

**Unitarian Universalist
Congregation
at
Willamette Falls**



**Annual Report
2022-2023**

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Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Willamette Falls

710 Sixth Street, Oregon City, OR 97045

2022-2023 Board of Trustees

Moderator	Kate Jaspers
Vice Moderator	Brian Fassett
Treasurer	Hal Stanley
Clerk	Linda Roberson
Trustee	Sheila Sullivan
Trustee	Ellen Stines
Trustee	Maggie Reed

Minister

Rev. Marcia Stanard

Executive Team

Rev. Marcia Stanard, Chuck Smith, Richard Powell, Kirsten Reimert

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**Unitarian Universalist Congregation
At Willamette Falls**

**ANNUAL REPORT
May 1, 2022 – April 30, 2023**

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Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Willamette Falls Annual Meeting 2022

Held via ZOOM and in person
May 15, 2022

Welcome

Moderator Greg Penner opened the meeting and thanked the congregation for their support and connection through the difficulties of the pandemic.

Chalice Lighting

Rev. Marcia Stanard lead the chalice lighting and read the opening words.

Call to Order

Greg Penner called the meeting to order and noted that the annual report is posted on the website and that printed copies are also available by contacting the office.

Parliamentarian

Greg Penner appointed Gerry Brown as Parliamentarian for this meeting.

Voting Protocols

Greg Penner explained that voting would be done three ways: 1) Members in the Sanctuary would raise their hands. Greg Penner and Rev. Marcia Stanard would count those votes. 2) Members on ZOOM would also vote by a show of hands either by raising a hand or using the hand icon. Clerk Sheila Sullivan and Intern Minister Stephani Skalak would count those votes. 3) Several members mailed in their votes.

If a member had comments or questions during discussion, he requested that the question be put in the Chat and members would be called upon in turn. Members in the Sanctuary could raise their hand. Comments were requested to be no more than three minutes long.

Moderator Penner noted that the four items of business for the meeting were:

- 1) Approval of Minutes,
- 2) Approval of nominations for next year's Board of Trustees
- 3) Approval of nominations for next year's Nominating Committee
- 4) Approval of the 2022-2023 Budget

There would also be a reading of milestones from the year, naming new signers to our Vanguard account, and recognition of some volunteers and congregational leaders.

Quorum

Sheila Sullivan (Clerk) confirmed a quorum, based on those attending in person, on ZOOM, and by absentee ballot.

Approval of 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes

Clerk Sheila Sullivan read the minutes. No motion was necessary for a vote, and minutes were approved.

Milestones

Rev. Stanard welcomed all of our new members who joined in the last year

Deaths

John Jaeger

Board of Trustees Slate

Kelly Wigmore presented the slate:

Kate Jaspers – Moderator – new two year term

Brian Fassett – Vice Moderator – new two year term

Hal Stanley – Treasurer - second year of two year term

Linda Roberson – Clerk – new two year term

Sheila Sullivan – Trustee – new two year term

Ellen Stines – Trustee – second year of two year term

Maggie Reed – Trustee – new two year term

Chuck Smith moved to accept the slate. Marina McIntire seconded. There was no discussion. The slate was approved overwhelmingly.

Nominating Committee Slate

Elliot McIntire presented the slate:

Carol Brownlow – new two year term

Kelly Wigmore – second year of two year term

Jennifer Dadek – second year of two year term

Marina McIntire moved to approve the slate. Michelle Stanley seconded. There was no discussion. The slate was approved overwhelmingly.

Budget

Greg Penner noted that we had an excellent Steward Campaign. Overall pledging was up by a significant amount, which allowed us to meet our goal of bringing our professional staff's salaries up to the UUA recommended mid-point. He thanked the congregation for their support.

Chuck Smith (Executive Team) presented the budget. He noted that there had been questions during one of the Budget Forums about earmarking any budget surplus for a Music Director, rather than for Facilities. We have a Capital Reserves account with approximately \$30K in it, after Scott Silver removed \$10K for tower repairs. The Executive Team felt this remaining amount is sufficient, and we do not need to add any surplus to this account. The Budget summary was screen shared.

Greg Penner asked for a motion to adopt the proposed 2022-2023 budget. Chuck Smith (ET) moved to approve. Floyd Roell seconded. There was some discussion. Greg Penner called the question. The motion was approved overwhelmingly.

Vanguard Signers

Greg Penner noted that new signers on our Vanguard Endowment and Capital Reserves accounts were needed. This is something that happens regularly, as we want to have members who are active in church leadership as our signers. The new signers will be Richard Powell (Executive Team) Joe Dadek (Finance Committee Chair, and Hal Stanley (our Board Treasurer).

