.....DEATH AT A FUNERAL
- January: .....LIFE AS A HOUSE
- February: .....SILVER LINING PLAYBOOK
- March: .....(cancelled due to weather)

In addition to movies, Social Activities organized:

- November: .....HARVEST SUPPER
- March: .....GAME NIGHT
- MAY:.....thanks to Nancy Fritz and Martha Naber, who organized “SEWING for BEGINNERS held on Monday mornings
- JUNE: .....In the process of soliciting ideas for an activity.

Cheryl Clukey, Chair

## Social Justice

The Social Justice Committee has offered justice focused opportunities to the UUCC during this past year by:

- Creating awareness of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle through a dedicated worship service, e-blast communications, leading discussion groups of the book Mistakes and Miracles, providing a written insert for the Order of Service, organizing testimonies of the importance of it from the perspective of a variety congregants;
- Identifying MUUSAN, Bread of Life, Hope Brokers, Family Violence Project, Global
- Fund for Human Rights and White Helmets (earthquake relief in Turkey and Syria),
- Essentials Pantry and Addie's Attic, Maine Family Planning, Augusta Warming Shelter,
- Alliance Addiction and Mental Health Services Maine and the Capital New Mainers Project as organizations to support through Share the Plate, as well as volunteering in their work.
- Bringing increased awareness of gun violence by lighting a candle of life each month during the worship service;
- Collaborating with Temple Beth El, Catholic Parish, and Vassalboro Friends to provide homemade, sit down breakfasts to unhoused neighbors;
- Updating the Social Justice section of the UUCC web page;
- Encouraging member involvement with MUUSAN, participating and connecting others with this legislative work centered on social justice;
- Requesting the Board of Trustees to add voting on the acceptance of the 8<sup>th</sup> principle to the agenda of the annual report;
- Awarding Capital Area New Mainers \$1,000 from the Reverend Carie Johnsen Social Justice Fund (RCJSJF) and sending an appeal to members and friends to contribute to the Fund.

Here are comments from some of our members about their SJC work:

### **Susan Shaw**

I was drawn to working with this committee because it presents the opportunity to raise awareness of concerns in the greater community that have a negative impact on others and to develop a plan of action that may help to ameliorate some of these issues. My hope for our community as a result of these activities is that we look beyond ourselves so that we can join in solidarity with those who have been marginalized, disenfranchised or somehow overlooked by others.

### **Hilary Neckles**

I was drawn to working with the Social Justice Committee for the opportunity to put my UU faith into action. Although our UU principles guide us to recognize and value the inherent worth and dignity of all people, the society in which we live does not live up to this standard. Through our shared ministry this church year, our Social Justice Committee has helped UUCC begin to focus on explicit antiracist strategies to ensure that we are intentionally inclusive to Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color. My hope for our community is that we adopt the 8th Principle and work together as a congregation toward a deeper humanity.

### **Mary Kane**

I was drawn to working with this committee because I wanted to work with others in our UUCC community to make positive change within our church and in the wider community of Augusta. My hope for our UUCC community through the work of the Social Justice Committee is that we increase our relationships with other people and organizations that are involved with social justice work in our wider community. Through adopting the 8th Principle we are making a promise to ourselves to continue working toward Beloved Community.

Through our Breakfast Program we are making connections with other community organizations and people that have a direct impact on people's lives.

### **Debbie Mattson**

I was drawn to working with this committee because I believe social justice work is the work of the spirit. I believe it is in spirit that we deeply understand our connections to each other and the Earth and we use this understanding to begin undo the injustices that separate us from ourselves, each other, and the natural world. My hope is that the UUCC truly becomes a welcoming and beloved community.

**Current Social Justice Committee Members:** Ed Democracy, Priscilla Jenkins, Mary Kane, Scott Klinger, Debbie Mattson, Hilary Neckles. New members always welcome!

