

FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF YARMOUTH, MAINE

Annual Report

2021 - 2022



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About Our Church



Our Mission

At First Universalist, our mission is to explore our faith, embrace this community, and engage the world as spiritual seekers. The themes of explore-embrace-engage permeate all we do as we each grow, learn, and serve.

About Our Church and Our Faith

The First Universalist Church of Yarmouth is a self-funded and self-governed volunteer organization supported in our mission by a fulltime minister and part-time staff.

We are an open-minded and open-hearted spiritual community of people who lead lives of justice, love, learning, and hope. Our church and our faith include people of every ethnicity, race, age, social background, ability, political affiliation, family structure, gender identity, and sexual/romantic orientation. As Unitarian Universalists, we are not interested in creeds and commitments of faith, but in right relations with one another and holistic ways of living on and with our planet. We welcome all who embrace our principles.

We are a certified welcoming congregation and have voted to endorse the spirit of the 8th principle. We are a member of the New England Region and an honor congregation with the Unitarian Universalist Association.

A Shared Ministry

First Universalist is a church of shared ministry where the Minister and the Board of Trustees are each responsible for parts of congregational life. Our Minister oversees and is responsible for worship, pastoral care, religious education, and social justice engagement. Our staff assists the minister in implementing these programs. The Board of Trustees oversees and is responsible for church finances, the upkeep of our physical spaces, and developing and growing our congregation.

About Our Church

Minister and Staff

Rev. Hillary Collins-Gilpatrick, *Minister*

Gwen Matthews, *Director of Education and Communications*

Sam Chandler, *Music Director*

Andrea Meadows, *Administrative Assistant*

Mack Jones, *Children's Teacher and Youth Facilitator*

Todd Roy, *Sexton*

Board of Trustees

Sarah Witte, *President*

Joanna Landsman, *Vice President*

Debbie Starkel, *Treasurer*

Christy Hayashida, *Clerk*

Joe Dreher

Nancy Dix

Stew Guernsey

Andrew Tonks

Photos: Fall 2021



Church in Fall, October 2021



Rainbow Sidewalk, Fall 2021



*Ingathering,
September 2021*

Photos: Winter 2021



Photos: Spring 2022



Maypole, May 2022



*Candles in Children's Chapel,
March 2022*



Easter Can Hunt, April 2022



*Memorial Day Weekend,
May 2022*

Current Financials and Proposed Budget

	June '22	July '22 - June '23
	FY22 6/30 Estimate	FY23 PROPOSED BUDGET
REVENUE		
Annual Campaign (\$156,000) & Plate (\$8,000)	151,371	164,000
Fundraising Programs (Gift Card Program)	3,926	4,000
Fundraising Events for Operations	0	5,000
Other Fundraising (e.g. OWL outside our walls & coffee)	1,279	1,700
Rental Income	37,175	38,300
Endowment Income	12,194	13,000
Other Income (gifts, grants, interest)	7,187	2,000
TOTAL REVENUE	213,132	228,000
EXPENDITURES		
Board of Trustees	11,256	11,575
Buildings & Grounds for Operations	27,838	33,790
B&G Administration	12,270	13,124
Minister's Office	100,775	102,095
Office Administration	12,536	12,316
Music & Worship	17,773	19,096
Congregation Connections	582	1,000
Religious Education	29,951	34,871
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	212,981	227,867
NET OPERATING REVENUE	151	133



Current Financials and Treasurer's Report

Fundraising Events for Justice 100% donated - 2 MFS & Hol. Fair	6,510
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Balance Sheet Information as of 4/30/22

Cash

Cash Available for Operations	10,816
Designated Funds	85,888
Total Cash on Hand	96,704

Designated Funds:

Faith in Action Funds	28,892
Building & Steeple Funds	30,053
FY23 Prepaid Annual Campaign Funds	18,700
various other (9)	8,243

Endowment Funds (managed by UUA)	107,474
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Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to say that my first year of being your treasurer has been a great learning experience. I have a terrific guide helping me understand the accounting of the finances of First U as well as getting to know the ins and outs of the church's everyday life. My guide is, of course, Marge Titcomb. Thank you, Marge.

I also thank the Board for all their guidance and assistance. Part of my learning experience was figuring out Google Docs. Christy was a great help.

The finance report is posted along with the Stewardship report. We had a good year and adapted well with the changes brought on by the pandemic. The Congregation stepped up to the plate by providing their time, treasure and talent to make sure we would give to the wider community through the guidance of the Faith in Action Committee.

Respectfully submitted by Debbie Starkel

Nominations for the Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees

Sarah Witte, President

Joanna Landsman, Vice President

Debbie Starkel, Treasurer

Christy Hayashida, Clerk

Nancy Dix

Stew Guernsey

Andrew Tonks

Dale Shields



Minister's Report



Rev. Hillary Collins-Gilpatrick,
Minister

Beginning with Gratitude

Thanks be to everyone who gave and received the gifts of our congregation this year. I lift up these names for their ongoing behind the scenes work that made it all possible:

Our collaborative, steadfast and downright fun staff: Gwen Matthews, Sam Chandler, Andrea Meadows, Mack Jones, and Todd Roy.

