

2024 Annual Meeting



Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Midland

Seek truth. Do justice. Center love.

October 20, 2024

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Agenda

2024 Annual Business Meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland

October 20, 2024 - 12:30 p.m.

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|-------|---|------------------------------|
| I. | Call to Order | Maxine Guettler, President |
| II. | Chalice Lighting | Rev. Eric Severson, Minister |
| III. | Covenant | Maxine Guettler, President |
| IV. | Confirmation of Quorum | Beth Sperry, Secretary |
| V. | Ministry Team Reports | |
| | A. Minister's Report | Rev. Eric Severson |
| | B. Other Reports | |
| VI. | Governance Committee Reports | |
| | A. President's Report | Maxine Guettler, President |
| | B. Treasurer's Report | Scott McDonald, Treasurer |
| | C. Stewardship Committee | Craig Murchison, Chair |
| | D. Endowment Committee | Jim Falender, Chair |
| | E. Other Reports | |
| VII. | Report of the Nominating Committee and Election | Shannon Sonoras, Nominating |
| | A. President-Elect – Monica Hughes | |
| | B. Treasurer – Jim Stewart | |
| | C. Board Member-at-Large (two-year term) – Christina VanPoucker | |
| | D. Nominating Committee (two-year term) – Susan Mayer | |
| VIII. | Vote on Nominees | Maxine Guettler, President |
| IX. | Installation of 2025 Board | Eric Severson, Minister |

Congregation: *We, members of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland have gladly elected you to serve on the Board of Directors, to conduct the business and administration of this Fellowship, in concert with its vision, mission, and covenant, effective January first. We offer you our faith and our trust, our ideas and our cooperation, our hands to help, and our spirits to support you.*

New board members: *We, elected members of the Board of Directors, will faithfully conduct the business and administration of this Fellowship. We offer you our speaking and our listening, our leadership and our service, our respect and our caring for the interests of us all.*

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|---|
| X. | 2025 Budget Proposal | Scott McDonald, Treasurer |
| XI. | Vote on Mission/Vision Statements | Maxine Guettler, President
Marsha McDonald, Task Force |

XII.	Presentation of the Unsung Hero Award	Beth Sperry, Secretary
XIII.	Comments & Suggestions from the Membership	
XIV.	Adjourn	Maxine Guettler, President
XV.	Chalice Extinguishing	Rev. Eric Severson, Minister

2023 Annual Meeting Minutes

2023 Annual Business Meeting Minutes of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland October 22, 2023

- I. Call to Order
12:36pm
Tom Bailey, President
- II. Chalice Lighting
Rev. Eric Severson, Minister
- III. Covenant
Tom Bailey, President
- IV. Confirmation of Quorum
Chris Nakamura, Secretary

62 present 32 required
- V. Ministry Team Reports
 - A. Minister's Report
Rev. Eric Severson

Rev. Eric reviews the report he submitted in the annual report. See that report for full text.
- VI. Governance Committee Reports
 - A. President's Report
Tom Bailey, President

See president's report full text in the annual report.

Thoughts added to the submitted report:

Need to thank Rev. Eric, the paid staff, the board members, all the many volunteers.

In-the process of reviewing our congregational vision, mission, covenant statements. Need to complete the survey. Give the feedback we need.

Stay tuned for news on Solar panels.

It has been a good, busy year. A lot going on. It is good, coming back from the dark days of the pandemic. Seeing uptick in attendance, and new members. A start contrast to many churches that are seeing declining attendance and membership.

We have a lot to offer. We just need to get the word out.

Tom Bailey hands chair duties over to Maxine Guettler to co-present Treasurer's report.

B. Treasurer's Report Maxine Guettler (chair)

Tim Wagner & Tom Bailey: Review the report Scott McDonald submitted. See annual report for full text of that report.

C. Stewardship Committee Craig Murchison, Chair

Craig Murchison: We have reached \$225k, 95% of our goal, with 87% of membership pledging. This is a good outcome. Thank everyone for pledging.

D. Endowment Committee Jim Falendar, Chair

Jim Falendar: Started years ago with the idea to fund special projects. Over the last 30 years there have been 30 contributions totaling ~\$300,000. The contributions range from \$10 to over \$100,000. There have been 32 projects funded through the fund. Ranged from small, for a table to large, for a parking lot repavement. Plan to play an important role in funding and supporting the solar panels. Balance is about \$442,000. While the original contribution was through a will, people can give at any time.