## **Worship Arts Committee**

For the first time since the onset of the pandemic, the Worship Committee managed a full year of hybrid in-person and online services. In addition to the technical demands of streaming, we navigated masking changes and the realities of planning with a half-time minister. Our committee met these challenges with goodwill, creativity, and commitment to our community. When a sudden case of Covid, a trip, or a snowstorm forced a change in the schedule, we worked together so that Sunday worship would continue.

I stepped in as chair after the departure of Susan Burnett, who led us ably through much of the pandemic. To our experienced crew of Sara Hodgkins, John Seksay, Marty Peters, and Angie Blevins, we added Nan Bell, Lori Milner, Kathy Kellison, and Priscilla J. Jenkins. Monique Bergère as CLFF and Rev. Christina Sillari also serve on the Committee. A wonderful group!

With Rev. Christina leading worship two times a month rather than three, the Worship Committee has had more Sundays to plan than in the past. Rev. Christina has been very helpful in finding guest ministers. Lay-led and group-led services filled out the calendar. To relieve our administrator of some of the details of planning, we moved the Worship Committee's scripts and order of service preparation online, and took primary responsibility for communicating with guest worship leaders. For some of us the learning curve was steeper than for others, but for the most part the new system functions well. It has been, however, quite a lot of work.

Our technical improvements have included the acquisition of additional over-ear and handheld mics and a laptop for worship use. We provided headsets for those who need an assist with hearing after an attempt to add Bluetooth capability did not work out. We contended with various volume, mic, and transmission issues – weekly, it seemed at times – but these were identified and resolved with mostly good humor all around.

Our order of worship took on a more familiar shape with the addition of in-person masked singing by the choir and congregation, and masked playing by the orchestra. At the suggestion of the Social Justice Committee, we added the custom of lighting a Candle of Remembrance for the victims of gun violence. Members of the congregation have shared their thoughts on stewardship, music, and the proposed 8th Principle of the UUA. Each Sunday we recognize those who join us online and include their responses to the extent possible.

For myself, I am grateful for the opportunity to do meaningful work with good people, and to sharpen my twenty-first-century technical skills. I am also grateful for the insightful new voice Rev. Christina has brought to our ministry and to her support of me and the Worship Arts team. When my combined Worship Committee and music duties made my plate feel overly full, she listened and pointed me in the direction of self-care.

With that in mind, I am making some changes so that I feel comfortable continuing as chair. I am sure the next year will present new challenges, but I am confident that our dedicated Worship Arts team, with the congregation's support, will meet them with both grace and resolve.

## **2024 Settled Minister Search Committee**

### **BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS - JUNE 4, 2023**

The UUCC Board presents the following slate of Settled Ministry Search Committee members for your final vote at the June 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting.

Although we are now a smaller congregation, we are still proposing to present the UUA recommended seven-member slate to insure we have a successful process should someone need to drop out at some point.

We are confident that this slate shows a diversity of age, gender, and length of membership in UUCC. For instance, we present five women and two men, which is actually reflective of the make-up of the congregation. We are also happy to see that the group represents the LGBTQ population in our beloved community as well. We have included one of our longest standing members and two of the newest.

In all cases, these members serve as leaders in the truest sense with interest, passion, and commitment to our community. Our proposed slate of search committee members participates in music (including at least four who serve in the choir and/or orchestra), social justice, fundraising, worship, SMG, governance, building and grounds and our burgeoning technology program.

Thank you, UUCC Board

### **RECOMMENDED SEARCH COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- 1. STEFANIE KOROL BARLEY**
- 2. NAN BELL**
- 3. ANGIE B. BLEVINS**
- 4. HAROLD BURNETT**
- 5. BECKY (REBECCA) HARVEY**
- 6. KEVIN KANE**
- 7. DEBBIE MATTSON**

## **Congregational Vote to Adopt the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle**

The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle project is a grassroots movement started in 2013 aimed at articulating a commitment to dismantle racism and other forms of oppression within UU congregations. The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle is founded in the realization that although the 7 Principles affirm the inherent worth and dignity of all people and promote justice, equity, and compassion in human relations, they do not explicitly address racism. As explained by Paula Cole Jones, member of All Souls Church Unitarian in Washington DC and Co-Founder of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Project, a person can believe they are being a “good UU” and following the 7 Principles without ever thinking about systemic racism and oppression. The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle was born of the need to de-center whiteness and dominant cultures in UUism and hold ourselves accountable for dismantling racism.

