

First Unitarian Church of Portland

Board of Trustees Meeting – January 4, 2024 – Agenda

Board (only) Deepening 6:00-7:00 pm, Board Meeting – 7:00-9:00 pm

NOTE ROOM CHANGE: Room A-108

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82930223125?pwd=TDdrckx1T0lSTG1KT3BFWGx5MmQyZz09>

Meeting ID: 829 3022 3125

One tap mobile

Passcode: 398649

+12532158782,82930223125# US (Tacoma)

Board Meeting

6:00 Board Deepening/Check-in (Board only)

7:00 **Convene**

- Chalice Lighting/Opening Words – John
- Determine Quorum
- Review Board Covenant
- Process Observer Review
- Review Agenda

Board Roles

Timekeeper –
Process Observer –

7:10 **Congregant Comment Period**

7:20 **ET Update**

7:35 **Board updates**

- Updates from board goal accountability stewards (no more than 3 min. each)
 - Board Liberation Team (BLT) report on Anti-Racism Goals
 - Governance Committee report on Board Size Goal
 - Leslie report on Article II Goals

Dates to Calendar

- Board Forum: Finance Update: Jan. 21
- Article II Forum: Sunday, Jan. 28
- Sewell Lecture - Steve Phillips; evening of February 27, 2024

- 7:45 **Consent agenda**
- Adopt 2022-23 Evaluation of Ministry
 - Approve non-Board congregants as member of Governance Committee for 2023-2024 church year, as recommended by Governance Committee chair
 - Approve [December meeting minutes](#)
- 7:50 **Business Agenda**
- Discuss/decide: Preliminary scope to guide development of five-year church goals
- 8:10 **Generative Conversation**
- Discuss preliminary 24-25 budget priorities to guide subsequent congregational outreach/engagement and Executive Team’s initial budget proposals
- 8:40 **Executive Session - Update, as needed**
- 8:45 **Meeting Wrap-up**
- Closing comments, items for future agendas
 - Communications Check
 - Process Observations
 - Closing Words – John
- 9:00 **Adjourn**

Our Mission:

The mission of First Unitarian Portland is to create a welcoming community of diverse individuals; to promote love, reason, and freedom in religion; to foster lifelong spiritual growth; and to act for social justice.

Our Vision:

First Unitarian Portland is a beacon of hope for us and for our community, a spiritual center in the heart of our city that helps each of us to find our moral compass, calling and challenging us to build the beloved community with an ever-deepening sense of spirit, diversity, and inclusion.

Church Goals 2021-2024

As we work to embrace our call as a justice-seeking community in the emerging post-pandemic era, we recognize the unique value First Unitarian Church and liberal religion bring to Portland and the larger community. We will:

1. Continue, and enhance as we are able, our vibrant ministries in worship, music, adult and young people's spiritual education, and social justice.
2. Successfully complete the ministerial transition and establish covenantal relationships among the new minister, the congregation, staff, and Board.
3. Take the next steps toward living into the 8th Principle by examining all parts of the church structure to ensure we are accountably creating a multicultural and anti-racist environment where each person is welcomed and finds connection.
4. Create a long-term plan for development and sustainability of the church campus given congregational needs and resources, community needs, and the evolving dynamics of downtown Portland.
5. Enhance and promote an ever-growing culture of generosity and financial sustainability.

Board Goals 2023-2024 (update 2023)

1. Improve the work of the Board to be increasingly more antiracist by:
 - Co-sponsoring the Advancing Racial Justice Action Group (ARJAG) event on microaggressions and working with ARJAG as needed to support this event
 - Committing that each Board member will participate in an Antiracism Learning Circle or a similar activity.
2. The Board will create an Ad Hoc committee to reopen the investigation on Board size to present, by February 2024, a written recommendation to the Board whether to change the size. The Board will decide on this recommendation by its April 2024 regular meeting and plan further action, if necessary. If there is a recommendation to change Board size and the Board agrees with that recommendation, the Board will develop a plan to have congregational presentations and/or forums on the issue during the 2024-25 Church year.

The committee to consider the question of Board size will consist of two members of the Governance Committee and volunteer Board members previously involved in this matter.

3. Article II:

- Have an Article II presentation put on the Board agenda to ensure that all board members understand the proposed revisions to Article II of the UUA Bylaws.
- The Board will hold at least two forums to educate the congregation about the proposed changes to Article II, and it will facilitate a process to decide on what recommendation(s) the Board will give to Church delegates who will vote at the 2024 General Assembly.

BOARD COVENANT OF LEADERSHIP 4/2023

We covenant to

1. uphold the spiritual nature of our work by regularly engaging in spiritual deepening.
2. demonstrate our leadership and commitment to the church by our example.
3. listen with an open, nonjudgmental mind and heart.
4. treat our time on the board as an opportunity to make an important gift to our church.
5. communicate openly and appreciate others enthusiastically.
6. practice respect and care for each other.
7. work toward repair when harm is done.
8. act for the good of the church and the community.
9. acknowledge and understand the true history of the church we inherit, and together build a future that embodies our Unitarian Universalist values.
10. cultivate relationships within the congregation.
11. discuss and disagree with curiosity, expressing ourselves as clearly, honestly, and lovingly as possible to further the goal of building understanding.
12. speak openly with the congregation, respecting the confidentiality of board conversations

We pledge to observe these promises, to do our best to trust that others are also observing them, and to be forgiving when we inevitably make mistakes. We accept the accountability implied in these promises.

DRAFT

Meeting Minutes

Board of Trustees

First Unitarian Church of Portland

Room A108

December 7, 2023

Board Members present:

x	Mindy Clark*	x	Theo Harper	x	Barbara Morrison
x	John Bishop	x	Caitlynn Hill	x	Leslie Pohl-Kosbau
x	Ryan Deibert	x	Adam House	x	Roger Robinson
x	Julia Griffiths	x	Marilyn Mays	x	Andy Wilson

*Mindy attended the meeting via Zoom connection.

Absent:

Ministers and Staff present:

x	Alison Miller, Sr. Minister
x	Tom Disrud, Assoc. Minister
x	Kathryn Estey, Church Administrator
	Danielle Garrett, Intern Minister

The following individuals were also in attendance when the meeting commenced:

Elizabeth Gern, Kathy Ludlow, Nicole Bowmer, Christopher Doo, Ron Yoder, Julia Spence, Marty Yoder, Nikki Beazley (attending Zoom), Dev Dion (attending by Zoom), and Cynthia Boelling (attending by Zoom). One and possibly two other individuals attended the meeting via Zoom but remained anonymous despite requests that they identify themselves.

Chalice Lighting – Ryan lit the chalice to open the meeting.

Determine Quorum – Ryan determined there were sufficient Board members present to constitute a quorum.

The Board members took turns reading aloud the Board covenant.

Ryan briefly discussed for the benefit of visitors how the Board process works at the beginning of each meeting.

Process Observer Review - Marilyn stated her desire for all treat the meeting as a safe space to express disagreement. Kathryn expressed that it seemed likely the meeting might involve difficult discussions and she suggested all should be prepared for this and to be ready to pause and just breath, if things became stressful.

Review Agenda – Ryan briefly reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

Congregant Comment Period - Ryan expressed gratitude for the attendance of so many congregants at the meeting, pointing out that the Board always welcomes visitors, but rarely sees the number that were in attendance. He emphasized the Board always holds time for congregants' comments during its meeting. He noted the Board typically limits comments to 10 minutes per congregant, due to time limits for the meeting. He noted there is also always the option to submit additional or lengthier comments via email to the Board.

Nicole Bowmer offered comments. She began by highlighting section 3.2.4 of the Church's Governing Policies. That provision states that the Executive Team "shall ensure that all staff members and volunteers are treated with dignity and fairness and shall ensure a safe working

environment for staff and volunteers.” Nicole recounted the history of staff efforts to form a union which started in 2014. She alleged there has been “systemic failure” in how staff are treated and claimed employees are not asked to give input on their performance. She reported that friends of hers on staff are “still stuck and still scared.” She said she would follow up with the Board by sending an email. She also said that six employees had anonymously filled out a survey to state how they are feeling. She said the survey would be provided to the Board after the meeting.

Christopher Doo offered brief comments. He said he felt concern over the fact that staff wanted to report about their work anonymously.

Cynthia Boelling offered comments via Zoom. She stated that if we have staff who are scared and don’t feel safe that makes congregants scared. She said she hoped there is a way to address that. She said we don’t need something else to be scared about right now.

Barbara Morrison asked for clarification from those who had spoken, inquiring “What are we speaking about when we say ‘fear?’ Physical fear? Fear about losing a job?” Nicole responded this would be made clearer once people submit their comments. Cynthia Boelling expressed her view that recent changes in the Religious Education program have caused fear and concern that other programs will change. She said this is the kind of “fear” that is at issue.