VII. Report of the Nominating Committee and Election Michaele Malecki

A. President-Elect - Jim Crissman

B. Secretary - Beth Sperry

C. Board Member-at-Large (2 year term) - Janelle Dombek

D. Nominating Committee (2 year term) - Shannon Sonoras

VIII. Vote on Nominees Tom Bailey, President

The nominees are elected with all Ayes, no Nays, and no abstentions

IX. 2024 Budget Proposal Scott McDonald, Treasurer

Tim & Tom budget proposal:

The motion passed with all Ayes, no nays no abstentions

X. Presentation of the Unsung Hero Award

Chris Nakamura, Secretary

The Unsung Hero award is presented to Janelle Dombeck

XI. Comments & Suggestions from the Membership

XII. Adjourn

Tom Bailey, President

Tom adjourns the meeting by consent.

XIII. Chalice Extinguishing

Rev. Eric Severson, Minister

Adjourn: 1:15pm

Nominees to the Board of Directors and Nominating Committee

President-Elect (One-Year Term) – Monica Hughes

Treasurer (Two-Year Term) – Jim Stewart

Member-At-Large (Two-Year Term) – Christina VanPoucker

Nominating Committee (Two-Year Term) – Susan Mayer

Minister's Annual Report 2024

Rev. Eric Severson

The fellowship remained strong over the past year. We lost a handful of fellowship members in 2023-2024, but gained several more, bringing the number back above 100 and allowing us three delegates to the UUA General Assembly.

A Multigenerational, Liberal Religious Community

I officiated at the celebrations of life for former member Marty Fitzhugh and for Adair Cleland-Host, son of former members Heather and Jon Cleland-Host.

Fellowship cofounder Bernice Sizemore died at the age of 97 in April 2023 (see her [obituary here](#)). She preferred no memorial service, but we will miss her and have recognized her on our memorial tree in the sanctuary. In contrast, we celebrated our children in May with a child dedication for Arilynn Cruff, Averiana Cruff, and Fox Cervený.

Religious education enrollment by the end of the 2023-2024 program year was 40 children! As a result, we hired two additional childcare assistants, Krystal Barnhart and Sam Keeler. The Religious Education Team returns, this year, to a three-year cycle that includes learning Unitarian Universalist principles and values. For this program to succeed, we need adult volunteers as classroom and childcare assistants and teen advisors.

A Beacon to the Religious Seeker

Outreach and collaboration efforts continued with local organizations, including Phoenix Community Farm, Great Lakes Bay Pride, Midland Area Interfaith Friends, and the Midland County Juvenile Justice Center. We continued to cosponsor Midland's Juneteenth celebration area LGBTQ pride events. We also held a handful of special collections for additional organizations.

Our "branding" efforts continued with UU FoM logo T-shirts and hoodies, with plans for more items available. We continued to have a steady stream of visitors and new congregants throughout the year. We have made some physical changes to our space to help make it more hospitable for all. This includes expanding our social space and moving the fellowship's office nearer to the front door.

We have welcomed 12 new members since September 2023, including Dominic Altmeier, Amy Bailey, Penny Coates, Alex Godinez, Becky Hansen, Sam Keeler, Jacqueline Markey, Drew Miller, Aidalys Rivera-Miller, Katie Turnbull, Mark Turnbull, and Laura Wagner.

We have worked through a process for revising our vision and mission statements, to be approved at this annual meeting. The new mission will be a spark for new initiatives and a measuring stick for all that we do. Next, we will focus our programs, activities, and finances to better live out our values and achieve the vision. It may require changes in the way we do things, but I hope you will meet these changes with curiosity, grace, and enthusiasm. If

you would like to share your gifts, please consider how you might help bring our mission to life. If you have questions, please let me know.

Thank you also to our dedicated staff members, Andrew, Jen, Krystal, Melanie, Sam, Samuel, Sandy, and Wendy, as we embark on a new mission together. And, once again, I thank our board members for their leadership and commitment.

