

CHURCH COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS
CHURCH YEAR 2024
JULY 1, 2023 –JUNE 30, 2024

Dear members and friends of UUSD,

As we work toward the close of this church year, we can all be proud and excited about all the work that our committees have accomplished. The energy and productivity of our committees and teams continues to be amazing! Our 25th year anniversary began in January of 2024 and has already produced a kickoff service and brunch, posters reflecting pictures from our history, a wonderful potluck dinner featuring Lois Powell of the Chantels, and much more. This celebration will continue into the new fiscal year. Under the leadership of the Fundraising committee, we had another successful Craft Fair last Fall and have just completed another Awesome Annual Auction. The Finance Committee worked hard to move us toward our very ambitious pledge goal drive this year. While we didn't quite make it to our goal, our leadership team will work hard to support of all of the committees as well as staff who keep us so actively living our vision and mission.

While the committees work independently as well as collaboratively, it is helpful to have the Church Council to keep everyone informed. The council meets every two-three months throughout the year, chaired by the Vice President of the Board of Trustees. Committee chairs attend along with representatives from the BOT, Leadership Development and the Executive Team, and the minister. The meetings are open to members of the congregation, and you are welcome to join us at any meeting throughout the year. As you review the committee reports, I encourage you to think about how you would like to help out if you are not already on one committee or more. It takes many people to keep us such a vibrant and effective force in the greater community.

I hope that the UUSD Committee Reports for the church year that span June 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024, will provide you with a comprehensive overview of what this committed group of people have accomplished. I am proud to be a part of such a dynamic and dedicated community.

In joy and appreciation,

Linda

Linda Marsden

Chair, UUSD Church Council

V.P., UUSD Board of Trustees

2023-2024 ADULT FAITH EXPLORATION COMMITTEE YEARLY REPORT

Members: Charles Bittner, Jean Charles, Chris Degnon, Mac Goekler, Kim King, Betty Kirk, Karen Laugel, and Rev. Heather

Below please find a list of classes and events we have offered over the past year. New this year is offering an AFE Team Forum discussion after services the first Sunday of each month.

Class	Dates	Facilitator(s)	Number attending
UU Tune-up	October	Rev. Heather, Kim King, Jean Charles	8
	March	See above	11
	August	See above	15
Darwin Day	Feb.	Betty Kirk	19
Health in all Seasons	Feb. (May 2024)	Deb Davies	9
Downsizing	April	Julie McCullough	6
Rise up	Ongoing	Kim Cook	10
The 4 Agreements		Kim King	16
Meditation/Still time	Sept-Dec	Rev. Heather	10
Trail Time	April/Ongoing	Rev. Heather	6
Humanism: Stories of Benefits from Covid	July 20, 2023	Charles Bittner	5
Humanism: Freethinking	September	Charles Bittner	5
Humanism:	October	Bobbe Baggio	13
Humanism: Positivity	November	Charles Bittner	5
Humanism: Winter Resilience	December	Charles Bittner	2
Humanism: Artificial Intelligence Literacy	January	Charles Bittner	13
Humanism: Darwin in our Times	February	DE Rep Eric Morrison	12
Humanism: Agreement and Disagreement in Science	March 21	Charles Bittner	7
Sunday Forum: Banned Books	October	Charles Bittner	16
Sunday Forum: Celebration of Your Life	November	Charles Bittner	12
Sunday Forum: Teaching Children about Religion and Atheism	January	Charles Bittner	9

Sunday Forum: How Can We Communicate with People Who are Different?	February	Charles Bittner	9
Sunday Forum: Daily Practice for Personal Growth	March	Charles Bittner	12
Sunday Forum: "The Rituals of Spring"	February	Bobbe Baggio	9
Total			239

CHILDREN’S FAITH EXPLORATION PROGRAM

See the Annual Report from the Children’s Faith Exploration Director, Heather A. Hamilton, EdD. The Committee is in the process of being reconstituted.

**COMMITTEE ON CONGREGATIONAL LIFE
ANNUAL REPORT – 2023-24**

Committee Membership: Jon Bartels, Deanna Duby, Steve Holtz, Martha McLaren, Rev. Heather Rion Starr

Board Liaison: Carol Huckabee

The Committee on Congregational Life has had a busy and productive year. We have been active on several fronts. The following is a brief summary of our work during the 2023-24 church year:

- Our committee membership has changed somewhat, partly as a result of the loss of Carol Huckabee as a member when she was elected to the Board of Trustees, but we have been fortunate to keep her involved with CCL as she became our Board Liaison. In addition, we have welcomed Steve Holtz, a relatively new UUSD member, to the committee.
- Responding to requests from the Minister, the Board of Trustees, or directly from members, we have met with members involved in conflicts or potential conflicts. Details of those meetings have been, and continue to be, confidential. We continue to believe and to do the work of the committee based on the principle that open and thorough communication is the only way to approach situations of conflict. We believe that the matters before us during this year have been resolved or if a clear resolution was not found, the parties involved felt heard and respected.
- The UUSD By Laws charge the Board of Trustees with “assessing the health of the congregation” every four years and, historically, the BOT has charged the Committee on Congregational Life with carrying out that task and conducting the survey on the Board’s behalf. This year we constructed and conducted that survey, with the valued assistance of Marj Shannon. We have reported the raw data from survey results to the Board of Trustees, and with their direction and Marj’s hard work, we will be compiling and analyzing that data so that we can give a detailed report to the full congregation. We anticipate that that report will be in a post-service presentation soon.

We believe that the overall health of “congregational life” at UUSD is good. However, as we experience both rapid and extensive growth and changes related to that growth, we plan to continue monitoring our congregational life and provide opportunities for improving communication and connection. We will continue to pursue that work.

Respectfully Submitted,

Committee on Congregational Life
Deanna Duby

**COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
2023-24 ANNUAL REPORT**

MEMBERS: (Core) Sue Brown (acting co-chair), Alice Casey, Kay Creech (new), Anita Gossett, MaryDiane Hausman (new), Aela Mass, Ronnie Smith, and Alleane Taylor (acting co-chair). Other active members: David DeWitt (new for copyediting), Christina Monroe (new for social media), Justin Schaber (new to the photo team and graphics), and Pat Williams (media archives). Kent Sprunger is the board liaison. The Rev. Heather Rion Starr is a nonvoting/ex-officio member. Pat Schaeffer, a longtime member and past chair of the committee, served until the end of 2023.

COMMITTEE PURPOSE: To coordinate and develop all communication vehicles that inform the congregation and the larger community about UUSD’s vision, mission, and activities.

KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

WEBSITE: The website, uussd.org, provides information primarily for two audiences: the public in general and UUSD members and friends. For the public audience, the website provides visitors with information about UUSD, its organization, the congregation, and activities. Sections of the website also provide information for the congregation and serve as a UUSD “library,” including the calendar, board of trustees meeting minutes and documents, volunteer opportunities, online giving, committee charges and contacts, policies, and forms.

The website administrators are Aela Mass and Alleane Taylor, working with team members Anita Gossett and Ronnie Smith. Over the past year, site content has been updated, with pages added as needed. A major project of the team was the migration of the website to a shared server because of the increased cost of the virtual private server. Our website maintenance company is instituting varied measures to improve speed and performance and reduce storage needs.

The analytics program we use was updated by Google as of July 1, 2023, so we only have data since then: from July 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024.

Website viewers	5,687, average of 632 viewers/month
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The 10 most viewed website pages, after the home page, are shown in the table below.

	2024		2023
Rank	Website Page	Page Views	Website Page
	All pages	27,206*	
1	Home Page	8,886	Home Page

2	Sunday Service Livestream	3,308	Sunday Service Livestream
3	Calendar	1,437	Calendar
4	Past Services	803	Member Documents
5	Member Documents	501	Past Services
6	Ongoing Activities	476	Upcoming Services
7	Online Giving	452	Children's Faith Exploration Projects
8	Committees & Contacts	367	Worship
9	Worship	362	Photo Gallery
10	Upcoming Services	349	About Us
11	Directory	347	Our Minister

*This chart covers less than last year, but the updated analytics program appears to be doing a better job of filtering out "bots" that inflated our earlier information.

