



2024/2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Unitarian Universalist Community of Victoria



Table of Contents

Board Executive Report.....	3
Name Team Report	4
Nominating Committee Report.....	6
Finance, Administration, Human Resources and Communications	8
Services Auction	8
Human Resources	8
Canvass (ABC).....	9
Archives and History	9
Legacy Circle.....	9
Communications	9
AV Committee	10
Outreach	12
Child Haven International	12
Denominational affairs.....	13
Environment and Climate Action Committee (ECAC)	14
GVAT	15
Lay Chaplaincy.....	15
Multifaith Victoria	16
One Planet Saanich	16
Refugee committee.....	16
Share the Plate	17
Share the Plate Report -2025	17
Share the Plate Report -2024.....	17
Zoie Gardner Overseas Fund	18
Truth, Healing and Reconciliation UU	19
Congregational Life	20
Book Group	20
Care & Concern	20
Depression & Anxiety Support.....	21
Lunch Group.....	21
Membership.....	21

Memorial Team	21
Men's Lunch Group	22
Monday Unitarian Walkers	22
Name Tags	22
Neighbourhood Groups	22
Photographs	23
Pub Night.....	23
Recognition & Awards.....	23
Welcome Team.....	24
Sunday Coffee	24
Property	25
Introduction	25
Property Maintenance	25
MAJOR 2024 ACTIVITIES:	26
2025 WORK PLAN HIGHLIGHTS:.....	26
Arts and Aesthetics	26
Gardens and Grounds (G&G)	27
WINTER	27
SPRING	27
SUMMER	28
AUTUMN	28
Memorial Wall.....	28
Rentals.....	29
Spiritual Development	29
Cantabile Handbell Choir	30
Chalice Circle Small Groups.....	30
Drumming Circle	31
Family Programming	31
Music.....	32
Song Circle.....	33
Spirited Jazz.....	33
Spirituality Group	34
Worship	34

Board Executive Report

Audrey Taylor (Acting President), Adriane Matheson-Smith (Secretary), Bruce Nicol (Treasurer), Kristina Stevens (Treasurer)

Our most exciting accomplishment this year is the adoption of our new name: **Unitarian Universalist Community of Victoria**. See the Name Team report later in this annual report.

Our mission statement was also updated to the following:

*Choosing our own paths, we come together to grow in spirit;
To honour and celebrate our connection to each other and the natural world;
To listen with humility to the wisdom of each person's experience;
To work together for justice, and co-create a diverse and thriving community,
where all feel respected, cared for, and held in love.*

Other events of note include:

- We were pleased to be asked by Reilly Yeo to host her ordination
- We were saddened by the resignation of Anna Isaacs whose many years of service to this community were pivotal.
- We were also saddened by the resignation of our music director Nick Fairbanks and our treasurer Matt Britton
- We are blessed that Kristina Stevens and Bruce Nicol quickly stepped in to fill the important Treasurer role
- We signed an extension of our lease with Montessori so they can apply for grants to improve the daycare
- The Zoie Gardener Overseas Fund received a substantial bequest.
- We welcomed new staff members:
 - Christine Taber – Music Director
 - Erin DeWolfe – Communications Coordinator
 - Leanne Hopkins – Family Programs Co-Director

Unfortunately, after 18 months into his term as Board President, Jim Willis had to resign from the Board for health reasons. Audrey Taylor, Vice-President, stepped in for the remaining 6 months of the term.

Through all the changes and learning curves encountered, our secretary, Adriane Matheson-Smith, remained the backbone of our Board. Her support is greatly appreciated by all.

Name Team Report

Name Team Members: Aeryn Bannister, Victoria Barr, Gita John-Iyam, Dar Levy, David Tietz, and Rev. Melora Lynngood

The Name Team facilitated a 5-month interactive process of receiving input and feedback from the congregation, culminating in a vote of the membership, on January 26, 2025, to change the name of our congregation from the First Unitarian Church of Victoria to:

Unitarian Universalist Community of Victoria

The motion required 75% to pass; it got 96.8%. (In favour: 152; against: 5; abstain: 0)

Worship Services that were part of the process

- September 22, “What’s in a Name?” <https://fb.watch/vf1ddnXayl/>
- October 20, “Unitarian or Unitarian Universalist?” <https://fb.watch/vf1ddnXayl/>

Workshops

- Sept 22 in person and Oct 1 online; on ‘church’ vs. ‘congregation’ vs. other words
- Oct 20 in person and Oct 22 online; on Unitarian vs. Unitarian Universalist
- Nov 17 in person and Nov 19 online; Putting it together- brainstorming whole names
- Jan 19 in person and Jan 21 online – info session after surveys sent out

Questions we asked congregation to consider:

1. What do you want to convey about our **identity**- about who we are- to others?
2. What words do you think would make others feel most **welcome** here?
3. **Church?** See video of Sept 22 service <https://fb.watch/vf1ddnXayl/>
4. **Unitarian or Unitarian Universalist?** See video of Oct 20 service <https://fb.watch/vwRIEtR2Y1/>
5. **Place Name.**
 - a. **Victoria?** Our congregation serves more than the City of Victoria; Greater Victoria? Capital Regional District?
 - b. What might options be for a place name that turns away from colonialism, and works toward reconciliation, WITHOUT cultural appropriation -or ‘virtue signaling’ or being performative?

A complicating factor is that our congregants come from ‘greater Victoria’ which includes W̱SÁNEĆ areas as well as lək̓ʷəŋən areas.

Even if we grounded our name in our local location, would it even be appropriate to use a SENĆOŦEN word?

Or would it be better to have a phrase under the name that acknowledges the land?

- c. **Saanich** has been suggested by some (but Saanich doesn't technically include Victoria, where many of our congregants live)
- d. **South Island** has been suggested by some.
- e. Could we leave out a reference to location?

Solicited suggestions and offered one-on-one conversations throughout the process

Surveys sent to congregation

1. Dec 11: Gauging preferences on individual words
2. Dec 20: Rating 7 different whole names

Vote on Final Name, January 26, 2025

Steps to changing our Name Officially

1. Discerning the will of the congregation with a **vote – Done!**
2. **Applying for the name with BC Registry – Done!**

They approved our name change, with the caveat that the word 'society' must be added at the end, as it is for all societies these days. So, we are filed with the BC Registry as 'Unitarian Universalist Community of Victoria Society.' But everywhere else we can be known as 'Unitarian Universalist Community of Victoria.' We have also applied to use our previous name (First Unitarian Church of Victoria) as our 'DBA-Doing Business As' name, which will allow us to continue to receive cheques and bequests and so on in our former name, in case they were written that way. That application is still in process.

3. Financial Systems – in process

Now that BC Registry approved our application for the new name, we are working on the next steps to get our legal name changed with various levels of government, banks, insurance companies etc...all of which require the certificate we just received from BC Registry.

4. Signs and Messaging – in process

Now that BC Registry approved our application for the new name, we are slowly beginning to proceed with changes to our digital name – newsletters, website, Facebook – as well as make plans to change our name in places it is 'printed,' the largest of which will be the sign out front. Rest assured, we will take the time we need to make these changes in a thoughtful, deliberate, inclusive, transparent way. This will be a gradual process.

We are now officially: Unitarian Universalist Community of Victoria. We can start to use this name for writing cheques, etc.

We can also start using our new name in conversation. When friends ask where you go on Sunday, you can tell them you are going to connect with your "Unitarian Universalist Community."

Of course, as previously stated, you can continue to refer to yourself and this place in whatever words work for you. We'll all have different ways of doing that. Diversity is our strength. Whoever you are, whatever your path to get here, we are glad you are with us.

Nominating Committee Report

The following is extracted from our By-laws and are the terms for the Nominating Committee:

ARTICLE VIII – Nominating Committee

Section 1.-- The Committee shall consist of five members elected for two-year terms at the Annual General Meeting plus the past President. No member shall be eligible for more than two consecutive elected terms. Other Board members, outside of the past President may not serve on the Committee.

Section 2. -- At each Annual General Meeting, the Nominating Committee shall present nominees from the membership for the following positions: 1) All Board vacancies 2) Vacancies on the Nominating Committee, and 3) the Financial Review Committee.

Section 3. -- If a vacancy occurs on the Committee, the Board, on recommendation of the Nominating Committee, shall appoint a replacement for the remainder of that year.