Our detail-oriented, decisive, and care-forward Covid Safety Team: Sarah Witte, Joanna Landsman, Christy Hayshida, Nancy Dix, Gwen Matthews, and Ben Tupper.

Our savvy, committed and mind-bogglingly calm Tech Crew: Pete Titcomb, Joanna Landsman, Jennifer Caven, and Charlie Horstmann

My insightful, informed, and warm-hearted Committee on Ministry: Emily Bogner-Williams, Ben Tupper, and Nancy Dix

Remembering Those We Lost

We also pause to remember those in our community we lost this year; people that brightened our world and strengthened our interconnected web. We remain ever-grateful for their time on earth and take comfort that their spirits of life will remain with us always: Jack Riordan, Barry Hilton, Al Spaulding, and the family members and friends of many in our congregation.

Our Three-Part Year

Friends, looking back on this year, I can't help but break it up into three parts.

The first, our dare-to-hope hybrid worship services in the fall: my first time seeing you all live in the sanctuary(!) and First Universalist's successful first attempt at offering hybrid worship in-person/online services. Though we were only able to meet for seven Sundays before the swift spread of the Covid Omicron variant pushed us back to virtual church,

Minister's Report

Our Three-Part Year

I am proud to say we tried it, it worked, and the Covid Safety Team did a spectacular job setting enough regulations in place to keep everyone well and while still providing a nourishing worship experience.

The second part of the year was when we all begrudgingly had to return to virtual church from November to February. Again, we celebrated the holidays pretty much remotely, again we moved through a slow winter of separation, longing, and uncertainty. Though this pivot back to virtual felt, to me, much more challenging than our our first all virtual year together, I want to lift up the ceaseless attempts of our staff, worship leaders, and lay leaders who found ways for us to still be together: take-away Farm Suppers, our pared down Holiday Fair, our outdoor Solstice play and breezy labyrinth, our Christmas Eve carol-sing round the firepit, our all church "Care for Ourselves and Others" retreat.

And then - hark! The third act of this year, when in late February, Covid case and hospitalization numbers dropped and our Covid Safety Team decided the risk was low enough and the need was great enough for us to return to in-person worship. I am overjoyed to say that we have remained in-person since. With the passing of each week and the re-introduction of worship elements - the choir, coffee hour, children lighting the chalice - I am feeling a greater sense of belonging at First U and a deeper and deeper trust in the resilience and love present in our community.

Wow, we have been through a lot in two short years, haven't we? It feels very fitting to cap these years off with our Installation Ceremony, our celebration of all that is possible together, as well as our ceremony to honor what we have already explored, embraced, and engaged together.

Minister's Report

We Are In This Together

Though, it's my tendency at these reflective points of the year to name our successes and growing edges, at this point, after everything that's just happened - and continues to happen - I find myself moving away from such binaries. To me, it's all just a process at this point, and my friends, we are in it all together. I can't tell you what an honor it is to sit, stand, walk, and sprint beside you as we keep on moving forward towards a world where all can thrive, free of suffering, full of profound joy, and able to live the values of peace and friendship.

Thanks be to everyone who gave and received the gifts of our congregation this year.

Thanks be to you.

Onward in Shared Ministry,
Rev. Hillary



*Back in Person,
February 2022*

President's Report



Sarah Witte,
President of the Board

What do you remember when you look back on a whole year of life at First Universalist?

My most personally transformative moments came during Worship, Vespers and other times when Reverend Hillary invited us to meditate on the phrase “strong back, soft front.” I would think about how we need to be strong in this world to do the work, and yet so very tender and soft in our loving kindness for all life. Strong in hope, soft in care. Strong to forgive, soft to imagine. We need a strong church with which to warmly, softly, joyfully welcome all spiritual seekers. These words “strong back, soft front” have helped me to feel my way into every part of my life with more intuitive courage and compassion. I see it in you, too.

People, I say we are doing pretty well with the strong back, soft front. That’s my executive summary!

Many UU (and other) churches are struggling to provide programming, and struggling to make ends meet. It takes boat loads of coordination and TLC, a lot of generous people and a little bit of kismet, but we are most definitely STILL HERE. We are still making joy and justice happen every week.

I will summarize the work of the Board (and committees which report to the Board) from an eagle’s eye view, knowing that Rev. Hillary and others will share news from the Councils (RE, Worship, Faith in Action). You’ll find reports with much more detail from each committee in this Annual Report.

Covid-19 Safety Team

- We have been as resilient, responsible and reasonable as a big diverse group could possibly be, thanks to the guidance of the CDC, UUA, and our own good leaders, Rev. Hillary and staff.
- Our excellent team has met regularly to review community COVID rates and tune our recommendations. On the bright side, we have developed robust at-home worship and leadership options. Thank you, Zoom! Thank you, Tech Crew!