PUBLICATIONS: The *Thursday eNews* (53 issues) and the *Sunday Service Reminder* (53 issues) have been published on a weekly basis via MailChimp. Currently, they're distributed to 561 recipients, including members, friends, staff, and visitors or others who have signed up for the eNews. Additionally, 26 eBlasts were distributed to members, friends, and staff as needed, including those about the pledge campaign, website status, surveys, cancellations, phishing, etc. Alleane Taylor prepares and disseminates these publications. Sue Brown copyedits the issues. The open rates are 57.2% (or 321 recipients) for the *eNews* and 59.7% (or 335 recipients) for the *Sunday Service Reminder*. These are excellent open rates, as Campaign Monitor indicates that up to 40% is a benchmark rating of solid health, and the average open rate across the board is about 15% to 25%.

SOCIAL MEDIA: The social media team plays a crucial role in building community through engagement and providing information about UUSD activities and events. Ronnie Smith is the lead for the social media team, which includes Aela Mass and Alleane Taylor. In the past few months there has been remarkable growth in UUSD's Facebook page and the initiation of an Instagram presence. The data for the UUSD Facebook page for the period of Jan. 19, 2024, to April 17, 2024 (90 days) is as follows.

Facebook:

Number of followers – Total number of followers on our Facebook page (as of April 17, 2024): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Age 65+: female – 37.5%, male 10.7% ● Age 55-64: female – 15.1%, male 3.7% ● Age 45-54: female – 12.2%, male 2.1% ● Age 35-44: female – 9.3%, male 2.2% ● Age 25-34: female – 3.7%, male 2.0% ● Age 18-24 or younger: female – 1.4%, male .01% 	930
Top cities	Lewes, Milton, Rehoboth Beach
Facebook Reach – The number of unique people who viewed the Facebook page in the past 90 days: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Highest reach on a post – "Local, Everyday Heroines Working Together: Celebrating the We," Jeri Berc: 1,059 	4,541 (Increased 89.1% from previous 90 days)
Engagement – The number of post reactions,	2,800 (Increased 184.4% from

comments, and shares on posts in the past 90 days: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest reactions on a post – Creative Corner: Irene Fick, 119 reactions • Highest comments on a post – Creative Corner: Irene Fick, 40 comments 	previous 90 days)
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Instagram:

Followers	28
Posts	64

PUBLICITY: The purpose of the publicity team is to effectively communicate information about UUSD’s vision, mission, activities, and events across diverse communities to foster understanding and connections. Alice Casey develops press releases and calendar postings for local media and online channels, as well as public service announcements. Google Alerts tracks when UUSD shows up on the web. This year alerts came from Community Briefs from the Cape Gazette, Bay to Bay News, and media in Austin, TX and Pennsylvania that had picked up news provided by EIN Presswire on the “Benevolent Community Summit” (UUSD is a partner).

Press Releases:

Date	Title of Article	Committee
August 2023	Anger to Action Forum Reproductive Justice Task Force UUSD	Social and Environmental Justice (SEJ)
September 2023	Favorite Banned Books, After Service Discussion	Adult Faith Exploration
October 2023	UUSD to Host Craft Fair, Film Festival Screenings, Nov. 9-11	Fundraising
October 2023	Celebrate Our Own Life, After Service Discussion	Adult Faith Exploration
December 2023	Teaching Our Children About Religion and Atheism, After Service Discussion	Adult Faith Exploration
January 2024	Artificial Intelligence Discussion	Adult Faith Exploration
January 2024	3 Degrees of Separation, Film and Supper	SEJ
January 2024	UUSD to Focus on Leadership and Service	Worship Committee
February 2024	UUSD to Screen “Streetlight Harmonies”	25 th Anniversary Committee
February 2024	Roy Park Grant Application	SEJ
March 2024	Annual Awesome Auction (Online) – 2 Articles	Fundraising

Media outlets included:

Media Outlet	Media Outlet
Delaware Online Calendar	Delaware State News Calendar

Delaware Online Press Release	Coast Press – (Bethany, Fenwick, Millville, and Selbyville)
Delaware Online News desk	Radio Station – The Talk of Delmarva
Gannett USA – (publisher of News Journal)	Cape Gazette – (Lewes and Rehoboth Beach)
Delaware State News – (Dover, Milford, and other community publications)	Seaford Star – (Western Sussex)

Public Service Announcements:

In addition, Alice Casey prepared 52 weekly public service announcements for Sunday services with the date, time, and sermon topic. She posted flyers and news articles on the bulletin board in the gathering area. Pat Williams prepares UUSD-related publicity notices from the Cape Gazette for archiving.

PHOTO TEAM: The UUSD photo team plays a vital role in visually documenting the life of the congregation, engaging members and the wider community and preserving memories for years to come. The photo team captures images at UUSD services, activities, and events for use in communications media products. The volunteer photographers include Warren Bouton, Sue Brown (lead), Randy Davidson, Dar Sellers, Alleane Taylor, and Richard Wheeler; Justin Schaber is new to the team. Vicki Nichols and Margaret Keefe also provide photos.

A major accomplishment for the photo team this year is the development and implementation of a new workflow system. A subset called the capture team takes photos and uploads them to a shared drive on Google Workspace. The post-processing team prepares the photos for use in communications products, and the photo team’s lead moves the photo files to a shared drive where committee members and staff have access to them for use in projects.

In collaboration with the 25th Anniversary Committee, Warren Bouton and Sue Brown have scanned and processed photos for display panels covering the beginning years of UUSD (1998-2005). They also processed photos for the Toddy’s years (2005-15) and are preparing photos for the years at UUSD’s current location (2015-23).

Committee	Photographer Present (Data from July 1, 2023 - April 2024)
Worship - Sunday Services	27 Sunday Services (Richard Wheeler and Warren Bouton)
Children’s Faith Exploration (CFE)	16 CFE Classes and Activities (Richard Wheeler, Warren Bouton, and Justin Schaber)
UUSD Cares	Valentine Donation Parade (Sue Brown and Alleane Taylor)
SEJ and UUSD Cares	Film/Potluck; 3 Degrees of Connection (Sue Brown)
Social and Environmental Justice	Rise Against Hunger (Justin Schaber) Share the Plate checks (Vicki Nichols)
25th Anniversary	Film/Potluck; Lois Powell, Chantels (Richard Wheeler) Photos for display boards (Warren Bouton and Sue Brown)

Landscaping	Bluebird Houses (Margaret Keefe)
Membership – Photos for the Breeze Directory	75 Members and Friends photos; 6 Pop-up photo sessions held in 2024 (Randy Davidson)
Fundraising – Online Auction Catalog	98 Tangible items (Warren Bouton) 51 Restaurant photos for gift cards, graphics for nontangible items (Sue Brown) 22 Other photographers
Pledge Campaign Videos	6 Videos (Alleane Taylor)

GRAPHICS: The graphics team creates visually attractive materials to effectively communicate messages and promote engagement. To advertise activities and events, Sue Brown worked with UUSD committees to create flyers, posters, logos, brochures, and special projects for the eNews, website, and social media. Randy Davidson produced posters and item cards for the craft fair and posters for Membership and the Safer Congregations Committees. Justin Schaber and Aela Mass are new members of the team.