ARTICLE IX – Financial Review Committee

Section 1. -- The mandate of the Committee is to review the year-end financial statements of the Church with the Accountant and the Treasurer and to report to the Congregation at the Annual General Meeting on the accuracy and adequacy of the year-end financial statements.

Section 2. -- The Committee shall consist of three members elected at the Annual General Meeting. Members who are serving on the Board or currently involved in the financial management of the Church may not sit on this Committee.

Section 3. -- Vacancies on this Committee may be filled by members selected by the Board.

The names and terms for the **Nominating Committee** for the 2025-26 year:

- Jan Thomson, chair – 1st year of 2nd term
- Lynn Hunter – 1st year of 2nd term
- Maggie Nixon – 2nd year of 1st term

With thanks to outgoing committee members Louise de Lugt (completed 2- 2-year terms) and Liz Graham (one year in 2 yr. term completed ~ leaving the committee to serve on UUCV board). The NC is also pleased that Audrey Taylor, will join the work of the committee for one year as part of her role as Past President.

ACTION: The Nominating Committee presents two members for election at the 2025/26 AGM:

- Martha McDougall – 1st year of two-year term
- Maureen Sherlock – 1st year of two-year term

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ~ when elected**EXECUTIVE:** *can serve up to 2, two-year terms*

- **President elect:** Shirley Travis – 1st year of first term
- **Vice-President elect:** Katherine Maas – 1st year of first term (had been serving as Congregational Life Council Chair for 5 years)
- **Secretary elect:** Liz Graham – 1st year of 1st term (left the NC to join the board)
- **Treasurer elect:** Janine Gliener – 1st year of first term
- **Past President:** Audrey Taylor – 1 year term (acclaimed)

REGULAR TRUSTEES *may serve up to 4 two-year terms*

- **Trustee:** Barry Wiebe, currently serving as chair of Administrative Council – HR & Communications - 2025/26 1st year of 2nd term (not up for election as he is mid-term)
- **Trustee:** Lynne Bonner, currently serving as Spiritual Development Chair – 2025/26 2nd year of 1st term (not up for election -as she is mid-term)

ACTION: The Nominating Committee presents the following members for roles on the UUCV Board for the 2025/26 AGM:

Executive:

- Shirley Travis *– President -2025/26 1st year of 1st term
- Katherine Maas – Vice-President 2025/26 1st year of 1st term
- Liz Graham *– Secretary 2025/26 1st year of 1st term
- Janine Gliener *– Treasurer 2025/26 1st year of 1st term

Trustees-at-large:

- Peter Hancock *– 2025/26 1st year of 1st term
- Margaret McKelvie *– 2025/26 1st year of 1st term

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, we wish to express our sincere gratitude to the members who have agreed to serve our community as new or returning trustees. As well, we wish to highlight the contribution of outgoing board members:

Audrey Taylor – who moved into the president role when president Jim Willis stepped aside for health reasons, has graciously agreed to provide governance continuity for one year as Past-President.

Jim Willis, who despite health issues, continued to work alongside Audrey to conduct the important governance of the community.

Adriane Matheson-Smith - who has completed a two-year term as Secretary.

Mariko Matsumoto – who has completed a two-year term as Outreach Counsel Chair.

Al Hoffman – who has completed a two-year term as Property Counsel Chair.

Finally, a special thank you to our devoted members who co-managed the work of treasurer ~ Kristina Stevens and Bruce Nicol until a recruit presented, as well as, for their role in orientation of the new Treasurer.

Financial Review Committee

On behalf of the congregation, and the Nominating Committee our thanks are extended to the following members for agreeing to continue to serve on the financial review Committee:

Pat Conroy, chair, Stephen Lentz and Bob Rintoul.

Finance, Administration, Human Resources and Communications

Council Chair: Barry Wiebe

Services Auction

Contact: Jen Young

Our Services Auction remains the premier annual fundraiser for our congregation. As Suellen always insisted: It is as much about building community as raising money. Suellen's Dream Team, some of whom have been on the committee for well over a decade, continue to honour her legacy. We have been blessed in the past two years with some new committee members who bring energy and creativity to our team. The Auction consistently raises over \$20,000 annually to support UUCV programs and operational expenses. As I write this report, we are in the midst of planning Auction 2025 with a fantastic array of offerings for people to bid on.

Human Resources

Members: John Worton, Marion Sollazzo, Martha McDougall, Audrey Taylor

It has been a busy time for the Human Resources Committee (HR).

We were involved with drafting for Finance, the suggested 2025 wage rates for staff and contractors.

Two of us attended an exit interview with Anna Isaacs. We were all involved in the hiring process for our new Music Director, Christine Taber, our new Family Program Coordinator Leanne Hopkins who will work closely with Jen Rashleigh, and our new Communications Coordinator, Erin deWolfe.

We also sat in on 2 staff performance reviews.

We are very, very sorry to say so long to John Worton who has served HR so well for many years, and we are very, very grateful that he has agreed to continue writing employment contracts for new staff.

Canvass (ABC)

Contact: Nancy Dobbs

Our Annual Budget Campaign goal this year was \$350,000. The total pledged of \$315,538 came from 159 pledges; 89 pledge units increased their pledge over their last year's pledge. This added \$27,633 to the total. Those who couldn't manage the increase stayed the course and this really helped too.

A group of 18 anonymous donors pledged an additional \$16,300 for one year only, bringing the total pledges for 2025 to \$327,948.

Archives and History

Contact: John Stewart

I continue to provide reference service to people needing to refer to the archives. However, there have been few inquiries this past year. My one issue of note is that, following the flood in the farm house in 2023, people stashed a lot of useless items in the archives room. Some of them are still there. One of them is a filing cabinet set so high up that I cannot access it. I need some help from 2 or more people with decent backs to help me move it and other items. Can I get some volunteers?

Legacy Circle

Contact: John Hopewell

The legacy team was not active this year. A number of bequests have been received or are in process. Plans are underway for an information session in the fall. The team would welcome new members interested in ensuring the financial sustainability of our UU community.

Communications

Contacts: Lies Weijs and Karen Furnes

Roles/Responsibilities: Karen F. is much appreciated for her proof reading of both the E-Weekly (E-W) and the In the Spirit Newsletter (ITS). Erin prepares and sends out the E-W. I layout and edit the ITS which Erin sends out each month.

Changes: There have been changes to personnel, the publications themselves and the work flow. Anna left in September and volunteers put together the E-W with Rev Melora until Erin started in the administrative position in January 2025. Erin has taken over the production of the E-W. I have continued with the layout and editing of the ITS. Karen is doing the proof reading. Erin does the editing, adding, deleting and having the final look at it before sending it out on the last Friday of the month. Some improvements by Erin in the E-mail have made aspects of the work flow easier for me.

Challenges: One of the challenges is receiving submissions in a timely manner. Of course there will always be last minute things such as memorials. As I wrote last year, MailChimp software does not

receive high marks for flexibility or user friendliness ... however, it is free and I have learned some hacks from Erin.

Wish list: My wish list last year was for a proof reader – Karen has been an excellent and thorough proof reader. As for another volunteer to do the ITS, I have spoken with Erin about this and she felt that she could quite easily step in should I be unable to complete it for some reason at the last minute. I usually start setting the ITS up several weeks ahead of time.

- Lies Weijs

AV Committee

Contact: Jamie Twidale

Memorials:

- Fran Pardee (15-Sep-24)
- Laura Doyle (28-Sep-24)
- Dee Heston (23-Nov-24)
- June Fukushima (15-Feb-25)
- Yvonne Haist's Mother (10-May-25)

Events:

- This past year, members of the AV team supported the Child Haven fundraiser evening and a couple of community events. Other events were set-up using the “self-serve” configuration.
- We have identified two people (external to the community) that are willing to share their audio mixing expertise for paid rental gigs. One, Viviana, was the paid audio operator for Spirited Jazz in March 2025.