President's Report

Stewardship

- Hats off to the strong leadership and guidance of the Stewardship Committee. Thank you, Debbie Starkel, for picking up the role of Treasurer.
- Our Annual Campaign “Touchstones of Joy and Justice” was a success. We did it all via video and email! We did not quite reach the commitment goal but more importantly we connected our financial wellbeing to our core values.

Leadership Development

- Leadership Development has supported essential staff hires as well as leadership development for ongoing Board and other committee positions.
- We are really fortunate to have the skills of Lisa Patterson on the committee. Thank you, Lisa!

Buildings & Grounds

- After many years of truly countless hours of service, Pete Titcomb has graciously passed the B&G leader hat to Ben Tupper. Ben and Pete are joined by John Vogt and Joe Dreher in the ongoing work. THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING PETE!
- B&G identified the need for a comprehensive inventory of our buildings which will inform the congregation as we make big decisions about how we use these assets. See planning for the future, below.

Congregation Connections

- The three priorities of CC were caring about people already here, welcoming all visitors, and growing our visibility.
- It probably seems like Gwen is everywhere, but is there anything more amazing (consistently awesome and so welcoming) than our weekly emails and constantly updated website? Thank you, Gwen, for your beautiful work and collaborative style!

President's Report

Highlights from Our Board Meeting Notes

AUGUST: We approved a children's library and space in the Kitty Corner. We asked the Stewardship Committee to update the rental policy.

SEPTEMBER: We discussed guidance for fundraisers that pop up, and established liaisons for all committees and councils. We reviewed the hiring process.

OCTOBER: We talked about how to engage people in a spirited Annual Campaign, and about our core values. We approved the Wabanaki Garden Project for the MFS donation. As at every month we checked on financials.

NOVEMBER: We reviewed Board Goals for the year. We spent time on the very general topic of our well-being, on many levels. Stress and grief and workload were all on the table. Rev. Hillary asked us each: "What do you need right now?"

DECEMBER: The Board learned about staff concerns for their wellness and workload, and thought of ways to support their work. We worked on our Annual Goals (which run by calendar year!) We got the big picture for the Annual Campaign process for the winter.

JANUARY: We planned the Midyear Meeting, learned from the COVID Safety team what was being planned, and discussed Gwen's arrangements for teaching OWL at the Waldorf school.

FEBRUARY: We began to wrap our heads around the INSTALLATION! We approved updates to the COVID safety policy and returned to in-person worship late in the month. We also reviewed a draft Gift Policy.

MARCH: We met with Ben Tupper of B&G to get a clearer sense of the responsibility of the Board in caring for the physical resources of the church. We also followed up with pledge units on the Annual Campaign.

APRIL: We reviewed the draft budget for FY23. We made decisions there about how much to assign to extra fundraisers and how much we would be able to increase salaries. Joanna volunteered to pull together the UUA's Preliminary Fellowship Review* (see more below) for Rev. Hillary's ministerial pathway.

MAY: We are preparing for the Installation Ceremony (6/5) as well as the Annual Meeting (6/12), and also orienting ourselves to the concept of an evolving form of governance and volunteerism at First Universalist called "Centering in Gifts".

Thank you to our Clerk Christy Hayashida, for a year of awesome agendas and notes!

President's Report

Our Minister, Our Ministry

We are healing from past troubles, growing into new places, and giving thanks for every joy, every new justice within and beyond our walls, and it is hard to imagine we'd feel this strong without the incredible ministry of Rev. Hillary.

From the Board's comments for the Fellowship Review, which were beautifully compiled by Joanna Landsman:

"Rev. Hillary embraced the challenge of beginning a ministry amid a pandemic and has moved us forward with grace, compassion, and enthusiasm. Together we:

- Met the technological challenges and demands imposed by the COVID pandemic.
- Formed a Covid Safety Team which continues to meet regularly. Rev Hillary participates fully on this team, listens to our questions and ideas and more often than not then presents a strategy or solution that feels right to everyone. The more inclusive, the more considerate, the more aligned with mission and values, the better.
- Continue to offer multi-platform worship as the pandemic has subsided, which we believe is not only necessary but wise and more inclusive.
- Embraced the use of technology, where appropriate, to address pastoral care needs and to build connections.

Covid aside, Hillary is participating fully in discovery efforts of what 'long term' means to our church so that we plan strategically as appropriate. This will be a zone of conversation about who we are, whose we are, why we are, and where we are going. Hillary has expressed many times that she wants to continue to co-create a shared ministry, and help us grow into it. The future can be frightening but it feels like Hillary will help us to find our beloved community, a place where everyone is welcome, safe and loved."

Offering a little 'thank you' seems like offering a drop of water when we would like to direct rivers of gratitude and appreciation to Rev. Hillary. Sharing her own strong back and soft front, she invites us to explore our faithful relationships to the church and each other.