Ryan asked if other congregants wished to speak. The remaining congregants declined to make comments. Several said they would submit their comments, if any, via email or letter.

Ryan thanked the congregants again for attending. He said the Board has become increasingly aware there have been longstanding tensions among staff. It appears tensions have existed for quite some time. To date, the Board has talked about providing supporting resources to the staff system with a goal of restoration, repair, and trust building. He said the Board has been in the process of building those resources that haven’t been there before.

The meeting then transitioned to receipt of the Executive Team’s updates.

Executive Team Update

As the Board transitioned to the ET update, Rev. Alison offered comments concerning the congregants' input. She noted the ET has been working with the Board and with UUA resources on developing methods for conflict resolution within the staff. She said those efforts have been going on for awhile and are ongoing.

Rev. Alison went on to offer the following updates.

- We have received 84% of our pledges toward our goal of \$1.5M for the Annual Fund Drive (AFD). We are awaiting additional information to decide whether making phone calls will be useful. Board members will be welcome to make stewardship calls if they wish. This is a rich opportunity to get a read of where people are with the church.
- We are having our first pre-sessions for community circles. These are good examples of our developing adult faith program. There will be circles around LGBTQ+ theology, parenting, and simply a circle without a specific focus. Certain circles may be held in some members' homes. During past community conversations folks spoke about their desire for more opportunities to meet new people in the congregation.
- Leah Ongiri started this month full-time leading the Religious Education program. She is working with Ashley Lookenhouse who is serving as an assistant and would like to continue. Leah is working on the organization of the program including imagining ways for parents to be involved.
- Rev. Tom and Rev. Alison are working with our new Membership Engagement Coordinator Jen Thomas to develop an event to celebrate the anniversary of our long-term members.
- Rev. Alison closed by reminding that the church will hold a solstice service on December 21 at 7:00 p.m., that the Christmas Pageant will be held on December 24 at 10:30 a.m., and that an evening Christmas Eve service will be held on December 24th at 8:00 p.m.

Board updates

- **Conflict of interest statements** – Ryan reminded Board members that conflict of interest statements had been circulated by email for signature. He asked those members who had not yet signed and returned their form to sign paper versions provided at the meeting before leaving.
- **Accountability stewards for annual board goals** – The Board Officers' Committee (BOC) has identified accountability stewards for each goal. Ryan stated they are identified in the minutes of the latest BOC meeting, and he asked that all refer to those minutes

which were provided with the Board packet for the meeting. Ryan asked that, for board updates in future meetings, accountability stewards should be prepared to report on their assigned goal.

- **Upcoming significant Church events:**
 - Board Forum & Finance Update: January 21, 2024
 - Joint Board/Delegate Forum on Article II: January 28, 2024
 - Seminary for a Day – possibly delayed.
 - Sewell Lecture scheduled for February.

Consent agenda

- **Adopt 2022-23 Evaluation of Ministry** – Materials for this item were not available to the Board to allow for proper evaluation and decision. The item was tabled for consideration at the next regular Board meeting.
- **Approve non-Board congregant as members of Governance Committee for 2023-2024 church year, as recommended by Governance Committee chair** -- Materials for this item were not available to the Board to allow for proper evaluation and decision. The item was tabled for consideration at the next regular Board meeting.
- **Approve November 2, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes** – Theo asked clarifying questions about the minutes which Rev. Alison answered to his satisfaction. After this, it was moved and seconded that the draft minutes should be approved. John stated he saw some minor typographical errors in the draft minutes which he would modify, and which would not change the substance of the minutes. Board members voted to approve the minutes with minor typographical corrections. There were no dissenting votes or abstentions.

Ryan announced that the Board would need to move into Executive Session to discuss sensitive and confidential personnel matters. He therefore asked visitors to leave the meeting. In response, all visitors attending (including those attending by Zoom) departed.

Executive Session began at 6:51 p.m.

Executive Session concluded: 7:58 p.m.

With the conclusion of the Executive Session, Board members elected to take a brief break to determine whether there was any additional business to conduct. It was concluded that there was no further business and the Board adjourned to hold its pre-planned holiday potluck dinner.

Adjournment -- The meeting concluded officially at approximately 8:10 p.m.

After the Board meeting, congregants who spoke during the Congregant Comment Period submitted additional written materials. Some of those materials addressed issues that are part of confidential matters which the Board has decided to address in Executive Session. Some materials also addressed individual personnel matters which the Board has decided should remain confidential. The Board, therefore, has determined it will not summarize those written submissions in these minutes. The Board also received information which was described as a survey of staff members who were reporting anonymously. The Board has decided not to publicize information submitted to the Board which allegedly has been gathered from anonymous sources.

The Board received written submissions from congregants Marti Yoder, Ron Yoder, and Kathy Ludlow. Their submissions are summarized below:

Marti Yoder shared her sentiments which she said were based on her 23 years as a committed, engaged congregant. She expressed gratitude for the new ministerial leadership and recent staff additions. She feels new energy and enthusiasm and said she had heard other congregants echoing similar sentiments. Marti expressed concern over reports that staff may offer feedback about their experiences anonymously. She worried this could set a bad precedent. She feared anonymous submissions would not allow understanding about the causes for the feedback nor would they permit an open exchange to attempt equitable solutions to any reported problems.

Ron Yoder noted the Church is still adapting to the post-pandemic world and to new ministerial leadership. He said his 20 years as CEO of Metropolitan Family Services made it clear to him that organizational change can be difficult. He expressed gratitude for the Board's efforts to keep the congregation and ministerial staff focused on the mission and goals of the Church. He urged as a next step that supervisory staff and employees at the church work collaboratively to

develop staff job descriptions and to implement annual performance evaluations. He feels we have talented and committed staff that would benefit from these efforts.

Kathy Ludlow offered remarks based on her role as a Board member from 2014 through 2020, which included two years as Moderator and a year as Moderator Emerita. Kathy said there were many significant changes at the Church while she served on the Board and those changes often were not easy. She said improvements often take time. Issues addressed at the Board meeting did not sound new to her. Her view is they have been with us for some time. She feels positive changes have been made, yet there is still work to be done. Kathy thanked the Board for the progress made in addressing these longstanding issues. She encouraged the idea of establishing a Personnel Committee. She commended what she characterized as increased transparency and pro-active outreach by the Board and Rev. Alison at financial meetings, with the congregation, and in one-on-one conversations with congregants. She closed by offering the Board her full support and trust.

DRAFT
Meeting Minutes
Board Officers Committee
First Unitarian Church of Portland
December 21, 2023, 11:33 AM to ~1:30 PM

The meeting was conducted via Zoom.

The meeting began at 11:33 a.m.

Present: Ryan Diebert; Leslie Pohl-Kosbau; John Bishop; Rev. Tom Disrud; Andy Wilson; Rev. Alison Miller, Marilyn Mays, Roger Robinson, Theo Harper, Caitlynn Hill

Absent:

Opening Words – Ryan offered opening words sharing a poem by Mary Oliver

Welcome & Quorum – Ryan noted all members of the BOC were present, so a quorum existed.

- All meeting participants offered brief check-ins.

Agenda Review – Ryan reviewed the meeting agenda.

Motion was made by Andy to approve the draft November 16, 2023, BOC meeting minutes. All voted in favor of approving the minutes.

Executive Team Update

Rev. Alison offered the following updates:

- Nikki Beezley's expanded position (Communications and Social Media Coordinator) and the Jen Thomas's new position (Membership Engagement Coordinator) are already making real differences.
- We have reached 84% of goal of \$1.5 million for Annual Fund Drive pledges. We are developing strategies for addressing the shortfall in pledges after the beginning of the new calendar year. Several congregants (including Board members) have volunteered to make calls.
- Leah Ongiri has been working full time this month as the acting Director of Lifespan Faith Formation & Family Ministries. She is making assessments of needs in the program. One area where she has identified a need for development is the OWL program. There is also a need for more teachers for Sunday morning programs. Ashley Lookenhouse would like to remain as an assistant in the program. This alleviates the need to look for additional staff to assist Leah.
- Rev. Alison was delighted to be able to report that the Church has received notice of a \$486,000 bequest to our Foundation. This generous gift to our Foundation will have a significant positive impact on the Church's annual budget. It reflects the impressive generosity of our members.
- The Shower Project will be opening in mid-January, with the expectation that it will happen on or around January 21.

• **Upcoming Dates:**

Ryan noted the following important dates on the Church calendar:

- Board Forum: Finance Update: Jan. 21, 2023
- Article II Forum: Sunday, Jan. 28, 2023
- Seminary for a Day: Saturday, Feb 3, 2023. May be postponed, depending on speaker availability.

- Sewell Lecture may be scheduled for late February 2023 depending on speaker availability.