Blessings, Rev. Eric Severson

- Pastoral Care Team: Gisela Bailey, Gail Kantak, Speed Malecki, Cherie Marks, Scott McDonald, Beth Sperry
- Worship Team: Laura Wagner, Jim Falender, Jill Crissman, Susan Mayer, Sarah Nuss-Warren, Connie Ofori-Dankwa, Jill Crissman, Beth Sperry, Marsha McDonald, Joanne Rummel
- Engagement Team (rebirthing)
- Staff members: Office Administrator Wendy Altmeier, Nursery Caregivers Krystal Barnhart and Sam Keeler, Sexton Sandy Hay, Director of Religious Education Jennifer Page, Choir Director Andrew Schulz, Accompanist and Music Coordinator Melanie Willison, Audiovisual Technician Samuel McLennan
- Religious Education Team: Patricia Calahan, Carol Cooper, Shana Barth, Amanda Arcuri, Lisa Janetski
- Social Justice Team: Maxine Guettler, Susan Mayer, Scott McDonald, Jennifer Streid-Mullen, Alan Ells
- Committee on Ministry: Marlene Hickman, Kevin King (former), Donna Wedge, Kurt Sonoras, Michael Malecki, Tom Bailey
- Music: Andrew Schulz, Melanie Willison, Roy Wedge, Sandy Hay, Sarah Nuss-Warren, Drew Miller

President's Report 2024

Maxine Guettler, President, Board of Directors

It has been a great pleasure, and a new challenge, to serve as your Board President this year!

This is a position that is not completed alone! I have to give a huge thank you to the staff, board, and all the fellowship volunteers who help along the way. We are a community of volunteers and it certainly takes a village to complete all the tasks that must be done to keep us running.

The staff have been wonderful! Thank you for answering my MANY questions with a smile, and sometimes an eye roll, lol! To the Board of Trustees: Jim Crissman President-Elect, Beth Sperry Secretary, Scott MacDonald Treasurer, Dan Sealey Member-at-Large, and Janelle Dombek Member-at-Large, it has been a privilege to work with all of you. What a great group!!! You all jumped in and helped out whenever needed....even in the middle of the grocery store!

Thank you to all of the volunteers who keep this wonderful place running so smoothly. From committee chairs, committee members, greeters, ushers, kitchen help, coffee makers, dessert providers, RE helpers, worship team volunteers, flower weeders, pasty makers...I could go on and on, it takes everyone pitching in to keep our fellowship working. I appreciate everyone who helps out, both with long-term or one-time events, we need everyone.

Thank you, Rev. Eric, for all your guidance and support this year.

It has been a busy year. Look around the building! The solar panels are up and running! Building and Grounds looked around and devised a plan to use our space a little differently to accommodate our growing membership. What a labor of love! Take some time and thank them for their hard work! The Vision and Mission Task Force has put together a new Vision and Mission for us moving forward, based on input from group meetings of fellowship members. It reflects the direction we are moving in. I appreciate the time and effort they put into developing this new statement. Thank you, Marsha MacDonald, Vickie Reidelberger, Jim Stewart, Lisa Janetski, and Sandy Hay, for all your hard work. It's up to us now to put it into motion. Janelle Dombek, Member-at-Large, has been working with administrator Wendy Altmeier and a team to get our records organized on a Shared Google Drive. This will allow us to have one space for all of our record retention. Thank you for leading the charge on this, I marvel at your organizational skills. We have a task force looking at accessibility in our building and around the fellowship.

As a fellowship, we've been visible in the community, practicing our values. We were represented at Loon's Pride Night, Pop-Up Pride in Mt. Pleasant which we shared with Central Michigan UU Church, Great Lakes Bay Pride, Juneteenth, continued partnership

with Phoenix Farm, Midland Area Interfaith Friends and I'm sure many more that I have missed. Thank you all for showing up and representing our UU values.

Looking outward at the larger UU community, Article II was voted on at the General Assembly and passed. As we move forward, let's look at how we share our UU values. This does not eliminate the seven principles that many of us treasure. It just restates our values a little differently.

I treasure this fellowship and all of you. This is my religious home, where I have raised my family and developed my own set of beliefs. I want it to be here for many years to come. Over the following year, ask yourself what it means to you. How can I get involved? How do I share the many values we all share together with the rest of our community? Our fellowship community is growing. Welcome our new members and friends. Invite them to join you as you sing in the choir, attend a pasty bake, clean up the yard, or just go for coffee. Invite a friend or family member to join you on a Sunday morning. I really believe there are so many like-minded individuals who don't know about us yet. Let's invite them in with a warm welcome, and maybe some coffee.