President's Report

Looking Ahead

What about Strategic Planning? We will take the lessons of the last two years, the inventory of the B&G team, input from all committees and councils (and anyone else who steps forward!), as well as guidance from the UUA regional staff, as we consider how best to serve the mission in First Universalist's future years.

But! Diminishing volunteerism in all age groups, ambiguous grief for the world, and uncertainty in any definite future seem to be pointing us to a different kind of vision work. Rather than script a crystal clear 5-year plan which charts the work of the organization, the new way might be to 'center our gifts', our heartfelt hopes and passions, and then to let that be our beacon for the path ahead.

For example, the more each person feels seen and heard and understood (plus loved and respected) the better First Universalist will function, for our personal spiritual journeys as well as for great exploring, learning, and justice-making.

We will ask ourselves many questions in order to reveal our vision:

- How can our programs and projects best engage people so that they feel great about the difference it makes in their lives and the world?
- Should 95 Main Street continue as a New Mainer house?
- Should we further expand our RE offerings?
- How can First Universalist be a resource for the wider community?
- Might we acquire land behind the church property for a contemplative or memorial garden?
- How can we make First Universalist even more relevant and visible, so that people who need us find us? I'm thinking of people who say, "I guess I was a UU my whole life and never knew it!"
- How can we grow our own brave wild hearts for joy and justice in our time on earth?
- What gifts do you have, what light, what hope, what strength?

In all our gatherings and decisions, in all the ways we do church and live our UU lives, whether we are laughing over tables of pie or lighting candles of sorrow, may we always have a "strong back and soft front."

President's Report

P.S.

Last but not least: the Board! I don't know if I have ever - in my whole UU life! - felt more gratitude and affection for a working group than for this one. In these days of strange new challenges, we wrestled with some gnarly questions. Often there was no clear answer, and yet at the end of each session we had a 'wow, that feels just right!' outcome. In other words, the group's combined wisdom was much better than any individual's first thoughts, and we were good at listening to each other. This gives me hope for all of us.

Please join me in celebrating amazing contributions from every person on the Board: Joanna Landsman, VP, Christy Hayashida, Clerk, Debbie Starkel, Treasurer, Stew Guernsey, At-Large, Andrew Tonks, At-Large, Nancy Dix, At-Large, Joe Dreher, At-Large*, and Rev. Hillary Collins-Gilpatrick, ex officio.

*Special thanks to Joe Dreher for his thoughtful work as he completes his Board term. Our 'group-think' was always better for his questions and ideas.

Submitted by Sarah Witte,
President of the Board of Trustees



Photos: Installation



An Installation Circle (above), Installation Cake (below, left), and Installation Rose Petals (below, right)



Director of Education & Communications



Gwen Matthews,
Director of Education &
Communications

Five Years at First U

When reflecting back on the 2021-2022 church year, I couldn't help but go back further and conjure memories of the past five and a half years I've spent with First Universalist.

I've reported to three ministers - two settled and one interim. I was able to witness from afar the serious, diligent work of the ministerial search committee and then the joy of successfully calling Rev. Hillary as First Universalist's new minister.

I've had the privilege of working alongside three music directors, four administrative assistants, three sextons, and five children's chapel teachers.

I've watched the 5th UU principle in action with the passing of the torch from lay leader to lay leader, Board member to Board member. I've seen the congregation vote to embrace the spirit of the 8th principle and consider it throughout all of church life.

Friends have become members of the church, members have moved or left the church, and some have passed on from this life.

There have been so many different fundraisers and events from Clam Fests to Clam Drops and Maine Farm Suppers to Murder Mystery Dinners.

Youth trips have gone from places as varied as Walden Pond, Salem, MA, and Kansas City, MO. Children and youth have engaged in a wide variety of justice making projects, community bonding fun and games, and spiritual reflection.

Members and friends undertook a massive project in planning and fundraising for a newly rebuilt, accessible chancel area, new windows in the Sanctuary, along with new floors in the Gathering Room and Kitty Corner.

Director of Education & Communications

Creative, justice-seeking members and friends envisioned and then transformed the former parsonage into 95 Main.

Of course, there has also been the pivot from in person to online church during a global pandemic. That small change that involved completely reimagining much of how we do church.

Together, we have experienced profound personal losses, indescribable, abundant joys, and the love and support of a community to hold us in all of our experiences. Through all of this, I am so inspired by our resilience, creativity, and faithful risk taking.

This Church Year

Coming back to focus on this church year, I am overcome with gratitude.

I'm grateful for First U's minister, Rev. Hillary, for her guidance, support, humor, presence, and tolerance of my many deadlines. I'm grateful for my colleagues, to Mack for her flexibility, creativity, and joie-de-vivre. To Sam, for the music he shares and the good humor he brings. To Andrea and Todd for their ongoing work and dedication, much of which is so often behind the scenes.

