



# Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Grand Valley



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## Annual Report



The Annual Meeting is on Sunday, June 11, 2023, starting at approximately 12:15 pm.



### Inside this year's report:

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### From Your Minister

Rev. Wendy Jones

Last year in my annual report I described the year as one of "turbulent transformation." This year I feel like we have made that transformation. We are up and running again. While some things have changed permanently such as our commitment to offer a combined virtual/in person worship service on Sunday mornings, I am also excited that it seems that we really have turned a corner.

We are seeing pre-COVID numbers in person on Sunday mornings. We have a number of new families and individuals who have found us and joined our faith community both as friends and new members. We have a very active care team, leadership

development team, a new property team and many people who are showing up to help in a myriad of different ways.

It really does feel wonderful to show up at the church and see so much activity going on.

The year began with a search to fill both our Director of Religious Education & Director of Music positions. In October, we hired Meg Worthy as Director of Religious Education and Joanna Wernette as our music director. For the first time in three years, we had a full staff. In early 2023 Meg & Jimi left, and we added Trent Nakugawa to our team as our facilities manager.

As we enter into July of 2023, I am excited that the children/youth programming will be taken on by Maya Kraushaar who will be transitioning from our administrator to our new Director of Programming & Community Outreach.

Our worship services continue to be offered as a hybrid option. We were lucky that our facilities coordinator Trent is also skilled in sound



UUCGV Minister, Rev. Wendy Jones

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technology and his expertise has been very much appreciated and deeply valued this year as we have embraced a new paradigm of virtual and in person worship. We continue to be able to offer high quality worship on Sundays in a large part due to Trent and his technical expertise.

The care team is very active and has implemented a few new programs including a caregiver's support group, and monthly blood pressure checks. The priority for this coming year is to help reestablish connections, as we continue to emerge from a few years of isolation.

As I wrote in my report last year, being a community of faith can be messy at times, and occasionally we stumble and don't live up to our highest aspirations. When this happens, I am grateful for the grace, compassion and renewed commitment to stay in relationship when we are not at our best. And, very few human beings have come out of the last few years being able to say that they were "at their best" all of the time.

Because of this I have to say that I am truly honored and grateful to serve this congregation at this point in history. I am humbled by the dedication, generosity and commitment so many UUCGV congregants have shown.

I'd like to acknowledge & thank our wonderful staff for their hard work and commitment along with so many in the congregation who

show up to care for, support and be there for one another.

As this year comes to an end, once again, I am honored and humbled to be your minister and to have been given the opportunity to serve you this year.

With Love,  
Rev. Wendy

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## Music Report

### Joanna Wernette, Director of Music



Director of Music, Joanna Wernette

It has been an exciting year in the UUCGV music world! I joined up with the adult choir in late October, after which the choir enjoyed participating in a musical winter solstice service in December in addition to a wonderful Christmas Eve service before the new year.

The bake sale the choir hosted in December raised funds for the choir's new folders, which are now housed in the newly arranged music office.

The new year brought the re-start of the children's music, with hopes for instrumental band music possibilities to start up next year, in

addition to the kids singing. The kids' music numbers have continued to grow, with Caleb, Sonia, Phoebe, Tobias, Jasper, William, Margot, (and Max) as consistent participants thus far. The kids sang in 4 different services, as well as at the Cabaret.

We had a fabulous 'Stewardship Cabaret' in March that featured the many different talents of the church members of all ages.

The choir numbers have grown since October, welcoming Julie Sinnott, Angie Ecker and Mike Youngren back into the choir, and welcoming Lee Carie as a new choir member and hopefully Sarah Rojas and Elixir Tyler as new choir members in the coming fiscal/choir year.

Hopes for next year include the addition of an adult music-reading class, a music for 'tots' (age 0-4) class, re-starting the kid's 'band' and expanding our adult musical offerings to include non-vocal opportunities (drum group/jam group.)

