

**Annual Report to the Congregation
Unitarian Universalist Church of Lancaster
May 2023**

1. Board Membership/Leadership

In May 2022, Steve Jones was elected by the congregation as a Trustee to replace Brad Weaver whose term had expired. Darcy Pollock and Carole Campbell were re-elected to serve their second three-year terms. In June 2022 Fred Foster-Clark was elected by the Board as its President, Alan Jacobs, as Vice-President, and Kim Chappell, as Secretary. Jonas Kauffman continued into the third year of his term as Treasurer.

2. Goal Setting and Action Planning

At its September 2022 retreat, the Board developed and adopted a set of goals to guide its work and the congregation's efforts for this church year. These goals were as follows:

1. Update our safety policies and procedures with initial focus on safety during worship services and gatherings in the sanctuary.
2. Growing our membership in the following ways: being as inclusive as possible; encouraging greater family participation; and raising UUCL's profile in the community.
3. Leadership development and volunteer recruitment to better sustain our programs.

In December 2022, an Action Planning Task Force was put into place with a charge to assist the Board in developing action steps specifically to meet Goal #2 and the volunteer recruitment part of Goal #3. Their final report was made to the Board in March 2023 after considerable congregational input. The report is available on the UUCL website and provides a foundation to UUCL's efforts now and in the near future.

3. Budget and Finances

We began the fiscal year in July 2022 with an annual budget of about \$430k. While our stewardship efforts fell well short of our target of \$305k, control over expenses and a bequeathed gift have led us to project that we will end this fiscal year in June pretty close to within budget even while avoiding spending much of the \$18k in prior year surpluses that was built into the budget. The proposed budget for 2023-24 comes in at about \$433k with over \$36k needed from prior year surpluses to fill the gap between revenues and expenses. This budget comes up for a congregational vote this month.

In other financial news of note, substantial outlays were needed from our Capital Reserves to cover the considerable expense of replacing one of the chillers and the pumps needed to operate our cooling system. In March 2023 this work was done, and a fully functioning HVAC system is now in place. A still substantial but much smaller sum was

needed for elevator repairs necessary to maintain our permit. Much of this latter cost was covered by a gift from one of our congregants.

4. Staffing

In May 2022 the Board learned of the resignation of the Reverend Israel Buffardi after his second year of ministry. Consultation with the UUA and the formation of a committee (Fred Foster-Clark, Darcy Pollock, Stephanie Santiago, Randy Newswanger) to search for a contract minister to replace Rev. Buffardi began quickly and resulted in the decision in July 2022 to hire the Reverend Patricia Guthmann Haresch as a contract minister. We agreed to a hybrid arrangement with Rev. Haresch (Rev. Pat) being on site for Sundays when preaching and other times when feasible as necessary. The Board agreed in February with Rev. Pat to extend her contract for a second year (through August 2024). Affiliated Community Ministers Elizabeth Haralam Shuba and Heather Gehron-Rice along with retired minister Steve Jones have supported Rev. Pat's ministry.

Another new face to most congregants in fall of 2022 was Alan Dynin who assumed the role of accompanist and impressed all with the quality and range of his keyboard skills. Also on the musical side, Eli Sauls continued his leadership but with a role redefinition and expanded hours to become Director of Musical and Technical Arts this February. Also, to better reflect job duties and staffing structure, the Facilities Manager job title has been changed to Facilities Director.

On the negative side, we lost our Director of Lifespan Faith Development, Lenore Bejare-Dukes, in February when she left after five years to take a job as Congregation Life Staff with the UUA Central East Region. Lenore worked hard and long with her Faith Development Council team, especially Joanna Ruhl and Suz Boyle, to plan for the late winter and spring RE program to continue in her absence. Both interim (until summer) and a permanent DLFD replacements are being sought. We wish Lenore all the best in her new role.

Other needed updates were made to staff employment agreements, pay rates, and our Personnel Manual. Most significantly, the Personnel Manual was changed so that congregational members could now be considered for permanent employment, something that was previously disallowed.

5. Important Events

a. Ordination

In October 2022 UUCL was thrilled to host the ordination of the Reverend Elizabeth Haralam Shuba in our sanctuary who grew up in this congregation and now serves it as an Affiliated Community Minister while working as a hospital chaplain in Lancaster. It was a proud and celebratory moment for our church.

b. UUCL Mural Project

Also in October 2022 work began on the painting of a mural for the outside of the church. This project was initiated last year under the guidance of the Mural Task Force and included commissioning a local artist, Gerri McGritty, and working with her and the congregation to finalize a design. Funding from a Walters Unitarian Grant covered both the design and installation of this mural which expresses the mission and theology of UUCL.

c. Block Party

Under the leadership of Stephanie Santiago and Sindy Pollard, UUCL will be hosting a May 20 Block Party to celebrate our community, welcome the church's neighbors, and dedicate our new mural.

d. UUCL Auction

Once again, the Auction Committee designed and executed a most successful Auction with an in-person opening event in March 2023. It ended with about \$35,000 raised for the church's Operating Budget.