I'm grateful for the Board of Trustees and their steadfast, compassionate, thoughtful leadership. I'm grateful for the Covid Safety Team for their determination to keep us all safe and in community. I'm grateful to the Religious Exploration Council and the Adult RE Council for their creative ideas and willingness to try new things. I'm grateful to the Congregation Connections Committee for their optimism, hard work, and ability to bring people together, even in the time of covid restrictions.

I'm grateful for so many of you who pick up all of the tasks that make the church run smoothly, who give of their time and talents freely and abundantly. I'm grateful for the gifts of all in this congregation, the ones you share with us and the ones you share with the world as you go out and share the love, light, hope, and justice.

Respectfully submitted by Gwen Matthews, *Director of Ed. & Comm.*

Music Director



Sam Chandler,
Music Director

Modern Music in a Worshipful Space

This year the music director has worked hard to keep an interesting round robin of musical styles to try and keep the music at church sounding fresh each week. This has been despite reduced access to musicians and choir, which normally would serve the purpose of providing a diversity of aural experience. The music director has leaned heavily on performing as a vocalist as well as on the piano and guitar. Based on feedback from the church community, the music director has moved away from classical music and towards more

modern (pop) music and improvised and meditative music. The music director is still working on the best way to use the often bombastic sounding pop repertoire within a often more subdued and worshipful space. The struggle here is on whether to push the service towards the excitable emotions of modern pop, or to tone down the approach to fit a more meditative space. The music director has used the offertory as a space to experiment with pushing the energy of the service using pop, punk and rock.

First Universalist's Choir

The choir stopped and started a few times this year. They briefly met outside in the fall but then were forced to wait until March to begin regular rehearsals. The music director has tried to encourage a focus on helping choir members to build musicianship and familiarity with their voices. Despite some push from congregants and choir members to begin performing regularly again, the music director has pushed back on this, aiming instead to prepare small pieces for occasional participation in services, and then working on more involved arrangements for one service before summer. The music director aims to begin the year next year with the choir strong, with goals to perform more anthem-like pieces, with specific choir participation in approximately every other church service. Despite the numerous hiccups with getting choir going again, it is currently at its highest active membership in the music directors six years at the church, including a good blend of voices.

Respectfully submitted by Sam Chandler, *Music Director*

Photos: Winter 2022



Committee Members

Committee on Ministry

Nancy Dix

Ben Tupper

Emily Bogner-Williams

Rev. Hillary Collins-Gilpatrick,
Minister

Stewardship Committee

Marge Titcomb, *Chair*

Debbie Starkel, *Treasurer*

Cindy Guernsey

Frank Read

Jen Civiello

Joe Dreher

Tom Settlemire

Phyllis Jones

Buildings & Grounds Committee

Ben Tupper, *Chair*

Joe Dreher, *Board Liaison*

Pete Titcomb

John Vogt

Charles Herman

John Bogner-Williams

Leadership Development Committee

Lisa Patterson, *Chair*

Joanna Landsman, *Board Liaison*

Nancy Read

Tom Carlisle

Jeanette Newton

Cheryl McGilvery

Congregation Connections Committee

Sarah Witte, *Board Liaison*

Martha Hutchinson

Brenda McKee

Cindy Guernsey

Lisa Williams

Sandra Stark

Ryan McKisson

Rev. Hillary Collins-Gilpatrick, *Minister*

Gwen Matthews, *DEC*

Janice Tooker

Committee on Ministry

Healthy Conflict Response and Advising the Minister

The Committee on Ministry (COM) models a healthy conflict response as conflicts arise, and advises and introduces the minister to the Congregation of First U.

The COM met monthly on Zoom. There were no conflict situations to sort out and most of our discussions were related to pandemic response issues. The constantly shifting expectations around re-opening and returning to “normal” operations took some time to process. As this is the second year of Hillary’s ministry with First U and the second year of the pandemic, the COM was able to provide a context of pre-pandemic First U for Hillary.

The other major task for the COM is the completion of the Preliminary Fellowship Evaluation which is expected to be completed by the end of May, 2022.

Humbly submitted,

Nancy Dix



Singing Outside, April 2022

Stewardship

Promoting Financial Health and Growth in Dialogue with the Board

We serve First U with an attitude of abundance and in the spirit of the 8th Principle. We keep watch over our church financial health, we launch fundraisers for Justice, and we connect with our renters, including Village Nursery School and our New Mainers next door.

We celebrate our paradigm shift, funding our operating costs with Annual Commitments, Rentals, and Endowment Income. This shift allows our events proceeds to be dedicated wholly to Social Justice, as we Engage in our World as Spiritual Seekers.

We UUs Are Creative, Resourceful, Generous People!