Committee Updates and Information Sharing

- **Communications Committee**

Leslie offered Communication Committee updates. Recent meeting included delegates who will participate in Article II forum. Another planning meeting is scheduled December 27. The Committee will be making sure the event is well publicized and that delegate application materials are available.

Leslie asked about delay in Board members receiving congregant letters after last Board meeting. Ryan explained email to Board address goes directly to him and he sometimes must assess whether communications fall within purview of Board or ET. This sometimes causes a delay.

- **Governance Committee**

Ryan reported that materials for approval of non-board member Cathryn Tortorici for committee membership will be prepared for the Board's consent agenda at the next Board meeting. He also reported that the finalized version of the Evaluation of Ministry should be prepared as an item on the consent agenda.

The Governance Committee continues to discuss the idea of working with Rev. Alison on collaborating over the ways we may need to change our governing documents to improve relations and trust between staff and the ET. Rev. Alison states she is very open to engaging in such a process. She looks forward to more conversations on this topic.

- **Finance Committee**

Andy reported that the Committee is preparing for the congregational update scheduled for January 21. He states that they Committee is also looking forward to the surge pledge payments that typically occurs in December & January.

- **Board Liberation Team**

Marilyn gave updates on the BLT activities. Rev. Tom was at the last meeting. There was discussion about the BLT planning the “deepening” section of the Board. Leslie, Roger & Julia have agreed to work with Tom on this.

The Team met with members of Advancing Racial Justice Action Group to discuss Board goals. There was discussion about a 2016 training on microaggressions which was offered by the UUA. Current thoughts are to set up a discussion on this topic for the April Board meeting. The hope is that ARJAG could join the meeting. Theo, Marilyn, & Caitlynn will meet again with ARJAG for further discussions.

The BLT is also continuing discussion around becoming a standing committee on the Board and how to bring that about.

Miscellaneous

Ryan noted that with the new calendar year starting, we will need to assign new BOC members to prepare opening and closing words for meetings. All agreed that we would continue the patten previously established. Thus, the responsibility for opening/closing words will be as follows: **January (Caitlynn); February (Andy); March (John); April (Leslie); May (Ryan)**. Since we lacked someone for June, Tom volunteered to prepare opening/closing words for that meeting.

Discussion and Decision Items

At this point in meeting, Ryan noted that the discussion would turn to planning the process for Board deliberation and/or action relative to confidential personnel matters. Accordingly, he announced that the discussion would be held in Executive Session.

Executive Session began at 12:24 p.m.

Executive Session ended at 1:17 p.m.

(During Executive Session, Caitlynn had to leave the meeting at approximately 1:05 p.m., due to other commitments, but a quorum of the BOC remained).

Planning January Board Agenda

With limited meeting time remaining, meeting participants quickly affirmed the following plan for January Board Agenda:

- ET Update (incl stewardship/AFD)
- Brief updates from board goal accountability stewards
 - BLT – AntiRacism goal
 - Leslie -- Article II goal
 - Gov Comm – Board Size goal
- Consent agenda
 - Adopt 2022-23 Evaluation of Ministry
 - Board approval of non-board Governance Committee member
 - Charter ad hoc committee to lead on search for and engagement of organizational consultant(s) to evaluate Executive Team competencies (per Board Governing Policy 2.2)
 - Approve past board minutes
- Discussion/Business items
 - Set preliminary scope/bounds for church process to develop Five Year goals (ET to bring proposals and lead discussion)
 - Executive Session: Update and planning for broader discussion in a separate, special meeting.
- January generative discussion topic: Initial discussion of potential 2024-25 budget priorities (ET to bring proposals and lead discussion)

Closing Words – Ryan offered closing words, reading a poem appropriate for the solstice by John O’Donoghue: “This is the Time to Be Slow.”

Adjournment -- The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:30 p.m.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Chair: Caitlynn Hill

Present: Ryan Deibert, Cathy Tortorici (congregant)

DATE AND PLACE: Wednesday, December 20, 2023, 5:30-7:00 p.m.

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85811770053?pwd=Slkxdzk1bVdOdTh1MXFiSGNPyi9Vdz09>

Opening Words - Caitlynn - Mary Oliver

Welcome, Introductions, and Announcements

Last month: [November Agenda](#)

Note Taker: Caitlynn

- I. Congregant Participation:
 - A. Language for the consent agenda - to John by tomorrow**
- II. Finalize 2023 Evaluation
 - A. Board will adopt the final draft. - **Caitlynn to submit language for consent agenda to John by tomorrow.**
 - 1. Ryan will find the list of edits and apply them to the document and then send to Caitlynn. Caitlynn will to send to Kathryn for approval and additions - by 3 days before Board Meeting.**
- III. Reviewing governing documents
 - A. Collaborating with the ET and Reverend Alison
 - 1. Invite Alison to a collaborative conversation about what we can do within policies or within our practices to get better staff engagement and trust.**
 - a) **What does it look like to invite more staff input/collaboration in the evaluation of ministry?**
 - b) **Bylaws reflect a more hierarchical structure in addition to historical norms.**
 - B. Feedback document from Cathy**
 - 1. Google Doc to share and for collaboration.**

III. Scheduled to begin discussion Annual Survey with Communications Committee next month

Closing words - Caitlynn - Mary Oliver - Blackwater

Words for next time -

Next meeting: **1/17 5:30-7:00**

Background:

Section 2.5 of the church's governing policies calls on the Board of Trustees to maintain oversight of the ministry and management of the church. Section 2.5.1 lists several tools that shall be employed to maintain this oversight. One of those tools is an annual evaluation of ministry in collaboration with the Senior Minister and Executive Team. A draft of the Evaluation of Ministry for the 2022-2023 church year was presented to the Board by the Governance Committee in the November 2023 meeting, and feedback was collected. The final draft is being presented to the Board in the January meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Action for Board of Trustees consent agenda consideration:

The Board of Trustees adopts the 2022-2023 Evaluation of Ministry as included:

Background:

- Board policy 4.11.6 (Guidelines for Non-Board Congregants Serving on Board Committees) states that non-Board members of Board Committees serve at the will of the Board, for terms expiring at the end of each church year.
- The chair of each Board Committee is to bring recommendations for such non-Board committee members to the Board for approval.
- For the duration of the 2023-2024 church year, the Governance Committee chair recommends that the Board approve the following non-Board congregant to serve as a member of the Governance Committee.

Action for Board of Trustees consent agenda consideration:

The Board of Trustees approves the following non-Board congregant to serve as a member of the Governance Committee for the duration of the 2023-2024 church year:

- Cathy Tortorici

Gather, chalice, reading by [Kaitlin Curtice](#)

Intros, check-in

Letter from the Board in the Front Steps

- Made final edits to Theo's letter. Leslie to submit.
- Made final edits to Andy's "Note from the Treasurer" re: Music & Worship contributions. Julia sent to Andy, cc: Leslie. Andy to approve and Leslie to submit.

Board Table

- Leslie will bring sign re: Article II
- Randy will bring Article II info, and Leslie will review info from Mindy.
- Leslie to confirm that table will be available on 12/17.

Review of Information Session re: Article II

- Successful, had 30 attendees.

Plan for the Article II January 28th event

Purpose:

Informational, to inform delegates and help them be informed as they vote their conscience; to inform congregants so they can understand proposed changes.

Make sure to communicate that if you're interested in being a delegate, be sure to attend. Also ask people to consider being a delegate. Have delegate applications available.

Agenda:

Moderate the meeting: Theo and Mindy

Intro presentation (20 minutes)

- Intro by Alison, to set the tone. Theo to ask.
- Presentation by Mindy with presentation of process. Theo to ask.
- Presentation by Ethel with presentation in favor.
- Presentation by Randy (has concerns).

Break-out discussions (30 minutes)

Break-outs at tables of about 3-4 people. (Last time we had 8 people per table, and that was too many.) At tables, people are answering questions.

- What do you like about proposal?
- Don't like?
- What will help us grow our faith?
- If we endorse/accept proposal, how will that affect you, the church?
- If we don't endorse, what does that say? How will that affect you, the church?

Come back together (__ minutes)

- Share highlights of conversations
- Conclusion statement
- Wrap-up
- Here's the value of this communication. Theo and Mindy.

Food

TBD. Maybe make this a board responsibility. Leslie will work with Board.

Facility

Need to double-check Buchan set-up as well as OWL and online participation. Need Zoom set-up, need volunteer to run the online community. Theo will work with Staff on tech. Julia to coordinate Zoom moderator.

Follow-up

Planning meeting 12/27, 10am. Leslie to convene.

Closing Words

"Perhaps humans' core function is to love." – adrienne maree brown

Proposed letter text re: Music and Worship donations:

Finance Committee Meeting
November 14, 2023

Attendees: Dev Dion, Roger Robinson, Jo Ann Foor, Andy Wilson, Linda Craig, Kathryn Estey, Erin Tafuri, Ed McClaran, Marilyn Mays, Mindy Clark, Stan Jewett

Attendees Check-ins

Openings words read by Andy

The Board approved the members of Advisory Panel to be official non-voting members of the Finance Committee.