Beginning in 2017, Paula Cole Jones and fellow Co-Founder Bruce Pollack-Johnson, of the UU Church of the Restoration in Philadelphia, worked with other antiracist activists to propose the following as an 8th principle within our faith:

*“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.”*

Beloved Community happens when people of diverse racial, ethnic, educational, class, gender, abilities, sexual orientation backgrounds/identities come together in an interdependent relationship of love, mutual respect, and care that seeks to realize justice within the community and in the broader world.

To date over 240 congregations across the continent have voted to adopt the 8th Principle. Although the recent UUA Article II Study Commission has proposed revising the congregation-to-congregation covenant of the UUA Bylaws in a way that would replace the 7 Principles with a statement of values that is inclusive, welcoming, and explicitly antiracist, it is still vital for individual congregations to consider expressing their own commitments to antiracism, anti-oppression, and multiculturalism through adopting the 8th Principle. Practically, the new statement of values proposed by the Article II Study Commission faces procedural steps before adoption, which include debate at the 2023 UUA General Assembly, potential revision, and vote at the 2024 General Assembly; neither the language nor final approval is certain, and the continued expansion of the 8th Principle throughout congregations builds momentum toward passing a UUA values statement that fully embraces antiracism. But perhaps more importantly, adoption of the 8th Principle would call us to action: what steps can we take as a congregation toward dismantling the policies and practices that uphold differences in power, resources, and opportunities existing between white people and Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color?

Today, as the legacies of slavery endure through police violence against Black people, mass incarceration, and racial, social, and economic injustice, adoption of the 8th principle at the UUCC would make antiracism central to our identity. As a loving faith community, it is time that we do this.

Social Justice Committee (Hilary Neckles, Mary Kane, Debbie Mattson, Susan Shaw, Ed Democracy, Priscilla Jenkins)

## **UUCC Covenant (4/13/23 draft)**

***Proposed*** – to be voted on at meeting

To manifest our Vision, implement our Mission, and increase our understanding and practice of our UU Principles, we the congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Augusta, Maine, covenant as follows.

### **1. Because we value our relationships with each other, we promise to:**

- Get to know one another, create opportunities to gather, work, and play together, and build trust in our relationships.
- Respect each other's boundaries, honor our commitments to others and the community, and protect the safety of community members, especially children.
- Listen to one another with intention and curiosity and respond thoughtfully.
- Accept one another for who we are and not allow differences of opinion to affect our respect for the person.
- Take responsibility for our own words and actions and explore differences openly, directly, and with compassion while assuming the good intentions of one another.

### **2. Because we value our relationships with our greater community, we promise to:**

- Model our UU Principles and Covenant in our relationships with the greater community.
- Respond to the needs of our community and seek to engage with others in helping to make the greater Augusta area a safe and supportive place.

**3. Because we value the wisdom and power of Covenant, we promise to:**

- Forgive ourselves and others when we do not live up to this Covenant and begin again in love.
- Display and recite these promises to each other on a regular basis, exploring them in our hearts and minds, and refer to them when difficulties arise. Recognize that our Covenant may evolve as our community evolves.

## **Bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church**

**Augusta, Maine**

**As amended, June 2019**

### **Article 1. Name**

The name of this religious society shall be the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Augusta [UUCC hereafter]

### **Article 2. Purpose**

The purpose of the UUCC shall be to worship and operate consistent with our mission and vision.

