



ANNUAL
REPORTS

2025-
2026

Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Annual Report 2026

ART COMMITTEE

CHAIR AND MEMBERS:

Jennifer Thomas, Chair
Denise Martin
Mary Ratliff
Sharon Day
Pam Knox

PURPOSE OF GROUP:

The Art Committee exhibits artwork from members and friends, runs the winter craft fair, and provides opportunities for engagement like workshops and creating displays.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

We held the second craft fair this November, raising over \$700. In August of 2005, Jennifer led an art workshop day in the LFD area. In the summer and fall of 2025, we created an adult art exhibit and a children's exhibit. Winter brought a show by member Alison Armstrong of Muddy Marmots Photography. Then in the spring, Mary Ratliff displayed along with friends Sue Hossack and Judy Niehaus. This summer, Denise Martin plans to display her work.

CHALLENGES:

The mounting and taking down of art work can present challenges due to mobility issues. The stepladder we use is precarious.

We are also looking for some assistance in replacing some light bulbs in the back lobby.

HOW THIS GROUP FURTHERS UUC'S MISSION AND VISION:

Maintaining an art presence helps to build community, raise funds, enhance the experience of coming to the meeting house, and provide opportunities for education and creative self-expression.

GOALS FOR THE COMING YEAR:

Administer a third winter craft fair to raise funds; invite artists and plan exhibits for 2026-27; develop collaborations with other UUC groups; and work with the building committee to improve the hanging system on the walls in the back lobby.

**Unitarian Universalist Congregation
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Committee on Ministries**

CHAIR AND MEMBERS: Rev. Pam, Toni Cox, Linda Pfeiffer, George Lally, Gertrud Montgomery, Jane K-B

PURPOSE OF GROUP:

The COM is charged with considering how the Congregation is living into its vision and mission in the world, and creating opportunities for strengthening communication among different facets of the Congregation. Aid the Minister by being available for counsel and offering candid observations and feedback about conditions within the Congregation. Submit an annual compensation recommendation of the Minister to the Finance Committee and Board. Provide opportunities for the minister and COM members to assess progress toward short- and long-term goals for the Congregation and its shared ministries.

Support the Minister's planning for continuing education and other professional development and self-care.

ACHIEVEMENTS: We held three feedback circles on Adult Faith Development and one feedback circle with RE volunteers. We sent out a survey on Adult Faith Development. We are planning a final RE parents feedback circle for the end of the year.

CHALLENGES: Summarizing the results of the feedback circles has been challenging. We have had fewer participants in the circles than in years past. There were more people who filled out the online survey.

HOW THIS GROUP FURTHERS UUC'S MISSION AND VISION: We help reflect upon and support the shared ministries of the Congregation

GOALS FOR THE COMING YEAR:

- Provide opportunities for feedback on how people about the congregation growing
- Communicate how feedback from past circles has been used.

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Connections Committee

Connection activities, coffee/hospitality, greeting, Second Sunday potlucks, Circle Suppers, UUYA (UU Young Adults)

Committee Members: Robin Cooley and Lisa Evanylo - co-chairs, members Kim Feucht, Patrick Feucht, Crosby Houston, Britton Gildersleeve, Pam Philips, Akiko Nakata, Jill Kiecolt, Karen Holstein, Cindy Barden

Subcommittee leaders: Hospitality/coffee: Pauletta Copenheaver, **Circle Suppers:** Jill Kiecolt, **Second Sunday Potlucks:** Franklyn Moreno, **UUYAs:** Lucas Machi and Niko Rensberger

Committee's Purpose:

Promote and enhance membership by developing programs, conducting activities, and producing materials to connect with potential members and visitors, encourage interested parties to become members, and enhance the integration and involvement of current members and friends.

Achievements:

Held two newcomers' orientations with Pam sending email invitations to possible attendees (no longer mailing letters), supported 2 new member ceremonies, held coffee hours after services with snacks provided by committees or individuals, offered a wine & cheese social to the UUC auction, held monthly potlucks, coordinated the end-of-year RE Sundae Sunday, assisted with the Chili Cook-off and Stewardship kick-off brunch, organized Circle Suppers, held a watermelon social following the Water Service, provided greeters for in-person and virtual services and celebrations of life, coordinated the annual Thanksgiving Potluck, worked on the Safer Congregations Committee Risk Assessment form and submitted it to the Safety Committee, discussed and submitted 2 questions to consider to the Strategic Planning Committee to be used in a congregational survey, held the annual salad supper potluck for all in various roles.

