

ALL SOULS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
CHURCH

Watertown, New York

ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2023 ~~ June 30, 2024

Presented at the
ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

June 9, 2024



The mission of All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church is to create an environment in which personal and spiritual growth is encouraged and where each of us is free to explore our individual beliefs and search for meaning. We strive to be a warm, supportive, nurturing, and inclusive religious community where all people are respected and honored because of their uniqueness. We promote acceptance, diversity, and social justice through our dealings with each other and our actions in the local and global community.

**BOARD OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES
2023 – 2024**

President – Heather Winn
Vice President – Amy Summerville Loomis
Treasurer – Eleanor Allen
Secretary – Francis Ashland
Trustees – Catherine Burns
Janine LaClair
Alabama Dane
Kelly Sackheim

CHURCH STAFF

Pianist – Toni Zygadlo
Bookkeeper– Angelo Guarino
Custodian– John Crupi

Abundant Heart Covenant

*Welcoming, loving, and joyous of spirit;
We offer the fellowship of this, our community.
To be in all things peaceful and just: thus we honor
the quest for meaning, the search for truth.
United by Spirit, we celebrate this Earth
and hold our connections as Sacred.
To abundantly give of our hearts' deepest gifts: to ourselves,
to our World, to the future -
This is our covenant". - J. Trainham*

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Order of Business

A majority of active members qualified to vote shall constitute a quorum at any regular or special meeting of the Church. At any meeting of the Church a lesser number than a quorum may vote only to adjourn the meeting. Voting members are only those who have signed the membership book and from whom, within the current fiscal year, there has been a recorded financial contribution or for whom there is a current signed pledge card on record. 37 members met the requirements as of printing, thus 19 is the quorum.

Officer's Reports

Minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting

Collector's Report

Treasurer's Report

President's Report

Committee Reports

Memorial Garden Committee

Nominating Committee

- Presentation of Slates

Orders of the Day

Elections for Each Office

- Nominations from the floor
- Election (by hand vote if uncontested, by ballot if contested; no runoffs: repeat until a majority is obtained)

Budget

Shared Plate

New Business (Members obtain the floor and raise items of new business)

Adjournment

Annual Meeting Minutes

June 11, 2023

Members Present: Eleanor Allen, Warren Allen, Francis Ashland, Catherine Burns, Rebecca Carr, Alabama Dane, Frances Mercer, Kathleen Hammond, Sylvia Heap, Julie Jeffers, Janine LaClair, Mimi Litsche, Harriet McMillan, Sarah O’Connell, Jo Reed, Kelly Sackheim, Christine Schneider, Robert South, Ruth Stewart, Pat Sutherland, Paula Trainham, Heather Winn, Caleb Tiff. Karen Hall, Amy Summerville by Zoom.

Call to Order

In the presence of a quorum (21 is the quorum, 25 were present), President Heather Winn called the meeting to order at 11:59 a.m.

Minutes – Sarah O’Connell

The minutes of the 2022 meeting were presented. **Rebecca moved and Eleanor seconded that we approve the minutes of the last annual meeting as written. Motion carried.**

Collector’s Report – Warren Allen

The collector’s report was in the Annual Meeting report booklet but Warren updated it by reporting that in 2020, there were 32 pledge units (which may be by individual or family) at about \$36,000; 2021, 35 units at about \$38,000’ 2022, 27 units at \$34,365 and as of this year’s pledge drive, 2023, 29 units at \$38215.

Treasurer’s Report – Eleanor Allen

The treasurer’s report was in the Annual Meeting report booklet. Eleanor will cover further points during the discussion on the proposed budget.

Other Reports – were included in the Annual Meeting report booklet, including the President’s Report and several committee reports.

Nominating Committee Report – Robert South

The nominations are:

A. Officers:

President – Heather Winn – continuing for a third 1-year term.

Vice President – Amy Loomis – continuing for a second 1-year term.

Secretary – Francis Ashland – new for a 1-year term

Treasurer – Eleanor Allen – continuing for a 1-year term.