Type	Committee	Total
Flyers	25 th Anniversary (1), Fundraising (3) Safer Congregations (1), Social & Environmental Justice (3), UUSD Cares (2)	10
Posters	Communications (7), Pastoral Care/Helping Hands (3)	10
Logo	Children’s Faith Exploration, Featured Committee, Communications Committee logo and products graphic, SEJ – Monthly Ask, Reproductive Justice, Property Management	7
Ad in Community Event Program	SEJ – PowWow, Rehoboth Beach Film Festival, Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, Camp Rehoboth Chorus (2 concerts), Pride Film Festival	6
Brochure	CFE Program (January to June), Finance (pledge brochure)	2
Special Projects	25 th Anniversary – Postcards for UUSD memories, pens, reusable grocery bags “Let’s Stay Connected” card	4
Graphics	Graphics for nontangible donations for the online auction catalog	

COPYEDITING: The copyediting team serves the important purpose of ensuring that written materials produced by the Communications Committee are clear, accurate, consistent, and engaging. The team assures that written materials adhere to the Chicago Manual of Style Guidelines and that copyrighted materials are not used without the permission of the copyright owner. David DeWitt is a new member of the team, which includes Kay Creech and Anita Gossett who edits and formats sermon descriptions.

Submitted by Sue Brown and Alleane Taylor, Communications Co-Chairs, April 23, 2024

CONTRACTS REVIEW TEAM

This past year, the Team’s efforts were focused chiefly on working with the Executive Team as it explored requirements and options for replacing UUSD’s existing signs (along Route 9/Lewes-Georgetown Highway) with an electronic sign. Team members appreciated the opportunity to review initial documents, contribute questions, and offer suggestions and recommendations as to the review

and approval process. Next steps include:

- Seeking Sussex County Planning & Zoning Committee and Sussex County Council review and approval; and
- Promoting participation in the UUA's Chalice Lighters group, to assure there are enough Chalice Lighters among UUSD's congregation to qualify it to apply for grant funding to help pay for the sign.

The Contracts Review Team looks forward to assisting the Executive Team further with this project when the requisite approvals are in place. (Estimated timeline for approval: 18-24 months.)

Alice Casey, Gwen Johnson, Marj Shannon, & Richard Wheeler

COVENANT GROUPS AND AFFINITY GROUPS ANNUAL REPORT

Chair, Ruth Lamothe

Currently there are 14 Covenant Groups active at UUSD. A new group is likely to begin sometime within the next few months. All the covenant groups vary in terms of topics, meeting times and places, and rotation of coordinators. For example, several groups follow the UUA developed Soul Matters monthly packet of materials devoted to a topic; several groups follow their own interests. Some groups meet at church, others at private home. No burning issues in any group at this time. Most concerns are about cross-talking or too much talking, about how the group functions, etc.

UUSD has four active affinity groups: The book club, the monthly drumming circle, the Gay men's dinner group, and the memoir writing group. No particular structure for meetings; all seem to be meeting monthly except for the gay men's dinner group, which is re-activating, so schedule is yet to be chosen. A travel club had one meeting in December 2023; the group may re-activate.

DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE FY23/24 Annual Report

The Board of Trustees approved and established the Denominational Affairs Committee (DAC) in July 2010. Our primary purpose is to help and encourage the involvement and education of UUSD members in denominational affairs issues, activities, and projects.

There are currently two members on the committee: Mac Goekler (Chair) and Nancy Comisso.

The UUA's periodic review (every 15 years) of the Art II Bylaw section (where the purposes, principles, and sources reside) resulted in a draft statement that passed by 86.3 % at General Assembly. This begins a year of discussion of that draft. Mac has conducted numerous after church discussion sessions plus published numerous Art II updates. Rev. Heather and Rev. Keith Goheen have given sermons on Art II. There are four amendments to this Art II proposal (2 to change language in the Equity value, one to add Reason as a value and one to add Peace as a value). Mac Goekler personally brought forward the Peace amendment. The Board agreed unanimously to be the primary sponsor of this amendment and also agreed to be secondary sponsors of the other three. These amendments required 15 congregational sponsors – the Peace amendment received 28. At GA this year the amendments and amended Art II will be voted on.

This past year, the committee's key accomplishments included promoting and maintaining UUSD's

involvement in the 2023 UUA annual General Assembly, which was multi-platform (in-person and virtual). Six UUSD members participated in the General Assembly serving as delegates (Rev. Heather is an automatic delegate, Jane Miller, Susan Haase, Pat Schaeffer, Susan Goekler, and Mac Goekler). This year, the 2024 UUA General Assembly, will be a virtual event. We will have a full slate of GA delegates (Rev. Heather is an automatic delegate Gary Schmidt, Jane Miller, Don Peterson, Susan Goekler, and Mac Goekler).

DAC also has two Board appointed representatives to the Delmarva Cluster group, Mac Goekler and Rev. Heather Rion Starr. Again, our Mac Goekler organized a summer cluster family day (July 13, 2024, this year) at Killens Pond State Park (South of Dover DE). This is a kid friendly park as it is the only DE state park with its own water park.

Also, DAC is responsible for advertising and encouraging UUSD support for the regional Chalice Lighters program, which facilitates congregational growth within our Central Easter Region (CER). UUSD currently has 24 % of our membership, who participate this past year in the Chalice Lighters program. We plan on having a higher awareness of Chalice Lighters (many new members are unaware of this program) this coming year.

DAC also regularly shares denominational events, programs, and articles on the UUSD Facebook page that originate from the UUA, Central East Region and other UUA related groups. We have been paying particular attention to the ongoing re-invention of the UUA – new structures, revised GA, and new UUA bylaws including Art. II.

We welcome new members to the committee to help us continue our focus on assisting and encouraging UUSD members to become knowledgeable and involved in UU denominational affairs activities. Being a member of DAC is a great way to better understand the workings of the Cluster, CER, and the UUA.

Mac Goekler, Chair, Denominational Affairs Committee, April 11, 2024

EXECUTIVE TEAM ANNUAL BOARD REPORT FY 23/24

The Executive Team's primary focus during the current church year was the coordination of UUSD's administrative and operational issues. Working independently and in collaboration with the Board, Committees/Groups and individuals, the ET coordinated day-to-day administrative systems, assessed administrative effectiveness, and maintained administrative continuity. Below are highlights from the Executive Team's work during the past year.

Members of ET for Church Year FY 23/24

Current Members: Rev. Heather Rion Starr, Linda DeFeo, Judy Hayes, Ellen Lytton, Don Peterson.
Former Member: Jean Charles (until 06/30/23)

Current Church Year Project Highlights

Information Systems/Technology

- **Google Workspace (GWS):**

- ET now maintains a registration form on GWS for Committees/Groups to reserve an information table after service on Sundays to promote their group or a special event.
- A new support contract providing technical support for GWS was signed with Techno Goober.

- Basic and advanced workshops were offered to the congregation to encourage use of GWS. Both beginner and advanced sessions were well attended with a total of 29 participants.
- A Google Forms workshop is being considered for later in 2024.
- **Breeze:** ET wants to express its deep appreciation to Kent Sprunger and Sandy Scheet-Robitalle for their combined efforts in the transition of Banco to Breeze and enabling the Church to make greater use of Breeze's capabilities.
- **Copier:** UUSD's five-year-old office copier was replaced with a more efficient and cost-effective model.
- **Roadside Electronic Message Board Project:**
 - Informational proposals were obtained from three local vendors. This provided ET with a ballpark figure for the cost of an electronic message board.
 - Representatives from ET met with Pennino Associates (engineering consulting firm) to determine the process and cost of getting a conditional use permit from Sussex County. This information was presented to the Board in April.
 - DelDot has indicated that the addition of an electronic message board will not impact traffic flow along Rt 9. Their permission to proceed is good for a three-year period.
 - ET is investigating non-budget-based financing options to cover the cost of the sign including applying for a Chalice Lighters grant.

Human Resources: ET continued its efforts to work on determining current and future staffing needs.