Challenges:

Placards with conversation starters on tables at potlucks weren't successful as there is already much conversation, and the placards are ignored. Circle Suppers are not attracting many folks and will be discontinued for at least a year. A better model may be needed if they are to be started up at a later time.

Expenses (including UUYA):

As of the end of April, \$680.82 has been spent. The committee has a budget of \$2200.

How committee furthers UUC's mission and vision:

We support our mission by creating connection opportunities and providing ways for new and old to develop friendships. We help transform friends into active members. Our vision of being known as a place of welcome, joy, and celebration is practiced as we welcome visitors, celebrate new members, and support the new member ceremony.

Goals for the coming year:

Continue to acquaint people with possibilities to serve. Continue to support RE activities. Continue newcomers' activities and support connections among all UUC congregants.

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COMMUNITY SERVICE TEAM

CHAIR AND MEMBERS: Molly McClintock, Alison Armstrong, Pauletta Copenheaver, Crosby Houston, Gertrud Montgomery, Bob Stimson, Polly Stimson, Mary-Virginia Woods, John Kelso, Joe Powers, Janet Sawyer, Walt Pirie, Barbara Taylor, Mark Benson, Lucas Machi, Sara Dalton, Irene Peterson, Rene Lowry

PURPOSE OF GROUP: Coordinate community service projects.
Encourage engagement by congregation members.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

On-going projects

- To Our House (annually)
- Interfaith Food Pantry (monthly)
- Adopt a Highway (quarterly)
- Fairview Adult Home bingo (monthly)
- Montgomery County Christmas Store (annually)
- Women's Resource Center cake delivery (monthly)
- Blacksburg Refugee Partnership (on-going)
- Literacy NRV (weekly, on-going)
- Hope to Walk, prosthetic kit assembly (bi-weekly, on-going)

LESSONS LEARNED:

Existing projects are fully staffed. UUCNRV members are very engaged in community service both within the framework of CST and otherwise.

HOW THIS GROUP FURTHERS UUC'S MISSION AND VISION

We work to build compassionate community, further just causes, and demonstrate radical hospitality.

GOALS FOR THE COMING YEAR:

Engage UUC members in new Habitat building project in Blacksburg.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation Annual Report 2026 Finance Committee

The finance committee has three regular duties as it pertains to the finances of the congregation. These three were conducted for the year 2025-26.

1. With the assistance of the treasurer, we review the monthly financial statements of the congregation to identify any anomalies or potential problems for the year. In conducting those monthly reviews this year, no outstanding issues rose to the surface as serious concerns.
2. We count and record the money for the weekly collection from the congregation. For 2025-26 three members of the committee regularly participated in that process. At least two members are used each week to ensure an accurate count. A third check on the collection is done by the administrative assistant who also counts and records the plate collection. Tallies for each week are recorded in the black account book in the work room.
3. Beginning in December the committee, working with the treasurer, began work on crafting the budget for the coming fiscal year. Emails were sent to all committee chairs and others with administrative responsibilities within the congregation requesting their input for the 2026-27 budget. In cases where we did not receive responses, estimates were used to project the figures. The committee approved the current budget at its February meeting. The committee will meet in May with the board to reconcile any differences in the budget figures and the pledge total.

In addition to these three duties, the committee periodically discussed issues that we believe are relevant to the financial management of congregation's money. This past year we discussed the following.

- We discussed a concern with the timeliness of the half-plate payments to those organizations designated to receive funds. Upon review of the unpaid organizations, we lowered the amount of the liability. The end result of that discussion is that we believe a more comprehensive review of half-plate measures is in order and would urge the board to consider alternatives to the current process.
- We discussed with the treasurer the process for moving funds back and forth into Vanguard as a way to ensure greater income from interest. The treasurer is doing an excellent job of a) increasing interest income and b) ensuring there are no cash flow problems.
- We discussed safety protocols as pertain to finance.
- We have had discussions of the ongoing transition of the treasurer's position.

(Finance Committee Report, continued)

- Finally, the committee has at times expressed concern about future budget growth and whether we are reaching a point where substantial increases in the budget are feasible given the size of the congregation. At some point, we would recommend that the board consider this issue and begin a process of evaluation of the issue.