Recognition:

Diana Antoniskis recognized volunteers and others who contributed to church life in the past year:

- Everyone who contributed to church services, from worship associates and special musicians to our camera and sound technicians
- Our Religious Education volunteers, who kept the program going under very difficult conditions
- The Committee on Ministry, who helped guide Marcia through the challenging year
- Our new Internship Committee, who journeyed through the year with Stephani and supported her learning and leadership
- The Facilities Committee, who continue to maintain our building, fix trouble spots and make our church home more beautiful and functional
- Pastoral Associates, who worked hard to keep us together, sending cards and arranging meals for members in need, and those who called lists of members to check in on them
- Our musicians, who in the absence of a choir found ways to bring us live music during our services
- Our new Stewardship Committee, who brought fresh energy to the job and help us achieve a major goal
- The Helping Other People Eat (HOPE) folks, who gather, pack, and distribute food to our hungry neighbors
- Feed the Hungry, who cooked and then packed up meals to go, giving folks in need a hot meal, even when they couldn't eat together
- The leaders and volunteers of Sheltering Our Neighbors (SON), who worked with a new system to bring food to families in need who were staying in hotels
- All the volunteers who run our social and support groups – End of Life Matters, A-Men, Sisters, Women's Book Group, The Forum, and the Sun Magazine Discussion group

- The COVID Task Force, who have been keeping an eye on the science and best practices and helping us figure out how and when to be together in-person
- The Nominating Committee, Executive Team, and Board of Trustees, who worked so hard to lead UUCWF into living our mission

Unsung Heroes

Rev. Stanard recognized several volunteers:

- Kelly Wigmore for organizing music
- Louisa Gonyou, Sheila Sullivan, Sally Betser, Joan Young, and Joanne Forsyth for being the Mouse Poo Mavens and designing the banner for General Assembly
- Ron Skolesky for coordinating and teaching OWL, and helping with church tech issues
- Jerry Spriggs for leading several social groups to keep us connected

Affiliated Ministers

Rev. Stanard recognized our Affiliated Community Ministers: Emily Brault and Rev. Kate McGraw – who did (and are doing) difficult jobs with vulnerable populations in prison and seniors who can no longer get services in Senior Centers.

Gratitude for Outgoing Leadership

Greg Penner thanked outgoing Board members, Mike Sweek and Kirsten Reimert.

Rev. Stanard thanked Diana Antoniskis for her service on the Executive Team, and Greg Penner for leading the Board through three years of challenges.

Closing Words

Outgoing Moderator, Greg Penner, thanked the congregation for their commitment to our community during such hard times. He also thanked all members of the Board with whom he served, and especially Rev. Marcia for her support, encouragement, and collaboration.

Adjournment

Marina McIntire moved to adjourn the meeting. No second being necessary, the meeting was adjourned at 1:07PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sheila Sullivan, Board of Trustees Clerk

Annual Minister's Report

Rev. Marcia Stanard

After re-reading last year's Minister's Annual Report, I realize that this has been a comparatively calm year, and we'll take that! Just think--we've been open consistently with services both in-person and on Zoom all year long! We've worked our way back up to Religious Education classes every single week, and have age-differentiated classes for nursery, preschool, early elementary and upper elementary, as well as a combined junior and senior high school youth group! Our choir is singing together, ushers are taking up the collection, and Second Sunday, Second Hour is in full swing. We're so grateful to be back together—most of us in person.

And we realize that we will never be “back to normal.” We've realized that some of us are more vulnerable and rightfully have a lower tolerance for risk. We've also realized that accessibility matters for all and being able to attend services, social groups, and committees via Zoom is a wonderful thing that we're not letting go of. We're grateful that we've finally learned one way of being more inclusive.

Our board, led by Moderator Kate Jaspers, together with Brian Fassett, Hal Stanley, Linda Roberson, Ellen Stines, Sheila Sullivan and Maggie Reed and I have been working our way through the UUA's report, *Widening the Circle of Concern*, which was completed in 2020 and published and released in 2021. The Commission on Institutional Change recommends that congregations study the report and figure out how they can become more welcoming and inclusive to folks who may be interested in our faith but may find barriers to feeling included. The Board has been doing some work with identifying barriers and has made some concrete steps to including more folks with better signage & more gender-neutral restroom options as well as ensuring that our Zoom services are set up to offer closed captioning.

We have some projects planned for next year, including more training for ushers and greeters, and examining ways we can be more fully inclusive of folks with disabilities. I am proud to be working with a Board that recognizes the importance of this work.

Our Executive Team has also worked hard this year on several projects, including our mask policy (which is now mask optional, with a separate area of pews set aside for folks who wish to only sit among folks who are also masked.) We've also struggled with the budget this year after losing our largest renter, FolkTime, in February. Chuck Smith, Richard Powell, and Kirsten Reimert have been a joy to work with and I'm so grateful for their faithful presence and outside-of-the-box ideas.

I continue to be profoundly grateful for our excellent staff. Mary Kroner-Ekstrand, our DRE, has faithfully guided a program that hasn't had enough volunteers to be self-sustaining, and so she's often had to spend much of her time finding substitutes or stepping into classrooms or the nursery. She's still found time to run an excellent program that is the envy of most congregations our size, with weekly programming for several different age levels. Offering classes every week did increase our children and youth attendance drastically, and while we're not at pre-Covid numbers, we have solid classes where children and youth make friends and want to be present. Mary also hired Comedy Sportz Improv Team to come and present to a cluster youth event we held, and several youth said that was a highlight of the year.

Vivian Brockett has served as our office administrator for nearly two years now, which means that she's developed her own systems for yearly events, like the stewardship drive and her skills and organizational know-how mean that our systems are running more smoothly than ever. She's planning to devote time over the summer to increase our rental income, which will be incredibly valuable. Barb Pitney, our long-time bookkeeper keeps our bills paid and our finances in shape. Amy O'Brien and Sojourner Lang handle our tech needs and issues and make sure the experience of those watching both on Zoom and in the sanctuary is as good as possible. Francesca Wicklin, together with several volunteers, has made our nursery a safe and happy place for our tiniest congregants, and we're so grateful to all of them.