General Administrative:

- **Space/Logistics:** ET is charged with coordinating general issues related to how our interior and exterior spaces are used. During the year ET worked with multiple committees to ensure equitable access to UUSD facilities.
 - **Fundraising/UUSD Cares:**
 - ET worked with Fundraising to establish space needs for the Fall 23 Craft Fair and the 2024 Spring Auction.
 - The usage agreement with Committees/Groups who want to hold an auction event on site was updated to include a limit of one such event each week.
 - **PMC:** ET is working with PMC to resolve the issue of the outside entrance doors leading into the Foyer and Sanctuary.
 - **Safer Congregation Committee:**
 - ET worked with the Safety Committee to review their procedures for an emergency situation and to address their need for an easily accessible storage location for the two new wheelchairs, walker, and the mobile heavy duty first aid kit.
 - ET has maintained contact throughout the year with local officials and DelDot to advocate for added improvements to the signage on Rt.9 that impacts left and right turns into our drive. As a result, the west bound "turning vehicles" sign has been moved from its original placement to make it more visible. Many thanks need to go to Rebecca Fitton who was instrumental in getting DelDot to put up the caution signs in the first place.
 - **Sunday Information Tabling:**
 - Working with the Leadership Development Committee, ET created guidelines and a reservation form for Committees/Groups to use when they need an information table. Three tables are now available after service on Sundays. The guidelines and the reservation form are available on the shared UUSD Documents/Forms drive.
 - ET had its own Information Table event on January 28 and used the opportunity to promote its various projects.
 - **Guide to Physical Storage Spaces:** The Guide was updated in early 2024. A print copy is available hanging next to the copier in the office area. An electronic version can be found in the UUSD Documents folder on GWS.

- **General Admin:**
 - **Inclement Weather Policy:** ET determined that the Office Administrator will contact the local news stations to announce any UUSD cancellations due to inclement weather. The Worship Committee Co-chairs will back up the Office Administrator.
 - **Calendaring:** To facilitate setting up meetings an internal-only calendar is now available on Google Workspace for the BOT, Committee and Team members to note times they will not be available. It is purely voluntary to use this calendar.
 - **Roadside Message Board:** Our current manual message board is updated on a regular basis by ET with the exception of the months when the message is provided by FUNdraising. This church year the sign was changed every 6-7 weeks.
- **Record Retention:** Using the current Retention Schedule ET reviewed all of UUSD's paper files that were stored in the attic. A number of documents were transferred over to the appropriate UUSD Committee to be scanned and stored on GWS. Building plans are now in protective tubes that remain on the Archive Shelf in the attic. Other archival materials are being reviewed by the 25th Anniversary Committee.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee's primary focus is to work with the Finance Officer(s), the UUSD Board of Trustees (Board), and UUSD Committees to help assure a solid financial foundation that supports congregational growth and continued financial stability. Dedicated to that work in the FY24 fiscal year were members: Bobbe Baggio –Chair, Tom Delany, Pat Murdock, Dara Schumaier, Kent Sprunger - Treasurer, Richard Wheeler – Treasurer, Peggy Hughes, Linda Lewis, and Lisa Drottar.

The Committee adopted a sub-committee structure in 2019 to manage projects and distribute the workload within the interest and expertise of the members. Under this structure, the full Committee remains responsible for committee proposals and final project results.

The Committee can report the following accomplishments during the 2023-24 fiscal year:

- The Budget Development Sub-Committee initiated Phase 1 of the annual budget process in January 2024. They completed Phase 2 in April, incorporating the final pledge commitment and other cost refinements, and will submit a final suggested operating budget proposal to the Board for Tuesday April 23, 2024.
- The FY23 budget will be presented for congregational approval at the annual meeting in June 2024.
- The Pledge Campaign Sub-Committee began its planning in October 2022 and initiated the pledge campaign in February by engaging our UUSD leadership, who made a 100% early pledge participation commitment. The campaign officially ran through the month of April 15, 2024, with a 2-week extension and the proposed budget was not achieved.

The numbers:

- FY25 pledge campaign target: \$402,600
- Total amount of FY25 pledges: \$368,827
- Percent of target achieved: 92%
- Total amount short of target: \$33,773
- Total pledge units: 153 (single 94; joint 59)
- Total new pledges (without a FY24 pledge): 28
- Total pledges by non-members: 22

- Total pledges increased after 3/31: 35
- Total of increased amount after 3/31: \$33,220

We will complete an internal review of the UUSD accounting books for the 2022-23 fiscal year, conducted by members Isaac Carney and Gwen Johnson, and submit it to the Board for approval. This accounting review will bring us up to the current period. I will begin in May 2024.

We submitted a revised Minister's Discretionary Fund policy (MDF) to the Board in April to clarify the administration of the MDF collection activities in December to avoid confusion with the "share-the-plate" process, normally run in the other eleven months of the year.

We continued a monthly newsletter communication to the congregation on the status and overall well-being of UUSD's financial situation.

This year's significant transition from PowerChurch to QuickBooks and Breeze for accounting and pledge/contribution management went very well. It is now complete.

The committee has the following goals for the FY2025 church year and beyond:

- Conduct an internal annual accounting review for fiscal year 2023-24.
- Develop the 2025-26 operating budget and the related financial pledge commitment.
- As the pandemic recedes, re-initiate the Cloud Society program promotion and increased public communications to members.
- Continue to build a strong reserve for the future.
- Look into establishing a plan for a socially responsible investment advisory committee which is inclusive and diverse. We will aim to include those members with expertise and diverse perspectives and backgrounds in financial investing and others who are community and committee focused.
- Subject to the broader visioning of UUSD's mission and strategy, prepare for an eventual capital campaign.
- Continue to support and offer our insight to the Finance Officers as the church more fully transitions to new capabilities, including online giving, with the new financial systems.

Respectfully submitted,

Bobbe Baggo, Finance Committee, **April 19, 2024**

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Members: Gwen Johnson, Chair; Beth Law, Co-Chair; Jane Miller, Treasurer; Gail Hecky, Pam Smith, Kaz Huston, Rick Welk, Randy Davidson, Laura Borsdorf, Martha McLaren, Linda Marsden, Carol Huckabee, Jan Daily, Jackie Baker, Kim King, Alleane Taylor, Sue Brown, Donna Davis, Carol Scileppi, Kris Acker, Darlene Sellers, Irene Frantz, Alice Casey, Ellen Lytton, Cheri Garnet, Nancy Commisso, Irene Frantz, Karen Lunstead, Jena Hom, Dar Sellers, Pat Bartels, Debbie Burns, Doug Welch, Joan Applebaum, and Wayne Wright

Our committee works diligently to not only raise funds for the UUSD annual budget, but also to also provide a spiritual connection. We invite new members and friends to UUSD to join us, and in the past fiscal year, FUNdraising has recently added a couple of new people to the committee. The committee began FY 23 with a FUNdraising goal of \$31,000. After many members crafted all year, we held our annual Craft Fair/Crafty Café November 9-13, in conjunction with the Rehoboth Beach Film Festival. We made approximately \$11,100.

We sponsored a trip to the Canadian Rockies in September 2023 and received a check from Collette Travel for \$3,349.00. We had 16 members and friends on the trip. This is a great way to have fun while traveling and getting to know other members and friends.

We are in the midst of preparing for our Awesome Annual Auction which begins April 27, 2024, and ends May 4, 2024. Our projected goal is \$15,000.

The FUNdraising Committee meets the second Tuesday of each month; sub-committees meet as needed to work their respective events. Our crafting sub-committee meets monthly; in addition to creating crafts, we also provide spiritual connections. As the FY 23 auction ends on May 4th, 2024, we will now begin to plan for the Fall Craft Fair!

Respectfully submitted, Gwen Johnson and Beth Law, Co-Chairs FUNdraising Committee

GOVERNANCE REVIEW TEAM ANNUAL REPORT FY 2023-2024

The Governance Review Team was created two years ago. The team members starting this year were Donna Dolce, Rand Lytton, Pat Murdock, and Mac Goekler (Chair). Both Donna and Pat have resigned.

Our basis charge is: “The Governance Review Team will undertake a systematic, comprehensive review of UUSD’s governance documents, with an eye to bringing them into conformance with current practice, desired future practice—and one another. Bylaws will be updated and revised as necessary, with subsequent conforming changes made to policies, procedures, and committee charges. The goal will be to produce a complete, internally-consistent set of documents that will serve as a resource and a guide to UUSD members.”