Thank you for allowing me to participate on the Board this year, it has been a privilege.

Maxine Guettler
2024 Board President

Lifespan Religious Education 2024

Jennifer Page, Director of Religious Education

Team Members: Jennifer Page (Director of Religious Education), Amanda Arcuri, Carol Cooper, Shana Barth, Patricia Calahan, Katie Turnbull

Nursery Staff: Krystal Barnhart, Sam Keeler

The Lifespan Religious Education Ministry Team is led by the Director of Religious Education working with a team of volunteers. The team meets together once a month and collaborates to create Sunday morning religious education classes for children, organize groups for youth and families, all ages services, and coordinate religious education efforts with other groups and teams. We base our programming on our team's vision:

We envision a program that celebrates our Unitarian Universalist identity, expands our spiritual, experiential, and intellectual religious understanding, and builds a sense of community. It is our mission each year to create a religious education program that engages all students in positive, meaningful religious exploration with a focus on ethical, spiritual, intellectual, and interconnected Unitarian Universalist faith development.

The Religious Education Team will be utilizing a three-year curriculum entitled, *Being a UU*. This program has been used in the RE program in years past, and focuses on learning the principles and values of Unitarian Universalist, identifying the values, and using the values in our everyday lives. The RE Team meets once-a-month to discuss upcoming curriculum, events, volunteer attendance, and plans for the upcoming weeks. Attendance for the RE program increased steadily in 2024 with many new families and children visiting the program and/or attending regularly.

In 2024, the RE team added two regular staff members in order to provide stability as attendance numbers can be unpredictable. Additional volunteers for RE are needed. This year, the team will put emphasis on both the Sunday curriculum and activities, as well as outside programs and events. Some examples of potential programs and events include:

- Holiday-themed family fun nights (Halloween event October 26th)
- Family-friendly outings (i.e. Dow Gardens)
- Young Adult Book Club (teens)
- Religious Learning Experiences (tour of various religions and their worship spaces and/or workshops and activities during RE)

The RE Team will continue to work collaboratively with the United Church of Christ (UCC) on the OWL (Our Whole Lives) lifespan sexuality education program for the 2024-2025 year. Volunteers with training in the OWL program will be needed.

Committee on Ministry

Committee Members: Tom Bailey, Marlene Hickman, Michael Malecki, Kurt Sonoras, and Donna Wedge.

Committee members are appointed by the board for a three-year term in a staggered pattern so there is continuity on the team.

The mission of the Committee on Ministry is to promote the well-being of the congregation's total ministry. The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland's (UUFoM) Board of Directors charges this committee to monitor, assess, and provide feedback about the various ministry teams to the Minister, the Board, and the Unitarian Universalist Association. This will be done through both active and passive involvement with the congregation of this Fellowship

The Board and this committee recently accepted the resignation of our chair, Kevin King, and the board appointed Tom Bailey in his place. We will be naming a new chair person in the near future. This committee completed its 2024 assessment of UUFoM teams and presented the results to the Board.

The committee's procedures document is still being reviewed and revised. We hope each Committee on Ministry member will be able to access a shared document file in the near future.

Our plan is to support the minister in achieving the following objectives in the coming year:

- Implementing the new mission statement
- Continuing to support the RE program as it expands and grows.
- Strengthening communication with ministry teams
- Promoting enthusiasm and engagement
- Encouraging congregational leaders and volunteers to share in the work of this Fellowship's ministry

Stewardship

Committee Members: Craig Murchison (chair), Simon Cook, Dot Hornsby, Beth Sperry, and Fred Thomas

We met during the months of June, July and August via Zoom to put together the annual Stewardship booklet with the important help of Alisha Toyzan and Wendy Altmeier. The booklet and pledge forms were emailed to members of UUFoM. Updates, explanations and encouragement were given Sundays in September and October. Personal letters were mailed to members who we had not heard from by 10/10/24. As of 10/13/24 we have raised 86% of our goal.