B. Trustees: (Trustees may potentially serve a maximum of three consecutive 2-year terms and then must be off the Board for at least one year)

1) Kelly Sackheim – new for the first year of a 2-year term

2) Alabama Dane – new for the first year of a 2-year term

Catherine Burns is continuing the second year of her third 2-year term.

Janine LaClair is continuing the second year of her first 2-year term.

C. Nominating Committee: (Members can serve for three 1-year consecutive terms).

1) Robert South – continuing for a second 1-year term.

2) Warren Allen – new for a 1-year term

3) Frances Mercer – continuing for a second 1-year term.
(The committee of Robert South and Kelly Sackheim had met with Pat Merz thinking she was the third member for 2022-23 and had nominated Shannon Starkweather-Burke for the 2023-24 third member, but since Shannon is moving this summer, Frances Mercer replaced her on the slate. Robert South made this motion to change the slate and Joanne Harter seconded; the motion passed.)

There were no nominations from the floor. **Joanne moved and Harriet seconded to accept the entire slate as presented, and the motion was carried.** Frances Mercer noted that she would like to see statements in the newsletter from each member on the slate introducing themselves and saying why they chose to serve All Souls in this way.

Proposed Budget – Eleanor Allen

Eleanor referred to the proposed budget in the annual meeting report booklet and noted where changes had been made. Questions were asked and answered about the various funds and what is used to pay our expenses and she explained about the Owens Fund principal being untouched. It was noted that the Capital Savings Fund that is actually part of that Owens Fund should be renamed as it is confusing. The accounting for the Split Plate collection was also explained. **Sarah moved and Kelly seconded that the budget for 2023-24 be approved and the motion was carried.**

Shared Plate – Robert South

Robert reviewed the results of the voting on the various organizations nominated to share half (one quarter each) of our annual loose plate collections in the coming year for our Generosity Project. The organizations with the most votes were the Children’s Home of Jefferson County and Planned Parenthood of Northern New York. **Robert moved that the Children’s Home and PPNNY be the recipients for 2023-24 and Eleanor seconded. The motion was carried.**

New Business:

1. Heather reported that last year at the annual meeting, the board was charged with developing a policy for Unirondack scholarships and had fulfilled that charge.
2. Kelly made a motion that we change our DBA to call ourselves All Souls Unitarian Universalist Community or All Souls Unitarian Universalist Congregation. After much discussion and the suggestion that the board look at this during the coming year, Kelly withdrew her motion.
3. Robert proposed a special rule of order for allowing members observing the annual meeting via Zoom to have their vote counted After much discussion about whether New York State law allowed for this post-Covid, it was decided that we would look into the matter further.
4. Kelly proposed that we take a look again at what would constitute a majority of our members for the purposes of a quorum. After discussion, this issue was tabled and will be looked at for next year.

Heather adjourned the meeting at 1:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah O’Connell, Secretary

2024 Report of the Nominating Committee:

by Nominating Committee—Warren Allen, Robert South, and Frances Mercer,

NOMINATING COMMITTEE: The Nominating Committee recommends the following slate to fill the open positions. Can serve 3, one-year terms.

1. Heather Winn (If elected, this will be her first of three one-year terms.)
2. Warren Allen (If elected, this will be his second of three one-year terms.)
3. Joanne Harter (If elected, this will be her first of three one-year terms.)

OFFICERS: The Nominating Committee recommends the following slate to fill the four officer positions for one year (maximum three one-year terms for president and vice president).

PRESIDENT: Robert South (If elected, first one-year term)
VICE-PRESIDENT: Amy Summerville-Loomis (If elected, 3rd one-year term)
SECRETARY: Karen Hall
TREASURER: Eleanor Allen

TRUSTEES: The Nominating Committee recommends the following slate to fill the open Trustee positions:

(Trustees may potentially serve a maximum of three consecutive terms and then must be off the board for at least one year.)

TWO YEAR TERM (July 2024-June 30 2026): Erica Gardner (If elected, 1st year of first 2-year term.)

TWO YEAR TERM (July 2024-June 30 2026): Janine LaClair (If elected, 1st year of second 2-year term.)