The **mission** of the UUCC is to worship, learn, and minister together embracing diversity and religious freedom.

The **vision** of the UUCC is to:

- enhance spiritual growth;
- provide a respectful religious home for all ages;
- join in celebration and friendship;
- be a common voice for justice;
- share the light of our principles with the wider community We also:
- affirm, defend, and promote the worth and dignity of every person;
- promote and provide religious exploration for all in our congregation;
- promote a deliberately diverse and inclusive congregation that welcomes and supports all forms of respectful, loving, age-appropriate relationships: gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or straight; and
- create an inclusive ministry in the community and work against oppression in all its forms.

### **Article 3. Non-Discrimination Policy**

The Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Augusta, Maine declares and affirms its responsibility to promote the full participation of persons in all activities and in the full range of human endeavor, without regard to race, color, gender expression, disability, affectional or sexual orientation, age, or national origin and without requiring adherence to any particular interpretation of religion or to any particular religious belief or creed, in accordance with our safe congregation policy.

### **Article 4. Denominational Affiliation**

This church shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations and of the Northern New England District of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.

### **Article 5. Membership**

Section 1. Any person 13 years of age and over may become a member by signing the membership book and declaring him/herself in sympathy with the purpose of this church, participating in congregational life, including congregational meetings, making an annual pledge, and transmitting this information to any officer of the church. The person will be acknowledged as a voting member by the Board of Trustees at its next scheduled meeting.

Section 2. The Board of Trustees may remove members from the rolls if:

- the member has not attended or financially supported the church for over a year's time; and
- there is no positive response within 30 days to a written notice asking if the person wishes to remain an active member or be removed from the rolls.

Section 4. Any member may withdraw his/her membership at any time by so notifying the Clerk of the church.

#### **Article 6. Authority**

All authority rests in the membership and is exercised through the meetings of the membership except as herein delegated.

#### **Article 7. Membership Meetings**

Section 1. The business meetings of the congregation shall be referred to in these bylaws as "membership" meetings, and shall be open to all.

Section 2. An annual membership meeting shall be held on the first Sunday in June of each year. Copies of an Annual Report (containing reports from the Minister, Director of Religious Exploration, Clerk, Board of Trustees, Treasurer, and committees, election information, and bylaws) shall be made available at the church 10 days before this meeting. Budget and end-of-year financial materials shall be available at this meeting.

The business shall be:

- to elect Officers of the church, Members-at-Large of the Board of Trustees, Chairs of all standing Committees, except the Committee on Ministry, and all other elected positions.
- to hear the Minister's annual report and other reports scheduled by the Board;
- to vote on the proposed annual budget of the church; and
- to transact any other necessary business for which notice has been given.

Section 3. Special membership meetings may be called by the Board of Trustees for any purpose deemed important for the maintenance and/or enhancement of the church.

Section 4. The Board of Trustees shall call a membership meeting if petitioned in writing by twenty percent (20%) of active members. The request must state the business to be considered, and actions at the meeting shall be limited to the stated purpose. The meeting must be held within 30 days of the request.

Section 5. Notices for all membership meetings shall be transmitted at least 10 days prior to the date of such meetings, and shall include a description of the subjects to be considered, date, time, and location.

Section 6. Thirty percent (30%) of the active membership shall constitute a quorum.

Section 7. Voting at membership meetings shall be afforded to members only. Voting shall be by ballot upon any issue, upon request by any member. Except where otherwise specified here, the outcome of votes will be determined by a simple majority of those present and voting.

Section 8. The Board of Trustees shall select a member of the church to act as a Moderator during membership meetings.

Section 9. The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order, Revised shall govern in all issues as to which they are applicable, to the extent that they are consistent with these bylaws or special rules of order adopted by the active members in the course of the membership meeting to which said special rules of order are to apply.

#### **Article 8. Nominations for Elections**

Section 1. The Leadership Development Committee shall serve until the final election of the Board of Trustees. The President of the Board of Trustees shall convene the first meeting of the Leadership Development Committee to deliver the charge to the committee, and answer any questions.