Significant changes during year

- In September 2024, we had a 3-day marathon session to complete all the outstanding AV items. That included the Lion TV mirroring the signal sent to the Projector. As part of this effort, we discovered that one of our SM57 mics was damaged and one of the Bi-Amp ports has an electronic failure. The documentation has been provided as per the contract. All documentation & code for the Extron panel is publicly available on the Google Workspace.
- In March 2025, we finalized the commissioning of the AV system. The remaining money has been paid in full to our contractor, Evolution. The AmplifyUU contract is complete.
- As part of the commissioning, we discovered that another Bi-amp port has been damaged. Now that the contract has been paid in full, we have started a discussion on a new contract for the repair/replacement of the Bi-amp - the Bi-amp warranty is for 5 years. As part of the discussion, we'll consider purchasing a more robust surge protection solution.
- In February 2025, Facebook announced a new retention policy for Live streamed videos. In our case, we used Facebook as a free archive of Sunday services. All live streamed Sunday services starting from the end of February will be deleted after 30 days. All live videos posted prior to that timeframe will be deleted within 90 days.

- The tedious process of downloading one video at a time has started.
- A discussion of whether to move from Facebook to YouTube is scheduled for May 2025
- The Operator Guidance document for volunteers was overhauled and published. The document went from 19-pages to 105 pages
- Training slides based on the Operator Guidance document are complete. A training date is being arranged.

Self-Serve Mode

- We had several rental Livecast Memorials through Summer 2024. We published a document on the self-serve mode setup and provided walkthrough training for each.
- We have a long-range Bluetooth receiver and published a document on setup and usage. This has been used to provide background music for one of the Memorials, a High School reunion and the music for the August 2024 Dance service hosted by Rev. Shana and Anna.
- The Oasis room upgrade was completed in November 2024.
- The installed router acts as a Wi-Fi extender for 'Sanctuary-Guest' (no password required).
- The installed TV provides wireless HDMI connection in order to support most devices and OS (Windows, MacOS, iOS, Android).
- There is documentation on setup & usage which can be accessed via a QR code on the plinth in the Oasis room.

Software Replacement/Upgrades

- Summer 2024 was much busier than planned!!!!
- In July 2024, Zoom forced users to upgrade to version 6.xx (and a rebrand to Zoom Workplace). Zoom 6.xx overhauled the User Interface (UI) which required a rewrite of our automation software. New UI changes in January 2025 caused similar problems. This is & will continue to be the Achilles heel of our automation until a replacement can be found/built. In addition, Zoom announced in June 2024 that the software we used for Webinars (inc. online Homilists) would be deprecated. The product was also required to be able show the Zoom folks during a service without video feedback. This is a Zoom product and the MacOS development team decided to drop Windows support. We were fortunate. Our video mixer (vMix) added support for Zoom meetings in the 2024 release. This enabled us to create a replacement Webinar solution. The Webinar automation was completely rewritten in time for August service resumption. It took 6 months of development for the first version and 2 months for this version.
- As stated in the 2024/2025 Annual report, we had an objective to "Upgrade button box to Open-Source industry-standard to enable automation of all components". We have completed that work to use Bitfocus Companion. Some benefits are:
 - Previously, each command from the button box to our automation software took ~80ms. Now, we're at ~1ms. We have visual feedback!!! Multiple goodness here:
 - With this software, the button briefly flashes a yellow outline when a button is pressed. No more "Did I press the button hard enough?". The "execute next cue" button now displays the cue number in an event OOS. It's like the difference between driving using a paper map and a Garmin
 - Virtual Tally - this is for camera operator geeks. Basically, a coloured background on a camera shot button. Program (red background) is what everyone sees.

Preview (orange background) is the camera shot being adjusted with a joystick before switching into Program.

- Many upgrades have been made to the home-grown automation software to ease the burden on the volunteer operators and to improve robustness. All the automation software is now in GitHub in preparation for sharing with the world but there is probably 3-4 months of documentation required.
- All AV computers have been upgraded to Windows 11.
- As mentioned above, Zoom updated to version 6.xx, vMix to version 27.xx, Bitfocus Companion from 3.3 through 3.5. The audio mixer firmware has been upgraded from 1.5 to 1.6. The main benefit is that we can now reliably backup & restore the audio mixer configuration settings to/from the main AV computer.

Plans for the upcoming year

- Train audio & video operators (and extend our bench)
- Repair/replace our Bi-amp
- Provide ability to provide separate feeds to Projector and Choir monitors
- Provide a solution for presenters to advance own slides and switch among slide only, camera shot only and camera shot + slide
- Deploy camera auto-tracking to enable speakers to roam on-stage - also handy for Q/A during official meetings.
- Purchase and integrate software for audio multi-track recording/playback
- Find/build replacement for Zoom automation component that is independent of Zoom UI changes
- Upgrades!!
 - Upgrade all automation software to use new version of interpreter (current version was deprecated in March 2024)
 - Upgrade our Media automation component
 - Upgrade to vMix 28.xx
 - Initiate the process of offering our automation software to the world
 - Updates/upgrades as new releases are made available (Windows, Zoom, EOS lighting, NDI tools)

Outreach

Council Chair: Mariko Matsumoto

Child Haven International

Committee Chair: Mariko Matsumoto

We had another year of successful fund raising for Child Haven International (CHI).

The shared the plate in April raised \$666 for the CHI. Our poster board was up for a month by the sanctuary entrance for information for those who were not familiar with CHI.

We hosted a fundraising dinner at our church on April 12th with over 100 people attending. Delicious vegetarian dinner (tradition of CHI) was prepared by International Women's catering co-op as last year.

Planning committee consisting of 5 of our members and 2 past interns planned the dinner program, ticket sales and all logistics.

We had many volunteers from our church who helped to run the dinner smoothly and efficiently...thank you for all who helped.

We also had Robin Cappuccino, and two other CHI staff from the central office attend to help with the event.

The final tally of the event was over \$5,000 for CHI. Mr and Mrs Kumar, regular supporter of CHI, matched the donation up to \$9000.

CHI is considered our church supported charity over many years and we hope to continue to run the event annually. We hope also new younger interns will go to CHI to have very unique enriching experience of a life time.

This year, we are planning an afternoon tea in May so more people can attend. We would like to promote youths to attend so they can learn about CHI. We also hope to have some music entertainment by youths as well. There also be some items for sales donated by Robin as well as other donors as a part of fundraising.

Denominational affairs

Committee chair: Rebecca Mellett

1. Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) - 3 (of 6) FUCV delegates attended the virtual CUC AGM in 2024: thank you Kristina Stevens, Russell and Rebecca Mellett. The CUC Members voted to add Terra Nullius to the CUC's denouncement of the Doctrine of Discovery, and passed a motion to defund fossil fuels.
 - Join the conversations with other UUs <https://cuc.ca/?s=agm+2025> and sign-up to be a delegate for the upcoming CUC AGM online May 31, 2025 @ 10am PST.
2. Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) of the USA -- voted for a shift in their values statement at its 2024 General Assembly: "Love at the Center: New UU Statement of Values Passes after Momentous General Assembly Delegate Vote" <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/uua-article-ii-passes-general-assembly-unitarian-universalism-bylaws-vote-values-statement> and approved corresponding UUA Bylaw Amendments https://www.uua.org/files/2024-07/Article%20II%20Purposes%20and%20Covenant_Final%20as%20of%20GA%202024.pdf.
 - CUC has a delightful podcast series on the UUA new model: <https://cuc.ca/uu-expressions-blogpost/>
3. UU international - with the closing of the UU office at the UN, our congregation's annual support on UN Sunday went to Seed Change (formerly Unitarian Service Committee founded by Lotta Hichmanova).

FUCVs annual CUC Share the Plate collection for 2025 will be held on later this year.

Environment and Climate Action Committee (ECAC)

Committee chair: Jim Jordan

ECAC had a successful year and was involved in several activities:

Development of an ECAC Disclaimer and related Terms of Reference to undertake environmental and climate action independent from the FUCV under a clear set of rules.

Research into growing food on the Royal Oak Golf Course recently bought by CRD Parks Branch.

Held two showings of the movie 'Fracking the Peace' in collaboration with Dogwood and Stand.earth at FUCV and Broadview United Church in September 2024. Kudos to Sheila Drew.

Presentation to the CRD Board of Directors as a representative of both ECAC and GVAT on Weds, Sept 24 in favour of the CRD Foodlands Access Service to be located at Bear Hill in a former forestry nursery site. Subsequently approved by the Province of BC and then formally by the CRD through their Alternative Approval Process (AAP).