Continuing on the board as trustees are:

TWO YEAR TERM (July 2023-June 30 2025): Kelly Sackheim (Second year of first 2-year term.)

TWO YEAR TERM (July 2023-June 30 2025): Alabama Dane (Second year of first 2-year term.)

Officer and Appointee Reports:

President's Report: by Heather Winn

After four years of being in pandemic survival it was great to begin getting back to a less stressful time. It is wonderful to see more people start joining us for services both in person and by zoom. This hybrid sort of gathering together is a good thing that came out of the pandemic. It has certainly made some things more convenient.

Last year a big chunk of our focus was aimed at getting the inside of our building repaired so that we could once again be able to come together. This year the inside of the building is beautiful, aside from the social hall ceiling and that is in the works (as soon as Diego can fit us in). We switched our focus to begin working on the outside of

the building. We had the roof over the RE wing replaced with a lovely metal roof. The next big project will likely be the siding.

As a board this past year we put a lot of effort and research into the heating system in the church. When the furnace in the RE wing went out it opened up the door for us to discuss the merits of heat pump vs forced air furnace. It turned out the heat pump is awesome but not really something that our church would be financially able to do at this time because we would need to install more than one heat pump and solar panels in order to get the most benefit from it. While the idea of using green energy to help ASUUC reduce its carbon footprint would be ideal, it just wasn't in the cards quite yet. As such the Furnace in the RE wing has been replaced with an energy efficient forced air furnace.

During this last fiscal year, we have been advertising for a minister without much luck, unfortunately. The search committee continues to work on this, explore and all leads that come up as well as looking at if we could find a way to fund a full-time minister that will hopefully help our congregation grow and make it another 200 years!

In conclusion thank you for this opportunity. I have learned so much and it is going to be odd not being on the board.

Collector's Report: by Warren Allen

Thank you for your gifts of time, and for your dollars which help us to pay for our group bills. For the current 2023-24 fiscal year, twenty-nine pledges came in for dollars which those pledgers hoped to pay, plus one pledge came in for credit on our electrical bill. Others of us had probably told themselves that they would donate later what they could then afford. The pledges of dollars totaled \$38,215. As of May 19, there are five weeks left of this FY, and as of now the pledged dollars brought in are \$31,993 or 84%. [I made an error in the June newsletter~~ I got the 84% correct but the number of dollars was too high.]

And for the year almost gone, of the pledged dollars received, we have also brought in \$2,221.98 in cash for our Generosity Project thus far, which shares a quarter of the total with each of the other local charities for which we voted last June~~Jefferson County Childrens' Home and Planned Parenthood of NNY. Also, we brought in \$30 towards our Fair-Trade coffee; \$807.61 in non-pledged donation checks; and \$1125 donated for rent from Ann Halback and the Tai Chi and also from the AA group.

And then miscellaneous receipts during this passing FY were the grant of \$3200 from the NYS Universalists, to cover "ads" on NCPR inviting others to join with us or with the UU Fellowship in Plattsburgh, and also including \$400 for exhibit fees and materials to reach out to neighbors who could join us. Other "misc" were the syrup fundraiser during our eclipse, for \$14.40; \$10 from a friend for newsletter postage; \$20 towards either an advertising banner to show during events at Sackets, or else towards our utility costs; and \$174 gross (less fees) for more nonpledged donations via

PayPal. I plan to update this during our annual meeting.

For those who can pledge, this eases the guesswork on our future income. As of May 19, twenty of us have brought in pledge cards offering checks totaling \$28,935, plus one pledger offering electricity credit. And of the pledgers offering checks, \$3,093 has come in by May 19 towards those pledges for next fiscal year.

Registrar's Report: by Robert South

The current list of active voting members is adds up to a total of 36, so our quorum would be 19 if nothing changes. The final list will constitute the sign in roster. To be a voting member you must make a financial contribution. Traditionally donations have been considered "from" family pledging units. My inclination is to include cohabiting family members who have attended any church activity in the past year, unless the person actually making the donation specifically says to include or not include them. So, if you want someone you paid for to be either included on the list or removed from it, please let me know.