The team decided that UUSD’s bylaws would be our first review. We worked with all the parties who are mentioned in these bylaws getting their input and basic approval, most importantly the Board. The bylaw revision was approved at a Congregational Meeting on December 10, 2023. The Team decided to review UUSD policies and procedures next.

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members: Pat Murdock, Chair; Rev. Heather Rion Starr; Paul Barnett; and Susan Haas

This year the Committee interviewed three candidates for the position of Children’s Faith Exploration Director. We were delighted when Dr. Heather Hamilton accepted the position, and she began her position on January 1.

We also worked to add the position of Transition Facilities Pointperson, and Cheri Garnet accepted that role starting April 1.

A big “Thank You” to the Committee members for all their work this year.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT FY24

Committee Members: BarB Barnette (Chair), Sylvia Daniels, Randy Davidson, Bobbi Dunham, Laura Holtz, Betty Kirk, Ellen Loewy, and Marcia McCollum-Martin. Rev. Heather and Tony Codella are ex-officio, non-voting members of the committee. We would welcome new committee members!

Consistent with the vision and mission of UUSD, the purpose of the Membership Committee is to provide a welcoming atmosphere for those attending Sunday services, to attract new members, and to work to retain current members. The Membership Committee meets on the third Tuesday of each month from 3 to 5 p.m.

Members, Friends, and Visitors: As of April 10, UUSD had **229** members and 86 friends. From July 1, 2023, through April 18, 2024, 28 new people signed the Membership book. Six members moved, resigned, or requested to change their status. One member passed away during this period.

Services have been live and streamed each Sunday during FY24. In-person attendance has averaged about 111 individuals, 11 children, 5 visitors, and virtual attendance is now averaging around 25 households each week.

Newcomers/New Member Events: The Membership Committee hosted an informal Happy Hour for newcomers on February 2, 2024; 47 individuals were invited, and 14 attended; several of the attendees signed the membership book at that event. Another Newcomers Happy Hour is planned for June 7th.

The “UU Tune-Up” classes have been offered three times in FY24, both in-person and on zoom, and all were well attended by potential new members and some current members.

Our next New Member Recognition Ceremony is planned for May 19, 2024.

Ongoing: Greeters and Ushers, coordinated by Tony Codella, continue to extend a warm welcome and help each Sunday service run smoothly. We currently have a list of 19 ushers, and 15 greeters. Tony will be stepping down at the end of this fiscal year, and we are searching for a new coordinator. He is more than willing to provide training for this duty.

We have begun a practice of having the Membership Chair available in the foyer after the Service on the first Sunday of each month for those who may wish to sign the membership book or ask questions about membership. This practice has proven to be effective.

We have also begun a practice of hosting a small group discussion, called “Second Sunday Circle” on the second Sunday of each month. This is an opportunity for visitors, newcomers, or new members to ask questions about Unitarian Universalism, our congregation, or the process to become a member here.

Randy Davidson has been diligently photographing new members, and those who do not already have a photo in the Breeze Directory.

PASTORAL CARE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024

This year the Pastoral Care Committee has continued to experience turnover of long-standing members and the addition of new members who are learning the role of the lay Pastoral Care Associate (PCA) as well as the use of the Google Workspace and Breeze. These tools are essential to accessing helpful resources to be supportive of church members.

The continued growth of new members in the past year, turnover on the committee and PCA's suspended availability for health concerns has contributed to dynamic challenges. However, we have assigned new church members to lay PCAs in a timelier manner than the 6-month time allotted for this task. Very new members may not be assigned yet and are generally assigned at our next monthly meeting.

Efforts to make the team more visible in the congregation have been made, such as identifying team members that are in attendance at Sunday Services and yellow name tags to identify committee members. The congregation is more aware of the team and 82% of individuals do know who their Lay PCAs are, according to the Congregational Life Committee's survey. Any lay PCA should be able to look that information up for members at social hour on Sunday mornings as a list is kept in the building with that information.

In May of 2023 the Pastoral Care Committee sponsored a talk by Dr. Judith Pierson on "Caring for the Caregiver," about 16 people took advantage of the program presented on Zoom. The presentation was recorded and is available for review.

Other information regarding evacuation and planning for weather and other emergencies was made available to the congregation. There are some remaining brochures on this in the foyer. An article "Don't Get Blown Away" was published in E-news on this topic as well.

Most team members have completed an initial training program offered by the UUA for lay Pastoral Care Associates, and those team members have agreed to participate in the 40-hour online training provided by the UUA. It is anticipated that the program will be done over the next year and can be done at each individual's pace. Also, every lay PCA has a backup person on the team to cover for vacations and/or just offer more support as needed. We have developed more of a team approach to assist members so that the team can support one another and not be overwhelmed by commitments.

Individuals that require assistance, often reach out to their Covenant group members or other friends in the church because they are known to them; this is appropriate but at times one may need more help/support, or a confidential ear, or privacy that that "friends" may not be appropriate to fulfill. Please just know that you are not alone.

We currently have about 25 members on the Helping Hands list, and we always welcome others that want to assist congregants on an as needed basis. Helping Hand individuals provide meals, rides, shopping, and other necessary tasks for someone that is temporarily unable to do those things for themselves.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT 2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT

April 21, 2024

Property Management Committee (PMC) is charged to:

- Manage operation and maintenance of the UUSD facility,
- Focus and provide information on facility-related problems and concerns,
- Monitor needs and oversee work on maintenance and improvements.

In addition to the main committee, PMC has organized subcommittees for:

- Landscape Management (detail reported separately)
- Audio/Visual Systems and Operations (detail reported separately)
- Kitchen

PMC and subcommittees work closely with all other committees, Executive Team and the UUSD

Administrator to accomplish its charged responsibilities.

Members are Gary Schmidt (chair), Allan Cairncross, Pat Murdock, Walt Smith, Ken Loewy, Doug Welch, Cheri Garnet, Mike Bonti plus subcommittee chairs, BOT, and ET liaisons.

Committee meets monthly, beginning April 2023 (1st Thursdays @ 1:30pm)

Ongoing responsibilities include:

- Contract management (Fire systems, HVAC system, pest, mow & snow, septic, insurance, phone & cable, cleaning, building supplies)
- Maintenance, repair, and improvements,
- Energy system (DPL utility, solar & HVAC) management,
- A/V system operation, maintenance, and enhancement.

Key activities for the last year included:

- March 2024: Resumed monthly “Work Saturday:” 2 hours of supervised volunteer work groups. Despite publicity, participation continues to be sparse.
- Scheduled and supervised annual maintenance for HVAC, fire alarm & extinguishers, septic.
- Interior improvements: music closet shelves, greeter’s desk, CFE Director’s desk, remote entrance control from Admin office.
- Well water nitrate level test: raw well and filtered. Results reported in eNews article.
- No major snow events for winter 2023-24. Minor snow/ice event in January was handled by volunteers.
- Maintained mowing contract with DR’s Mowing
- Support to “Safer Congregation Team.” Operation and possible replacement of sanctuary doors.
- Began migration of PMC hardcopy and softcopy documents to Google Workspace. Several PMC members took Google WS training.
- Staff facility point person recruited and hired. Work is ongoing to migrate PMC responsibilities. Android tablet was purchased to consolidate PMC apps.
- Facility mold & moisture survey conducted in January.
- Rear deck repair was begun in April with step replacement.
- Ongoing monitoring of energy usage and production to maintain “net zero” usage on an annual basis.

Key (known) activities for the next year include: continued A/V system improvements, completion of deferred maintenance/improvement items, continuing work with staff facilities pointperson.

Key challenges for PMC are:

- Managing, inherent “unknownness” of facility operation & maintenance demands,
- Delegation of problem resolution and/or work execution beyond “core” PMC members, including engaging non-PNC congregation members in ongoing PMC-related activities.
- Ongoing management of the currently very limited facilities (e.g., storage space)

**LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE:
A SUB-COMMITTEE OF PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT**

Members: Valerie Andrews, Pat Bartels, Linda DeFeo (Co-Chair), Jim Gervan, Sue Greer, Margaret Keefe (Co-Chair), Maggie McLaughlin, Peter Martin, Lewis Rathbone, Karin Westermann, Lee Wheeler.