Letter to the BC Utilities Commission regarding a proposed change in the rate structure for the solar panels on our roof, which might reduce the revenue to the Church. Advocated to retain the existing tariffs by "grandfathering-in" the Net Metering System currently used.

'Seniors for Climate': Members attended the rally for the climate at the Legislature under the auspices of GVAT on Oct 1. Kudos to our Amalia Schelhorn for helping to organize.

Newsletter Report and Call for Participation in the Government of Canada's Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Canada's (ECCC) Call for Comments supporting a Cap on Fossil Fuel Production to reduce Atmospheric Emissions. This included a presentation table in the Coffee Hour after Church to engage congregants. Then sending a formal comment letter to the ECCC and then-Minister Steven Guilbault.

A Newsletter report on record increases in the Earth's Average Temperature over the past decade leading up to 2024, the hottest year on record, which exceeded the favoured 1.5-degree C limit agreed to at the Paris Climate Accord in 2015-2016 (with Canadian support). This limit is based on the recommendations of the world's leading climate scientists (see latest report of UN IPCC).

Participation in the UUCV Table Talk for ECAC, involving Church members run by the UUCV GVAT Core Team. (*UUCV is the new Church name: Unitarian Universalist Community of Victoria.)

Green Corners Articles:

- Hybrid Vehicles
- E-Bikes
- Human Rights Violated by Gov't Inaction on Climate Change in Switzerland
- Swathes of the Earth are turning into Desert
- LNG Worse than Coal? – BC's LNG Conundrum
- BC's Highway Charging System

- Sandown Farm
- Climate Change Effect on Earth Desertification

GVAT

Committee chair: Marion Pape, Philip Symonds

June 2024 to May 2025

Our UU Community is a member of Greater Victoria Acting Together, an organization of member organizations working for the common good. Our link to GVAT is through our GVAT Core Team. One of the Team's jobs is to organize a service on the first or second Sunday of January each year to highlight GVAT's work and raise financial support through Share the Plate for our membership fee. This year the fee was \$1,800. Core Team members held important roles in GVAT serving on GVAT's Board, Strategy Hub and prominently on Action Research Teams (ARTs). Since GVAT's inception in 2019, its work has centred on housing and climate justice. In October, 2024, GVAT held a "Seniors for Climate Event" on the lawn of the Legislative Buildings. Our Community was well represented by half a dozen individuals conspicuously wearing "mushroom hats". The hats symbolized the need for conversations about climate change. The need to re-focus the work of the Climate and Housing ARTs led to a Listening Campaign, which became the theme of our January 2025 service. The campaign continued until May. During the Campaign, our Core Team organized six Table Talks engaging a total of nearly 40 congregants. The Talks revealed that Climate Justice, Health Care, and Housing were areas of greatest concern, with food insecurity, family doctor shortage, and lack of variety of housing as major concerns respectively in each. Through this reporting year, Core Team's membership fell from seven to four. Re-building the team is therefore a prime objective for the current year. Two new members have already joined.

Lay Chaplaincy

Committee chair: Liz Graham

Our Community is blessed to have three lay chaplains to serve us and our larger community. Oceanna Hall serves the community through her work as Spiritual Care Practitioner at Saanich Peninsula Hospital and offering programs in the Sidney area, while Jenny Heston and Barbara Boyle perform services for members of the general public and members of our Community in the absence of our ministers.

In 2024, they performed a total of only 6 services (4 weddings, 1 memorial and 1 pet memorial).

This year, we have kept in touch mostly through zoom, email and phone consultations, providing support and information relevant to the practice of lay chaplaincy, as well as quarterly zoom meetings with the CUC Lay Chaplaincy Group from across the country. Our group contributes much to these national gatherings, in the form of leading discussions and making presentations.

Additionally, we have incorporated Barbara Moore, the lay chaplain from the new Vancouver congregation, UUs of the Salish Sea, and Larry Boldt, a lay chaplain from the First Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo in our collegial group as well as Deborah Goodman, a newly trained LC candidate from Nanaimo.

Going forward, we are planning to embark on initiatives that will raise our visibility both within our Community and the community at large.

While the number of services we have been called upon to perform has not been large, we provide a valuable service in that we are available to provide services to our members in the absence of our ministers, and we serve as a Unitarian outreach to the greater community. As well, one third of the fees we generate go to the congregation.

Multifaith Victoria

Liaison: Mariko Matsumoto

There have been regular meetings at Quaker house on third Wednesday afternoons on a regular basis.

Some of our members have attended to discuss topics such as peace. We discussed items that are dealt differently among different faith communities. It is awakening to find out there are many similarities as well as differences. February 4, 2024 the society hosted an event “Kindness and Kinship” at Commonwealth centre. A panel of various Representative of faith traditions spoke on peace keeping. There were approximately 10 people present from our congregation.

Unfortunately, the event “Multifaith Prayers for Peace” in January was cancelled due to security issues. It was to be booked at later time.

This year Unitarians were given a seat at their board level and I will be appointed for the role for the year. They are still looking for a Buddhist rep.

One Planet Saanich

Committee chair: Glenyss Turner

Following up on his homily to FUCV on Earth Sunday (April 2024), Trevor Hancock went on to write a whole series of articles for the Times Colonist about the values our society most needs, with FUCV getting mentioned in most of these articles. Glenyss’ connection to Trevor Hancock was through her work with One Planet Saanich as Trevor is a longstanding resource person for OPS. This was a powerful series of articles and excellent publicity for UUCV.

Glenyss is delighted to report that she is handing the reins of UUCV’s One Planet Saanich project over to Zhu-Liang Sim as of April 2025.

Refugee committee

Chair Committee: Kristine Stevens

The Refugee Committee continued to provide support for Mohammad, Fatemah and Abdulrahman Abo Qayass for the first few months of 2024, to enable Abood (Abdulrahman’s nickname) to continue his English studies. Abood has found a full-time job at a lawn care company.

We are still awaiting the arrival of the Albargash family of three from Jordan. They have had an initial interview and we expected them in late 2024, but they have not yet had further word from the Canadian authorities.

During 2024 the committee was contacted by the Right to Learn society (formerly Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan). They are currently helping Afghani refugees come to Canada. The committee received Board approval to raise money to sponsor a family of four, currently residing in Pakistan. We worked with Right to Learn staff to submit an application before the end of 2024. Then in February 2025 we put on a fund-raising luncheon with a speaker from RTL. Thanks to the generosity of our congregation, plus a large donation from the Salt Sprint Unitarian Fellowship, the Refugee Fund stands at \$54,000, ample funds to support a family for their first year in Canada.

Ebrahim and Mina Rahmani and their sons Mosab (11) and Walid have been accepted as refugee applicants by the Canadian government, have had their first interview, and are awaiting final security and health approval. The situation in Pakistan is not secure for refugees in their situation, and Canadian authorities usually process such applications faster in response. We hope to welcome them to Victoria this summer.

Share the Plate

Committee Chair: Lynn McKay and Susan Layng

Share the Plate Report -2025

Congregational sponsors recommend a monthly charity; the collection is divided between the charity and UUCV.

CUC collections are not included.

DATE 2025	CHARITY	DONATION AMT.
January	GVAT	\$1403.30
February	Gender Generations	\$949.24

Share the Plate Report -2024

In 2024, charities represented four main themes: housing, social justice, conservation efforts and Indigenous support.

This year the STP committee, with the support of Rev. Shana, reduced the number of months from twelve to ten. July and August collections go directly to UUCV.

CUC collections are not included.

DATE 2024	CHARITY	DONATION AMT.
January	GVAT	\$1800 (1036.92 +763.08)

February	Lifeline	\$1489.15
March	Child Haven	\$666.87
April	International Conservation/Canada	\$1966.36
May	Victoria Sexual Assault Centre	\$1420.37
June	Refugee Fund	\$1372.77
July	NO COLLECTION	
August	NO COLLECTION	
September	RAVEN	\$593.57
October	WSANEC Lands/Trusts	\$809.84
November	Fur Bearers	\$833.97
December	Our Place	\$2180.00

Submitted by Lynn McKay

Zoie Gardner Overseas Fund

Committee chair: Remi Odense

With the generous bequest of \$3.7 million from the Hackler Estate to the Zoie Gardner Overseas Fund (ZGOF), the committee recognized the need to increase the number of organizations it supports and to consider increasing the level of support to the existing supported organizations. In response to the increased scope of the ZGOF the committee reviewed the overall funding process, and this led to the development of several new documents, including:

- Project Funding Criteria for all projects
- Expression of Interest for new projects
- Application for Project Funding
- Project Reporting Form

The use of the new documents will enable a more impartial and transparent process for project review and funding.