Historian/Bicentennial Report by Sarah O'Connell

This year, All Souls UU Church celebrated its Bicentennial, so most of the historian work was also done around this celebration. The Bicentennial ad hoc committee consisted of Harriet McMillan as our esteemed leader, Sarah O'Connell, and Kelly Sackheim.

We began the church year with a service on September 23 specifically on the Bicentennial. Harriet with assistance from Robert South presented (with accompanying slides) a look at the various buildings in Watertown that have housed the Universalist and Unitarian/Universalist congregations.

At the first service of most months thereafter, a member of the BC gave a brief update on Bicentennial historical tales. In March and April this included "interviews" with historic UUs, including Pitt Morse, Hosea Ballou, Dr. Grovner Farmer, Clara Owens and Marada Johnson. In March 2024, Dr. Jason White presented a service on what Watertown was like in 1823 when the Universalist church was beginning.

Activities planned for June to wrap up the Bicentennial celebration include a convoy to visit the buildings that housed original Universalist congregations in Jefferson County, including Henderson Harbor, Sackets Harbor and Dexter and a lunch. T-shirts commemorating the event are also planned.

There were also some historian tidbits offered in the newsletter, including a mention of our celebrating Indigenous People's Day in October 10 years ago. As the city ponders the future of the Zoo, we referenced the hard work of Winnie Dushkind. We also wrote about the church tradition of donating food stuffs going back 150 years. Ten years ago in March the news included Guy and Mike's wedding. The May issue gave information on the carillon bells donated by Clara Nott Owens.

Treasurer's Report: by Eleanor Allen

		All Souls UU Proposed Budget 2024-25			
		Jul '23 - Mar 24	Annual Budget	Proposed	Difference
Ordinary Income/Expense					
Income					
22-23 Pledges		320.00			
23-24 Pledges		26,937.00	35,500.00	35,000.00	(500.00)
Amazon Smile		0.00	0.00		0.00
Building Use		895.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00
Earned Interest		2,812.01	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00
Fundraiser		0.00	1,500.00		(1,500.00)
Memorial Garden Donation		645.00			0.00
Pledges					0.00
Current Year Pledges		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Pledges		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
UBS Investment Income		12,600.00	21,600.00	24,000.00	2,400.00
Unpledged Income		1,279.65	1,500.00	1,000.00	(500.00)
Z					0.00
Other Income					0.00
Coffee Fund		21.00			0.00
Generosity Project		1,689.47	0.00	900.00	900.00
Total Other Income		1,710.47	0.00	900.00	900.00
Total Z		1,710.47	0.00	900.00	900.00
Total Income		47,199.13	63,100.00	63,900.00	800.00
Expense					0.00
Advertising and Promotion					0.00
BiCentennial Celebration		79.51			0.00
Advertising and Promotion - Other		300.00		900.00	900.00
Total Advertising and Promotion		379.51			0.00
Bank Service Charges		7.60	0.00	0.00	0.00
Board Expense		0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00
Bookkeeping/Accounting Service		4,500.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	0.00
Building and Property Security		260.00	400.00	400.00	0.00
Capital Improvements		43,500.00			0.00
Charitable Contribut/Generosity Project		0.00	2,400.00	900.00	(1,500.00)
Computer and Internet Expenses		0.00	200.00	500.00	300.00
Guest Minister/Worship		2,522.68	3,000.00	5,000.00	2,000.00
Insurance Expense		2,559.95	9,000.00	5,102.00	(3,898.00)
Landscaping Expen:/Mowing		0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00
Membership Expenses		113.60	200.00	200.00	0.00
Ministerial Search Expenses				500.00	500.00
Office Supplies		159.56	235.00	300.00	65.00
RE Supplies				650.00	
Organist		3,120.00	6,240.00	6,240.00	0.00
Payroll Expenses					0.00
Custodian		2,422.90	8,000.00	8,000.00	0.00
Minister		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Payroll Taxes		814.88	2,500.00	1,384.00	(1,116.00)
Religious Education		0.00	1,000.00	2,000.00	1,000.00