Overview: The Landscape Committee was reactivated in 2018 after a two-year hiatus. Linda DeFeo and Margaret Keefe share committee management duties. The Committee's goal is to maintain and enhance the garden beds, keep the property looking attractive, and plan for future garden features. The Committee's mission is to use environmentally responsible gardening methods, including adding native plants, avoiding harmful chemicals, and installing a rain barrel to use in watering. This commitment entitled UUSD to be recognized as a Certified Wildlife Habitat by the DE Native Plant Society/National Wildlife Federation.

Accomplishments:

- Memorial Garden Project
 - Hired Boni Landscape to prepare ground for the Memorial Garden bed.
 - Planted a dogwood, several winterberry shrubs, clethra plants and ground phlox.
 - Mulched the area to prevent weeds and retain moisture.
 - Worked with Signarama to create a double-sided sign to which names could be added.
 - Held a dedication ceremony on November 5, 2023.
 - Explored options, presented by Sue Greer, for a notebook/journal which can include biographies of those whose names are memorialized.
 - Worked with Finance to determine how Chalice/Memorial Garden funds can be used.
 - As of April 2024, there are 7 names on the sign (Nancy Saulsbury, Jane Germain, Gabriel Zepecki, David Dagenais, Justin Lesko, Joshua Fein, and Arthur Paul Skillin).
- Wildflower Pollinator Meadow
 - In its first full season, the Meadow bloomed beautifully throughout the summer and fall.
 - In spring, committee members cleared out old growth & planted additional plants.
 - Pat Bartels plans to do a CFE session with the children to discuss the Meadow & encourage them to enjoy it responsibly.
- Bluebird houses
 - Walt Smith was asked to make 2 bluebird houses which were placed near the Wildflower Meadow.
 - A third donated house will be added.
 - Maureen Larkin has agreed to manage the houses.
- Garden bed maintenance
 - Hired Boni Landscape to weed, mulch existing beds, and trim shrubs.
- Tree maintenance
 - Contracted twice with Sussex Tree to trim trees on east side of driveway and in the back yard.
- Watering
 - Recruited volunteers to take a weekly turn at watering our garden beds from early June – late September.
- Long-term Property Use Plan
 - Committee member, Peter Martin and his son, Andrew, took drone photos of the whole property in fall and spring.
 - The photos will be used to help determine a long-term plan for how the congregation envisions the open property to best be used.
- Meditation/Memorial Garden Area

- Began discussion of a possible meditation/cremains garden, possibly in the southeast corner of the property.
- Maggie McLaughlin contacted Dr. Anna Wik of UDel Landscape Architecture program to see if student interns might help us design the area.
- Lewis Rathbone explored our options in terms of land use codes.
- Project will progress as funds are available to continue.
- Committee leadership
 - Linda and Margaret will step down as Co-Chairs as of June 30, 2024.
 - Karin Westermann has agreed to become Chair for 2024-2025.
- Partnership with Property Management Committee
 - We continue to communicate with Property Management to be aware of additions or changes to the property which might impact the work/plans of the Landscape Committee.

SAFER CONGREGATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Members: Adele Abrams, Mike Burns, Deborah Knepp, Ruth Lamothe, Ken Loewy, and Randy Davidson

Accomplishments:

- 35 people trained in CPR/AED. All those trained rated the training very highly, and the teachers feel that UUSD is their favorite training ground. Fall schedule of training in planning includes CPR/AED for child-care workers and emotional triage: de-escalating crisis situations.
- Acquiring Narcan shots for emergency purposes.
- Professional grade First Aid kits have been bought and assembled. They are found in the front closet next to the 'office' door and under the sink in the big FE room.
- Assistive devices have been acquired and stored within easy reach: 3 wheelchairs (1 large wheelchair is in the shed), canes, and walkers.
- Fire Drill, 1st since 2019 held successfully. Annual fire drills will be held.
- Ongoing review and revision of Emergency Procedures Manual for UUSD
- Revised procedures for locking front door during Sunday service being prepared for Greeters and Ushers

SOCIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE 2023-2024

Chairs: Susan and Mac Goekler. **People who Have Participated in Meetings during the Year:** Marta Dominguez, Lisa Drottar, Christine Gill, Ed Gill, Lindsay Haines, Judy Hayes, Carol Huckabee, Betty Kirk, Karen Laugel, Elaine Loughlin, Marce McCollum-Martin, Julie McCullough, Vicki Nichols, Teresa Ripley, Jo Anne Saltzberg, Peter Schott, John Sykes, Rev. Heather Rion Starr

The Social & Environmental Justice Committee (S&EJC) supports UUSD's Vision, Mission and Resolution of Conscience and Statement of Position by proposing, coordinating, and participating in a wide variety of activities in the name of social and environmental justice. The S&EJC conducted the following activities during the 2023-2024 church year. The activities are organized by the Resolution of Conscience's priority areas:

Multi-element Efforts

- Continued a Monthly ASK of the congregation:
 - June 2023 ADVOCATE for state legislative issues
 - July 2023 PARTICIPATE in “Searching for the Future”
 - August 2023 WATCH video of April forum held at UUSD “Addressing Racism through Criminal (In)justice Reform”
 - September 2023 SUPPORT Back to school
 - October 2023 PARTICIPATE in a Peace Week Event
 - November 2023 DONATE to a local food pantry
 - December 2023 Be a surprise ELF in someone’s life
 - January 2024 PARTICIPATE in MLK Weekend event
 - February 2024 DO an 8th Principle Activity
 - March 2024 SPEAK UP for Women’s Rights
 - April 2024 CARE for MOTHER EARTH
 - May 2024 DONATE to disaster relief organization that helps mothers and children.
- Continued the monthly **Share the Plate** to benefit local non-profit organizations and others. See Recipients under the relevant issue areas below. Between our last report in April 2023 and March of 2024, UUSD has donated \$7,780 to local community groups from Share the Plate offerings. **Vicki Nichols** coordinated work with recipients.
- Continued to support the **UU Service Committee** through Guest at Your Table program and secured UUSD Board approval to include UUSC as a line item in UUSD’s non-operating budget. **Mac Goekler** continued as the UUSC-UUSD liaison.
- Continued to support **UU Delaware Advocacy Network (UUDAN)** with Peter Schott and **Elaine Loughlin** being on the UUDAN Steering Committee.
- Continued to be part of **Network Delaware**, with **Ed Gill** as our representative, who participated in an organizing training.
- Submitted proposed revisions to the **UUSD Resolution of Conscience** for the congregation’s consideration at the annual meeting.
- Consulted with UUSD’s **Visioning** Task Force on future directions.
- Continued the Grant program: **Roy Parks Fund**. No grants were made in 2023. West Side New Beginnings has received an award for 2024; deadline for further 2024 nominations is April 30.
- Promoted **UUA’s Side with Love** and UU the Vote initiatives and trainings; **Mac Goekler** is on the Side with Love Action Center.
- Served as umbrella group within UUSD for UUSD’s participation in LRAC (Julie McCullough and Donna Davis are UUSD representative) and the Multifaith Coalition (Rev. Heather and Don Peterson serve as UUSD’s representatives; Don is co-chair), as well as an umbrella group for the UUSD Cares team.

Racial Justice:

- **Had representatives on the Cape Henlopen School District’s Community Minority Liaison Committee.** Their priorities are to hire more minority teachers, to narrow the achievement gap between white and African American students, and to address the disciplinary inequities between these two groups.
- Showed the film *Three Degrees of Connection*, which highlighted the history of Black people in Lewes. Collaborated with UUSD Cares to host a bread and soup dinner prior to the film. SDARJ was a co-sponsor.
- Showed the film *Beyond Bars!* About ending mass incarceration. Co-sponsored with SDARJ. Invited ACLU and state legislators. Timed to get activism in support of Probation reform legislation in Delaware.
- **Susan Goekler** participated in ACLU’s Probation Reform lobby Day – 2023 & 2024. Followed

up with Sussex Correctional Institution inmate on advocacy efforts for reform of criminal legal system in Delaware. Became co-chair of new prisoner reform committee of SDARJ.