The announcement of newly available ZGOF funding and a process for contacting ZGOF with an Expression of Interest (EOI), was provided on the new ZGOF webpage, hosted by UUCV.

April 15, 2025

is the closing date for the new EOIs and after review, the committee will send Project Application Forms to the selected EOIs. A final project selection will occur after the Project Applications are reviewed.

ZGOF is aiming to provide about \$550,000 in funding to projects which meet our criteria this year. A more precise estimate can be provided once we have reviewed the new project applications. We expect to reach at least the target of \$650,000 in funding next year.

As per ZGOF requirements, funds are invested in broad based ETFs, however we have kept about \$600,000 in cash to provide for this year's donations. Also, one of the ETFs is a money market ETFs which is much less prone to market volatility.

The last new months have been very active ones for ZGOF, and we feel the hard work of generating the procedural documents, developing the website and communications will lead to a consistent, transparent and defensible management of the funds. All of the committee have contributed to this work, and in particular I would like to commend Laura Porcher and Lynn Beak for their diligence in drafting and reviewing the documents. The committee is fortunate to have such an eager and dedicated team. With approval of new projects expected, additional ZGOF members would be welcome.

Remi Odense
ZGOF Chair
15 April 2025

Truth, Healing and Reconciliation UU

Committee chair: Matt Britton

THRUU's mandate is to identify and facilitate opportunities for education and engagement in the spirit of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Greater Victoria. THRUU has a dozen members and is currently chaired by Matt Britton. The members meet via Zoom in alternating months to plan regular events and organize attendance and support of local Indigenous-led activities. Since the last AGM, THRUU members have organized outings to the National Indigenous Peoples' Day event at Royal Roads University (June), the Honouring Wətanmy Powwow on the Tsartlip Reserve (in July, where some members also volunteered), and the South Island Powwow on the National Day for Truth & Reconciliation (September). Members also participated in the Moose Hide Campaign that works to end gender-based violence (May), hung red dresses on the UUCV property to raise awareness of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit people ("Red Dress Day" in May), and arranged Share the Plate donations for two Indigenous-led organizations: RAVEN, which supports Indigenous-led litigation that sparks transformative change across Canada, and the Victoria Native Friendship Centre, which works to improve socio-economic conditions for urban Indigenous peoples.

THRUU members also maintain the native plant pollinator garden around the UUCV sign, pull invasive plants on UUCV property, and grow native plants to assist with restoration of the land. Members also attend weekly demonstrations at Goldstream Provincial Park to support WSÁNEĆ elder Carl Olsen's efforts to protest planned future development of the highway, which will have a negative environmental impact on the park's trees and salmon spawning grounds. Finally, in accordance with our education

mandate, you will find monthly articles about Indigenous culture, history, and issues written by THRUU members in the monthly In the Spirit newsletter.

Throughout May, THRUU members will be greeting people at the Outreach Table in the hallway - please visit for information about our activities or to sign up for upcoming events!

Congregational Life

Council Chair: Katherine Maas

Book Group

Team Leads: Pat Kinrade and Margot Lods

The Book Club has terminated its meetings at the church community's Board Room. We have resumed meeting in individual members homes as we did before Covid-19. All are still welcome to join us on the third Friday of each month. Contact Pat Kinrade: 250-361-4336.

Care & Concern

Team lead: Mary Ellen Nicol

The care and concern team (C&C) at UUCV consists of C&C people in each of 12 Neighbourhood groups, 4 liaisons, of which we only have 3 at the moment (Maggie Nixon, Stephanie Ippen, Mary-Ellen Nicol), committee chair (Mary-Ellen), and ministerial representation (currently Rev. Melora Lynngood). We presently have three C&C neighbourhood positions and one liaison position that are vacant. The Core team liaisons meet monthly, except for July, to share reports from each of the neighbourhoods and to inform each member of the folks that are having health issues or otherwise struggling.

Each Christmas we try to recognize members who have had a particularly difficult year, folks who have been socially isolated, experienced loss, illness or other life concerns, by sending a seasonal card and a token gift. This year the core group made three Blessing Beads placed on cording accompanied by a card with words to help with focused reflections: Gratitude (purple bead), Sorrows (blue-green bead), and Hopes (yellow beads). At other times several members received hand knitted shawls or blankets, and several received heart stones. Many received cards and phone calls from the C&C members.

We reprinted the Christmas card that Chelsea Sunder (Stephanie Ippen's daughter-in-law), designed for us last year and gave these cards along with the Blessing Beads at Christmas. We also gave these cards throughout the winter season. We gave out approximately 70 cards this past Christmas.

We are continuing with the Caring Corner submissions in the E-weekly, now in its 5th year. Each C&C team member submits a brief writeup for members that are unwell, recovering from surgery or otherwise experienced a loss, and with their permission sends them directly to Communications. The Caring Corner continues to provide a variety of different supports for our members via the congregation: a card, e-mail, or phone call etc. Our hope for this next year is to fill our three C&C neighbourhood positions and one liaison position, to continue to encourage our congregation to remember the folks in our neighbourhood group and in the congregation at large in their time of need, and to remember the lonely and those that need everyone's support.

Depression & Anxiety Support

Team Leads: Pat Kinrade and Lies Weijs

The group continues to meet every two weeks. Alternating in-person and zoom meetings we share our experiences and support each other as we are able, noting that we are not a therapy group.

Lunch Group

Team Lead: Pat McMahon

UU lunch is a social gathering open to all Unitarians in Victoria and their friends. We meet at Cedar Hill Golf Course Derby restaurant at noon on the 4th Tuesday of months from September to June.

Reservations by email to the organizer are requested. uu.lunch.victoria@gmail.com

Membership

Team Lead: Kathleen Zimmerman

The Membership Committee's role is to promote a welcoming and caring atmosphere for all Members, Supporters and Visitors, and to actively encourage membership in the church.

In the last year the Committee has:

- worked with various other committees to clarify the Canada Revenue Agency requirements with respect to rites of passage benefits
- held four UU Newcomer Information Sessions and one New Member Welcome Ceremony
- created a protocol and contacted members and supporters who had not paid an annual financial contribution to clarify their membership wishes
- updated the brochure outlining the benefits and responsibilities of Members, Supporters and Visitors
- purchased a new laptop for the Welcome Table
- worked with the Welcome Team and the Name Tag Coordinator to welcome visitors.

As of April 5, 2025, UUCV had 284 Members, 2 Members Emeritus, and 41 Supporters.

Please contact the Kathleen Zimmerman if you would like to join the Committee. Volunteers are very welcome!

Memorial Team

Team Lead: Betty Sherwood

Memorial Services and Receptions:

- Don Mills with the Royal Oak West Neighbourhood Group
- Penny Furnes with the Gordon Head Neighbourhood Group

- Fran Pardee with the Esquimalt Neighbourhood Group
- Dee Heston with the Royal Oak West Neighbourhood Group
- June Fukushima with the Gordon Head Neighbourhood Group
- Barbara Nyland an informal reception was held at the home of Jen Young, as Barb was no longer a Member.

Changes:

- Suzanne Beauchamp joined the Memorial Team
- Betty Sherwood took over from Nancy Dobbs as Coordinator
- Nancy and Betty edited the Guidelines, in collaboration with the Ministers, Office, Caretakers, Lay Chaplain coordinator, and members of the Memorial Team, into a concise 9-page document.

Men's Lunch Group

Team Lead: John Stewart

The group meets on the third Thursday of the month at noon at the Four Mile Pub. There are usually 10 or 12 people meeting for lunch and lively conversation. If anyone wishes to join, send your email address and phone number to John Stewart at stewartvaasjo@outlook.com.