	Payroll Expenses - Other	204.35			0.00
	Total Payroll Expenses	3,442.13	11,500.00	11,384.00	(116.00)
	Postage and Delivery	0.00	550.00	550.00	0.00
	Printing and Reproduction	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00
	Professional Fees /Fire Inspection	50.00	50.00	50.00	0.00
	Repairs and Maintenance	559.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	0.00
	Snow Removal	4,166.65	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00
	Social Action	0.00		2,100.00	2,100.00
	Trash Removal	104.00	200.00	210.00	10.00
	Utilities				0.00
	Gas & Electric	3,371.60	4,700.00	5,000.00	300.00
	Telephone Expense	1,245.79	2,150.00	2,160.00	10.00
	Water/ Sewer	354.91	450.00	480.00	30.00
	Total Utilities	4,972.30	7,300.00	7,640.00	340.00
	UUA Annual Program Fund	3,159.35	5,425.00	4,874.00	(551.00)
	Total Expense	73,576.33	63,100.00	63,900.00	800.00
	Net Ordinary Income	-26,377.20	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Other Income/Expense				0.00
	Other Income				0.00
	Pass-Through Income				0.00
	UU-UNO-In	131.00			0.00
	Pass-Through Income - Other	626.00			0.00
	Total Pass-Through Income	757.00			0.00
	Total Other Income	757.00			0.00
	Other Expense				0.00
	Coffee Hour	110.49			0.00
	Investment Value Change	4,330.88			0.00
	Pass-Through Expense				0.00
	Donations for other Organizatio	25.00			0.00
	UU-UNO_Out	399.51			0.00
	Pass-Through Expense - Other	100.00			0.00
	Total Pass-Through Expense	524.51			0.00
	Total Other Expense	4,965.88			0.00
	Net Other Income	-4,208.88			0.00
		-30,586.08	0.00	0.00	0.00

ASUU Financial Assets as of April 30, 2024

As of the UBS statement on 4/30/2024:

- \$105,225 in their Core Savings earning 4.5% APY. These funds are left over from the insurance money for building repairs following the two floods. We can decide how to spend this money:
 - Set it aside to pay future minister
 - Capital expenses and repairs to our building
 - Other
- \$566,266.68 The Owens Fund, left to us in a trust with the stipulation that we preserve the principal and use only dividends and interest.

At Americu Credit Union we currently have:

- \$19,390.28 in our checking account. I've kept that much in checking because the board has approved spending \$15,450 (Diego's estimate) for the remaining work on the ceilings and replacing the light fixtures in the social hall. We're waiting for him to begin work.
- \$73,145.84 in our money market account at Americu, earmarked for:
 - Camp Unirondack Scholarship \$450
 - Savings to pay future minister \$59,919.85
 - Set aside for Social Justice Projects (Hild Fund) \$2,903.54
 - Savings not otherwise allocated \$9,872.45
- \$5,798.28 in the separate Memorial Garden checking account

Committee Reports:

Finance Committee Report: by Eleanor Allen

On April 18, 2024, the Finance Committee, consisting of Amy Summerville-Loomis, Harriet McMillan, Sarah O'Conner, Frances Mercer, Angelo Guarino, and myself, met over Zoom with Bill Couch of the Couch Group at UBS Financial Services. We've been working together for 25-plus years and have traditionally managed a portfolio balanced between fixed-income investments and stock market investments.

In the last 12 months, the portfolio return has been 12.85%. This has allowed us to spend more than our current income, but the provisions of the Owens Fund trust require that we use only interest and dividends so the principal will continue to provide income for the congregation well into the future. At this point, income generated from investments is approximately \$15,000. That amount, together with our income from all other sources, including pledges, is not enough to attract a part-time consulting minister. We've had our information listed on the UUA Ministerial Search portal for more than a year without any nibbles, and were told by the UUA that we might have better results if we could increase the salary we're offering, currently \$30,000, by offering benefits, such as health insurance. The Committee asked Bill and his team to produce a miracle and grow the portfolio while generating more income. We've found a solution that we expect will generate 5.3% or approximately \$28,400 per year in income. This will reduce our stock market exposure a bit, but at this time with all-time market highs, and interest rates likely to go down somewhat, this may prove to be the right time to make these adjustments.