We have two beloved staff members who will be leaving us soon. Ashlee Brouillette has been our amazing pianist since 2019, and this year she stepped up to direct our choir as well. She is warm, talented and kind, and we will miss her tremendously as she leaves us for full-time work. Our Intern Minister, Stephani Skalak is finishing her time with us as well, and will be doing a chaplaincy residency in the fall. Stephani is a gifted minister and we will miss her heartfelt and thoughtful sermons, her warm pastoral care, and her creative ideas. She will be gone for a while, but my hope is that we will be her ordaining congregation after she passes the Ministerial Fellowship Committee interview in December.

Next year, I am looking forward to continuing our work to be inclusive and welcoming. I enjoyed working with the Oregon City Diversity and Inclusion committee and learned some things that will help our congregation's efforts. I am also looking forward to working with our new Intern Minister, Mary Ellen Morgan, who is also from Meadville Lombard. Mary Ellen brings a wealth of UU experience, particularly in finance and administration, and was president of the UU Administrator's group for several years, as well as working in District Leadership. We will benefit from her experience, and she will benefit from our warm, healthy teaching congregation.

In my volunteer work with the broader Unitarian Universalist community, I have become a district Good Officer. Good Officers work with ministers who need a listening ear and someone to strategize with if problems, difficulties, or questions come up in their ministries. I am honored to be trusted by my colleagues in this way.

As always, I am so grateful to be your minister. I am happy to offer pastoral care or help with discernment as to how you'd like to be involved. UUCWF needs all of us to thrive. Because when we know better, we do better.

Warmly,
Rev. Marcia

Annual Religious Education Report

Mary Kroener-Ekstrand

I am now completing my seventh year serving as your half-time Director of Religious Education. It has been another difficult, COVID-impacted year in many ways, but I do see many glimmers of renewal in our congregation as we come to the end of this church year. I believe that we are entering a time of new possibilities. I am proud of our resilience and hopeful for our future.

We began the church year with RE Groups for K-12th grade children and youth meeting every other week, and although we only had one returning nursery staff member (out of 3 that we budget for), we also offered care for our youngest participants weekly by supplementing with volunteers and sometimes me (the DRE). The decision to limit RE to every other week was made because of a shortage of adult volunteers. We usually try to staff with teams of four per age group so that our volunteers can rotate turns and accommodate everyone's busy schedules and need for opportunities to also enjoy worship in the sanctuary. By mid-year, two more volunteers stepped forward and we combined two groups with lower attendance, so that in January, we took a leap of faith and decided to return to weekly Religious Education Groups for all ages. By April, our nursery was so overfull that we pulled in some additional volunteers to open up a new group for 3- and 4-year-olds.

Although I believe the decision to return to weekly RE was beneficial for our families and attendance has been going up through the spring, I want to highlight that most of our volunteer teams were and are still understaffed. So, it really has been a strain on our RE leaders to continually operate just a little beyond the level of our resources. Our congregation owes a debt of gratitude to these folks for giving above and beyond to help us rebuild.

We have some good news to report. Our average attendance in weeks that we have had RE groups had been averaging about 20 throughout the year, but just recently in the past month we've had a bit of a surge and have been seeing 30 or more kids and teens (nursery-12th grade). We have had lots of new families visiting with us, which is exciting and encouraging. So, while attendance is still variable, it is on a rising trend. We've had 72 kids attend at least one Sunday, 56 attend twice or more, and 20 who have attended 10 or more Sundays.

What do we need going forward? In short, our most significant and urgent need is new volunteers. I know that I say this each year, but honestly, the need has never been more critical than it is now. Please consider if you could contribute your time and presence to our Religious Education program. I will train and support you. You will deepen your faith and find new connections in our congregation.

There was more rotation in and out of service this year among our volunteers. But we had a great crew of folks who have served in RE for all or part of this year. They are:

Teacher Council: Brenda Koehler, Brooke Scherlie

7-12th grade youth: Sarah Kemp Anderson, Michelle Stanley, Greg Penner, Annie Pullar

Gold Group: Erin Hughes, Brenda Koehler, Angie Koehler, Jenny Ostergard

Silver Group: Travis Albers, Brooke Scherlie, Dan Tuggle, Annie Pullar

Orange Group: Michael Matsumura, Emily Booth, Alicia Altenau

Nursery: Elli Dadek, Gwen Dadek, Brianna Grady

Subs/Special Assistants: Emily Booth, Jen Dadek, Kate Jaspers, Kristin Stephenson, Sam Wolf

*****I really hope I didn't miss anyone*****

In Closing

I appreciate the ongoing opportunity to serve this congregation as your Director of Religious Education. This is a warm and loving community full of dedicated and passionate people transforming the world. I am proud to work for and with you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Kroener-Ekstrand, Director of Religious Education

Intern Minister's Report **Stephani Skalak**

It is a spiritual practice of mine to be mindful of the ephemeral nature of all relationships. Accepting that truth while also being willing to show up authentically, with vulnerability, curiosity, and compassion, is at the heart of my understanding of a meaningful life in general, and ministry in particular. Here at UUCWF, you have all embraced being a teaching congregation with such grace and generosity. As I look back

over all that I have learned during my time here, I am so grateful for the support that you have offered me, both collectively and individually. You have given me the opportunity to grow into ministry and to be a meaningful part of this community. Training new ministers is a gift not just to the individual intern minister, but to the denomination as a whole. Choosing to be a teaching congregation is to demonstrate that you value what Unitarian Universalism has to offer the larger community. You have my deep gratitude and respect for making the formation of ministerial interns part of your mission.