October Minutes approved as submitted.

ET Update

Fund drive update:

Under \$1.2 collected to date

580 pledges, a little under last year

In the next couple of days an email will be sent from Rev. Alison thanking everyone who have pledged and encouraging those who have not pledged (approx. 150 units) to do so.

As of this fiscal year, 727 pledges, the mean averaging approximately \$2,000 per pledge.

Review of September Financials

Erin presented the budget, reporting that most of the numbers are normal. On the expense side, the HR, Recruiting and Relocation is not in fact over budget. Donations and plate share is a new line item. Kathryn pointed out that we are right on budget with payroll, even with the shifts in the personnel. Utilities are also right on target now but may very well be much larger than in previous years. Linda mentioned that Jason is working on an energy audit, and monies may be available to help.

Finance Committee Open Forum to the congregation is tentatively scheduled for January 21st. We will be able to talk about results of the AFD, ET can present budget matters, Rev, Alison may have a Q. and A. session. Perhaps also presenting the June 30, 2023 year end report.

Erin: Is it time to consolidate Federated and Franklin accounts? (Mutual funds that were given to the church.)

Linda favors consolidation as long as it doesn't interfere with any commitments based on the donations.

Closing words: Andy

Meeting adjourned at 6:10pm.

Next Meeting: December 12, 2023 at 5:00 PM Pacific Time (Zoom)

(minutes: RR)

First Unitarian Church of Portland				
Budget Report (unaudited) - 4 Months Ending 10/31/2023				
	YTD Actual	Annual Budget	Remaining Budget	% of Budget Expected: 33%
Revenue:				
Pledge Contributions	392,809	1,450,000	1,057,191	27%
Adjust to Accrual Pledge Contributions	-	-	-	
Non-Pledge Contribution	9,454	65,000	55,546	15%
Foundation Gift to the Church	-	82,000	82,000	0%
Plate Contributions	19,490	45,000	25,510	43%
Program Contributions	3,462	-	(3,462)	
Program Income	22,060	38,000	15,940	58%
Tenants Rental Income	111,572	364,000	252,428	31%
Event Rental Income	2,051	25,000	22,949	8%
Merchandise Income	4,347	11,500	7,154	38%
Miscellaneous Income	750	-	(750)	
Reserve & Fund 49 Income	-	26,000	26,000	0%
Total Revenue	565,994	2,106,500	1,540,506	27%
Expenses:				
Payroll	505,409	1,596,424	1,091,015	32%
HR, Recruiting & Relocation	12,895	2,200	(10,694)	586%
Professional & Contract Services	25,468	101,045	75,577	25%
Professional Expenses	3,774	17,000	13,226	22%
Professional Expenses - Sr. Minister	550	8,500	7,950	6%
Professional Expenses - Associate Minister	1,184	6,000	4,816	20%
Professional Expenses - Intern	975	2,000	1,025	49%
Guest Ministers/Musicians/Speakers Exp.	5,685	16,500	10,815	34%
Merchandise Inventory	249	-	(249)	
Program Expenses	8,117	102,645	94,528	8%
Retreat/Workshop/Conference Expenses	27,139	24,700	(2,439)	110%
Event Expense	1,187	5,500	4,313	22%
Parking	4,217	25,450	21,233	17%
Utilities	33,132	92,575	59,443	36%
Custodial Supplies	1,761	12,000	10,239	15%
Web Svcs/Software/Computer Program Exp.	7,680	24,750	17,070	31%
Computers, Furniture & Equipment	5,013	15,800	10,787	32%
Equipment Rental/Lease	5,751	14,400	8,649	40%
Bldg Repairs & Maintenance	7,930	40,000	32,070	20%
Equip Repairs & Maintenance	14	6,150	6,136	0%
Landscaping	-	1,500	1,500	0%
Outside Printing & Copying	2,243	14,750	12,507	15%
Postage & Shipping	684	4,900	4,216	14%
Bank Charges & Merchant Fees	4,698	19,000	14,302	25%
Cost of Goods Sold	-	-	-	
Licenses & Fees	1,792	9,000	7,208	20%
UUA Dues	10,500	38,500	28,000	27%
Insurance	6,720	20,500	13,780	33%
Donations/Plate Share	4,621	1,000	(3,621)	462%
Uncollectibles	-	-	-	
Miscellaneous Expenses	648	1,000	352	65%
Total Expenses	690,036	2,223,789	1,533,753	31%
Transfers				
Transfers from Other Sources	1,050	(117,289)	(118,339)	
Change in Net Assets - Operating Fund	(122,993)	(0)		

Consent Agenda Item #1, January 4, 2024

Background:

Section 2.5 of the church's governing policies calls on the Board of Trustees to maintain oversight of the ministry and management of the church. Section 2.5.1 lists several tools that shall be employed to maintain this oversight. One of those tools is an annual evaluation of ministry in collaboration with the Senior Minister and Executive Team. A draft of the Evaluation of Ministry for the 2022-2023 church year was presented to the Board by the Governance Committee in the November 2023 meeting, and feedback was collected. The final draft is being presented to the Board in the January meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Action for Board of Trustees consent agenda consideration:

The Board of Trustees adopts the 2022-2023 Evaluation of Ministry as included:

THE EVALUATION OF THE MINISTRY OF FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF PORTLAND, OREGON, 2022-23

Conducted jointly by the Board of Trustees, Senior Minister Rev. Alison Miller, and Rev. Tom Disrud and Kathryn Estey of the Executive Team

Introduction

The mission of First Unitarian Church is to create a welcoming community of diverse individuals; to promote love, reason and freedom in religion; to foster lifelong spiritual growth; and to act for social justice. Our bylaws require the Board, the Senior Minister, and the Executive Team (ET) to annually conduct a joint evaluation of the ministry of the church in reference to the church's mission and the policies enacted by the Board.

This annual report adds to the written history of our downtown church and reflects our congregational life for posterity. In addition to publishing the report on the church's website, the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee review it together in order to inform future work. This evaluation of the ministry is focused on the church year that began on July 1, 2022, and ended on June 30, 2023. The report includes two parts:

1. A detailed report from the Executive Team, including historical data on attendance and pledging throughout the past several years.
2. A Board-led summary of responses from an open-ended congregational survey in which a small subset of congregants give voice to their experiences of congregational life in the past year.

Collectively, these describe a church in the midst of significant transition. In addition to being the first church year under the leadership of our new Senior Minister, Rev. Alison Miller, it was the first full church year of in-person worship and activities since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019. The congregation's adoption, in 2022, of the 8th Principle reflected a deepening commitment to embodying commitments to racial justice, radical welcome, and anti-oppressive practices, and Rev. Alison's leadership of a series of Community Conversations helped to give expression to emerging visions of the congregation we are yet to become.

Executive Team Report: Evaluation of Ministries Church Year 2022-2023

Summary

This was a year of major transition in the life of First Unitarian Church. It was not only the first year with Rev. Alison Miller serving as Senior Minister but it was also the first year of the congregation more fully emerging from the COVID pandemic. It was the church's first full year of being back in person (with a continued strong virtual presence) since 2019.

The emergence out of COVID has had many dimensions for individuals and families ("What is my/our relationship with the church?"); for the community as a whole ("What is our mission/who are we at this turning point?") and for greater Portland ("What does it mean to be a downtown church at a time when Portland's downtown still struggles with houselessness and closed businesses?").

What will the church that emerges out of this time look like? That is still very much an open question. It could well be that we will look back at this time and see the seeds of that future church in formation. Included in this report will be attendance figures and financial giving stats. Both are considered two of the primary "indicators" of church health.

This year the energy in the church has been high. That has been connected to the beginning of Rev. Miller's ministry and the energy she has brought to the church. It has also had to do with the enthusiasm people have felt being back in person. Just about every Sunday this year, it has seemed, someone would be back for the first time since Covid. And new patterns are forming for people—with some combination of in person and online viewing becoming the new norm.

That said, our staff system has been challenged by long-standing workplace tensions, and personnel matters occupied significant Board, Executive Team and staff time in this church year. The unionization of a subset of our staff several years ago spotlighted pay equity and helped us move in alignment with our principles around that issue. However, workplace tensions remain. While the Board of Trustees chose not to have an interim minister, this need for healing, covenanting, and team-building is an example of interim work that our new Senior Minister and the Executive Team are working to nurture with support from the UUA.

Other Notes from the Year

–The church continued to hold a single Sunday worship service, while simultaneously conducting religious education programs.