- Joyfully in the spirit of Justice, we collaborated with the Board and Faith in Action to produce three “to go” Justice Events – two Maine Farm Suppers and the mini-Holiday Fair. Together we selected the recipients of the funds, raising \$6500 for the Wabanaki Garden Project and the New Mainer Garden Project, both projects of the Brunswick Topsham Land Trust.
- The February Annual Campaign, Touchstones, led by the Board, raised \$158,000 for the year that begins July 1, 2022.
- At the Board’s request we drafted a Gifts Policy. Key point of the Policy: The Board, in conversation with the donor, decides distribution of gifts among Operations, Designated Fund(s), and Endowments based on donor’s intention and church needs.
- We continue to monitor and share the state of our finances – monthly Financial Times highlighting opportunities, celebrations, and transparency.
- We are welcome your questions, concerns, and interest in all things Stewardship!

Respectfully, and filled with Gratitude, Marge Titcomb, Stewardship Chair

Buildings & Grounds

Keeping in Mind Present Use and Looking to the Future

The Buildings and Grounds Committee serves to maintain church properties in both the short and long term, as well as informing the board and congregation about its properties so that it can make informed decisions.

To that end Pete Titcomb and John Vogt have worked to digitize records and develop a maintenance database that will persist beyond the current members of the committee. Pete has supervised many regular inspections and maintenance calls. We hosted two maintenance days where we joined forces to maintain the grounds and work on building repair. We have developed plans to improve livability and safety aspects in our rental unit at 95 Main St.

John Bogner-Williams and Dorothy McAloney pushed through some recent kitchen updates funded by a legacy gift from Jane Cleaves. Wolfgang Wendler audited our telephone system and needs, and has proposed a plan that will meet our current needs at about half our current cost.

We shared a long-term view of capital costs with the board, and the board has taken up the conversation around long-term planning.

We expect to be busy in the coming year including updates to the telephone system, continued expansion of our documentation system, and to develop a long-range plan for the physical needs of 95 Main St.

Respectfully submitted by Ben Tupper

Leadership Development

Goals 2021 - 2022

- Assist Councils and Committees with the recruitment of new members
- Present slate of Board of Trustees to be voted on at the 2022 Annual Meeting
- Provide/facilitate training when needed
- Develop/plan/assist with Leadership Retreat Fall 2021
- Develop Board of Trustees Guide/Orientation

Work Done

- Slate of Board of Trustees presented for vote at 2022 Annual Meeting
- Assisted Committees and Councils with member recruitment
- Developed Board of Trustees Guide/Orientation

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Patterson



Candles in Children's Chapel, April 2022

Congregation Connections

Goals

This year the CCC was behind the scenes thinking ahead on all the things that keep us connected! There was lots of welcoming as well as following up on long time members and friends. We started the year with worship in the sanctuary but then had to go to zoom due to the pandemic numbers, so the CCC made extra efforts to create opportunities for people to see each other and keep in touch.

Our goals for the year were:

- Consider the spirit of the 8th Principle throughout.
- Keep people connected, both existing and new friends and members. Support Cottage Meetings/Circle Suppers (when safe to do so). Maintain the Church Directory and database. Imagine new ways for people to connect.
- Increase our visibility and accessibility, with our website and other social media space, in collaboration with the Director of Education and Communications. Consider the needs of the larger community by supporting FIA projects, or partnering with projects in the area.
- Grow the membership of 1st U (knowing that Congregational Growth is not just numbers.) Collaborate on a flexible “Pathway to Membership”. Follow up on visit cards, invite newcomers to zoom ‘tea’, etc. Conduct exit interviews for those leaving. Check in on people who are not around in meetings. Send a welcome package to the new friends.



Ministerial Procession Line Up, June 2022

Congregation Connections

Projects this Church Year

Here is a quick list of the items we planned and worked on. Many thanks to Gwen Matthews and Rev. Hillary for supporting our work in body mind and spirit.

August: Ingathering, Covid safety, welcoming

September: Review of worship and coffee hour: felt good! Name tags, all church outing plans

October: Winslow Park plans, fire pit for church, First U Store! Planning ahead for postcards

November: What do we need? Bread Communion, Christmas plans, inviting people, welcoming

December: Lots of details for Solstice and Christmas Eve hospitality, Boxing Day, new directory, goals for Midyear meeting report

January: things that feel good about the last year, Valentines postcards, organizing Pi/e day

February: newcomer contacts still going, updating the directory

March: Easter hospitality, Pi/e Day, directories,

April: Easter Sunday, welcoming newcomers, Bring a Friend, Directory updates, more videos

May: summer thoughts, Vespers, picnics, circle suppers! Pathway to Membership to be coordinated with Rev. Hillary for next year.

Installation reception.

We enjoy our meetings and welcome anyone who would like to drop in, or join!