This was our first full year of in-person worship after the pandemic. It was the first year that our religious education program was back in full swing and the Time for All Ages had a gaggle of kids to interact with. This past September, we made masking optional, so I was able to see people's faces and deepen relationships with one-on-one pastoral care. During this year, I have led Sunday worship every month. I have also had the opportunity to be the officiant at a wedding, as well as for two memorial services. These were all rewarding experiences, and in each case I was moved to be able to create a sacred space, a container for collective reflection, or joy, or grief. The most rewarding aspect of leading worship is being responsive to the spiritual co-creation of that container with the congregation and worship team. This act of co-creation, for me, is at the heart of what makes ministry itself a spiritual practice.

In my time here, I have been able to observe the turnover in lay leadership over two years; it provides a much fuller picture of the unique benefits and challenges of parish ministry. From Board and Executive Team meetings, to staff meetings and working with the worship associates, volunteer lay leadership is the backbone of the day-to-day management of the church. It also has meant that I have gotten to witness the process of finding the right lay leadership for a church's particular challenges, which of course can change from year to year.

I am going to miss being here every week! I will always treasure this time as your intern minister. I'm a Portlander though, so we will definitely be seeing each other again. As for my immediate plans for the future, I have accepted a residency in Clinical Pastoral Education (in other words, chaplaincy training) at Portland Providence Medical Center for the coming year. I am looking forward to the growth and challenge of a year of CPE.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephani Skalak, Intern Minister

Annual Office Administration Report

Vivian Brockett

One month from our 2022-2023 Annual Meeting is my two-year anniversary as the Office Administrator of UUCWF. On one hand, I can't believe how fast the time has passed. I deeply enjoy my work here, and my working hours seem to fly by. On the other hand, I often feel like I've been in my position for longer than only two years. I have become very settled-in and self-sufficient in managing our church office. Adding to that sense of familiarity is the joyous fact that I have gotten to work face-to-face with so many more members than I was accustomed to seeing when I started here, during the meatiest part of the COVID pandemic.

Some things I am proud of over the past year:

- Keeping our office and building running smoothly during Rev. Marcia's leave last summer, and sabbatical during March
- An efficiently-run 2023 stewardship campaign, which successfully employed the organizational methods I set up last year
- Engaging in personal ways with new visitors and friends, several of whom became UUCWF members
- Problem-solving surrounding our immediate experiences with the houselessness crisis, and keeping abreast of emerging local solutions
- Booking four weddings, and hatching advertisement plans to increase that number next year, as well as seeking additional rental income
- Facilitating six meaningful memorial services
- Developing more intuitive ways to communicate with UUCWF online

At its heart, my job is about facilitating connections within the UUCWF circle, and that is such an honor, because this community encompasses so many caring, talented, and intelligent people. Working on a staff with Rev. Marcia, Mary, Barb, Stephani, and others has meant that I not only work on a team that is efficient and competent, but that my working life is full of meaningful human interactions and genuine care. The UUCWF members are so generous to me in ways that range from boxes of garden vegetables to housewarming gifts. My positive experiences at UUCWF played no small part in my decision to grow roots here in Oregon City. I look forward to more years of enthusiastically serving this congregation.

Respectfully submitted,
Vivian Brockett, Office Administrator

Annual Moderator's Report

Kate Jaspers

2022-2023 Board Goals

During our UUCWF Board of Trustee's August 2022 retreat, we set our goals for the year. We knew when the 2022-2023 church year began, that it would be a time for re-opening and reconnecting. Our congregation did a wonderful job, the best we could, at maintaining strong services and connection while doing only online services and activities, but many of us were craving in-person connections. Our 3 goals for the 2022-2023 church year included:

Board Goal 1: Build and Rebuild Community and Connection

When this church year began in July, we were in the process of re-opening to in-person services and activities. The board prioritized a thoughtful re-opening that allowed people to experience many of the activities that have historically brought much purpose, joy, and community to our congregation. Those include re-introducing the following:

- a. Coffee hour after service
- b. Choir
- c. Fellowship dinners (previously Dinners for 9)
- d. 2nd Sunday, 2nd Hour
- e. Time for All Ages, and singing our children to their Religious Education (RE) Classes
- f. Weekly RE Classes

The board is grateful for our staff and dozens of congregants who volunteered to lead and assist with these activities: Sheila Sullivan gathered a team of volunteers to restart our coffee hour after service; our accompanist Ashlee Brouillette served as both accompanist and choir leader; Linda Roberson recruited and organized a new round of fellowship dinners; April Santiago took the lead on planning activities and organizing volunteers for our 2nd Sunday, 2nd hour potluck and activities; Rev Marcia Stanard, intern minister Stephani Skalak, and our worship associates re-introduced Time for all Ages during service; and our Director of Religion Education Mary Kroener-Ekstrand and our team of Religious Education volunteers have returned our religious education classes to weekly meetings and have expanded the number of classes to nearly 2019 levels.