The finance committee consists of Ann Ruple, Chair; Jim Bohlad (immediate past chair); Rich Gandor; Susie Fry; Pam Knox; Wayne Neu, treasurer; and Ashley Dugan, treasurer in training. In 2027, the committee intends to ensure an audit of our accounts and procedures is completed.

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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

CHAIR AND MEMBERS:

Brian Mayer

Steve Keighton

Kendra McAllister

Cassy Davis (as Board President Elect)

PURPOSE OF GROUP:

The Leadership Development committee has the responsibility of seeking and developing leadership in the Congregation. The committee, in consultation with the Executive Board, shall prepare a list of at least one nominee per office for the elective offices of the Congregation to be filled, and shall recruit persons to serve as leaders and coordinators as requested by the board. The committee privately maintains a database detailing members' gifts (experience/skills), interests, and potential for leadership. The Leadership Development Committee may also choose to undertake other activities that support lay leadership in the Congregation.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

We had a successful nomination season.

We also replaced the Board Secretary mid-year.

Finally, we prepared a new approach to this year's nomination process (inspired by congregation requests at last year's congregational meeting) by better informing the congregation about the board responsibilities and the nomination process.

CHALLENGES:

Filling some of the more demanding roles, specifically Treasurer. We are trying to take a new approach where we have someone apprentice with the current Treasurer (as an assistant) in hopes that they can learn the tasks and feel comfortable (and not overwhelmed) stepping into the role.

HOW THIS GROUP FURTHERS UUC'S MISSION AND VISION:

Making sure we have strong leaders to guide the church. We try to leverage people's unique skills, talents, experiences, and perspectives to lead our congregation. We encourage members to find ways in which to contribute to our mission and vision.

GOALS FOR THE COMING YEAR:

Continue to enhance visibility into what we do as a committee and engage people so that they can find ways to contribute as leaders of the congregation.

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LIFESPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Submitted by Rachel Craine
May 2026

Lifespan Faith Development Committee: Rachel Craine, Brandie Lemmon, Kendra McAllister, Jill Kiecolt, Sally Pfeiffer

Purpose of the LFDC

The LFDC supports and oversees the UUC LFD program. The LFD program is committed to creating an environment for volunteers, students, and their families that reflects our mission, UU principles, and UUC covenants. Our goal is to support the development of each student to their fullest potential. LFD programs include: Children's RE classes, Middle School Youth Group, YRUU (High School Youth Group), YAC (Youth Adult Committee), Adult RE classes, Our Whole Lives (OWL), Coming of Age, and the UUC Library.

2025-2026 LFD Updates

- **Registration:** 51 families and 80 children and youth were registered in this year's programs.
- **Attendance:** Sunday Children's RE averaged 21, with a range of 9-35. This is a bit lower than last year. Our prek-k age range continues to be quite low, and attendance tends to drop in the spring.
- **Youth Groups:** We had an average of 8 youth on Sunday nights, and bridged 2 seniors. Numbers were consistent with last year, and participants were highly engaged, with 9 youth attending the Mountain, and several participating in events like the coffee house, italian dinner, book sale and food drive. This year we began combining MSYG and YRUU. Next year we will move MSYG to Sunday nights and overlap with YRUU—combining once a month and having separate MSYG once a month. YRUU will continue to meet weekly.
- **Adult RE:** (attendance)
 - God is Not One—Pam
 - Date with Death Club—Cynthia, Gretchen, Amanda

LIFESPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (continued)

- Trans Inclusion in the Congregation– Rachel
 - The Common Read–Rachel
 - Responding to the Anti-Trans Movement Workshop–Rachel
 - Shared Pulpit–Pam
 - Building the World We Dream About (UUYA's)–Rachel
 - UU History–Pam
 - Ongoing opportunities include–Meditation, Sunday Circle, Conversations on Faith, Yoga
- **OWL (Our Whole Lives):** This year 10 youth participated in 8-9 OWL. Next year we will offer Elementary OWL and Adult OWL.
 - **Summer RE:** This year the All Ages summer RE program will be Smoothie Summer–exploring flavors of summer around the world.. It will run for 11 weeks, between June 7 and August 16. August 30 will be ingathering, with an RE open house downstairs after the service. Fall RE will start September 13.
 - **Teacher & Advisor Appreciation:** Teacher appreciation will be held on May 31, recognizing the 38 volunteers who make our programming possible.
 - **Community Service Activities:**
 - It's Scary to Be Hungry campaign for the Interfaith Food Pantry
 - Canned Pasta Drive–to support IFP's food bags over winter break -
 - Reverse Advent Calendar collection for the Interfaith Food Pantry
 - The Mitten Tree warm clothing drive for the Mont. Co. Christmas Store -
 - Just One Can Drive (to support IFP)
 - Egg Hunt supply drive for the Montgomery County Animal Care & Adoption Center and the Montgomery County Humane Society
 - Ongoing collection of food for the Interfaith Food Pantry in the RE lobby.
 - **UUCCommunityBuildingActivities:**
 - The Buddy Project paired 9 adult and child buddies
 - Monthly All Ages Community Game Nights
 - Parent Covenant Group

LIFESPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (continued)

–Karaoke–Hosted by the Board

–Chili Cook-off–Hosted by Connections Committee

Challenges & Opportunities:

- **Youth Groups:** Next year we will be combining Youth Groups even more—my hope is to increase connections between high school/middle school youth, increase attendance, and make it easier for scheduling for parents and advisors.
- **Attendance:** I am still concerned about attendance, especially in our lowest grades. This extends to activities for families as well, such as Parent Covenant Group, which fizzled out by the end of the year. Next year I would like to re-vamp the buddy project, all ages game nights, and parents' group to make them more engaging and accessible.

Goals for Next Year:

- Continue to build our sense of community, especially across age groups.
- Engage larger numbers of children in RE, with a special focus on younger grades
- Encourage connections and involvement/retention of families.
- Increase visibility and use of our library resources.

How LFD Works to Further the Mission and Vision of UUC: The programs of LFD are designed to help our congregants, regardless of age, to grow in their personal spiritual and ethical journeys. We emphasize covenant and compassion in all programs. Through our liberal religious education, we help children and youth create a bridge between our religion and other religions in the NRV, and to discover how they can make the world a better place through their own actions.

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LAY PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY

Committee Chair and Members: Jane Mahone & Earle Irwin (Co-Chairs and Assistant to Rev. Pam Philips); Dan Kominsky, Pat Traynor, Sharon Crane.

Purpose of the Committee: The purpose of the LPCM (Lay Pastoral Care Ministry) Committee is to assist our minister in providing support to the congregation members and friends during times of distress, both crisis and long-term. The process involves visits with members and friends as requested by them and at their times of availability.

Achievements During the Last Year: Over the past year, the team met most months for 1½ hours for training and support. Most members have been matched with congregational members at some time during the year. One member transitioned off the team (Lisa Evanylo) and we welcomed a new member (Sharon Crane). Member Dan Kominsky continues to facilitate Caregivers Support Group which meets monthly via Zoom.

Lessons Learned in the Last Year: We continue to evaluate how to best broaden the base of congregants that we serve, and to make sure that we have an adequate number of trained members to provide these services.

Committee Expenses for the Year: Only fees related to financing background checks for all members.

How the Committee Supports the Mission and Vision of UUC: Our committee helps to create compassionate community by reaching out to members and friends in their time of need. We further our mission to transform our community and the world through courageous love by being listening ears to them.

Goals of the Committee for Next Year: We want to continue to provide these trained members in assisting Rev. Pam Philips. We plan to broaden our scope to provide visits to members who are recovering at home or in care facilities after medical events. We will also continue to provide training to our members and add members as needed to meet the needs of our UUCNRV community.

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STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

CHAIR AND MEMBERS:

Chair - Denise Martin

Members - Maryann Hansen, Lisa Evanalyo, Carol Kern (moving off committee), Andy Roberts, Patrick Feucht, Kim Feucht, and Bea Yancey.

PURPOSE OF GROUP:

To manage and support the annual pledge campaign to meet the yearly budget set for UUC.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

We put on a very successful pledge campaign this year and were able to meet the budget goal for the 26/27 budget year. Our brunch was well attended and we were able to raise 71% of our budget either before or at the brunch.

CHALLENGES:

Recruiting new members to our committee is something we need to work on. We are losing one member this year and others on the committee have been on it for several years and may be ready to move on. People are reluctant to volunteer for the Stewardship team because they feel it's too big of a job. Some are uncomfortable talking about money. This is an amazing team of individuals are very dedicated to the mission of UUC.

HOW THIS GROUP FURTHERS UUC'S MISSION AND VISION:

We support the financial side by helping to raise money for the budget. Being able to fully fund our budget allows UUC to offer more programs, pay staff, and offer a safe, secure place for people to gather.