- Encouraged members to participate in Juneteenth celebrations in Georgetown, where UUSD participated in the parade, and in Lewes. Signed up to participate in the 2024 Juneteenth parade in Georgetown.
- Share the Plate: The Way Home (October 23).
- participated in ACLU's Probation Reform lobby Day – 2023 & 2024. Followed up with Sussex Correctional Institution inmate on advocacy efforts for reform of criminal legal system in Delaware. Became co-chair of new prisoner reform committee of SDARJ.
- Encouraged members to participate in Juneteenth celebrations in Georgetown, where UUSD participated in the parade, and in Lewes. Signed up to participate in the 2024 Juneteenth parade in Georgetown.
- Share the Plate: The Way Home (October 23).

Immigrant and Refugee Rights

Environmental Justice

- Sponsored event on Climate Justice as part of Peace Week. Co-sponsor: Sussex Preservation Coalition.
- Co-sponsored with Lewes Library and Delaware Interfaith Power and Light showing the film *Salted Earth*, a film created by U of Delaware, followed by discussion.
- **John Sykes** participated in lobby day in support of HB99 Climate Solutions Act.
- Share the Plate offerings: Sussex Preservation Coalition (April 23), Teach a Person to Fish Society (February 24).
- Provided consultant support for the **Ripley's** Teach a Person to Fish Society.
- Held an Adopt a Beach cleanup at Herring Point.

Women, Family, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Justice

- Fostered the birth of a Reproductive Justice Task Force (RJTF), which kicked off with a "Women's Equality Day Workshop: (Re) Claiming Reproductive Justice: Anger to Action" – **Boden Sandstrom and Joanne Saltzberg**
- The RJTF
 - created links with Women's March Sussex, Planned Parenthood of Delaware, and the First State Abortion Fund;
 - organized a phone bank for the Ohio Referendum on Abortion Rights with the group Red, Wine and Blue, Ohio;
 - provided weekly highlights for UUSD updates during Women's History Month focusing on reproductive justice issues and local women - **Joanne Saltzberg**; and
 - initiated Share the Plate with First State Abortion Fund.
- With the UU Delmarva Cluster, had a presence at Pride Day in Dover on the grounds of Legislative Hall. **Mac Goekler**
- Showed the film from *Selma to Stonewall* in collaboration with ACLU and Seaside Jewish Community.
- Signed on as a supporter of a new group Speak Out About Hate (S.O.A.H.). **Peter Schott** is on the Steering Committee.
- Encouraged Boden Sandstrom and Deb Davies to participate in a UU Side with Love training on organizing for reproductive rights.
- Collaborated with Sussex Pride and hosted organizing meeting for a new initiative Sussex Pride Aging.
- Purchased the 6-session online course "Transforming Hearts: Transgender Inclusion in Congregations" and engaged Asha Moon and Boden Sandstrom in taking the course as a first

- step toward a possible broader congregational involvement.
- Share the Plate: Sussex Pride (June 23), Planned Parenthood DE (August 23), First State Abortion Fund (March 24).

Economic Justice

- Coordinated UUSD's participation in a food packaging event Rise Against Hunger. In one day, participants from throughout the area (with about 50 from UUSD) packed about 70,000 meal kits for distribution to those in dire need (most likely in Haiti).
- Through the Giving Tree, collected donations of Christmas gifts for 43 needy children in the Cape Henlopen school district.
- Represented UUSD at a Poor People's Campaign event in Dover calling for legislative support. Sent an advocacy alert asking for support of Homeless Bill of Rights legislation.
- **Rev. Heather** joined the Delaware Housing Alliance.
- Share the Plate: Family Promise (July 23), Habitat for Humanity (August 23), Cape Henlopen School District Homeless Liaison Program (September 23), Milton Food Pantry (November 23), Rise Against Hunger (January 24).
- Worked with Covenant Group Council to recruit groups to provide meals for shelter residents.

Peacemaking

- Participated in planning and conducting Peace Week activities in Sussex County. **Mac Goekler** chaired the Sussex group.
- Helped staff a table at Pride Day for Peace Week Delaware. Mac Goekler
- Served on planning committee for and sponsored a Benevolent Community Summit—A day-long retreat with a keynote address by the prominent scholar and best-selling author, Dr. Eddie Glaude, Jr. The summit engaged participants in conversations that inspire bridging divides and uniting. Other sponsors included Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice and the Episcopal diocese of Delaware.

Susan Goekler

Worship Committee Annual Report 2023-2024 Co-Chairs: Jean Charles, Rick Welk

Members: Carol Bruce, Deanna DUBY, Susan Goekler, Julie Keefer, Beryl Martin, Dara Schumaier, Marj Shannon, Sue O'Brien, Don Peterson, Nancy Smith, and Rev. Heather Rion Starr

The Worship Committee has been responsible for the appearance of the chancel, which includes preparation for the holiday season beginning Dec. 1. This also includes occasional arrangements of flowers/plants as donated by members of the congregation or purchased by the committee.

The Committee meets each month to discuss and plan on providing assistance to enhance the quality of the many components of the worship experience. This includes (but is not limited to) planning with the Minister, and other committees, individuals or groups, the content, and themes of services throughout the year.

This committee strives for excellence every Sunday. Our trained worship associates work with the minister and/or guest speaker, to develop a cohesive and meaningful service. We provide information for the Order of Service (OOS) and supply a large print OOS, as well as large print hymnals, for those who need them.

When the minister is not in the pulpit, we strive to provide thoughtful and interesting lay sermons, or invite visiting ministers. We encourage services by all committees, covenant groups, and sermons by visitors as well as by members of our incredibly diverse congregation.

Special Note: With music now being under worship, Julie and the Music Committee decided that there was no need for a separate Music Committee.

Music has always been an integral part of every service. The congregation continues to be energized by our Director of Music Ministries, Julie Keefer. There also continues to be a wonderful relationship between Rev. Heather, the Worship Committee and Julie to make every Sunday an inspiring experience with the music creating the perfect atmosphere and spiritual extension for each service. We are also blessed to have musicians in the congregation who have shared their talents and continue to do so. We thank Julie, choir members and musicians for their dedication, hard work, and contribution to enhancing every worship experience.

In addition, livestreaming has proven to be a valuable asset to our services. We have received many wonderful responses from members as well as visitors and guests who otherwise would not have been able to attend in person. We will continue to review and improve on this aspect of our service so that *everyone* can be a part of our incredible spiritual journey.

UUSD AV Team Annual Report 2023-2024

In the summer of 2023, the Worship Committee became responsible for coordinating AV for UUSD. With money in the budget and support from the HR Committee, UUSD hired an AV professional, Cheryl Hickey, to provide regular AV support for Sunday livestreamed services. Cheryl recruited Brian O'Toole as a backup when she was unavailable. They have provided excellent service.

In addition, Cheryl trained four people to serve as projectionist for the Rehoboth Film Festival movies shown at UUSD—Linda DeFeo, Gary Schmidt, Susan Goekler, and Charles Bittner. A fifth person, Clare Nichols, was already trained. These people comprise the AV support system (we do not meet as a team) and have provided support for congregational information and voting meetings, Adult Faith Exploration offerings, and social justice films.

A previously purchased portable sound system and hybrid cart are available for any UUSD group to provide its own AV support, and several groups have taken advantage of those tools. To address some lingering hardware issues, Mid South Audio has re-wired the projection system in the sanctuary and made some adjustments to the microphones and speakers.

Susan Goekler

UUSD 25TH ANNIVERSARY TEAM ANNUAL REPORT FOR FY 24

Members: Kris Acker, Sue Brown, Betty Kirk, Alice Casey, Sue O'Brien, Linda Marsden, Rev. Heather

1. January 21, 2024, Rev. Heather led the first 25th Anniversary Sunday service. Sue O'Brien & Kris Acker worked with Anne Pikolas and the Hospitality committee to provide finger food brunch after the service, catered by Scratch Mill kitchen. UUSD Cares members helped to make this a very successful event.