Board Goal 2: Give People the Opportunity to Serve our Congregation and Community

In the Fall of 2022, we hosted an Involvement Fair that included representatives from all groups at UUCWF. There was a great turnout, and many members were able to get started with new groups and activities. We also updated the groups and group descriptions on the UUCWF website with the help of Vivian Brockett, our amazing office administrator. Many of our groups have returned to have a strong presence since reopening for in-person activities in 2022. We continue to serve our larger community through activities like Feed the Hungry, HOPE food pantry, and Supporting Our Neighbors. An additional goal for the future is to re-develop our greeters and a welcome team, as a way to reach our visitors and newer members.

Board Goal 3: Improve Inclusivity and Accessibility (for members and newcomers)

Our congregation has historically prioritized inclusivity and accessibility. So, for our 3rd board goal, we considered if there are groups who may find our building or space less accessible. For example, a sub-group of the board began the process of using the UUA's Equal Access group's resources to consider how we can make our building more accessible for people with disabilities. This process was begun during this board year and will likely take an ongoing group to continue into the next year. The board is also in the process of reading the UUA's Widening the Circle of Concern, which is a report that examines the power structure and systematic racism within the Unitarian Universalist Association. Finally, the board also sees the value of reintroducing more robust greeters and welcome teams as a method to be a more inclusive and accessible congregation for newcomers. I see inclusivity and accessibility as an ongoing process, and not a goal that can be completed; I hope our congregation can continue to examine what we are doing well and in what ways we can improve our inclusivity and accessibility for all, especially for those who have been historically marginalized in larger society and within our faith tradition.

Financial Status

Our board carefully monitors the financial health of our congregation, in coordination with our Executive Team (ET) and Finance Committee. In the previous church year, 2021-2022, the congregation was able to significantly increase stewardship which allowed us to bring staff salaries to the midpoint of suggested ranges. This was a meaningful and important change that allowed us to properly compensate our wonderful staff and required an increase in stewardship of about 6.5% over the previous year. In our just-completed stewardship drive (April 2023), our stewardship pledges decreased by approximately 3% from the 2022 stewardship drive. This shows the generosity of our congregation, and for that I am so grateful. Unfortunately, we also saw an increase in costs in some areas (e.g., utilities, insurance, janitorial service, wages for childcare) as well as loss of rental income when the FolkTime program closed, which

required some cuts to our budget to develop a balanced budget. The board continues to prioritize a fiscally responsible balanced budget that fairly compensates our wonderful staff. Our current budget does not fund a music director. The Board will continue to work with the choir, Executive Team, and staff to develop short- and long-term solutions to maintain a robust music program at our church.

Gratitude

I have been so grateful for the opportunity to serve this congregation. I have learned so much about the people and workings of this amazing church. I am grateful to the current Board of Trustees and Marcia for a wonderful working relationship. I would also like to thank our Executive Team for their hard work and collaboration. Finally, I also would like to thank the congregation as a whole for your patience, kindness, and grace as I served as the Moderator to our Board of Trustees this year.

In service,

Kate Jaspers, Moderator of the 2022-2023 UUCWF Board of Trustees

Annual UUCWF Executive Team Report

Dear Fellow Congregants:

The Executive Team (ET) this year consisted of Chuck Smith, Kirsten Reimert, Richard Powell, and Rev. Marcia Stanard. The ET met twice monthly to discuss board issues and put together a budget for the coming year. Some of the issues discussed included helping oversee stewardship, fundraising, safety measures, recruiting for a music director, COVID policies, and our building's 100-year anniversary, among other topics.

Overall, the ET carried out the directions of the board successfully and in a timely matter within budget guidelines. Members of the ET thank the congregation for their trust and the members have enjoyed serving the UUCWF community.

-Richard Powell

Affiliated Community Ministers

UUCWF's Affiliated Ministers are:

Rev. Dr. Emily Brault

Rev. Kate McGraw

A-Men!

(Also known as: UUC Men's Group at Willamette Falls)

The congregation's men's group enjoys each other's company twice a week (second and fourth Tuesdays). We share our thoughts and life experiences in a spirit of camaraderie that never fails to make us all chuckle and smile. Our covenant with each other includes these points:

- Listen to each other.
- Respect each other and ourselves.
- No fixing, no saving, no advising, no setting each other straight.
- Honor confidentiality.
- Be a friend.
- Have fun!

We discuss a topic every evening. Sometimes it's serious – many times it's not. Whichever direction our discussions takes (and there are often many directions), there's much to learn about the topic and each other. This past year we have considered the following:

- | | | |
|---------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Patriotism | 6. Regrets | 11. Relationships |
| 2. Education | 7. Movies | 12. Liberty |
| 3. Conflict | 8. Equality | 13. Women |
| 4. Teachers | 9. Heroes | 14. Democracy |
| 5. Music | 10. Disinformation | 15. Death |
| | | 16. Wokeness |

God, A.I., Change, and Compassion will be the four topics for May and June, 2023.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, our meetings have been conducted via Zoom. The attendance was still good but not as robust as the in-person meetings.

If you're a guy and want to weigh in with your point-of-view, or simply listen to others, log into our Zoom sessions! If anyone has any questions, contact Jerry Spriggs at jspriggs5@comcast.net or (503) 742-1667 (Land Line) or (503) 913-2213 (iPhone).