Monday Unitarian Walkers

Team Lead: Chris Cook

The team walks each Monday at 1 pm for 10 months of the year, taking a 2-month break in the summer. There are 47 people on the mailing list. People take it in turns to lead walks in Victoria, up the peninsula and out Metchosin. The numbers attending fluctuate from about 6 to 18. After the walk we meet for drinks either in a cafe or someone's home. The team welcomes friends, family and snow birds. New people often comment that it is a good way to get to know church members in smaller groups. Contact Chris Cook at (250) 386-3455 or 49chriscook@gmail.com to get on the mailing list.

Name Tags

Contact: Madeleine Clarke

We are in the process of converting to a new name tag system, as the old supplies are getting difficult or impossible to source. We are also seeking a new team lead to take over from Madeleine Clarke, who wishes to step down but is continuing to do this role until a new volunteer is found.

Neighbourhood Groups

Team Lead: Kathy Vinton

The main task has been organizing the NG conveners to provide goodies for after service. There are two vacancies (for Western and Oak Bay NGs) and other groups are variously active. By mostly doubling up, less active NGs are bolstered by the ability of more active NGs to arrange for Sunday treats. The ability of

the coffee team (Chris Peterson and Fiona Flook) to provide additional provisions as well as organizing their own team's duties has kept things going. This is also a vulnerability, as it adds an extra load for them each Sunday. As well Fiona and Chris have been pivotal in putting out a basket for cash donations during coffee hour and getting the proceeds to the church office. There is therefore a surplus in the Hospitality budget, and conveners know they can be reimbursed if they choose. This might become more of the model: that someone purchases and/or prepares goodies to be available each Sunday, draws on the Hospitality budget to finance that, and the NG conveners mobilize their members for a time of their choosing, rather than the more structured "assignments" that have been standard previously.

A number of NGs (Esquimalt, James Bay and Royal Oak West) have collaborated within their membership to organize and offer Service Auction donations. It's not clear whether or if any newcomers to UUCV are able to connect to neighbourhood groups near them.

Photographs

Contact: Mary Cramer

Throughout the year, photographs were taken at the majority of our Sunday services including numerous guest musicians and guest speakers. Photographs were also taken at many events including the Spring and Winter Choir Concert, our Annual General Meeting, Spirited Jazz evenings and other Community events.

These photos and archived photos have been used for the Photoboard in the Lion Hall, the ABC video for the Annual Canvass, memorial services, and numerous requests from members for specific photos to be used at other community activities and promotional materials for our community information and outreach.

Photos were taken by Mary Cramer, Barb Boyle, Mary Theal and others. We appreciate their contributions to our records.

Pub Night

Team Lead: John Hopewell

Pub Night continues to meet on the first Monday each month at Lure in the Delta Ocean Pointe hotel. Usually 12-20 attend, often including people who are new to our congregation.

Recognition & Awards

Team Leads: Suzanne Beauchamp and Pat McMahon

The Recognition & Awards Committee organized the recognition of an Honoured Volunteer nominated by each of the Councils, and by the President. These are members who have made a meaningful contribution to our UU community.

There were also several volunteers worthy of recognition nominated by members of the congregation, who were honoured as a Most Valued Volunteer (MVV). During the year, the MVV award had a name change to Hand and Heart Award, as it will be known going forward.

In September, long term members were honoured at a worship service and celebrated with a cake. We began a transition which will continue over several years, from honouring 25- and 50-year members to recognizing 20- and 40-years' membership.

The Recognition & Awards Committee will also change co-chairs soon, with Suzanne Beauchamp and Pat McMahon retiring at the end of June. The new co-chairs will be Kathie Doerksen and Rosemary Harrison.

Welcome Team

Team Leads: Gloria Turner and Claire Ebendinger

The Welcome Team is an amalgamation of the former Sunday morning Usher, Greeter, and Visitor Table volunteers, and currently consists of 13 members: Caroline Startin, Claire Ebendinger, Gela Stach, Glenys Thompson, Gloria Turner, Lesley Duthie, Leslie Stafford, Louise deLugt, Lynn McKay, Maggie Nixon, Pat Kinrade, Stephanie Ippen and Rosemary Harrison. Three volunteers are needed every week and volunteers sign up monthly for their preferred dates using a shared Google spreadsheet. The board member on duty also acts as a defacto member of this team on their duty Sundays.

Duties include presenting a friendly face at each of the three entrance doors to the building and sanctuary, handing out visitor name tags to newcomers, counting attendance and passing baskets for the collection. The distribution /collection of hymnals has been taken over by the choir as many Welcome Team members are elderly and were finding that task onerous.

Volunteers at the visitor table distribute information about congregational procedures and activities and are also responsible for encouraging newcomers to fill out the intake form to receive the e-weekly by getting their name into the Breeze database. A new laptop was purchased this past year, with Membership Committee funds, to enable visitors to input their information directly into the database so that information written on paper forms does not need to be transcribed by staff members. It has been a challenge for some volunteers to get comfortable with setting up the WI-fi connection, prior to the service.

Almost all Welcome Team volunteers are long-time members. Recruiting new volunteers to this team remains a challenge, especially from among new members.

Sunday Coffee

Team leads: Christine Peterson and Fiona Flook.

The Sunday Coffee team provides coffee, tea, and finger foods in the Lion Hall every Sunday after worship. Most finger foods are generously supplied by the Neighbourhood Groups on a rotational basis. Fiona often adds her very popular egg sandwiches and recently Christine has discovered a source of free frozen desserts from a local thrift store, which service-goers have been enjoying.

Revenues from the collection basket on the finger food table have increased in the last year, because Christine and Fiona put up signage reminding people to donate if they can, to help defray the costs of coffee and tea. The team would like to ask the new Treasurer team to begin tracking this revenue, as it is sometimes substantial, and it could be used to defray the cost of buying coffee, which seems to get more and more expensive all the time. As well, Christine and Fiona often buy sugar and cream out of their own

pockets, and this is something else that I would like to see covered by the budget or by revenues from the basket on the table.

The coffee urn is aging, and while it's still working, it probably may need to be replaced this year.

In the past year, we have given the Montessori staff access to the Lion Hall kitchen during the week, which has resulted in some changes to the way we manage the kitchen. For example, we recently began using paper cups instead of china, because so many groups meet on the property after the service, resulting in coffee cups being left around or brought back too late to wash up to leave a clean kitchen for Montessori on Monday morning.

In the last couple of years, Christine and Fiona have been offering a Summer Tea on the deck as part of the Service Auction. Last year Brad rigged a tarp of his own on the deck to provide some shade for that event, but that's not an option in future, so Christine and Fiona are looking for another solution – perhaps someone has a tarp or awning to donate for that event?

Like many other groups, this team has occasionally been strapped for volunteers, though Christine reports that often people just drop in on Sundays and offer to help if extra hand are needed. The working environment is very positive and enjoyable. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, contact Christine or Fiona – you can find their smiling faces in the Lion Hall kitchen every Sunday.

Property

Council Chair: Al Hoffman

Introduction

Volunteers continue to be very active caring for and managing various aspects of the property maintenance, rentals, aesthetics and grounds. I want to give a tremendous thank you to church members and supporters who have given of their time and energy to support our facilities. Thanks, are also due to Niki our Church Administrator and Bradley Clarke our Maintenance Technician and Custodian. We could not operate without Bradley's and Madelaine's trouble shooting of the many issues that arise after business hours.

Limited budget and volunteer hours continue to be a challenge. We cannot continue to defer the painting of all church buildings and the paving of the upper parking lot and driveway just south of the farmhouse. Some work must be completed by professionals. If you have a green thumb or are interested in maintenance including painting and carpentry, the community could use your interest and skills. Please chat with the applicable Committee Chair.

Peter Hancock has agreed to step into the council chair position again. Thanks, Peter for your continuing commitment to the Community property.

Please find below reports from the Council Chairs.

Property Maintenance

Submitted by Andy Lee, Chair

The Building Maintenance Committee had its second full year of operation in 2024. The top priority was to ensure the buildings and support systems were in safe operating condition.

MAJOR 2024 ACTIVITIES:

- Prepared a 30-year plan showing costs and timing for maintaining or replacing all likely building elements. Annual costs are estimated at \$93,000 in 2024 dollars (\$97,650 in 2025 dollars).
- Replaced flat roof over the sanctuary.
- Replaced original single-pane windows on the 2d floor of the farmhouse.
- Replaced deck on the north side of the farmhouse.
- Installed drain pipe above the upper paved parking lot.
- Replaced a shed roof.
- Replaced office carpet.
- Miscellaneous repairs were made to plumbing, electrical and walkways.