Choir

The 2023-2024 season began with rehearsals in late August, under the leadership of Andrew Schulz, and performed at least once every month from September through June.

December's traditional Choir Sunday service had the group singing many songs for the service from the dais. The group sang at the Dow Gardens Christmas Walk once again.

The choir was also able to contribute to two additional services that were predominantly music performed by soloists, smaller ensembles, and the choir. These services were in February and April.

Choir Members:

Dominic Altmeier	Jacqueline Markey	Ellen Severson
Sara Clavez	Samuel McClennan	Eric Severson
Janelle Dombek	Marsha McDonald	Shannon Sonoras
Alisha Draper	Drew Miller	Beth Sperry
Sandy Hay	Cathy Mitzel	Jim Stewart
Marlene Hickman	Chris Nakamura	Laura Wagner
Judith Hill	Sarah Nuss-Warren	Tim Wagner
Mary Johnson	Linda Rector	Donna Wedge
Cindy Kempl	Karen Roth	Roy Wedge
Carolyn Mahaffey	Dan Sealey	

Men's Group

The UU FoM Men's Group meets on the first Monday of each month from 7:30 to 9:30 PM, running from October through June. Meetings are held at either the Murchison or Malecki home, with attendance typically ranging from 5 to 7 men. Participants are encouraged to propose topics of personal importance, leading to discussions on a wide range of subjects, including current events, politics, the roles of men and boys, being an American, marriage, various faiths (including UU), and personal experiences. A welcome message for the group is now included in the weekly UU FoM eNews.

By Craig Murchison

Three Jewels Sangha

The Three Jewels Sangha is still going strong, with several committed members, most of whom are not UUs. We meet in person and over Zoom and begin each session with a meditation. This year two of our young members moved out of state, but continue to join us on Zoom. A true UU Sangha, we don't follow one Buddhist path or lineage. After meditation we move on to our study and discussion, with someone reading from the current book. We pause every few paragraphs to digest and discuss what we just read. We generally don't get through many pages because the material is so juicy and our free-wheeling discussions are so lively, deep, and full of laughter.

This year we completed our study of *The World Could Be Otherwise*, by Norman Fischer. We then moved on to *The Diamond That Cuts Through Illusion*, Thich Nhat Hanh's translation of, and commentary on, *The Diamond Sutra*. We're currently deep in another Norman Fischer book, *Training in Compassion: Zen Teachings on the Practice of Lojong*. It's important to us to use our study and time together to apply what we've learned to our lives. As always, we welcome anyone who is curious about Buddhism or meditation, or who just wants to carve out an hour to be still and study with a kind, loving Sangha.

By Beth Sperry (Chair)

Social Justice Team

Team Members: Susan Mayer (Chair), Scott McDonald, Maxine Guettler, Alan Ells, Jennifer Streid-Mullen

The Social Justice Team (SJT) has expanded areas of advocacy to allow more responsiveness to current issues such as gun safety, reproductive rights and democracy.

Activities for the last year:

1. Worked with Building and Grounds, Finance, and Endowment teams resulting in the installation of solar panels at the Fellowship.
2. Joined with Religious Education in the Guest at Your Table collection for the UU Service Committee.
3. Led the fellowship effort to host a Ramadan dinner at the Islamic Center.
4. Sponsored a service on Reproductive Rights with an option for fellowship members to donate to the Midland Coalition for Choice (no special collection because they are a 501(c) 3 or 4 organization.)
5. Paid permit for the Phoenix Community Farms stand on the Fellowship grounds.
6. Sponsored Juneteenth Celebration.
7. Sponsored Pride Fest, Pride Pop-up Event in Mt Pleasant, and the Loons Pride Night.
8. Announced various UUA and local election activities.
9. Held Anti-Racism Discussion Groups and took a trip to the Ziibiwing museum.

Pastoral Care

Team Members: Rev. Eric Severson, Gisela Bailey (Chair), Beth Sperry (Co-chair), Scott McDonald, Robert Malecki, Cherie Marks, Gail Kantak .

The purpose of the Pastoral Care Team is to help fellowship members who need a helping hand in various situations. Team members make visits to hospitals and nursing homes, help with rides, shopping, meals in coordination with members of the fellowship, and provide a listening ear and a cup of coffee.