Section 2. The Leadership Development Committee shall nominate the officers, members at large of the Board of Trustees, chairs of standing committees, and member-at-large of the Finance Committee.

Section 3. The Leadership Development Committee shall publish the slate of qualified candidates 10 days prior to the General Elections annual membership meeting. The Committee shall, of possible, avoid nominating persons to a third consecutive term and shall nominate for the chairs of the committees persons who have served on those same committees for at least one year.

Section 4. Nominations for the Board of Trustees positions may be made by petition of ten (10) active members to the Clerk of the Board. This list will be published prior to the election and shall be made available at the church at least one week in advance of the General Elections annual membership meeting. Such nominations shall be included in the slate for the position to be filled.

Section 5. Nominations for any position may be made from the floor at the General Elections annual membership meeting.

#### Article 9. Officers

Section 1. The elected officers shall be:

- President
- Vice President
- Clerk
- Treasurer.

Section 2. All officers must have been members for a minimum of one year.

Section 3. The President shall:

- preside at meetings of the Board of Trustees;
- be the chief executive officer;
- delegate responsibilities to others as appropriate.

Section 4. The Vice President shall:

- chair the Council on Leadership
- discharge the duties of the President in his/her absence;
- aid and assist the President in his/her administrative duties; and
- succeed to the Presidency for the unexpired portion of the term upon the death, resignation, or removal of the President.

Section 5. The Clerk shall:

- provide for the written record of all proceedings of the Board and meetings of the church;
- issue notices of meetings;
- conduct the correspondence of the Board;
- verify the membership list prior to all membership meetings, and determine the proper quorum requirement, and determine the proper numerical vote required for all issues; and
- be an ex officio member of the Membership Committee.

Section 6. The Treasurer shall:

- be custodian of all monies and securities;

- present the current financial statement at each meeting of the Board and the membership meeting at which there is a vote on the proposed annual budget;
- keep a full and accurate account of all receipts and disbursements and present these records upon reasonable notice, except for identification of individual pledges;
- submit the books to be examined annually by a person(s) designated by the Board;
- be bonded at the expense of the church; and
- serve as an ex officio member of the Finance Committee in preparing budget recommendations for the next fiscal year.

**Article 10. Board of Trustees**

Section 1. The Board of Trustees shall consist of the officers, the immediate past president, members-at-large, youth member, and the Chair of the Finance Committee. Ex officio members shall include the Minister and the Director of Religious Exploration. The immediate past president shall serve for one year.

Section 2. Vacancies on the Board shall be filled by appointment of the President, subject to approval of the Board. Persons appointed to fill vacancies shall serve until the next membership meeting.

Section 3. The Officers of the Board of Trustees shall serve a one-year term. There shall be three members of the Board of Trustees elected at large by the membership for staggered three-year terms. One member shall be elected each year. There shall be one youth member of the Board of Trustees elected at large by the membership for a one-year term. Members at large will serve as liaisons to the standing committees. Board members and officers will not serve as chair of standing committees, except for the Finance Committee.

Section 4. The members of the Board of Trustees shall assume office immediately following the vote of the slate of officers at the General Elections annual membership meeting. The Board shall have its first organizational meeting at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

Section 5. The Board shall hire and dismiss all employees of the church not elected by its members, and shall determine conditions of employment.

Section 6. The outcome of votes of the Board shall be determined by a simple majority of those present and voting.

Section 7. Attendance at Board meetings is a necessary function of all members of the Board of Trustees. Resignation from the Board may be requested by the President with Board approval if an individual's absence interferes with the workings of the Board.