2025 WORK PLAN HIGHLIGHTS:

- Apply acrylic finish to sanctuary floor.
- Replace carpet in Music Director's office.
- Replace office computers.
- Pump Family Wing septic tank.
- Set aside \$17,000 for future exterior painting.
- Budget for the year is \$70,700, compared with \$97,650 in estimated expenses, so the difference of approximately \$27,000 represents work that will be deferred. Note that this work will need to be done in the not-too-distant future.

The completion of the above tasks would not have been possible without the volunteer work of committee members and many church members and friends. Thank you one and all.

In 2022 Earle Anthony saw the need for a comprehensive approach to maintaining our facilities. He recruited and organized the Building Maintenance Committee and guided its planning and maintenance efforts through November 2024, at which time he stepped back into well-earned retirement. We are deeply indebted to Earle for his vision, leadership and physical work over many, many years. Thank you, Earle.

Arts and Aesthetics

Submitted by Chris Cook and Mary Theal.

- 9 artists exhibited their work in the sanctuary. There were no paintings hung for July and August.
- 3 of the artists are church members Farrell Boyce, Jewel Spooner and Jan Dawson. 2 of them auctioned off paintings that raised several hundred dollars for the church.
- 2 other artists sold paintings for a total of (4) and remitted 5% of the sale price directly to the church.
- Mary Theal worked with specialist Gail Tyshynski to sell the Arbutus tryptic tapestry. It was sold for \$5,000 with a commission of \$1,250 to Gail. The church received \$3,750.

- Arts and Aesthetics do not receive financial statements, therefore the total income generated by this committee is not available.
- In December the sanctuary was decorated by volunteers.
- Farrell's wooden stars were hung. Swags of greenery were placed at the entrance, and 2 large floral arrangements and a Poinsettia added a festive touch to the Sanctuary.
- Artists have been booked for the spring, and we will choose artists for the fall after the Moss St "Paint In".
- In the Farm House common room 2 Romanian embroideries have been hung as we rotate art around the premises.
- The "Oasis" Room had another wall painted by Peter Hancock and a donation by Janine Gliener of acoustic panels have been hung.
- The general appearance of the property is reviewed to ensure that it remains uncluttered and attractive.

The Arts and Aesthetics have been active in this role for many years and would appreciate more assistance.

Gardens and Grounds (G&G)

Joint submission by Bradley Clarke and Evelyn Peters

WINTER

- maintenance and repair of mower/tractor
- firewood sales deposited to Landscape Fund
- re-organization of G&G equipment and tool shed
- grapevine pruning

SPRING

- bi-weekly lawn mowing commences (Earle Anthony, Bradley Clarke, Dan Klimke)
- fig trees added to veggie garden
- rhubarb bed de-winterized
- forest removal of invasive species (THRUU, SEL-CY, IMHS, G&G)
- native garden maintenance and deer fence installation
- native garden viewing success during Satinflower Nursery's garden tour
- annual maintenance of Rhododendron Grove (Andy Lee)
- second wooden gate installed in veggie garden (Dan)
- G&G Committee Chair resignation (Dan)
- G&G income requirement ceases (David Hoadley)

- rhubarb sale funds deposited to G&G

SUMMER

- cement water feature installed in Willow Pond (Bradley); plumbing pending
- annual maintenance of Willow Pond and woodchip picnic area
- apricot sale funds deposited to G&G fund
- rotted railway tie removal from terraced, peace-pole lawn and re-landscaping/seeding
- in Fran's remembrance, entrance garden maintenance continues (Erin Kinrade, Evelyn Peters, Lesley Duthie)

AUTUMN

- grape harvest
- apple harvest (SEL-CY fundraising initiative)
- G&G Committee Chair accepted by Evelyn
- forest restoration efforts included 100+ native plantings
- severe grapevine pruning to safeguard Common Room paint refurbishment

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED TO CONTINUE GARDENS & GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

Memorial Wall

Submitted by Earle Anthony, Chair

The Memorial Wall Committee's mandate includes the processing of applications from members and friends to place a plaque on the Memorial Wall, to oversee the placement of a plaque on the Wall, to manage the Memorial Wall Fund, and to maintain the Wall and surrounding Gardens.

During 2024, six new plaque applications were approved, and five new plaques were placed on the Wall. There are currently 87 plaques on the Wall, 28 applications for new plaques have been approved and there are 81 open spaces left.

The balance in the Memorial Wall Fund at the end of 2024 was \$ 28,639.19.

The maple tree in the middle of the Memorial Wall Garden is not developing its root system properly. Steps have been taken to improve the root system of this tree. If the condition of the maple tree does not improve; it may be replaced in 2025.

Many family members and friends visit the Memorial Wall each year to remember their friends and family of the past. Church members are invited to use the Memorial Wall and Gardens as a quiet place for rest, relaxation and meditation.

If any member or friend of the Church wishes to reserve a plaque space on the Memorial Wall, please contact Niki, the Church Office Manager, or myself (250 5924831).

Rentals

Submitted by Astrid Firley-Eaton

2024 was again an exciting and very busy year for rentals. When I took over as rental manager in 2021, it seemed a good idea to ask Brad to show the property to prospective renters, since he lives on site. However, objections were raised, that this was not part of Brad's job description. So, we slowly transitioned to a new system, where I am always the first 'on site contact' for renters. I usually try to arrange these meetings for Sundays after the service, but sometimes I do meet renters during the week as well.

Our overall gross income increased from \$57,296 (2023) to \$60,268 (2024).

The large increase from \$39,116 (2022) to \$57,296 (2023) was probably due to previously unrealized rental potential.

However, I am sure that there is still unrealized potential beyond \$60,268.

There are times of the year & days of the week that could be better utilized.

In 2024 rental did have two unusual expenses.

- Last summer, the roof repairs were delayed because of wet weather, which affected the yoga instructors and created some challenging negotiations. In the end, we reimbursed the entire group for just over \$1,000.
- We were also finally able to move ahead with the new website (\$2,500), which was completed at the end of the summer.

It seems to be working the way I had hoped. Hardly any rental requests go through the office any more, taking up Niki's time unnecessarily.

Almost all of them end up in my in-box. We have also linked the new site to our existing church site. If anyone is looking for rentals there, a button will connect them to the new site and my in-box.

In addition, I asked the web designer to create a link between the two sites for anyone looking for chaplain services. They will now reach our chaplains page directly.

Here's the link: <https://victoriaunitarianhallrentals.ca>

In 2024, we have not had many rentals that take advantage of our AV capabilities.

Spiritual Development

Council Chair: Lynne Bonner

Cantabile Handbell Choir

Contact: Anne Hill

The Cantabile Handbell Choir has had an active and productive year thus far. Rehearsals began on September 25, 2024 and our year will conclude on June 11, 2025.

The choir has provided music leadership at Sunday services and has participated in the concerts hosted by UUCV as follows:

- Sunday services: Nov. 24, 2024; March 2, April 13, June 1, 2025
- Winter Concert: Dec. 7, 2025
- Spring Concert: May 17, 2025

Collaborations have taken place with the Chalice Choir to prepare a joint music selection for each concert. The ringers are looking forward to joining the Chalice Choir again for a joint piece in the 2025 Spring Concert.

In addition to these performances, Cantabile also performed along with other UUCV musicians at the first-ever Sweetheart-Friendship Tea held on Feb. 12, 2025 and hosted by the Cantabile Handbell Choir. The Tea event was a huge success!

- This event was a fundraiser to complete the project that began in 2011 to purchase a 3-octave Malmark handbell set.
- Between its inception and 2016, that project provided for the purchase of a two octave handbell set followed by the upper bells for the third octave and then the F#4 and F4.
- The goal of the current fundraising project is to purchase the missing lower 5 bells and the carrying case required to complete the 3 octave set. This will allow more ringers to play in the choir and much more variety in the music that can be played.
- Currently there are 8 full-time ringers in the choir. Five are UUCV members and 3 are musicians from the community. The handbell ringers continue to learn and become more accomplished in using a variety of new techniques for ringing and for performing.
- A recruitment program for new and beginner ringers from UUCV and the community is in process. Planning for inclusion of children and youth is on-going.