-Jerry Spriggs

Bring an Object

Bring an Object is a group that started as a spinoff of the Sun Magazine discussion group. We started the group about three years ago around the time that COVID was getting a grip on the nation. We met on the stage at the End of the Oregon Trail Center in Oregon City. As the weather changed towards Fall, we started meeting on Zoom and continue to do so. As the weather improves again, we will likely meet at members' home backyards.

We get together once a month, usually the last Thursday, and bring an object from our lives to the meeting. This object can be a book, a photo, a piece of art, a piece of jewelry, just about anything that can be carried to the meeting. We begin with a brief check in, and then each person has time to talk about their object and share a personal story about it. This is a fun and easy way for people to get to know each other better.

The nature of our group means that we need to limit its growth, but at this time, we have space for one or two more participants. Please contact Eric Griswold at griswold@nwlinc.com if you would like to join.

-Eric Griswold and Julia Marie

Committee on Ministry

The current Committee on Ministry consists of Michelle Stanley, Patty Snow, Jim Grant and Joe Dadek. Nancy Zaffaro was also on the committee, but had to drop out because of other commitments. The committee typically meets by Zoom with Rev. Marcia the first Thursday of each month, except during the summer months. The group provides feedback to Rev. Marcia on various issues. One of the duties of the committee is to provide an evaluation of Rev. Marcia every 2-3 years as spelled out in her contract. The committee is currently going over the evaluation questions and determining who the questions will be distributed to. The committee anticipates that the questions will be distributed soon and that results will be available next month.

-Patty Snow

Day Timers

Day Timers is a group that meets monthly to share stories from our lives. The purpose of Day Timers is to foster a sense of community. It has been meeting for around ten years with a core group of ten.

Any adult church member is invited. We meet at the church on first Fridays for two hours. As the host, I publicize a topic in advance and send out an invitation to Tidings.

Attendance at Day Timers has risen this year and meetings are respectful, interesting, and congenial.

-Kelly Wigmore

ELM - End of Life Matters

This group of 10-12 people meets regularly to discuss all things related to loss, death, and end-of-life care. In the past, the group organized speakers, classes, films, workshops, and discussion groups. Some of the topics were: Advanced Directives, Hospice & Palliative Care, Death with Dignity, Home Funerals, Green Burial, Water Cremation and more. We get together monthly to provide education and discussion on death related topics in a caring and supportive environment. The group is available to help with funerals and memorial services and has worked closely with Rev. Marcia to provide families with reception services. We are an open group and welcome all those who are interested in joining us.

-Sally Betser and Bev Koch

Facilities

We formed an Interiors Team this year to try to help us improve the look, feel, and function of the church interior. Louisa Gonyou and Sally Betser coordinate for this team. Thank you Sally, Louisa, Sheila, Kate, Joan, and all the others who continue to improve our Interior.

The Audio/Visual group (Amy, Sojourner, and Vivian) continue to upgrade and improve the sound and video during the services. We should appreciate their dedication to the service EVERY WEEK (when some of us skip to sleep in). A big Thank You to them; maybe stop by the booth after service and express your appreciation in person.

Bev Koch continues to try to coordinate cleanup efforts around the exterior of the property. Thank you, Bev!

On the building front, it is the standard litany of clogged toilets, homeless, doorknobs, roof and gutter leaks, and dead lights. The major work we started this year is a rebuild of the tower structure to make it last another 100 years. Michael Roberson and Scott Silver are the leaders on this. We hope to have the building completely dry again by the start of rainy season 2023. There is much to do.

And last but not least, our one-person IT team Ron Skoletsky continues to keep the network running and the computers humming. Thank you, Ron.

Members and friends, each of our teams could use additional help. If you have skills (or want to learn new skills), please reach out to any of the folks listed above and join a team. Expanded fellowship while helping fill a need is our goal.

Yours in service and community,
Scott Silver, Facilities Chair
(503) 522-5727

Feed the Hungry

UUCWF is responsible for providing prep, cooking, set up, portion division, serving, delivering, and clean up, to approximately 60-80 persons in need, 4 to 5 times a year. We meet every 5th Sunday afternoon at St. John's Episcopal Church kitchen and dining room. This church is located in Milwaukie, at 2036 SE Jefferson. Volunteers from our congregation sign up to assist in this 2 1/2 hour gathering, often including young people over 12, with the adult volunteers, numbering about a dozen.

This participation is part of the social justice program of UUCWF. Volunteers have a chance to give to the community, expose our youth to good examples, open our eyes to empathy and gratitude, and get better acquainted with our community and fellow congregation members.

This year we have resumed serving guests in the dining area. This has required additional volunteers and we are happy to report that our congregation has been very generous with their time and efforts, and we have always had the needed support for our commitment.

We want to thank everyone who has volunteered to help with the preparation and serving of food and helping ensure that this valuable program continues.

-Eric Griswold and Julia Marie
griswold@nwlink.com, (503) 232-7010

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee monitors UUCWF's financial health and meets each month to review trends and recent activity. Like many organizations in the current economic climate, we are adapting to new risks, including the loss of a long-term tenant due to funding shortages. We approach the end of our 2022-2023 fiscal year financially healthy and committed to expanding our positive impact on the community.