We facilitate Birthday Sunday on the first Sunday of the month, keep a written record of joys and concerns, assist with memorial receptions, and provide a plaque for the memorial tree when requested.

We do not provide counselling or long-term interventions. However, we maintain a list of resources and can refer to appropriate service providers in the area.

Activities:

- Linda Rector left the team after many years of service to the fellowship. Thank you so much, Linda, for all you have done.
- Gail Kantak joined the team. Thank you and welcome. Gail actually was a team member some years ago.
- We no longer keep a written record of joys and concerns.
- In February 2024, we helped with the Memorial Service at the Flint Unitarian Universalist Church in Flint, MI, for Adair Cleland-Host, who passed away at MSU. Over 220 people showed up including many students from MSU.
- On April 18, 2024, some of our members attended this year's Spiritual Care Conference : End of Life Counseling and Support. Rev. Eric was one of the presenters. Feedback from the conference was very positive.
- In November 2023, we offered an Advanced Directives Workshop, presented by Kelly Perry from My Michigan Hospital. Information packets were handed out along with UU FoM Life Crisis forms.
- As usual, we provided many rides, nursing home visits, and also moving help this year. Several people from the fellowship have helped with those tasks just mentioned and we are very grateful.

We welcome new members and thank everyone who is willing to lend a helping hand.

Worship Team

Team Members: Laura Wagner (Chair), Sarah Nuss-Warren, Jim Falender, Susan Mayer, Connie Ofori-Dankwa, Beth Sperry, Jill Crissman, Marsha McDonald, and Joanne Rummel.

Participation varies according to individual schedules, with 5-6 active regularly. Additional participants invited to our meetings are Rev. Eric who usually joins, Shannon Sonoras for Zoom Inclusion, Wendy Altmeier, Melanie Willison and Jennifer Page. Laura began as chair in January and now has a decent grasp on the job and how the Worship Team is integrated with the other teams. We are always trying to recruit additional members.

The Worship Team responsibilities are to assist the minister with Sunday services when he is preaching, provide feedback and support regarding Sunday services, and to fill the

pulpit when Rev. Eric is not preaching. The Worship Team also assists the worship associates with preparing the sanctuary, props and sound checks. Melanie Willison leads the Music Team and Samuel McLennan provides the sound, with whom we rehearse on Sunday mornings.

This year, we continue to offer multi-platform services in coordination with sound and music teams for the services. In 2024 we have arranged for nine guest speakers and 11 member-led services. While securing speakers requires diligence mixed with creativity, our services have been varied, informative, relevant and well-received. Zoom requires one monitor and one slide manager, sometimes the same person but often not. The Worship Team provides service coordinators for ~20 services per year who plan the service, prepare the Order of Service, readings, slides, script, cues for sound, and sometimes the hymns, offertory, pre and postludes. When Eric is preaching, the Worship Team provides assistance as needed. Utilizing the Soul Matters program throughout the year, the Worship Team plans to provide summer services in 2025 following a World Spiritual Practices theme.

There has been a major change in the document control for the fellowship, a UU FoM Shared Google drive was created. This has been a lot of effort, but will really help keep all the documents organized and easier to use. The Worship Team has been learning the system during our monthly meetings and as needed. The Worship Team leader is working with Wendy Altmeier and Eric Severson on cleaning up the old files before moving them to the Shared Drive. In September the Worship Team began using the Share Drive exclusively moving forward.

Currently the service sound and slides are run through Zoom, and shared with the sanctuary screen. The Worship Team leader has been working with Eric Severson and Simon Cook towards running the services in the sanctuary then sharing to Zoom, to have the Rev./Worship Associate/Worship Team be in control of the presentation slides, hopefully also installing a larger screen. The biggest hurdles we encountered this year are when Melanie Willison or Samuel McLennan are not there, for whom we do not have consistent back-up. To alleviate this, the Worship Team is building a library of recorded music for which we have copyright permissions to use for these services. We welcome guest musicians to provide interludes during Worship Team led services.

Our meetings are being conducted on Zoom on the third Thursday of the month from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. They consist of sharing personal updates, general and specific service planning then brainstorming new ideas for services and speakers. They typically stay on schedule and seem productive, positive and fun. The congregation seems receptive to new

ideas so the Worship Team hopes to try some in the coming year. Our meeting minutes are updated during the meeting and shared on UU FoM's Shared Drive.