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## UUCGV Board

### Laurel Carpenter, President

Laurel Carpenter (President), Kitty Tattersall (Treasurer), Elizabeth High (Past President), Kitty Tattersall (Stewardship), Laura Jeffries (At-Large), Dave Collins (At-Large)

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UUCGV Board President, Laurel Carpenter

This year has been an exciting roller coaster of self exploration for our congregation, as we've asked the question "Who are we?" while emerging from the fog of the early Covid years. That question has been posed in the sanctuary, in the newsletter, and in a congregation-wide survey. We've found as many answers as there are colors in the rainbow, but some themes have emerged.

One thing we are fully staffed! Our fantastic employees work together every day to enact the UUCGV vision. Reverend Wendy Jones has been with us for 12 years and is finishing up her 9th year as our Minister, providing worship services and pastoral care within our congregation and beyond. Joanna Wernette joined this year as our Director of Music and has already created a successful Kids Music program, in addition to running the Choir. Trent Nakagawa joined this year as our Facilities Manager, and works tirelessly to ensure that our physical space is ready for our

congregation's very active calendar every week. And after 4 years as our Administrator, Maya Kraushaar is growing our congregation forward by moving into the role of Director of Programming & Community Development. This tapestry of roles fits together to create the infrastructure of UUCGV, in combination with our leadership.

Another thing we are is Covid-aware. After two years, our Board of Trustees repealed our masking requirement, while relying upon guidance from the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Mesa County Health Department, and the Centers for Disease Control. We continue to monitor the risk involved in gathering as a community, and will remain vigilant in doing our best to protect each other.

We continued to develop our identity as a hybrid congregation, offering programming both in-person and online. Our technological capabilities have increased, boosting the quality of our virtual options. Some congregants have vocalized that they can now be even more involved than previously, due to the convenience of Zoom options. We have congregants who attend only virtually, or only in person, and every combination in between.

Our usual programming was all offered, including traditional services such as the Flower Communion & the Water Ceremony, and we were able to add on new ideas and bring back treasured old ones. Robert McDonald returned to help us host

the "We Shelter" winter overflow program for houseless community members, creating a warm bed and meals for dozens of participants in January. We completed our third year of hosting the Mutual Aid Distribution Day every Tuesday, helping to provide 339,993 pounds of food to 25,000 families in Mesa County in those 3 years, right from our parking lot. Our facilitators taught an Our Whole Lives sexuality education class for middle schoolers, for the first time in several years. Reverend Wendy brought back the popular Building Your Own Theology class, which was last offered in 2019. UU Nights were restarted on Wednesday evenings, and now include our Kids Music program in addition to the beloved, family-friendly, potluck meal. New offerings include a Women's/Women-Identifying group & Men's/Men-Identifying group, a jewelry swap, chair yoga and a Caregiver Support Group.

Looking to the future, we're getting closer and closer to accomplishing several long standing goals. Board Treasurer Kitty Tattersall spearheaded a UUA grant application and we were awarded \$3,165 towards our outdoor space for children, and \$1,500 toward an energy audit for our building. Staff is exploring ways to make our monthly newsletter both more cost-



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effective and more environmentally friendly. Our paddle auction raised funds to support our technological needs as we continue to evolve into the future.

One of the most significant growth opportunities of the 2022-2023 church year, in my view, was our annual Cottage Meeting, where a “visioning session” was held by outside facilitators Shae Lynn Watt and Kevin Watt. This dialogue explored our congregation’s identity, past, present and future. They were able to help us identify themes and trends, spoken by the voices of our congregants, which can help guide us as we grow every day and every year forward. To learn more about that experience and our collective findings, check out the Holistic Visioning Report report, available <http://www.grandvalleyuu.org/member-zone.html>

Personally, I’ve reached the end of my 2-year term as President of the



Board, and I’ll now be moving into the role of Past President. I will always wish I’d been able to contribute more to our growth during my time as President. But luckily, I can still look for ways to contribute, both inside and outside of leadership—and so can you! Yes, you!