- Founders Jim Lesko and Sheryl Winsby lit the chalice. Sheryl and Beryl played and sang some of the songs they sang together during the early days of the church. Bob Johnsen provided greetings via video, and Lenore Bajare-Dukes (our current UUA primary contact) appeared in person.
 - The reception following the service went very well. The food provided had good variety and was carried around on trays for serving so there wasn't a crowd trying to get food at one table. Champagne and sparkling cider were served, making it very festive.
 - This is just the kick-off! An insert in the order of service described other events coming up throughout the year and opportunities to get involved.
 - The first of the History trifold picture boards was displayed, including photos from 1997 – 2000. There was a lot of interest in it from both original members and newer members. There was a "heartbeat" across the middle of the boards where folks wrote in when they joined UUSD. All of the founders present added their names. Drawings from current CFE kids were at the bottom of the screens. Cards were available for folks to add notes about memories from this period in our history.
 - Announcing upcoming events: Jean will put write-ups from Kris in her Sunday Updates
 - Commemorative Swag: Pens with UUSD info on them have been purchased and are being used as needed at church.
 - There was a press release after the January 21 service regarding our 25th anniversary. Alice contacted Kris about what to say.
 - Our Facebook logo has been changed to the 25th anniversary logo.
2. January 28 (Jean Charles Service Sunday) the Pioneers held that service. Rev. Heather presented those present with their picture and Plaque that will be hung in our foyer.
- Gary Colangelo (former member and Pioneer) and Betty Kirk spoke, and Gary sang Dream the Impossible Dream.
3. February is Black History month and Lois Powell, an original member of the Chantels, spoke at an evening potluck/movie event on Saturday, February 24.
- Lois was featured in the documentary movie called "Street Light Harmonies" that was shown. SDARJ has rights to the movie and gave permission for us to show it. Lois provided her copy for our use.
 - UUSD Cares members worked on setting up the event, setting out the food, making sure the event ran smoothly, and cleaning up.
 - Clare Nichols provided AV support for the evening.
 - Richard Wheeler took photos of the evening, and Linda Marsden served as MC.
 - About 80 people attended the potluck and an additional 10 people joined us for the movie only.
 - The planning details for this event were worked out at the February 20th meeting, including layout for the sanctuary, table covers, paper plates and bowls, name tags, registration table, beverages, and recruiting help with set up and clean up.
 - This event celebrated UUSD's history of support for civil rights and other Social Justice issues in an extra special way in honor of our 25th anniversary.
4. March:
- The 2nd trifold screen was displayed starting March 3rd with pictures from the Toddy's years. This included some pictures of the groundbreaking and building of the new sanctuary.
 - Members were able to sign where they joined and add pictures and comments to this history.
 - There was also a picture display featuring the Wild West auction event.

- Kris needed more photos from the Toddy's years and Sue Brown and others provided some.
- March 3rd the new pledge drive was launched with the theme "Deep Roots/New Growth."
- This display will remain up until the end of March.
- When UUSD hosted a Coffee and Conversation event with the multi-faith group, she was able to share some of UUSD's history and the creation of the new space with our visitors using the trifold screen.
- Heather Hamilton approached Sue Brown about providing bags for the UUSD Easter Egg hunt at the end of March. Linda M. has also been interested in another "anniversary swag" item that would include our 25th anniversary logo. We decided to pursue the idea of the tote bags with a logo for the congregation as a whole, not just the kids. Sue shared pictures of possible bags and designed a logo specifically for them. Both the type of bag and the logo were agreed to via email, and Sue ordered 250 bags. Heather H. decided these bags were too big for the kids to use for the Easter Hunt, but they will still be distributed to the congregation (see below).
- We continue to search for a 15"x8" shipping box that contains the cards for adding notes to the trifold boards and other related supplies.

5. April is Earth Day month

- The "swag bags" Sue Brown were distributed to the congregation at the April 21 church service in celebration of Earth Day (these re-usable bags cut down on waste). The CFE kids helped with the distribution of the bags.

6. May/June

- Betty K. and Dar S. are planning to have children interview long-time church members (elders) in May. Elders have been identified as well as children (and parents) to interview them. This will probably happen on two Sundays in May, hopefully outside. Pictures will be taken, and the children/parents will create a written record of their talk. Rev. Heather will talk to parents about it at the next Parent Covenant meeting. Betty, Dar, and Heather H. are working on the process and how to present the interview information to the congregation. Rev. Heather may share excerpts in her reflection during one of the Fall services. We may also work on an article for the Cape Gazette. There could be a "Carrying Our Stories Forward" display in January 2025 (see below). Sue B. will arrange for photography once she knows the dates of the interviews.
- Betty provided a separate document that went out to the whole committee with more details.
- This is the beginning of the "Where are we now" stage.
- The Searching for the Future Task Force will be making their report and may have already started working with committees to get initiatives started.
- June 2 – the 3rd trifold will be displayed reflecting our years at our current location (2015 – 2023). Once again, folks will have the opportunity to add their joining date to the heartbeat line and add memory notes. We may create a 2024 25th Anniversary Year photo display later as well.
- June 16 will be the annual picnic. This is the "Gratitude for All the Things" picnic (Juneteenth, Father's Day, Pride Month, 25th anniversary, etc.). UUSD Cares and the 25th Anniversary Committee will take the lead, but all committees that interact with the congregation will contribute as well. We'll look for 25th anniversary table coverings (and maybe other themes as well?) This is the end of the church year for formal children's programming. Heather H. will let families know of any summer activities.

10. Undated projects

- New UUSD cookbook. Renee Rocheleau has taken the lead on this project with advice from Susan Goekler who has experience with the software and Jean Charles regarding UUSD process. Kris will contact Renee to discuss setting a deadline (possible end of June) for submissions to the cookbook. Once the deadline has been decided upon, Sue Brown will put info in the e-news and on Facebook. Rev. Heather will ask Heather Hamilton to encourage families to participate in her next email reminder.
- Stained glass project: Ron Parks is working on creating the chalice picture that Gabrielle Zapecki created in window at the back of the sanctuary in stained glass. It looks like this will be done around mid-year and could be unveiled Music Sunday (June 9P) or the Ingathering Water Ceremony Sunday (Sept. 15).

UUSD Cares Year End Report 2023/2024

UUSD Cares has had a busy year. Our only regret is that the June & September picnics had to both be cancelled due to the weather.

August 25, UUSD Cares Summer Movie Night.

Members & Families joined us for Popcorn and a movie. We had about 35 attendees and everyone enjoyed the movie, *Yes Day*.

October 27, Spooky Dinner

There was a great turnout for the Spooky Dinner; the foyer and sanctuary were full of fabulous Halloween trim provided by parents of or children. Good food, and Spooky fun was had by all.

November 23, Friendsgiving

It was a lovely dinner. UUSD Cares provided the turkey and gravy. Members brought delicious side dishes and desserts.

January 21, UUSD's 25th Anniversary Brunch

UUSD Cares and the 25th Anniversary Committee arranged a catered Champagne Brunch to kick off our 25th Anniversary celebrations for all our members and friends after church. Festivities were enjoyed by all.

January 26, Soup & a Movie

The Social & Environmental Justice Committee and UUSD Cares worked together to plan this event. S&EJ showed the local movie, *3 Degrees of Connection*. We also invited the outside community. We had over 90 attendees.

February 10, Valentine's Giving Parade

We had a good collection for the Community Resource Center. They sent a lovely note and appreciated UUSD's support.

February 24, the *Streetlight Harmonies* movie and Chantels singer, Lois Powell

The 25th Anniversary Committee put together a program for Black History Month. UUSD Cares took care of the logistics and the Potluck dinner. We had over 90 participants and a very enjoyable time was had by members and outside guests,

June 16, 25th Anniversary Picnic

Kris Acker