Records Management Task Force

Members: Janelle Dombek (chair), Wendy Altmeier, Simon Cook, Jim Falender (former), Susan Mayer (former), Fred Thomas (former), Christina VanPoucker, Laura Wagner, and Tim Wagner

To improve access to and control of Fellowship documents, both hardcopy and electronic, much work took place in 2024:

- Wendy Altmeier set up new shared drives to be used by the board, committees, and ministry teams. She also held training sessions to teach members how to use the new technology.
- To prepare for transition to the new shared drive, Janelle Dombek organized the existing board Google drive to meet the board's needs, and ensured that it contains a complete set of key documents (meeting minutes, by-laws) from 2017 forward.
- Wendy began scanning board meeting minutes from years past, for addition to the Board of Directors' shared drive.
- Tim Wagner drafted a UU FoM Records Management Policy which was revised and refined by a review team of Janelle Dombek, Wendy Altmeier, Jim Falender, Susan Mayer, Fred Thomas, Christina VanPoucker, Laura Wagner and Tim Wagner. The policy states that UU FoM will maintain file space for important documents that are used by the Board, Board committees, ministry teams and staff; and establishes responsibilities and protocol for doing so.
- To implement the Records Management Policy, a project team of Janelle Dombek, Wendy Altmeier, Simon Cook, Christina VanPoucker, Laura Wagner, and Tim Wagner has been established. An early step will be to survey the congregation to learn what documents exist and where they are stored.

Building & Grounds Committee

Judith Hill (Building Co-Chair), John Kinkema (Grounds Co-Chair)

The Building and Grounds Team completed a number of projects this year. Perhaps the most dynamic was the installation of solar panels and the creation of additional space outside the kitchen for much needed coffee hour visiting. With these major changes we were able to increase the size of the Minister's office and reallocate some space in the coat room for the Administrator's office.

Additional projects completed:

- parking lot cracks filled and lot seal coated with lines repainted
- pulpit sign repairs and painting completed, along with new lettering inside the sign, compliments of Judith Hill and Sandy Hay
- general garden weeding completed by a variety of volunteers, led by Janelle Dombek
- continued lawn maintenance by outside contractor
- gutters cleaned
- annual spring and fall clean-up held
- children's playground snail painted again (thank you, Joanne Rummel)
- continued snow plow contract, adding sidewalk shoveling
- many trailer loads of debris and unneeded materials taken to the Midland County Landfill
- replacement of the sewer line from the fellowship to the street
- a team of volunteers completed the interior painting
- repaired and painted the playground bench (thank you, Sandy and Dan)
- continued Phoenix Farm project (thank you, Vicki)
- continued as a site for a free library (thank you, Judith, for keeping it stocked)
- purchased furnishings from the Community Center auction for the new coffee hour area and minister's office/board area
- reconfiguration of the sanctuary camera and audio equipment
- removal of fence from the back parking lot area with no replacement needed

Treasurer Annual Report

Scott McDonald, Treasurer

Financially, UUFoM is presently doing well. We started this year \$8,531.00 short of our pledge request but thankfully the 2023 year ended with enough excess to fund the shortfall through the Opportunity Fund. The August 31, 2024 financial statement shows that we have received \$161,143 (71%) of the total amounts pledged and our year-to-date income at \$183,618 (76%). Year-to-date expenses are \$166,604 (63%). Presently the Financial Statement shows that income is a little above expected rates and expenses are below expected rates.

The present budget expenditures consist of personnel (71%), building and grounds (15%), administration (5%), UUA membership dues (3%), miscellaneous expenses (6%). To cover these expenses, 85% of our income comes from pledges with 12%, from fundraising, ad-hoc donations, and Sunday offerings, with the balance (3%) from the Opportunity Fund. We project that we will meet our budget at year-end assuming pledges keep track and we continue to stay within budget expenses.