The Board would like to acknowledge the enduring financial support of our congregants. Our church has been able to maintain stable finances through an unstable time, due to your generosity and commitment. I’ll leave you with a reminder that, “This congregation is a community of ourselves. Its energy and resources are our energy and resources.” Have an extra \$20 this month? Share it with the \$20 Campaign! Have an idea for programming or fundraising? Speak up! We need you. We are you. You are us. If you’re reading this message, that means you belong here.

Hugs & love from your outgoing Board President,  
Laurel Carpenter

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## Finance Report

Kitty Tattersall,  
UUCGV Treasurer

Kitty Tattersall was the treasurer and the finance team was comprised of past treasurers Janet Cummings, Steve Watson, and Floyd Joramo, with additional members Tad Hutchins and Joel Prudhomme. Meetings were held monthly at the church. The Church



UUCGV Treasurer, Kitty Tattersall

Administrator handles the financial affairs of the Congregation with the treasurer and finance team providing oversight. During the Administrator’s sabbatical in April 2023, Kitty made deposits and wrote checks, and Janet did the month-end accounting.

During the 2022-23 church year, UUCGV hired a Director of Religious Education in October and parted ways in early March. We also hired a Music Director in November who we are happy to report is still with us. The DRE position has not been filled so expenses have been lower than expected. Pledge payments and offerings have been strong, the service auction brought in more money than expected, and we received several grants. Overall, we expect to end this year with a surplus.

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### What's in the budget?

The money paid on pledges makes up about two thirds of the expected income of UUCGV.

The rest is from offerings, grants, and fundraisers such as the service auction.

Currently, salaries and benefits for our talented staff (the minister, administrator, facilities coordinator, and music director) make up about two thirds of our expenses. Mortgage and interest, utilities, maintenance, insurance, supplies, and contributions to the UUA and district comprise the rest of the expenses.

Looking ahead to next year, we anticipate a possible deficit as we return to full staffing. At the same time, our special fund for mortgage payments is nearly all spent. The board discussed the situation at their May 11th meeting and leaned toward increasing income rather than cutting expenses. Thus, you all might notice an increase in fundraisers and

appeals. Please remember that everyone is welcome in our congregation, no matter whether you have cash to share or not.

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## Stewardship Team

### Kitty Tattersall

#### Stewardship Coordinator

Kitty Tattersall served her second term as Stewardship Coordinator. Reverend Wendy opened stewardship season with a sermon on February 26, 2023. Member moments were provided at the four services in March by Peg Oswald, Wendy Metzger, Jamie Kavanaugh, and Elizabeth High. Bill Hilty recorded a member moment for the April 2 service, but technical difficulties prevented its viewing. Our talented administrator Maya Kraushaar produced a beautiful stewardship brochure. A Stewardship Cabaret was celebrated on March 11 and many pledges were turned in then.

Starting in the second half of March, a team of stewards contacted folks who had pledged in the past but not yet for 2023-24, plus a few new members. The stewards were Dave Collins, Janet Cummings, Elizabeth High, Monte High, Wendy Metzger, Kitty Tattersall, Steve Watson, and Barbara Beth Wolf. Several anonymous donors provided a total of \$11,000 in matching funds for new or increased pledges.

As of May 12, a total of \$141,610 has been promised through pledges. There are 28 new or

increased pledges with a total increase of \$11,260. The total pledge amount is about the same as last year due to dropped and decreased pledges that balance the increases. We

expect to receive a few more pledges to bring the total to about \$144,000 about \$155,000 with the matching funds.

While this year's stewardship team focused on treasure, we recognize that time and talent are also needed to keep the community afloat, and we thank all members and friends who contribute time, talent, and/or treasure to UUCGV.



## Membership

This year has been an active year of new growth as we are emerging from the pandemic. Our church attendance is back at pre-COVID numbers which is exciting.

We are currently functioning without a membership team. If you would like to volunteer welcoming new people and helping them get involved, your time and talent is needed and welcome.

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Between May of 2022 and May of 2023 we have had eight people formally become members. We also have a number of guests who have become active participants in our programs. We have 91 members.