The proper paperwork has been submitted, and this transition will have taken place by the time of our Annual Meeting.

Building and Grounds Report: by Rebecca Carr

Currently:

The lawnmower was maintained and ready for this year's use. A campus maintenance employee will be hired to maintain the lawn. New picnic tables are under construction.

In the past year:

In April additional church expectations were discussed with John Crupi in April and the RE furnace was replaced.

Upcoming maintenance:

The parking lot and driveway striping plus painting curb caution color will be maintained. Some of the trees will need trimming to allow for expedient lawnmowing.

Areas of concern:

The cedar plank siding has been secured by Robert (thank you). However, a long term solution is needed.

The stone wall under north sanctuary windows continue to allow water to seep through to the support studs. This had a temporary repair from the inside when Diego was restoring the building. It must be removed with reinforcement and finished with siding. Estimates have been made; start of work has not been confirmed.

The Social Hall ceiling tiles were compromised when the clerestory windows were leaking. We are waiting to determine there are no more leaks before the ceiling tiles are replaced.

Some of our furniture is showing signs of age. Replacement furniture may be under consideration.

Other comments:

A pear tree was planted on the north side of the building. Fruit was observed last September. Is anyone interested in making time to pick the fruit and share with church members.

The Memorial Garden has been under the control of the Memorial Garden committee. Since there are too few volunteers to participate and maintain this entity, it may be advisable to place it back under the management of B&G.

Membership and Activities Report: by Robert South

This year the Membership and Activities Committee expanded to include Robert South, Harriet McMillan, Kelly Sackheim, Warren Allen, Francis Ashland and Annabelle Stoner. We spun off a caring committee led by Kelly Sackheim. Game night continues to do well. We hosted about 10 people from downstate UU congregations coming to see the eclipse and needing a place to stay overnight. A series of musical performances with interactive components has begun with Sandro Ladu's violin performance and a Cinco de Mayo Eco Drumming event. These "Musicking Experiences" will continue throughout the calendar year.

Memorial Garden Report by Robert South

The Memorial Garden committee is a bylaw created committee of the congregation appointed by the President and charged with maintenance of the memorial garden and memorial plaques. The committee has a separate fund for its needs, based on donations of those wishing to have ashes placed in the memorial garden and plaques on the plaque board. In practice the office takes care of the plaques.

While she may play a role, Catherine Burns no longer wishes to chair the committee. The other committee members are Sarah O'Connell, Robert South, and Paula Trainham. The Memorial Garden committee needs a new chair, someone with gardening skills and a desire to plan and supervise the gardening. Perhaps someone with gardening skills can join us and lead us in a plan for volunteers to execute.

Social Justice Report by Eleanor Allen

Even though we're a tiny congregation with no social justice committee, we believe in the value of social justice work, and our members continue to get involved where we can. Our building is a resource we make available without charge to groups doing important work for the benefit of our community. The American Red Cross held two blood drives at All Souls this year, organized by one of our members, Julie Jeffers. The Mexican Consulate came twice with lawyers and social workers to provide services

for Hispanic immigrants in the Jefferson County area. Our members provided transportation and translation services at these events. And the Mexican Consulate will hold a third event later in June. On January 6th, we hosted a candlelight vigil for all of those killed in the war in Gaza. Tim Stoner organized this vigil, inviting members of other area churches and the local synagogue.

As in past years, our members donate blood, work at the polls during elections, help plant trees and clear brush in Thompson Park and other areas around our city, and provide transportation to farm workers and others without means of getting to medical and other appointments. We participate in the Watertown Pride events and in Watertown Juneteenth.

We split our weekly plate collection with two organizations chosen by the congregation at our Annual Meeting. This year's organizations are the Children's Home of Jefferson County and Planned Parenthood of Northern NY. We send a donation to the UU United Nations office each year. We include contributions in our budget for the Watertown Urban Mission, Camp Unirondack, and NY UU Justice, and we pay our fair share to the UUA. We collect food donations for the Watertown Urban Mission.