Section 8. The Board of Trustees shall:

- conduct and approve all business transactions of the church, consistent with these bylaws;
- implement the decisions and policies of the membership, guided by the Strategic Plan; <sup>a</sup> establish such policies and appoint such persons and committees as necessary to achieve
- these functions and fill vacancies among committee chairs until the next annual meeting;
- maintain a balanced budget with the provision that the Board may make changes to the annual budget not to exceed 10 percent of the total; and
- publish a written annual report.
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Section 9. A quorum of the Board shall consist of two-thirds of the positions filled at the time of the vote, provided that at least one-half of the Board's positions as specified in these bylaws are filled.

**Article 11. Council on Leadership**

The Council on Leadership consists of the chairs of all standing committees, and is chair by the vice president of the board. It shall meet at least three times a year and will set goals and coordinate joint activities among the various committees, and carry out assignments as directed by the board.

**Article 12. Finance Committee**

Section 1. The Finance Committee assists the board in overseeing the financial affairs of the church, including its annual budget, stewardship, endowment, gifts and bequests. It will submit recommendations for the annual budget, and conduct reviews at the request of the board.

Section 2. Membership. The committee chair, member-at-large, the Treasurer and members representing Invested Funds and Stewardship are elected by the membership to one-year terms. The committee chair also serves on the Board of Trustees, for a one-year term. Vacancies will be filled by the board, with the consent of the committee.

**Article 13. Standing Committees**

Section 1. The Board of Trustees shall authorize other committees necessary to carry out the business of the church and will keep a list of committees and the charges of the respective committees. This list will be posted in the church and will be included in the annual report of the Board of Trustees. All authorized committees will submit a report for the church's annual membership meeting. No members of the congregation shall chair more than one standing committee.

**Article 14. The Committee on Ministry**

Section 1. The Committee on Ministry shall be comprised of three (3) members, serving staggered three-year terms. One member will be appointed to the Committee on Ministry each year. Before each annual meeting, the Minister will submit a list of three (3) active church members to the Board of Trustees. The Board will choose one member from this list for appointment to the Committee on Ministry.

Section 2. The Committee on Ministry shall select a chair from among its three members.

Section 3. Vacancies in the Committee on Ministry occurring in unexpired terms shall be filled by the same method specified in Section 1.

Section 4. The purpose of the Committee on Ministry is to strengthen the quality of ministry within the congregation. The Committee on Ministry focuses on all aspects of the congregation's shared and professional ministry.

- the Committee shall meet regularly in a non-crisis, goal-oriented manner with an agenda to explore the various concerns and challenges of the Minister/Congregation relationship and the Congregation's own role and agreed-responsibility in shared ministry.
- the Committee shall assist and support the Minister in his/her plans for professional development, continuing education, sabbaticals, etc. The Committee shall alert the Board to any emerging concerns between the Minister and Congregation.
- consult with the Minister and submit an annual compensation recommendation to the Board of Trustees; and
- the Committee shall promote and facilitate healthy relationships in all aspects of professional and shared ministry. The committee shall receive, investigate and respond to all matters affecting the shared ministry of the congregation and the professional ministries. The Committee shall alert the Board to any emerging concerns.

**Article 15. Minister**

Section 1. A candidate for the office of Minister of this church shall be nominated as outlined in the Article of these bylaws concerning the Ministerial Search Committee. The Minister shall be called by means of a vote at a membership meeting held for the purpose of decision on a candidate nominated by the Ministerial Search Committee. The Minister shall be considered to have indefinite tenure upon election by the membership.

Section 2. A contract detailing the terms of agreement between the Minister and the congregation shall be proposed by the Ministerial Search Committee, agreed to by the Board of Trustees, signed by the officers of the church, and shall be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees.

Section 3. A Minister may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any meeting convened for that purpose. In the event of a potential dismissal, the advice of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations and the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association will be sought.

Section 4. The Minister shall continue his/her duties for 90 days after written notice of resignation is received by the President, or after membership decision for dismissal, unless it is mutually agreed otherwise.