GOALS FOR THE COMING YEAR: Increase number of members on the committee. Look at ways to simplify the pledge campaign.

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VOTING RIGHTS TEAM

Committee Chair and Members: Sara Dalton, Anna Vijayan, Jamie McReynolds, Carolyn Rude, Carol King

Purpose of the Committee: The purpose of the voting rights team, formed in January 2023, is to promote and encourage voting by members of our congregation as well as the larger community.

Achievements During the Last Year:

- Coordinated with our VICPP liaison in having our congregation pledge with Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy to become a 100% Voting Congregation and banner was posted.
- On several occasions, hosted voter information tables at UUC
- Promoted the LWV and NAACP fall 2025 candidate forums and some members volunteered to help at those events.
- Provided non-partisan voter information via a series of announcements in UU News and Updates and the quarterly UUC newsletter as well as on the bulletin board. Included was information about the Nov. 4, 2025 general election, the April 21, 2026 special election and information on the three proposed Virginia constitutional amendments as they moved through and were passed by the General Assembly.
- Collaborated with community organizations as individual members were active in multiple community voter information and voter registration events.
- Coordinated a collaborative effort with the UUC congregation, the UUC anti-racism group, a local social justice group (Our Bodies Our Choice), neighbors and friends for a Get Out The Vote campaign via Center for Common Ground, mailing 1000+ post cards.
- Followed General Assembly voter related legislation and sent alerts to team members and occasionally to public witness listserv.

(Voting Rights report continued)

Lessons Learned in the Last Year: We experienced the power of collaboration on both the community level and in-house level. Also, we witnessed the interconnected nature of our various social justice issues and how voting is a critical component for all social justice efforts. Most of our committee/team work this current fiscal year was done via emails and direct communication vs. zoom meetings. We will need to re-access that approach.

Committee Expenses for the Year: We spent our budget on stamps for the get out the vote post card campaign.

How the Committee Supports the Mission and Vision of UUC: Our goal, to promote and encourage voting by members of our congregation as well as the larger community, stems from our 5th UU principle: “The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.” Also, the activities of the Voting Rights Team align with our UU core values of justice and equity.

Goals of the Committee for Next Year: Our goals for the coming year remain the same with a continued emphasis on voting as a right, a responsibility, and a way to live our faith. We will continue our collaborative activities, internally and externally. Since Virginia has elections every year, in the upcoming fiscal year we will be directing our attention to the August 8 primary and the November 3 general election when the US Senate, US House of Representative and local offices in some jurisdictions will be on the ballot.

We will also continue to provide information on the three very important Virginia constitutional amendments which will be on the November ballot.

The three are:

- 1) The Fundamental Right to Reproductive Freedom
- 2) Qualifications of Voters and the Right to Vote (automatic restoration of the right to vote for ex-felons)
- 3) Repeal of Same Sex Marriage Prohibition.

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WORSHIP TEAM

CHAIR AND MEMBERS:

- Britton Gildersleeve
- Casey Akers
- Cynthia Baute (chair)
- Denise Martin
- Gretchen Luke
- KC Arceneaux
- Kristine Reid
- Pam Philips
- Steve Keighton
- Susan Sisk
- Victoria Taylor

PURPOSE OF GROUP:

To collaborate in planning, designing, and leading services, ensuring that services are vibrant and rich experiences for the congregation, as well as welcoming and accessible for new attendees. Worship Associates also help arrange and lead worship when the minister is out of the pulpit, and may develop and lead worship services themselves.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Held a small auction luncheon event for congregants and conducted Q&A and got 1:1 time with participants.
- Conducted a variety of types of services - music service, artists service, diversity services
- 3 members participated (4, with Rev. Pam) in the sermon writing workshop which fostered development of lay leaders and resulted in a fantastic sermon given by Fred Piercy
- Attendance has been very strong (115-130) recently (typically in the 90's).

CHALLENGES:

- Raising diverse voices - we tend to be an older white group. We would like to add some young people and more men.

(Worship Team report, continued)

HOW THIS GROUP FURTHERS UUC'S MISSION AND VISION:

The worship team is responsible for bringing messages that inspire, create, and transform the congregation by creating inspiring, creative, and transformative services. We also act as ambassadors for our congregation when we have guest speakers in the pulpit.

GOALS FOR THE COMING YEAR:

- Expand the diversity of the team
- Include more voices of the congregation
- Explore alternative worship styles and settings