– In an effort to bring together the two churches – adults worshiping and having social hour in the Sanctuary building, and parents and families in the Buchan building for classes and social time – social hour was moved to Buchan on the first Sunday of the month. While we successfully created more opportunities for multigenerational community building, this was not without complication (thanks to Bookstore and Art Wall leaders for their openness to figuring this

new pattern out), but the move was generally well received and it did seem to lessen the sense of two separate communities.

– The congregation passed the “8th Principle” proposal in 2021 overwhelmingly, voting to add a principle to the existing 7 Principles, making explicit a commitment to be an anti-racist/anti-oppression multicultural faith. This year we began the process of living into that principle with the formation of a Transformation Team to guide and assess work towards that goal.

– 13 Salmon Shower Project: Staff and volunteers are transforming our Buchan Building's lower level into a respite haven for our unhoused neighbors, complete with showers, bathrooms and laundry facilities. We expect to open our doors early in the 2023-2024 church year.

– Leaven Community Assembly: In February, we hosted the Leaven Community Land & Housing Coalition Mass Assembly, bringing together over 400 people across the region. It was a testament to our commitment to interfaith organizing for justice.

– Our UU the Vote collaboration was a focal point for congregational engagement early in the church year. We partnered with our UU siblings in North Carolina to get out the vote in NC districts critical to advancing UU principles for democracy, equity, and compassion. Over 300 congregants helped us achieve our goal of writing 10,000 letters to potential NC voters. We hosted a phone banking night with our 8-week partnership with NC activists and had more than thirty First Unitarians participate over those weeks.

– With a continued focus on voting, our Social Justice Council hosted an online voter forum on local, regional, and statewide ballot measures. Several of our social justice groups invited speakers to present on the issues of importance to their group's goals.

– The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. service project was a collaboration of Family Ministries with community partner Hygiene4All. Children in our Religious Education program and their families assembled scores of hygiene kits to be distributed to unhoused Portlanders.

– On Reproductive Freedom Sunday, we hosted the Focus on Abortion exhibit, and our Youth program hosted Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon for an abortion care kit assembly project. We also shared our plate in January with Idaho Interfaith Organizing for Reproductive Freedom, recognizing the importance of showing up in solidarity for reproductive dignity and a right to abortion as healthcare.

– In the Spring, our Social Justice Action Groups hosted several events that drew much participation. Our Peace Action Group hosted Ukrainian English Language teachers to speak about their ongoing work for intercultural understanding and ending the war in Ukraine. Community for Earth hosted the Rumble on the River, bringing many climate justice organizers together to share information and information about how community members can get involved in important climate justice initiatives geared toward ending our reliance on fossil fuels.

- For Earth Day, our Community for Earth collaborated with Family Ministries to offer a multigenerational Earth Day Fair. Over 100 congregants of all ages participated in the fair, building a shared sense of our commitment to the interconnected web of life.
- Trans Rights: First Unitarian continued to provide a warm space for trans, nonbinary, 2Spirit, and gender-expansive members and friends with our bi-monthly "T Time" socials after Sunday services.
- Our weekly virtual Vespers Prayer Services and Mindfulness Meditation Sessions, born during the pandemic, continue to be spaces of connection, reflection, and solace.
- Lay Ministry and Pastoral Care continue through our dedicated group of 18 lay ministers. This team provides compassionate pastoral care, hosts prayer services, and facilitates small groups, strengthening our bonds of support.

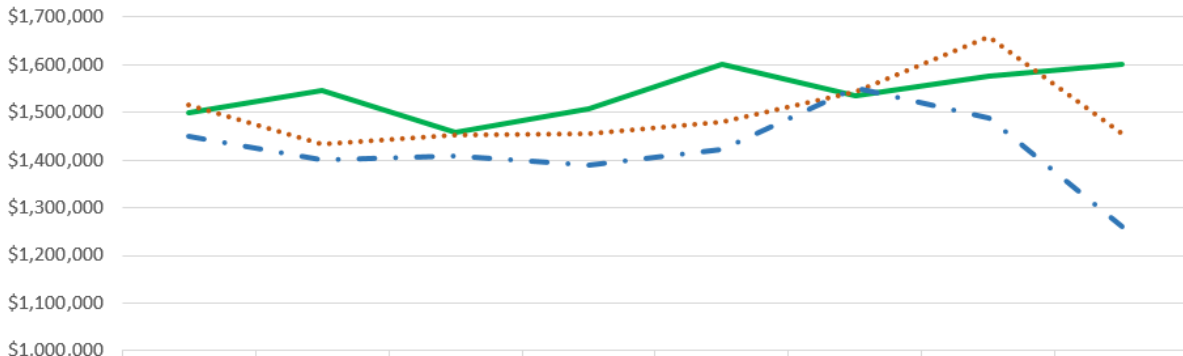
Finances

As the pandemic continued into a second and then third year, the annual pledging began to level off. The 2022 campaign came in about 6 percent short of the goal, but that shortfall was made by our largest annual donor (\$30,000) giving an additional generous pledge of \$125,000 to make up the difference. Due to changed circumstances, only part of this additional pledge was fulfilled.

Calendar Year Pledges and Pledge Receipts

Year	Goal	Dollars Pledged	Dollars Rec'd
2016	\$1,500,000	\$1,514,484	\$1,451,280
2017	\$1,545,000	\$1,433,435	\$1,401,818
2018	\$1,459,000	\$1,453,539	\$1,408,487
2019	\$1,506,750	\$1,455,538	\$1,389,472
2020	\$1,600,000	\$1,480,200	\$1,422,529
2021	\$1,535,000	\$1,544,504	\$1,552,216
*2022	\$1,575,000	\$1,659,213	\$1,487,916
**2023	\$1,600,000	\$1,454,183	\$1,259,980

Calendar Year Pledges and Receipts

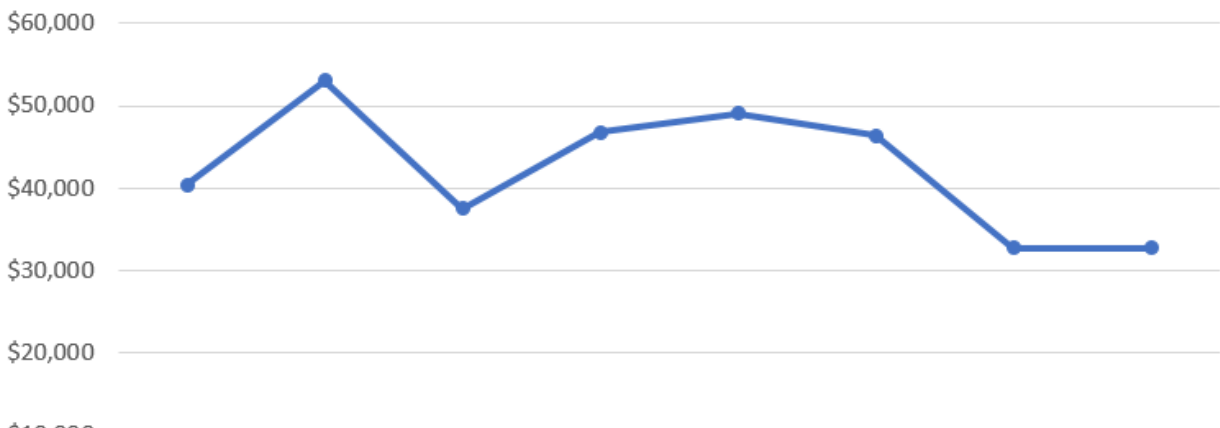


	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022*	2023**
Goal	\$1,500,000	\$1,545,000	\$1,459,000	\$1,506,750	\$1,600,000	\$1,535,000	\$1,575,000	\$1,600,000
Dollars Pledged	\$1,514,484	\$1,433,435	\$1,453,539	\$1,455,538	\$1,480,200	\$1,544,504	\$1,659,213	\$1,454,183
Dollars Rec'd	\$1,451,280	\$1,401,818	\$1,408,487	\$1,389,472	\$1,422,529	\$1,552,216	\$1,487,916	\$1,259,980

* A very large one-time special pledge was made for calendar 2022 and is included in "Total Dollars Pledged." Due to changed circumstances, a large portion of this pledge was unfulfilled.

** Through Nov. 2023. NOTE: A second fund drive, "Close the Gap," was held in early 2023. There were 716 pledges for the main autumn campaign, and 85 pledges to "Close the Gap." The total number of individual donors for the combined autumn and spring campaigns is unavailable because of the overlap (i.e., many donors gave to both campaigns).