## Staff Congregation Relations (SCR)

Richard Hyland

**Mission:** The Staff-Congregation Relations (SCR) Committee reports to the Board and oversees the hiring, evaluation and performance of the paid staff of the Church. It mediates issues among staff members, between staff members and members of the congregation on a confidential basis. It serves in an advisory role to the Minister in her/his role of staff supervisor. It seeks to achieve and maintain a healthy balance between the need for skilled professional staff and volunteer involvement in the growth and evolution of the Church.

**Members:** Monte High, Joanie Leinbach, Richard Hyland, Kathleen Hedlund, Janet Cummings

**Activities:** Over the past year, the SCR has continued to grow into its



SCR Team Member, Richard Hyland

mission, confronting and resolving challenges as UUCGV gradually emerged from its COVID-related isolation.

As it turned out, it was a year of record staff turnover/ transition in all four key staff areas: RE, Music, Facilities and Administration. All are part time positions ranging from 12 to 30 hours per week.

With each position, there was a process that played out, whether it was a resignation, simply filling an opening or a termination which resulted in a subsequent process of search and replacement, and a final process of hiring. Each required time, multi-person search teams of congregants, extensive candidate research and interviews and, if all had gone well, successful hiring through a signed employment agreement.

By nature, the SCR is the front line for the staff dynamics whether positive or challenging. So, we get to experience the joy and excitement when a new staff member joins us, but we also are the first people to deal with some of the conflict and behind the scenes issues that also take place. That can bring a myriad of emotions as has played out this year.

So, as expected each situation also involved a cascade of emotions ranging from pain and sadness to joy and anticipation as working relationships –some longstanding—ended and new ones began.

The role of the SCR is to walk this tight rope, while bridging conversation among staff, congregation, and the minister.

Depending on the cause of the separation, e.g., resignation or termination, this cascade certainly played out among us on the SCR. But it also played out among staff members. And



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between staff members and congregants. It played out throughout our beloved community.

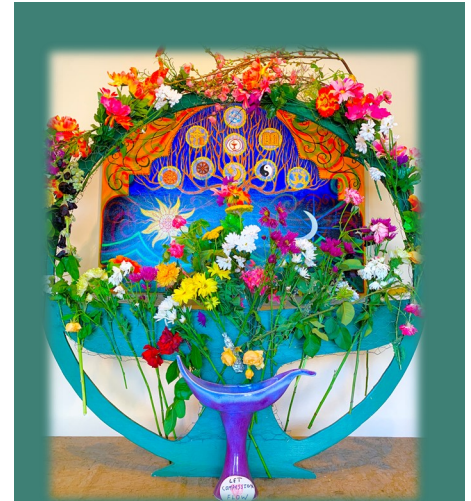
To go through the above once a year is a challenge. To go through it four times in the same year is exceptional and tested our limits as SCR members. Playing a supportive role to staff for maintaining confidentiality can sometimes take its toll which resulted in Joanie Leinbach as one of founding members of the SCR taking a step back and a much needed and well deserved break. We thank Joanie Leinbach for her dedicated service on SCR for many years as one of the founding members. We are excited to have Janet Cummings and Kathleen Hedlund join the SCR.

We were also obliged to terminate Meg Worthy, whom we had hired as DRE in

October 2022. But we ended up with some very high- quality staff to finish out this year and to begin the next. Here is a summary of key SCR developments:

- Conducted our third annual Christmas staff bonus drive in December 2022 which was very successful and provided funds well in excess of the targeted 1% of staff base salary.
- **Trent Nakugawa** was hired to replace Jimi Blevins as Facility Manager on 20 January 2023. Jimi had resigned after 18 months of loyal service.
- **Joanna Wernette** was hired to fill the position of Music/Choir Director on 1 October 2022.
- **Maya Kraushaar** will transition from her current position as Administrator to a new position as Director of Programming and Community Development effective 1 July 2023. Her new position will involve an expansion of the old DRE position into a broader inter-generational approach to UUCGV religious education, programming and community-building.

- A search for a new Administrator is currently underway.



Thank you to  
everyone who  
has been part  
of this  
community.

Whether you  
have been with  
us for years or  
just  
found us...

You are  
welcome here.