6. Policies

a. Health & Safety

The church year began with a return to our sanctuary for Sunday services, held in multiplatform format whenever possible. With the guidance of the COVID Task Force, the UUCL COVID Policies were reviewed and updated twice during the year. Masking of congregants during services and congregational meetings was required until March 2023 when masking became optional.

Last August, the Safer Congregations Committee (SCC) was reactivated by the Board and immediately looked into issues surrounding Sunday morning security. An initial decision to enter into an agreement with a local security firm was eventually retracted by the Board in favor of further congregational input and further investigation of the logistics of employing security personnel. In March 2023, a congregational workshop was held under the guidance of the Reverend Sunshine Wolfe from the regional UUA office. From that workshop came calls to develop a more comprehensive plan for church-wide security and safety with input from marginalized communities to ensure that we can stay both safe and welcoming. Also, the SCC and the Operations Committee continued several efforts to enhance the security of our building and programs including changes to building access, planning updates to the security cameras, and holding an evacuation drill. Significantly, a robust team of greeters/ushers, organized by Susan Lithgoe, was in place each week for Sunday services to provide both welcoming and security.

b. Facility Use

A task force of mostly staff and Board members met several times to review and revise facility use policies and propose a new facility rental fee structure. With considerable behind the scenes work by Kelsey Holl, a new Rentals and Facilities Use policy and Fee Schedule document was approved by the Board in February 2022. The policy and fees immediately went into effect and can be found on the UUCL website.

c. Conflict Management

The Committee on Ministry updated its charge and recommended revisions to the UUCL Conflict Management Policy. Both the charge and the new Conflict Management Policy were approved by the Board in November 2022 and shared with the congregation at the fall Congregational Meeting.

d. Committee Reorganization

Considerable discussion about reorganization has taken place over the course of this year – both at the Board level and with the Leaders' Circle. Also, a workshop was held after church in late February with a Power Interfaith representative to discuss the formation of a Justice Council. All this follows up upon work begun and discussed during congregational discussions held during the prior church year. While no finalized restructuring plan has so far been approved, there continues to be movement both toward constructing mission-based councils and creating shorter-term, more flexible project-based volunteer opportunities in lieu of ongoing programmatic committees.

7. Social Justice/Community Outreach

a. Refugee Support

Beginning last summer, UUCL has been sponsoring Congolese refugees Elevantina Ombeni and Emmanuel Ndayizeyo and their children Pacific, Gadi, Joshua and Jackson since their arrival in Lancaster from a Ugandan refugee camp in August 2022. Sponsorship includes average 20 hours/week volunteer time, transport to doctor, dental, vaccination and specialist appointments; transport/assistance at Clothing Bank, Thrift Stores, Food HUB; PTO attendance and field trips, English tutoring; job assistance, translation of work documents; computer trouble-shooting, banking, budgeting, bill autopay and financial assistance forms; health emergencies and medicine/pharmacy set-up; home maintenance and landlord issues; cultural insights and paid weekly translation/interpretation via Kinyarwanda-English. UUCL's support for this family is being coordinated by Steph Santiago and Marian Joyce with a team of six to eight regular volunteers: Bette Phillips-Hershey, Karen Galiano, Diane Madrigal, Carol Hawk, Walt Poyck and more. Funding supplied by the Art Walters Trust.

b. Walters Unitarian Program Grants

The Walters Trust Program Committee is charged with receiving and approving grant requests from in house and outside non-profit organizations to support the goals established by Art and Selma Walters in their trust document. During the previous 12 months, the Committee has approved and funded 17 grant proposals (out of 19 received) totaling almost \$127,500. (Distributions from the Trust into the Walters Program account amount to between \$120,000 – \$130,000 annually.) Among the largest recipients were the Lancaster Bail Fund, the Lancaster Cleft Palate Clinic, Planned Parenthood – Keystone (in honor of Dr. Dan Wert), the UUA Disaster Fund (for Hurricane Ian relief), and the Immigration Legal Clinic operated by the Parish Resource Council. Additionally, the Walters Program fund was used to underwrite the costs of newspaper advertising to counter Christian Nationalism in our community. It also now provides a match (on a one-year trial basis) for the congregation's monthly Share the Plate donation.

c. Share the Plate (STP)

The following organizations were supported in 2022-23 (collection dates and total donation in parentheses):

- Planned Parenthood – Keystone (July-Oct.; \$964)
- The Common Wheel (Nov.-Dec.; \$535)*
- Patients R Waiting (Jan.-Feb.; \$790)*
- Lancaster Cleft Palate Clinic (Mar.-Apr.; \$788)*
- Lancaster LGBTQ+ Coalition (May-June)

[*Note: STP donations beginning in November were then matched by an additional matching donation from the Walters Unitarian Trust. Figures shown do NOT include the match.]

Please note that this report is selective and does not include all the events, activities, or programming of the church. Instead, it reflects many of the issues and events of special interest and importance to the UUCL Board of Trustees and excludes most things connected to worship and faith development which are better reported elsewhere and by other church leaders.

Respectfully submitted,

Fred Foster-Clark

UUCL Board President 2022-2023