Plate Contributions / Net After Distribution to Shared Recipient



FY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Amount	\$40,414	\$53,027	\$37,564	\$46,818	\$49,102	\$46,413	\$32,711	\$32,742

Budgeting process

In consultation with the Board of Trustees, the Executive Team articulated priorities for the church as it continued to move out of the pandemic and as it entered a new chapter with a new senior minister. Those priorities included:

Communications beyond our in-person & online "walls"

- o social justice & community engagement
- o communications & social media to prospective visitors

Communications within

- o building up friend/membership connections & engagement

Welcoming & Befriending

- o Newcomers Experience
- o Hospitality with an 8th principle lens

Pathways to Belonging & Commitment

- o membership development
- o stewardship - *time, talent, treasure*

Lifelong Spiritual Growth & Learning

- o large group and small group worship/spiritual practices (online, in-person, hybrid)
- o multigenerational and age peer group opportunities for learning, meaning-making, moral development, and fun!

These priorities have a number of implications, including impacts to the budget where staff are concerned. Given that we didn't add to the Annual Fund Drive income line, it meant trimming where possible and also a reallocation of resources. We also wanted to give some raises to continue to move towards our commitment to equitable compensation and to be able to retain talent. Ultimately, our goal is a staff that is lean enough that we can fully afford the costs and large enough that we can fuel our mission.

We added hours and funding to Communications & Social Media - moving from 20 → 40 hours (our new Acting Communications and Social Media Coordinator). We added hours and funding to Membership Engagement (Hospitality, New Member Pathways, Volunteer Recruitment, Connecting people to small groups, classes, etc.) - moving from 0 → 40 hours (our new Membership Engagement Coordinator). We added hours to Adult Learning Opportunities - this is primarily a shift in our ministers' hours and also working with our new membership engagement coordinator. We added hours to events & facilities coordination - from 40 hours (our Facilities Manager) → 62 hours (our Acting Operations & Events Coordinator). This did mean a reduction in one sexton.

We had to trim hours and funding from our music program (24.5% or 122 → 92 hours and from 7 to 5 staff, our social justice program 30% or 60 → 40 hours and from 2 to 1 staff, and our religious education program 30% or 120 → 80 hours and from 3 to 2 staff.

With few exceptions we continued to decline rental requests, as we did not have the staff to accommodate them.

The budget for FYE2024, approved by the congregation in May 2023, can be found on pages 6-7 at this link:

https://www.firstunitarianportland.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/6_Ballot-Packet-Complete.pdf

Attendance & Membership Statistics

Following are three charts showing attendance comparisons, and a chart with historical adult membership, RE enrollment, and Budget comparisons:

- Attendance: Sundays in March (as a representative month) / 2019 – 2023
This chart includes children and youth as well as adult attendance.
Early in the pandemic, livestream attendance shot up as in-person attendance necessarily came to a halt. Over the course of the shut-down, livestream attendance declined somewhat. In the 2022-2023 church year, livestream and in-person attendance mirrored each other somewhat.
- Easter Sunday Attendance / 2019 – 2023
- Average Adult Attendance per Sunday for the 2022-2023 church year. As stated in the first bullet point, it's interesting to note that the in-person and livestream attendance numbers are often quite similar.
- Adult Membership, RE Enrollment & Budget Comparisons dating back to 1950.

Attendance: Sundays in March / 2019 - 2023

	In-Person R.E.	In-Person Sanctuary	Virtual Fam Wor	Virtual Sanctuary	In-Person + Virtual TOTAL	Virtual x 1.5	GRAND TOTAL
2023							
3/5	42	263	X	259	564	389	694
3/12	58	196	X	216	470	324	578
3/19	46	232	X	209	487	314	592
3/26	<i>Spring Break</i>	250	X	241	491	362	612
						2023 AVG:	619
2022							
3/6	X	- X -	41	374	415	623	623
3/13	X	134	34	358	526	588	722
3/20	X	111	29	288	428	476	587
3/27	16	169	39	295	519	501	686
						2022 AVG:	654
2021							
3/7	X	X	90	530	620	930	930
3/14	X	X	50	517	567	851	851
3/21	X	X	67	467	534	801	801
3/28	X	X	59	462	521	782	782
						2021 AVG:	841
2020 - the beginning of the Covid Shut-Down							
3/8	85	398	X	147	630	221	704
3/15	X	X	X	555	555	833	833
3/22	X	X	X	719	719	1079	1079
3/29	X	X	X	760	760	1140	1140
						2020 AVG:	939
2019							
3/3	107	617		43	767	65	789
3/10	84	535		88	707	132	751
3/17	100	601		110	811	165	866
3/24	<i>Spring Break</i>	511		100	611	150	661
3/31	<i>Spring Break</i>	516		85	601	128	644
						2019 AVG:	742

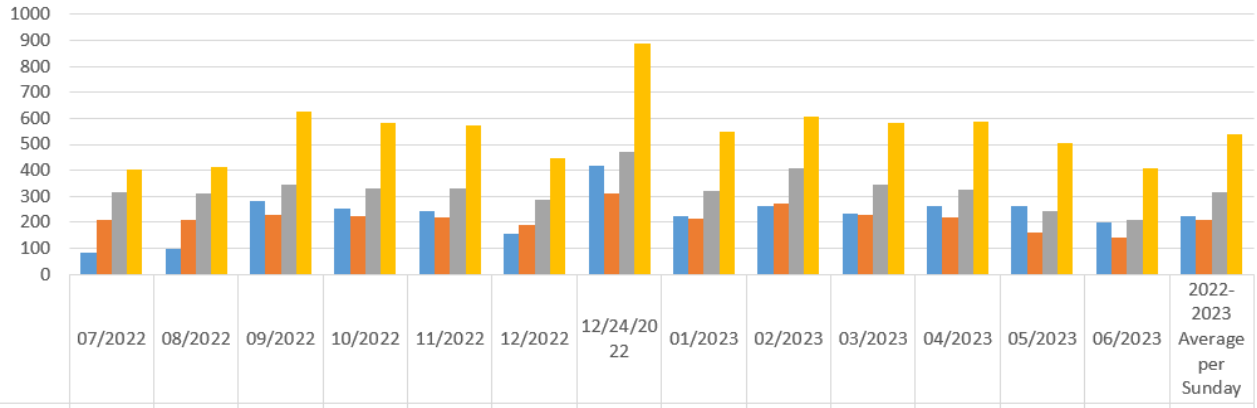
Easter Sunday Attendance

YEAR	IN PERSON	IN PERSON TOTAL	DEVICES ON-LINE	Devices x1.5	GR. TOTAL	
	11:15 /11:00 9:15 /10:30					
2019	523	550	1073	130	195	1268
2020				1146	1719	1719
2021				682	1023	1023
2022		367	367	392	588	955
2023		426	426	275	412.5	839

Average Adult Attendance per Sunday for 2022-2023

Average per Sunday for the Month of:	In-Person	Livestream	Livestream x 1.5	Grand Total
July	86	211	317	403
August	99	209	313	412
September	280	230	345	625
October	251	222	333	584
November	245	220	329	574
December (excludes Christmas Eve)	158	192	288	446
Christmas Eve 2022	418	313	470	888
January	226	215	323	548
February	262	274	410	607
March	235	231	347	582
April	262	217	325	587
May	262	162	243	505
June	198	142	212	410
2022-2023 Average per Sunday	222	212	318	539