Transitions/ Search Team Report by Eleanor Allen

The board created a 'Transitions Team' after Marty Pelham left as our part-time contract minister in 2021. This team, consisting of Harriet McMillan, Sarah O'Connell, Frances Mercer, and Eleanor Allen, consulted with our regional representatives at the UUA, worked in a series of zoom sessions with Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt, our transitions consultant hired by the board, and moderated a discussion with the congregation around a set of questions posed by Rev. Dr. Hurt.

The congregation overwhelmingly supported searching for a part-time contract minister. So, Sarah and Eleanor, with some suggestions from Francis Ashland, updated our Congregational Record on the UUA Ministerial Search Application Portal. Our search went 'live' in May 2023, and was renewed for the current fiscal year. But we've had no applicants. At first we were advised by the UUA that we needed to be patient because there were more congregations searching for ministers than ministers searching for congregations. We've attempted to gain leads by speaking with ministers and people we know from other UU churches in this area without success. Where do we go from here?

Worship / Music Report: by Eleanor Allen

The 2023-24 fiscal year marks the 200th anniversary of All Souls as a Universalist, and now a Unitarian Universalist presence in Watertown. We've completed the major repairs to our building following the two floods, and we've returned to in-person hybrid services, using new technology learned during the pandemic. Since we remain without a minister of our own, the worship committee continued to be responsible for organizing all our worship services. A member of the worship committee

volunteered to coordinate all the services for each month, and we used monthly themes provided by Soul Matters, a UU subscription service. Attendance varied greatly this year, from a high of 45 to a low of 22, with some present on Zoom while most joined us in the sanctuary. We didn't need to cancel any services because of inclement weather since we were able to simply move everything online! We held 48 formal worship services this fiscal year. We had an end-of-summer brunch instead of a formal service on August 27th and again on New Year's Day. We held no services on July 2nd and September 3rd.

Once each month, at the start of the service, a member of the 200th Anniversary Task Force spoke briefly about the history of All Souls, including mock interviews with some of our former members, now long dead. Dr. Jason White, a physician in Watertown with an interest in our city history, gave a talk about our Watertown roots on March 24th. On Christmas Eve, and again at Easter, we had intergenerational services, organized by our very creative volunteer religious education director, Kathy Ashland, with help from various members of the worship committee. Sylvia Heap, our United Nations Envoy, and Frances Mercer organized a traditional UU UNO service. Tim Stoner, a member of our congregation who is interested in becoming a UU minister when he's completed his military service, led two dynamic services. We had several guest UU ministers: Dave Weissbard monthly; Kathy Hurt over Zoom when available, and Andrea Abbott for one service. Our much loved former minister, Eugene 'Guy' LaMothe was unable to come in person, but led a special online service on April 7th, the day before the total eclipse of the sun. In addition to the regular Sunday services, we had two memorial services for members, one of which was led by Dave Weissbard, and the other lay-led.

We greatly appreciated Toni Zygadlo's live piano music at each of our services. On the few occasions when the services were entirely online, she recorded her music for us. We thank Robert South for his technical assistance throughout the year.

Here's a listing by date of the topic and presenters this fiscal year:

- July 2: No service (July 4th weekend)
- July 9: Robert South - How to Create a Worship Service
- July 16: Eleanor Allen - Do You Have to Belong to a UU Congregation to be a UU
- July 23: Harriet McMillan - Would You Like a Little Help Writing Your Obituary?
- July 30: My Favorite Poems
- August 6: Kelly Sackheim - Service and Spiritual Journeys of Travelers and Hosts (about the organization, Servas United States)
- August 13: Catherine Burns - Meditation, Mindfulness, and Me
- August 20: Eleanor Allen - What Makes You UU?
- August 27: Potluck Picnic and Conversation - No service
- September 3: No service (Labor Day weekend)
- September 10: Joanne Harter - Rock and Water Ingathering Service
- September 17: Andre and Judy deZanger - Happiness, Flourishing, and Well-Being
- September 24: Harriet McMillan - Our 200 Year Heritage
- October 1: Frances Mercer - How Heritages Shape Personal Faith