Respectfully submitted by Sarah Witte

Council Members

Worship Council

Joanna Landsman, *Board Liaison*

Lily O'Brien-Gilbert, *Convener*

Andrew Tonks

Kai Fast

Kelsey Goldsmith

Rev. Hillary Collins-Gilpatrick,
Minister

Tech Crew

Pete Titcomb

Joanna Landsman

Jennifer Caven

Charlie Horstmann

Kai Fast

Religious Exploration Council

Christy Hayashida, *Chair*

Emily Bogner-Williams

Mika Lentz

Lesli Chambers

Gwen Matthews, *DEC*

Adult Religious Exploration Council

Cathy McKenna, *Chair*

Anne Turner

Andrew Tonks

Dale Shields

Gwen Matthews, *DEC*

Rev. Hillary Collins-Gilpatrick,
Minister

Faith In Action Council

Marge Titcomb, *Facilitator*

Jane Makela

Pete Titcomb

Sue Ellen Bordwell

Dale Shields

Steve Thomas

Mariana Tupper

Rev. Hillary Collins-Gilpatrick,
Minister

Faith In Action

Justice for All Will Help Heal Our World

The Faith in Action Council, guided by First U's endorsement of the 8th Principle to act to dismantle racism and other oppressions, recognizes the inter-connected web, where justice for all will help heal our world. Our purpose is to move us from something that we do to who we become. Our thematic goals for 2022 are: create a groundswell of enthusiasm for Justice; balance learning, direct action and advocacy; mirror MUUSAN Justice themes, and consider FIA funds and Justice fundraising. During this church year Faith in Action, with Rev. Hillary's leadership, guided several First U social justice initiatives.

Justice Events

Collaborated with the Board and Stewardship Committee, raising \$6,510 for the Brunswick Topsham Land Trust's Wabanaki and New Mainer Gardens. The events, though take-away due to COVID, were especially joyful to produce knowing every dollar was given for Justice.

Advocacy

Led by MUUSAN (Maine UU State Advocacy Network), we organized opportunities to support several pieces of legislation, most notably 3 bills in support of Wabanaki Alliance. This work will continue with next year's legislature season.

Education and Action

- Wabanaki Mapping Event – 27 participated.
- Portland Black History walks (2) – 34 participated; 1 more walk scheduled for June.
- Collaborating with several area organizations responding to the needs of Yarmouth's New Mainers, especially those temporarily settled at a local Yarmouth motel.
- Participating in YCARE (Yarmouth Community for Racial Equity) with focus on Indigenous history.

Half Plate Program

As of 5/22/22 First U has given \$6970 to 11 organizations.

Faith In Action

Social Justice Partnerships

- Connected with Hopeful Links, a Portland organization that supports New Mainer needs; First U contributed \$5000 to their Fund.
- Continued education support for 11 students in our partner church village of Gyepes.
- Responded to requests from our four 95 Main residents.

Respectfully submitted by Marge Titcomb



**Brunswick Topsham
Land Trust
New Mainer Garden,
Fall 2022**

***100% of the Proceeds from
the Takeaway Maine
Farm Supper went to
support BTLT and the
Wabanaki and New
Mainer Gardens,
Fall 2022***



Worship Council

Goals of the Worship Council

The Worship Council is a collaborative and creative group and enjoy our work. What is that work? The goals guiding us, and that we strive to deepen and widen are:

1. To create Sunday services that reunite and revitalize our community
2. Continue to offer hybrid worship options
3. Use UUA and Soul Matters resources to strengthen, inspire and diversify our programming and approaches
4. Make space for a diversity of voices and wider participation from our community and beyond
5. Consider the spirit of the 8th Principle throughout: weaving Justice into the practice of our faith
6. Use worship as a platform to explore and explain the meaning of all our Principles

Successes

What are some things we did this church year that we feel especially good about?

- We offered in-person, virtual, hybrid, multigenerational, indoor, and outdoor, all-welcoming worshipful programming for all!
- We developed creative approaches to Solstice, Christmas and other special services under very trying circumstances.
- We maintained a meaningful series of virtual Vespers services every Wednesday evening, providing needed breaks for Hillary with volunteer, lay-led services.
- We welcomed guest musicians to complement our fabulous Music Director, Sam, and to provide him a well-deserved break.
- We coordinated Sunday Services for the once-a-month Sundays our minister is off. Some services were led by guest ministers who brought with them different messages and perspectives. Some services were lay led by Worship Council members, Small Group Ministry members and Adult RE study groups. In arranging lay-led worship, we strived to make space for a diversity of voices and a wider participation from our community and beyond.

We look forward to continuing this joyful work together!

Respectfully submitted by the members of the Worship Council

Religious Exploration

Goals Met

- Increased justice work opportunities for children, youth, and families.
 - In the fall, JYG and SYG participated in a walking tour in Portland on Black & Indigenous history.
 - JYG and SYG made cat toys and dog toys to donate to an animal shelter.
 - In the spring, the youth groups did a litter cleanup in Royal River Park. Children's Chapel did a litter clean up in downtown Yarmouth on the sidewalks and roadway near the church.
 - Children participated in an Easter can hunt and donated the canned goods and other non-perishables to the Yarmouth Food Pantry.
- Offered easy ways for families to join in activities.
 - Including things like a trip to Portland's Children's museum, an ice skating soiree, cooking over a campfire, a movie night, an all ages Earth Fest picnic, and foursquare games.
- Completed three sessions of Our Whole Lives at the Maine Coast Waldorf School (7th grade, 8th grade, and 9th grade).
- Offered in-person youth groups and Children's Chapel when safe - purposeful activities that included community building, social justice, and learning.
- Offered take-home activity kits.
- Continued to offer programming and events, online and in person.
- Hired and trained Mack Jones as Children's Chapel teacher and then as Youth Facilitator.
- Made progress on developing a children's library.