Average Adult Attendance per Sunday / 2022-2023

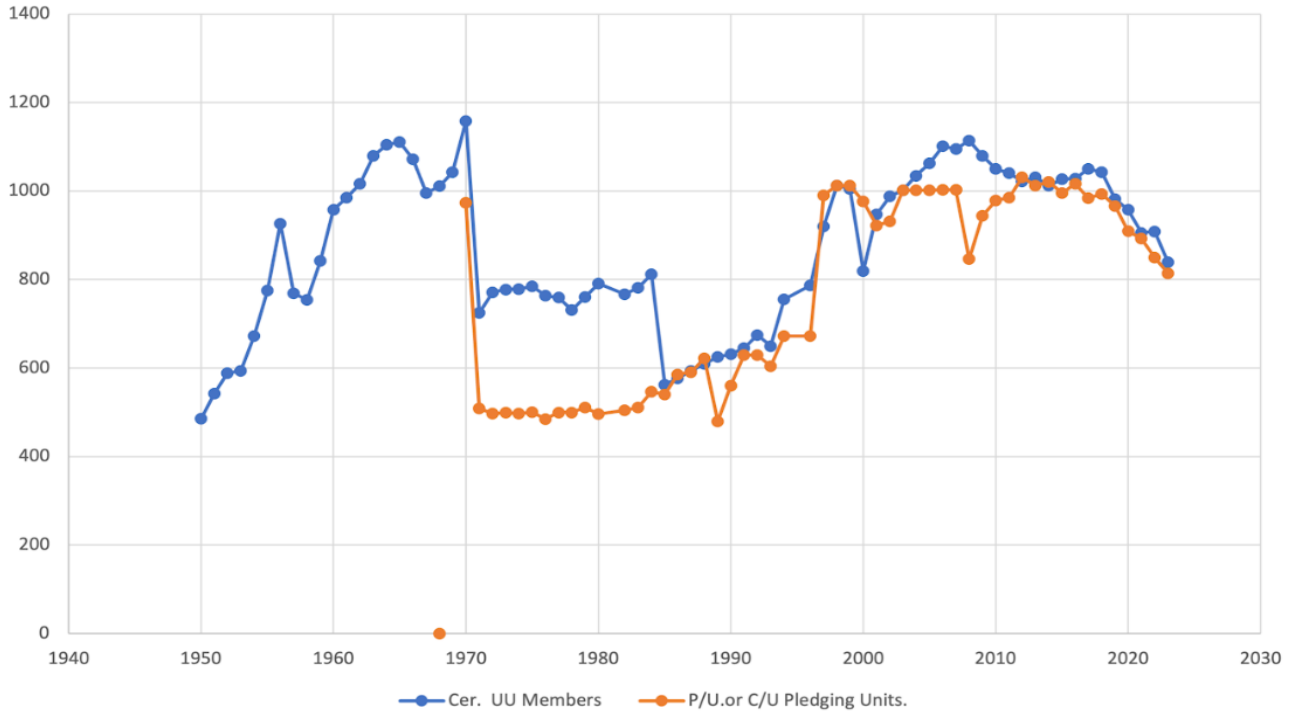


In-Person	86	99	280	251	245	158	418	226	262	235	262	262	198	222
Livestream	211	209	230	222	220	192	313	215	274	231	217	162	142	212
Livestream x1.5	317	313	345	333	329	288	470	323	410	347	325	243	212	318
Grand Total	403	412	625	584	574	446	888	548	607	582	587	505	410	539

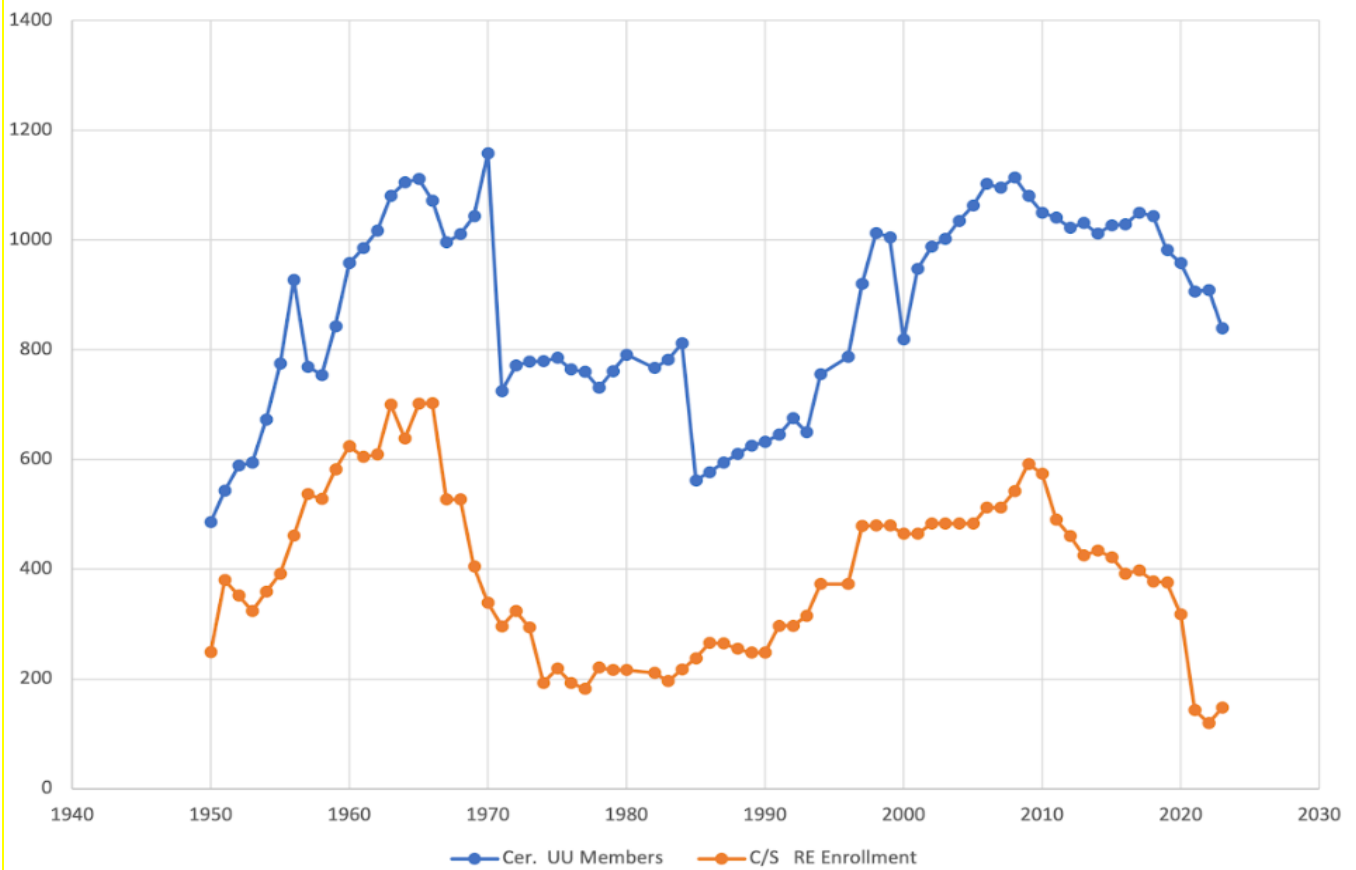
Adult Membership, RE Enrollment & Budget Comparisons:

Year	Adult Members	RE Enrollment	Budget	Year	Adult Members	RE Enrollment	Budget
1950	486	249	\$31,471	1987	594	265	\$268,138
1951	543	380	\$29,180	1988	610	255	\$329,861
1952	589	352	\$27,287	1989	625	248	\$337,514
1953	594	324	\$31,504	1990	632	248	\$366,052
1954	673	359	\$36,477	1991	645	297	\$361,408
1955	775	392	\$35,594	1992	675	297	\$361,408
1956	927	461	\$38,404	1993	650	315	\$463,388
1957	769	537	\$47,435	1994	755	373	\$528,015
1958	754	528	\$49,129	1996	787	373	\$528,015
1959	843	582	\$54,658	1997	920	479	\$870,111
1960	958	624	\$60,787	1998	1013	480	\$990,770
1961	985	605	\$70,768	1999	1005	480	\$990,770
1962	1017	609	\$70,126	2000	819	465	\$1,254,187
1963	1080	700	\$85,340	2001	947	465	\$1,280,527
1964	1105	638	\$85,700	2002	988	483	\$1,227,798
1965	1111	702	\$83,800	2003	1002	483	\$1,227,798
1966	1072	703	\$89,955	2004	1035	483	\$1,227,798
1967	996	527	\$87,914	2005	1063	483	\$1,227,798
1968	1011	527	\$107,416	2006	1102	512	\$1,676,016
1969	1043	405	\$113,247	2007	1095	512	\$1,676,016
1970	1158	339	\$88,899	2008	1114	542	\$1,887,540
1971	725	296	\$86,190	2009	1080	592	\$1,953,884
1972	771	324	\$80,393	2010	1050	574	\$1,841,656
1973	778	294	\$105,309	2011	1041	490	\$1,895,182
1974	779	193	\$101,807	2012	1022	460	\$2,194,462
1975	785	219	\$105,005	2013	1031	425	\$2,162,825
1976	764	193	\$111,846	2014	1012	434	\$1,951,719
1977	760	182	\$117,600	2015	1027	422	\$2,076,856
1978	731	221	\$121,969	2016	1028	392	\$2,096,484
1979	761	216	\$127,978	2017	1050	398	\$2,193,227
1980	791	216	\$140,775	2018	1043	378	\$2,155,538
1982	767	211	\$166,071	2019	982	376	\$2,572,548
1983	782	196	\$190,870	2020	958	318	\$2,453,473
1984	812	217	\$201,463	2021	906	143	\$2,207,869
1985	562	238	\$276,356	2022	909	120	\$2,227,026
1986	577	266	\$276,356	2023	839	148	\$2,031,025