Our overall financial strength, stability and predictability are based on five “pillars” which were enacted in 2014. They are listed under the Current Assets section of each monthly Financial Statement and consist of Operating Budget and Operating Reserve (which are collectively adjusted at the first of each year to hold at least 3 months of operating income to help the Fellowship survive through several months of operation during a cash flow disruption), Major Maintenance Fund, Endowment Fund and Opportunity Fund. A brief description of each financial pillar and its current funding level are below:

- Operating Budget (\$16,737) is meant to pay the day-to-day bills, including staff compensation and operating expenses. It should contain at least one month of budgeted expenses and is primarily funded by annual pledges. These funds are managed by the Finance Committee.
- Operating Reserve (\$93,866) contains at least two months of the current year’s budgeted expenses. This ensures that if UUFoM’s cash flow is disrupted for a short time, staff will continue to be paid on time and other time-sensitive payments are made. These funds are managed by the Finance Committee.
- Major Maintenance Fund (\$33,874) is reserved for major building and infrastructure repairs and improvements and is funded from our annual budget (currently set at \$6,000) and annual surpluses. These funds are managed by the Building and Grounds Committee.
- Endowment fund (\$544,624.29) (which existed long before and was rolled into this financial system) is meant to be built up to a high enough level to generate income

each year for one-time major project endeavors. These funds are managed by the Endowment Committee.

- Opportunity Fund (\$18,021) is for impromptu problems or opportunities that do not relate to major maintenance or other projects. This fund is funded annually from the surplus remaining after the Operating Reserve and Major Maintenance Fund have been fully funded. These funds are managed by the Minister and Board.

The Pillars system is an important part of the financial stability of the Fellowship. The system needs to be fully maintained and carefully managed so we are prepared in case of a financial crisis. Not building a solid capital structure is one of the main downfalls of many non-profits.

The figures show that a majority of our pledged dollars go toward the day-to-day operations of the Fellowship. It's the careful attention of our staff and volunteers to keep expenditures in line with the budget that helps us often end the year with a surplus. A big "Thank You" to everyone for giving your time and dollars to support this wonderful place.

Endowment Committee

Committee Members: Thomas Bailey (co-chair), Jim Falender (co-chair), Karen Roth, Roy Wedge (Secretary), Judy Donahue, Speed Malecki, Chris Nakamura

The UU FoM Endowment Fund was established in 1993 when Millie Irons specified in her will a gift with the express purpose of using the fund income for enhancing the mission of the UU FoM and making it possible to carry out special projects above and beyond those handled by our yearly pledges. The Endowment Fund has grown significantly since it was established due to both large and small additional contributions and the gains achieved by the fund.

We want to express appreciation for contributors who added to the capital base of the fund over the years. Thanks to the contributors we have been able to make our building a very special place and have enhanced the financial stability of our organization. This past year we held an endowment lunch to publicize our fund and recognize those who have contributed.

The Endowment Committee aims at a balance that incorporates spending and investing responsibly – while keeping an eye on market risks. In the past three years, The Endowment Fund investment income and capital gains have paid for a part of the funding for our upgraded audio-visual equipment, for an event to celebrate the professional credentials achieved by our minister, for our solar panels, and for the recent wall removal project.

In addition to supporting the above projects, the Endowment Fund income and gains have allowed us, in the past, to disburse funds for the playground, parking lot, carpeting, modification of our entry doors (to make us more accessible to handicapped people), the piano, lobby tables, chairs, hymnals, a grant to Midland Area Homes in memory of Ted Ilgenfritz (a deceased founding member), sending UU FoM leaders and teachers to denominational UU activities and training, a projector, and a project to have a more aesthetically pleasing way of displaying materials people see as they enter our building.

The Endowment Committee encourages members and friends to give unrestricted gifts to the Endowment Fund to grow the capital base so that income from the fund will allow increasing worthwhile enhancements to UU FoM in perpetuity. These gifts may be given as instructions in wills or estate plans or through contributions at any time. Contributions to the Endowment Fund should be treated as over and above pledge contributions. The Endowment Fund Committee does not encourage gifts to the fund if they will adversely affect pledge status. Contributions to the endowment fund are tax deductible for those that itemize their deductions on Schedule A and can help to avoid taxation on required IRA distributions. If you have questions pertaining to the tax advantages of various means of Endowment Fund contributions, contact Tom Bailey. Endowment Committee Operating Guidelines and meeting minutes may be obtained from Jim Falender.

Endowment Fund contributions have helped ensure the continued well-being of the UUFoM for 30 years. Please consider a contribution either now or in the future.