Chalice Circle Small Groups

Contact: Helen Hvozdzanski

This group is not currently active. Helen would like to stay the contact person in case someone would like to start up a Chalice Circle group. She is willing to help start up a group but needs someone else to lead and to get commitments from the group – members should commit to a year to maintain consistency and group cohesion. Any Chalice Circle group should be open to all.

Drumming Circle

Contact: Dar Levy

The drumming circle, under the guidance of Community member Dar Levy, continues to meet after the service every other Sunday, with from 3 to 7 participants. A portable wagon was donated to the Community and it has greatly facilitated moving the drums from storage next to the Oasis Room to the Sunflower Room where the drumming circle meets.

Family Programming

Director of Family Programming, Leanne Hopkins;

Co-Director (Youth Programs, ages 10+), Jen Rashleigh

September of 2025 brought a transition as Anna Isaacs, SEL-CY Director, announced that she was stepping away from the role. Anna has so beautifully created a supportive and inclusive space for families, and we thank her for her service and her contribution.

Under Rev Shana's supervision, Marissa Donaldson and Jen Rashleigh stepped in to manage the transition, with Marissa focussing on Under 10 years, and Jen focussing on Ages 10+.

In February, Leanne Hopkins was hired as Co-Director of Family Programs with a focus on Under 10 years; Jen Rashleigh continues her program focus for 10 yrs+. Erin Kinrade, Ben Smith and Bridget Barr-Hoadley are our fantastic Sunday morning leaders. We are excited to have a full staff team and are ready for a year ahead of growth and discovery!

Our Family Programs consist of several important streams:

Sunday Morning Program

- This "one-room schoolhouse" program is staffed by two paid leaders and takes place in the Family Wing or out-of-doors.
- Attendance has been consistent, with an average of a dozen children coming each Sunday, ranging in age from babes-in-arms to 13 year olds. Our weekly touchstone rituals include a chalice lighting, check-in beads, and singing to extinguish the Chalice. Program activities range from art projects, to practising for a singing performance, to exploratory play in the nature playground.
- With consistent staffing now in place, we look forward to weaving in more Soul Matters curriculum content and connecting more deeply with UU themes and values.

Intergenerational Events

We are particularly excited to be developing more intergenerational events which build meaning, connection and joy in our community. These include:

- The February Wassail, which has been resurrected as an annual practice and takes place by the apple trees.

- Hallowe'en or Samhein time brings the Ancestor's Shrine, which transforms the Farmhouse Common Room into a shrine of votives, photographic & spoken memories, and music recorded by the Chalice choir.
- In December we collaborate with Rev Melora to bring WinterQuiet, a beloved ritual of music, reflection and candles set in a cedar and sequoia spiral.

Camps and Programs

In 2024 we offered two week long camps for children and youth and a monthly informal event:

- Over Spring Break we ran a mural-making camp with Kay Gallivan, a professional muralist and our first artist-in-residence with our Family Program! Kay lived at the church for the week and introduced campers and community to the joy of collaboratively designing and painting a mural. The mural turned out absolutely beautifully, and we documented the week with a Sanctuary gallery exhibit. Thanks to the Arts & Aesthetics Committee for your warm support and encouragement, and to Jane Wilson's family for your generous financial support to make this mural possible.
- In early July, we ran a Pride Camp for children and youth, transforming the church into a maker space to get ready for the Victoria Pride Parade— another wonderful intergenerational experience!
- Finally, we began a monthly Messy Church program in fall of 2025, creating an informal Friday evening gathering for families with young youth. Dinner, games, trivia, badminton...this evening is helping to deepen community and connection, and we look forward to more gatherings and to expand the program as we continue to build capacity.

Music

Jen Young, Music Committee Secretary

The Music Program welcomed its new director Christine Taber in September after she attended the AUUMM conference in Albuquerque NM. With energy and boundless enthusiasm, Christine has guided the music program to outstanding growth. The Chalice Choir is now at 56 members. The Men's Choir has been reinvigorated. Christine has incorporated youth and children into choral performances. Under the direction of Anne Hill, the Cantabile Handbell Choir is thriving and held a fundraiser in February towards completing the third octave of bells. The UU Heart Beats Drumming Circle, led by Dar Levy, offers a rhythmic option for participants. Jewel Spooner and Nancy Dobbs lead a Song Circle for those who just want to sing for the pure joy of it. Spirited Jazz continues to flourish, and attendance is up to pre-pandemic levels again. Music is alive and well at UUCV.

The annual Winter Concert collected close to \$3000 for local food banks. The Spring Concert raised almost \$1500 for the Music Program. Under Christine's creative care, the congregation has been treated to a broad variety of musical guests enhancing both services and concerts. The Music Director's office has been thoroughly cleaned and reorganized. In every way, this past year has been uplifting for the members of the music program and the people they serve.

Song Circle

Leaders: Nancy Dobbs, Jewel Spooner, Bernard Spalteholz

- With Bernard's technical support this informal singing group offers both Zoom and in person gatherings twice a month with words and/or music on the screen
- Bernhard joined Jewel and Nancy as a song leader after completing the Community Choir Leadership Training (CCLT) in the fall of 2024.

Spirited Jazz

Contact: Gary Theal

Spirited Jazz in the Sanctuary in 2024

Our Spirited Jazz services throughout 2024 hosted everything from a dynamic organ/guitar duo, through to a tribute evening with a Cuban Jazz Quintet, to a salute to a Women in Jazz Quintet, and a special full on Blues Quartet. Masterfully hosted by our Rev. of Jazz Shana with her signature "Homilette", Spirited Jazz experienced an encouraging indication of growth and sustainability over 2024 and transitioning into 2025.

Highlights

- Improved marketing with an expanded email list, and access to local Social Media outlets. Also, publishing promos in the Event Calendar, Go Section of the Times Columnist and UU exterior display cases
- We are attracting more patrons and drawing larger donation amounts.

Related to AV

- Developing a freelance backup audio operator list for Spirited Jazz and have 2 qualified on the list. Up to now have only 1 volunteer qualified to work with the level of musicians we are employing.
- Looking to develop a freelance Video operator list as soon as possible as we only have 1 volunteer qualified at the moment for Spirited Jazz.
- Developed a much-improved patron experience with video coverage improvements from a staging perspective, we have moved more to a front of risers set up to put all players on the same level as the piano (piano not riser friendly) and the audience. Without our 4-camera system this would not be possible. But, with our 4 cameras offering closeups on the keyboard, fretboards, overheads on drums and multi-shots of the group, all viewers get set see the details from a variety of viewpoints.

Comments

Booked 2 cross Canada travelling groups for April and June 2025 (groups contacted us)

Over 2024 and into 2025 it is noteworthy that many of the musicians and patrons have commented on both the great acoustics, audio video environment and exceptional aesthetics of our Sanctuary. A most recent comment from a highly acclaimed musician: “best acoustics in town”.

Spirituality Group

Contact: Don Vipond

This group continues to meet on-line monthly. The group of 8 -9 people discuss a current UU topic. For example, in February, they discussed UUCV member Brenda Greenwood's book of poetry. This group is open to everyone.

Worship

Jana Kotaska, Worship Chair

Highlights and Accomplishments

- Ensured two team members were available every Sunday throughout the eleven months that UUCV has services.
- Managed to cover twelve events in December and January with only three active worship associates (WAs) by reaching out to former WAs.
- Recruited and trained four new WAs; one decided not to continue after training due to the responsibilities of the role.
- Continue to receive positive feedback about the role of WAs and what they add to the services.

Issues and Concerns

- We had three WA come to the end of their terms, and one who had to step back due to a change in employment circumstances. We have had a hard time filling their spots on the team.
- It is difficult to recruit and retain WAs because the role requires a significant commitment of time each month, public speaking, and document management skills. The Worship Team needs to have at least six members to keep the demands on team members reasonable. Having eight members would help to manage periods when team members take extended leaves due to vacation or medical procedures.
- Some potential and current WAs are concerned about being live-streamed and/or having service videos available on the internet. A solution would be to have services available live on Zoom to allow for interactivity, and then only post the homily online afterward. We are also exploring ways to have the services prior to the current year removed from the internet and archived for internal church use.