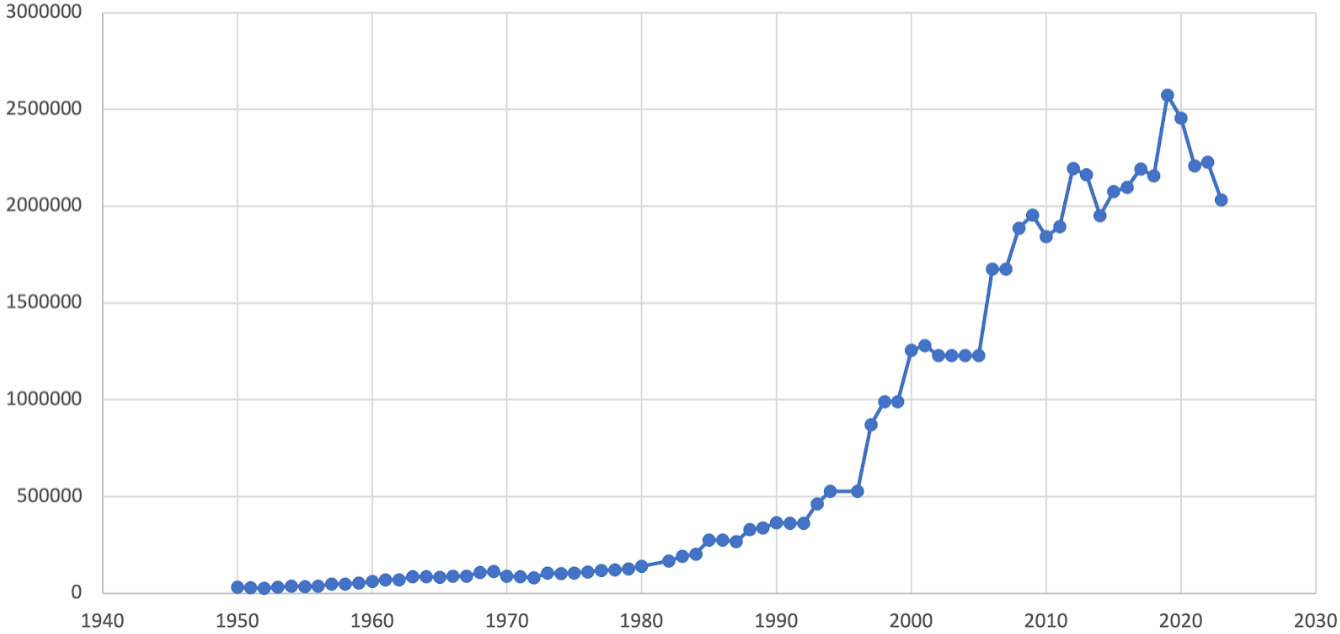
Pledging units compared to membership from 1950-2023



Membership and Re Enrollment from 1950-2023



Total expenditures from 1950-2023



Community Conversations

Our senior minister facilitated Community Conversations working with a team of seven lay leaders. The goal of these conversations was to capture at the beginning of her tenure what our congregants' hopes are for the health and wellbeing of our ministries. We used appreciative inquiry for the process and asked broad questions, such as:

- *What brought you here? What were you hoping to find?*
- *What keeps you here? What allows you to feel connected, inspired, and engaged?*
- *What would enhance your experience? What would be different? What are your hopes/dreams for the future?*

The overarching themes that emerged reflected that our folks are here to participate in a community where they can:

1. Make Meaning
2. Make Connections
3. Make a Difference (in our congregation & in the world).

Six specific areas that people lifted up would enhance their experience time and again are the following:

1. Better Communications
2. More Adult Spiritual Growth and Learning
3. More Opportunities to Get to Know Others and to Be Known by Them
4. More Multigenerational Experiences
5. More Collaborative Justice Efforts (interfaith and wider UU)
6. Greater Transparency

These themes and areas above are a glimpse of the rich and enriching feedback we heard in May and June from the over 200 people who came to one (or more) of the 8 sessions (4 in-person and 4 online) plus the staff session.

One of the interesting byproducts was that people expressed how much they enjoyed the Community Conversations gatherings themselves – the chance to be together, to exchange ideas, and to become energized around what's possible. Staff and volunteers are already beginning to act on the information we gleaned. It helped us with plans for 2023 – 2024 and has also set a foundation for the strategic planning work we will undertake in the not-too-distant future.

Congregational Survey

For the 2021-2023 church year, the Governance Committee created a brief survey with four open ended questions (“What helps me feel connected to our church community?,” “Ways our church has helped me live our principles in the larger community:,” “Ways I would like to see our church community change or grow as we emerge from the pandemic:,” “Programs and activities at First Unitarian Portland that have been particularly meaningful for me over the last year:”) and nine demographic questions (“Are you a member of First Unitarian Portland?,” “How long have you been attending First Unitarian Portland?,” “What brought you here? What has kept you here or brought you back after a pause?,” “Where do you live?,” “How do you usually attend church?,” “If you have children or youth in your household, do they participate in the learning community? If no, why?,” “If you live with a partner or spouse, do they also participate in the church?,” “What is your racial/ethnic identity?,” “What is your gender identity?,” “What is your age group?”). Participants were invited to fill out the survey online using Google Forms and on paper. Responses were primarily collected online.

The Board of Trustees advertised the survey in the weekly Front Steps e-newsletter, in the Sunday Service PowerPoint slides, 1:1 encounters, and endorsements to individual groups within the congregation. Similar to the data collected in last year’s survey, the demographics of folks who responded to the Board of Trustees Congregational Survey reflect a portion of our church community. This year 64 individuals responded, 80% of those respondents were white, 85% female identified, and all who shared their age were at least 30 years old, with the majority of folks identifying as “70 or better.” All respondents live in the Portland Area and have a diverse means of attendance (40% mostly in person but occasionally online, 25% mostly online with occasional visits, 30% primarily or exclusively online). On average, respondents to our survey had been a part of First Unitarian for at least 20 years. Some members even shared that they participated in RE as a child 70 or more years ago. The board is very grateful to our community for their time and feedback.

Survey Results

In order to better visualize the narrative responses, the Board generated the WordArt using the website WordArt.com. WordArt produces a graphic display of words that increase in size based on their frequency in responses.

What helps me feel connected to our church community:



Image: Largest word, “Group,” is in the center surrounded by 2nd largest, “church” and “service.” Other prominent words: “Program,” “Small,” “Being,” “Attend,” Person,” “Choir,” “Connected,” “Music,” “Feel,” “Alliance,” “Sunday,” “Participate,” “Social Justice,” “Weekly,” “Events,” “Work.”

Ways our church has helped me live our principles in the larger community:



Image: Two largest words, “Church,” “Social Justice,” centered. 2nd largest words: “Sermons,” “Help,” “Program,” “Community,” “Active,” “Work.” Other prominent words: “Principle,” “Events,” “Being,” “Group,” “Opportunities,” “Classes.”

A major theme that emerges from the survey prompts is the value First Unitarian Universalist has in Community. Members find connection and meaning through our shared experiences in Sunday Services, weekly programs, music, and Social Justice. Those same communal experiences call us to live our Principles in the larger community.

Just as clear is First Unitarian Universalist's desire for lifelong learning to deepen our principles. As we move into the post-COVID "emerging church" it's important that we nurture children's programs, music, and opportunities to foster meaningful connections with one another.

Limitations

2022-2023 was a year of significant change for First Unitarian, not least of which was welcoming our new Senior Minister Reverend Alison Miller. At the same time that the Board of Trustees' survey was active, Reverend Alison was engaging in rich "Community Conversations" with multiple small/medium sized meetings that were very well attended. It's likely that our smaller, individualized survey felt redundant and some congregants expressed a lack of information as to the purpose of the survey.

Our survey required respondents to have a certain level of reading comprehension and was distributed in written English only. These and other assumptions may have made the survey inaccessible to some and reflect this congregation's preference for "the written word."

In the future, the Board of Trustees can draw from the success of the Reverend Alison Miller's Community Conversations and engage in direct conversation with the congregation. We could hope to have more robust feedback through direct outreach to communities like RE students and parents, folks who live outside of the city, and those who attend programming but not Sunday Services.

For past years' Evaluations of Ministries, follow these links:

2021-2022 Evaluation of Ministries:

<https://www.firstunitarianportland.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Evaluation-of-Ministry-Report-2021-2022-FINAL.pdf>

2020-2021 Evaluation of Ministries:

<https://www.firstunitarianportland.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Eval-of-Ministry-2020-21-FINAL.pdf>

2019-2020 Evaluation of Ministries:

<https://www.firstunitarianportland.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Eval-of-Ministry-2019-2020-FINAL.pdf>

Consent Agenda Item #2, January 4, 2024

Background:

- Board policy 4.11.6 (Guidelines for Non-Board Congregants Serving on Board Committees) states that non-Board members of Board Committees serve at the will of the Board, for terms expiring at the end of each church year.
- The chair of each Board Committee is to bring recommendations for such non-Board committee members to the Board for approval.
- For the duration of the 2023-2024 church year, the Governance Committee chair recommends that the Board approve the following non-Board congregant to serve as a member of the Governance Committee.

Action for Board of Trustees consent agenda consideration:

The Board of Trustees approves the following non-Board congregant to serve as a member of the Governance Committee for the duration of the 2023-2024 church year:

- Cathy Tortorici