- October 8: Rev. David Weissbard - Optimism in a Time of Despair
- October 15: Frances Mercer - UU Faith and Heritage
- October 22: Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt - A Spiritual Facelift
- October 29: Sylvia Stuber Heap and Frances Mercer - United Nations Sunday: Just/Unjust War or World Culture of Peace
- November 5: Eleanor Allen - Generosity
- November 12: Rev. David Weissbard - Which Side Are You On?
- November 19: Eleanor Allen - Guests At Our Table (about the UUSC)
- November 26: Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt - What If My Enemies Don't Deserve to Be Loved?
- December 3: Rev. Andrea Abbott - A Kind of Tribalism
- December 10: Rev. David Weissbard - The Virtue\$ and Vice\$ of \$elfi\$hne\$\$
- December 17: Tim Stoner - The Great Mystery of Truth
- December 24: Intergenerational Service organized by Harriet McMillan and Kathy Ashland - 19th Century Style Pageant from Mary's Viewpoint
- December 31: New Year's Eve Potluck Brunch - No service
- January 7: Robert South - De-secularization
- January 14: Rev. David Weissbard - Dr. King's World House
- January 21: Robert South - The New UUA Article II
- January 28: Rev. Andrea Abbott - Stuck
- February 4: Eleanor Allen - Max Coots on God: What Kind of God Allows Hatred, War, and Famine?
- February 11: Rev. David Weissbard - Not Written in Stone
- February 18: Eleanor Allen - Susan B. Anthony and Voting Rights
- February 25: Tim Stoner - Green Beans
- March 3: Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt - I Wish I Hadn't
- March 10: Rev. David Weissbard - Sins of the Past - And Future?
- March 17: Frances Mercer - Transformation - The Idea and the Reality
- March 24: Jason White and Frances Mercer - In the Beginning of All Souls - Who Was There?
- March 31: Kathy Ashland, Kelly Sackheim, and Frances Mercer - Easter Sunday: A Celebration of Transformation. This was an intergenerational service
- April 7: Rev. Eugene LaMothe and Sarah O'Connell - The Light Inside the Dark: Solar Eclipse 2024
- April 14: Rev. David Weissbard - What's Next When Our "Fit's Over"
- April 21: Robert South - Newcomers' Orientation
- April 28: Natasha DeMercado and Julie Jeffers - Where to Get Mental Care
- May 5: Kelly Sackheim and Eleanor Allen - Celebrating the Diversity That is Us
- May 12: Rev. David Weissbard - Job's Challenge
- May 19: Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt - Mother Tongue
- May 26: Eleanor Allen - Hurry Up and Wait
- June 2: Rev. David Weissbard - Did You Really Mean What I Thought I Heard You Say?
- June 9: Frances Mercer - Celebrating our Congregation with Flowers, followed by the Annual Meeting
- June 16: Frances Mercer - Music, Music Everywhere

- June 23: The conclusion of our year of celebration of our bicentennial, followed by a caravan to sites of former All Souls Churches and places significant to Universalism in Jefferson County in the early days.
- June 30: Joanne Harter - Blessing of the Animals outside around the Peace Pole (weather permitting)



Our Principles

Unitarian Universalist congregations (currently) affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Our Mission

- The mission of All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church is to create an environment in which personal and spiritual growth is encouraged; and where each of us is free to explore our individual beliefs and search for meaning.
- We strive to be a warm, supportive, nurturing and inclusive religious community where all people are respected and honored because of their uniqueness.
- We promote acceptance, diversity and social justice through our dealings with each other and our actions in the local and global community.

Our Purpose (Article II of our bylaws)

Free religion, as we would have it lived, is a fellowship of seekers after truth, bound by no dogma, restricted by no creed. Our purpose is to join together in a cooperative quest of religious and ethical values and to apply those values to the fulfillment of our objectives, which are the enrichment of spirit, the development of character, and service to all. Our basic underlying convictions are these: that religious and scientific truth must be compatible, that the democratic process should guide human relations, and that each individual has an inherent dignity and the right to freedom of belief unfettered by any prescribed creed.