Religious Exploration

Other Notes

- After church reopened, more families with younger children began attending. We are averaging six to eight children in Children's Chapel each week and often there are a few children who stay in the sanctuary with their grown ups.
- Unfortunately, we did not see this same uptick with families of middle and senior high school students, possibly because JYG and SYG had events to attend outside of church service hours. On average, more JYG and SYG youth attended social justice events than they did simply social events. Some SYG said they didn't attend events because they didn't know who or how many people would be at the event, so it was safer to just not attend.
- In an attempt to build relationships and to increase the number of kids attending an event, we invited St. Barts and First Parish junior and senior youth groups to a movie night. We did not hear back from St. Barts. First Parish thanked us and said they would let their youth families know. No children from these churches attended.

Goals and Ideas for Next Year

- To increase JYG and SYG engagement, we'd like to offer service and/or learning trips during the 2022-2023 church year if reasonably safe to do so.
- Offer regular youth group activities on a weekly basis.
- Bring back Our Whole Lives offerings to the church.
- Resume Peace Play for Littles program when safe to do so.
- Continue developing the Children's Library space.

Respectfully submitted by Christy Hayashida



Adult Religious Exploration

New Adult RE Council Launched!

This year First U launched a new and improved Adult RE Council. Despite all the pandemic induced uncertainty, the Council managed to organize a number of diverse educational offerings for our curious community and has high hopes of expanding our offerings in the future.

In the fall we organized several book discussions around our summer congregation reads and worked with the Faith in Action Committee to enhance their work in support of Native American rights by holding a book discussion and co-hosting a movie about our Wabanki neighbors.

In the winter our own Andrew Tonks led a four-week course on the Gospel of Mary that was well attended and well received.

This spring with the generous help of Rev. Hillary we introduced What do UU think? a new opportunity to get together and talk about topical issues on Thursday afternoons. Rev. Hillary also led an adult Coming of Age class, which gave a number of our members the chance to explore and articulate their religious beliefs. We even organized a lecture on the historical background to the current crisis in Ukraine, given by our resident eastern European historian, Cathy McKenna.

Along the way our Council has established general goals and guidelines for our work and collaborative relations with other Church groups, especially the Faith in Action Committee. We are an enthusiastic group of folks bubbling with ideas for future Adult RE offerings. We welcome both input and additional members as we are always on the look out for more ideas and opportunities to get together and explore issues of interest to our congregation.

Looking forward to next fall, we have chosen a fascinating book for our congregation summer read: *Milltown*, a thought provoking book about economic and climate justice set just up the Androscoggin River in Mexico, Maine. We have reached out to the author, Kerri Arsenault in hopes of hosting a discussion with her this fall. We're still on the look out for a fun beach read that we can talk about in August. Stay tuned for more information and please let us know what you would like to see in the future!

Covid-19 Safety Team

Developing Guidelines and Maintaining Safety

The charge to the Covid-19 Safety Team was to develop guidelines for reopening the church during the second year of the Covid-19 pandemic. We decided to work on a consensus model, to consult scientific data, using both case counts and hospitalizations, to make the safety of the congregants and staff the primary focus, and to continue the online Zoom option for worship. We developed a color coded guide to re-opening with covidactnow.org as the resource.

As cases declined in the fall of 2021, we began to add in person options to worship, however, a January surge in cases caused us to return to distance only worship. The Maine Council of Churches requested churches to stop in person services during the surge to support the overwhelmed hospital staff and First U complied with that request.

At the time of this report, we have resumed a hybrid worship model, both online and in person. There is limited singing by the choir and masks are required inside the building except when eating or drinking. Singing outdoors and having coffee hour outdoors are the norm. Several celebrations, (i.e. Pi(e) Sunday, Easter, and Earth Day) successfully transitioned to a mix of indoor/outdoor activities. A new video, "When In Doubt, Sit it Out," has been added to our weekly online newsletter and to the Sunday online message.

As the warm weather approaches, and our beautiful restored windows can be thrown open, we hope to continue a hybrid approach.

The Covid-19 Safety Team will continue to monitor the covidactnow.org designations and to follow the guidance of the Maine CDC.

See attachments: [color coded chart](#) and [current policy](#)

Members of the Covid-19 Safety Team include Sarah Witte, Joanna Landsman, Ben Tupper, Christy Hayashida, Nancy Dix, Rev. Hillary Collins-Gilpatrick, and Gwen Matthews.

Humbly submitted,

Nancy Dix