-Hal Stanley (co-submitted by Joe Dadek)

The Forum

Just around 9:00 every Sunday morning this past year, about a dozen people gathered in a circle in the South Room for lively and passionate discussion of matters Spiritual, Political, Economic, Ethical and Philosophical. Tea from Taiwan, and sometimes snacks, were provided by "Teawala" David Hiebert (served by him and Hannah Berkowitz assisted by William Gifford and Don Arbuckle). Thanks to William Gifford and Hannah Berkowitz, who brought and set up their personal laptops, an additional 3-5 people regularly Zoom'd in from a distance and took part in the discussion.

This year, topics have not been decided upon in advance, but rather arose from the immediate interests and concerns of the individuals on the day. Included were: economics and income disparity, stock market and financial capitalism, ethics of capitalism, houselessness, tolling on I-205, civic participation, decline in civility and public accountability, gratitude, care for dying friends and relatives, Oregon and Oregon City candidates and issues, national political personalities and issues, goodness and evilness of individuals such as Hitler, Putin, Trump, Biden and Supreme Court justices, and discussions of the meanings and origins of particular words. Participants weighed in out of their own experience and expertise and shared sources and references. The atmosphere of discussion has been supportive and inclusive. Participants felt comfortable to discuss their personal issues like changes in job, family and commuting status and expressed that they were able to explore and express ideas that were sometimes sensitive and personal. Though there could be strongly stated disagreement, they always felt loved and appreciated.

This is an open group, inviting anyone who wishes to participate. Visitors were welcomed, often with a round of introductions that increased everyone's knowledge of each other. To be included in the hybrid meeting, just come to the South Room at 9:00a.m. Sunday or contact Jerry Spriggs (jspriggs5@comcast.net) to be put on The Forum Zoom invitation list.

-Gerry Brown

H.O.P.E. Food Pantry

HOPE Food Pantry at Oregon City First Baptist Church is UUCWF's longest social justice commitment. It takes 2 teams of volunteers to serve our food insecure neighbors in Clackamas County.

The first team is 5-6 volunteers who meet at the food bank truck every other Monday morning from 7am-9am, and transport about 2,000 pounds of food into First Baptist Church. Jim Ammeson has led this team for the past 4 years, but now is moving with Eini Lowell to Sisters, so we are in dire need of 2 volunteers to replace them. We are so thankful for their service and will miss their kind, hardworking, upbeat attitudes!

The second team of 20-25 volunteers serves 2-4 hours each third and fifth Friday. They pick up and prep food in the morning and then help our neighbors in need shop at the pantry in the evening. It is such a pleasure to work with these positive, caring people and to help about 60 families each week stretch their SNAP budget with fresh meat, dairy, produce and canned options. We have as much fun as possible working together to help others! We would welcome more volunteers.

-Ellen Stines

Internship Committee

I am happy to report on the Intern Committee that I have chaired for the past two years. We had the pleasure of working with Stephani Skalak, our intern, in monthly meetings and any time she wished to have our opinions, support, etc. Other members of our committee are Maggie Kalil, Marina McIntire, Daniel Tuggle, Hal Stanley.

Our work included the pleasant task of meeting together on Zoom once a month. Stephani would share with us her questions she had about her position, the church, and the services. We worked with her to support her ministry in all ways. Each year, we helped evaluate her for the Meadville Lombard Theological School and monitored her progress on key ministerial practices.

Needless to say, Stephani grew in her position during these two years. She is an inspiring minister; she is seen as a leader by members and guests alike. We found Stephani to be proficient in all areas and exceptional in the great majority! We feel Stephani served our church in an exceptional way and we thank her and wish her the best in the future.

-Kate Grant

SISTERS

SISTERS found the pandemic a mighty challenge, but we are once again having monthly meetings, either in member's homes or at the church. We, as a group, have decided to support our local community by donating men's clothes to Our Father's Heart. We hope to hold our annual retreat this summer at the Oregon Coast. Further details have yet to be determined.

-Carla Hayden

SON (Sheltering/Supporting Our Neighbors)

The SON program continued this church year from October-April. We work with three other congregations in Clackamas County, along with the NW Housing Authority, to provide meals to families experiencing homelessness. The families are housed in various motels in the county, and each congregation provides meals for two weeks on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday on a rotating basis.

UUCWF volunteers contributed over 175 meals during our three SON rotations, utilizing the generous contributions of over 30 volunteers, both in food preparation and meal delivery. We anticipate that the program will start up again in the fall and look forward to doing our part to help our neighbors in Clackamas County. Thanks to everyone for your support!

-Diana Antoniskis and Kate Grant

Stewardship Team

We had a great Stewardship team this year, made up of Joyce Tischler, Richard Powell, Kirsten Reimert, Jim Grant and Greg Penner. Stephani Skalak and Rev. Marcia were regular attenders of our meetings. Vivian Brockett was a great help, keeping us updated with clear numbers throughout the drive. We had our first meeting on January 9th, 2023, and met a few times before kicking off the drive. Because Rev. Marcia was out on sabbatical for part of the drive, we kicked off earlier this year, on February 19th.

The drive took a month longer than the previous year. I believe a couple of things contributed to that. First, and perhaps most important, the economy had been shaky for several months before we started the drive. Several other entities did not have the pledging numbers they were looking for, including First Church and NPR. I also feel like our message this year was not as compelling as last year. We did not have a rallying point like the equality issue around staff salaries like we did last year.

With all that, our initial pledges matched the number we got to last year, ending up at \$270,000. Unfortunately, after the drive wrapped up a few congregants reached out because they had experienced big life changes, and had to reduce their pledges, amounting to about \$6,000 less. As of 5/1/23 our total number pledged is \$262,370.