Section 5. The Minister shall:

- be in the fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations;
- have primary responsibility for worship and other religious ceremonies;
- be an ex officio member of the Board of Trustees
- be available for advice and guidance of members and committees when requested;
- in consultation with the President, supervise all employees and maintain written jobs descriptions for each position, and coordinate the administrative and communicative aspects of the church;
- report at the annual membership meeting any matter which seems pertinent to the general welfare of the church, and make such recommendations as in his/her judgment may be appropriate; and
- keep complete and accurate vital statistics (that is, marriages, dedications, and deaths) concerning the membership.

#### **Article 16. Ministerial Search Committee**

Section 1. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the Minister, the members of the church shall elect a Ministerial Search Committee.

Section 2. The Ministerial Search Committee shall consist of seven (7) members of the church. Two (2) members of the Committee will be selected by the Board of Trustees, and five (5) members will be elected from the membership at a special meeting following the rules for selection of the Leadership Development Committee.

Section 3. The membership shall instruct the Ministerial Search Committee regarding the general terms of agreement that it shall tentatively negotiate; a tentative salary shall be approved by the membership prior to any interviews.

Section 4. The Ministerial Search Committee shall:

- consult with appropriate members of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations and the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association;
- conduct a membership survey;
- interview potential candidates and select one;
- make necessary arrangements to ensure the candidate has reasonable knowledge of and acceptance of the church, its membership, finances, and Bylaws, and of the community at large;
  - agree tentatively in writing with the selected candidate regarding the terms of agreement;
- nominate such candidate, with the Board of Trustees' concurrence, at a membership meeting called for the purpose of decision on that candidate, and present the terms of agreement for action at that meeting;
- prepare a contract containing the detailed terms of agreement, in consultation with the candidate, and propose it to the Board of Trustees;

- assist the new Minister to become settled and acquainted in the community; and • comply in all matters with the UUCC Non-Discrimination Policy.

Section 5. Any vacancies on the Ministerial Search Committee can be filled by nomination of the President with the Board of Trustees' approval.

**Article 17. Calling a Minister: Quorum and Plurality of Call**

The Ministerial Search Committee shall present a Ministerial Candidate to the membership. The minister shall be called by at least an eighty percent (80%) vote of the voting membership present at a special congregational meeting held for that purpose. The vote to call a minister shall be by written ballot. One half (1/2) of the members eligible to vote shall constitute a quorum at such special congregational meeting.

**Article 18. Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year shall be set at July 1 through June 30 of each year.

**Article 19. Bylaws and Amendments**

Section 1. Suggested changes for these bylaws shall be submitted to the Clerk, and if approved by the Board of Trustees, shall be presented to the membership.

Section 2. These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any membership meeting, provided that written notice of any proposed change is included in the notice for that meeting, at least 10 days prior to the meeting.

Section 3: If for five years no amendments shall have been made to these Bylaws, the president shall appoint, with the concurrence of the Board, a bylaw committee to review this document.

**Article 20. Dissolution**

In the event of dissolution and liquidation of this corporation, either voluntarily or involuntarily, the Board of Trustees (in the event of voluntary dissolution) and the appropriate public official (in the event of involuntary dissolution) shall transfer any surplus in excess of the corporation's outstanding liabilities to the order of the Northern New England District, Unitarian Universalist Office for Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, 10 Ferry Street, Suite 318, Concord, NH 03301.

Revised 8/04 to include amendments passed at the June 6, 2004 Annual Meeting

Revised 6/05 to include amendments passed at the June 5, 2005 Annual Meeting

Revised 3/09 to include amendments passed at the March 9, 2009 Membership Meeting

Revised 6/10 to include amendments passed at the June 10, 2010 Annual Meeting

Revised 6/12 to include amendments passed at the June 3, 2012 Annual Meeting

Revised 6/13 to include amendments passed at the June 2, 2013 Annual Meeting

Revised 6/17 to include amendments passed at the June 4, 2017 Annual Meeting Revised 6/19 to include amendments passed at the June 2, 2019 Annual Meeting