We had 94 pledges this year, as opposed to 97 last year. 11 were new, 83 pledged last year. Of the 14 folks who pledged last year, but not this year:

- 1 has moved
- 1 has ceased pledging due to age/health
- 4 have left UUCWF
- 4 have chosen not to pledge or did not respond (unknown reason)
- 4 have stated economic hardships

On behalf of the team, I'd like to thank our congregation for their generosity in supporting UUCWF. Most of our folks pledged in a timely manner, and those who needed a reminder, in my experience, were kind and responsive.

Finally, I am very grateful to the team we had this year. They were all great collaborators, willing participants, and friendly folks to work with. It was a great team.

-Greg Penner

Women's Book Club

The UUCWF Women's Book Group is a fun and thoughtful group that loves to read. This year, we are scheduled to meet September through June on the 1st Tuesday of each month, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. We all contribute by choosing our book titles. Come join us!

Below is a list of our book selections to give you a taste of what we have been reading this year:

Pied Piper, by Nevil Shute

The Rosie Project, by Graeme Simsion

State of Wonder, by Ann Patchett

The Exiles, by Christina Baker Kline

Death Comes for the Archbishop, by Willa Cather

People of the Book, by Geraldine Brooks

July's People, by Nadine Gordimer

Woman of Light, by Kali Fajardo-Astine

Summer in the City of Roses, by Michelle Ruiz Keil

-Jane Spriggs

Worship Associates

The Worship Associates meet quarterly to discuss creating reflections and sermons, scheduling, and supporting one another. Each Worship Associate prepares and presents a reflection that supports the theme of the sermon, as well as provides support to the Minister during the service; each person serves every four to six weeks. In Rev. Marcia's and Intern Minister Stephani's absence, a Worship Associate will organize the full service, including music, readings, and delivering the sermon, and be supported by another Worship Associate. This was the case in March and will be again in July and August. It is a great opportunity for Rev. Marcia to get a break and for the congregation to hear a variety of perspectives.

-Elaine Cozart

STATISTICAL REPORT May 1, 2022 to April 30, 2023

Deaths:

Richard Bellingham
Skyler Freimann
Jacqueline Griffith
Horace Nealey

New Members:

Tom Crancer
Jo Cunningham
Sara Forrest
Taylor Forrest
Donna La Main
Jessi La Main
Yvonne Lyles
Erin Olson
Chris Plaisted
Rachel Sitler
Jean E. Stewart
Robert Thornhill
Lisa Westapher
Tricia Wood

Births:

Ari Joseph Wolf, born to Samantha and Aaron Wolf

COVENANT OF RIGHT RELATIONS

Summary of Key Principles:

As the community of Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Willamette Falls, we do covenant together to:

- Honor the fact that the work of the church involves a significant investment of time and energy.
- Pledge time, wealth and talent to the best of our ability.
- Be respectful, friendly and welcoming to all members, visitors, and staff. Avoid gossip and speak directly with church members regarding issues or concerns.
- Resolve conflicts in a positive way.

MISSION STATEMENT

Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Willamette Falls
is a welcoming community whose mission is to:

INVITE connection
INSPIRE spiritual growth
IGNITE action

VISION STATEMENT

We, the members of Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Willamette Falls, envision that in our church:

1. We nurture spiritual growth.
2. Our personal behavior reflects the seven principles
3. We engage with communities outside our church
4. We are active in the church and have many strong volunteer leaders
5. We have vibrant and diverse programs
6. We have a beautiful and functional building

VISION STATEMENT - DETAILED

1. We nurture spiritual growth.

We have programs for all ages that provide ongoing sustenance for spiritual growth. We celebrate the joys of our community. We stimulate thinking in church services, through classes, and in all community activities. We are not afraid of differences and relish the splendor of variety. We are a collage of wonder, in all stages of growth and development, ready to help each other climb the next obstacle.

2. Our personal behavior reflects the seven principles.

We live with and by the seven principles of Unitarian Universalism. We are truly a community of loving people; acting out our beliefs as individuals and as a community. We reach out to members in need and help them through difficult times. We support, respect and celebrate children and adults alike through all stages of life. We welcome newcomers. We support social action and give time and money to sustain and improve our church community.

3. We engage with communities outside our church.

We reach out to diverse groups of people outside our membership through social action and visible church activities. We provide both voice and action representing our liberal religious views. We seek out new members to join in our community. We have a strong presence in the southern Portland suburbs through our landmark Oregon City building and by aiding local non-profit groups with financial and volunteer support.

4. We are active in the church and have many strong volunteer leaders. Because we have congregational polity and the freedom it implies, we also shoulder the burden and responsibility to make the church work. Church members give their time, expertise and financial support to create a place we can call home. We identify and encourage church members to take on leadership roles. The congregation both supports and challenges the leadership in a spirit of shared purpose and commitment.

5. We have vibrant and diverse programs.

The programs of our church range from small groups meeting for spiritual nurturing to church-wide social events. Programs are the reason that all types of people join our church, find meaning and stay involved. We create new programs as new interests and needs grow and end programs that no longer have a constituency.

6. We have a beautiful and functional building.

We exist in a building whose beauty helps our spirits soar during worship. The building also provides comfortable and flexible spaces for small to large groups in support of the many activities our church members enjoy.