

**188<sup>th</sup>**

**Annual Congregational Business Meeting  
of  
The Universalist Unitarian Church of Joliet**

**Sunday, June 9, 2024**

**Universalist Unitarian  
Church of Joliet  
3401 W. Jefferson Street  
Joliet, Illinois 60431**

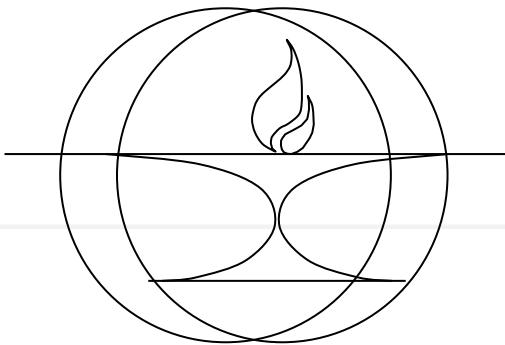
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Church of Joliet**

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**UUCJ Board of Trustees**

President: **W. Ray Thom, Jr.**

Vice President: **Sandy Griffin**

Secretary: **Grant Prellwitz**

Trustee: **Margaret Juraco**

Trustee: **Sarah "Sally" Patterson**

Trustee: **Richard Wachenheim**

Trustee: **Bruce Irwin**

•

Treasurer: **Margaret Juraco**

•

Lay Community Ministers:

**Charlotte Droogan**

**Sandy Costa**

# A G E N D A

## **Call to Order**

## **Opening Words**

Appointment of Recording Secretary

Appointment of Proofreaders

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes 2023/2024 Annual Meeting

President's Report

Lay Minister's Report

## **Old Business**

## **Current Business**

2024/2025 Budget

## **New Business**

Awards

## **Adjournment**

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# Welcome to the 187<sup>th</sup> UUCJ Annual Meeting!



The meeting will be conducted in person and those online will be considered present.

Everyone should receive an annual meeting packet. When you receive this packet, read it over carefully. If you notice any mistakes or have any questions, please email [board@uujoliet.org](mailto:board@uujoliet.org) or bring your questions to the meeting on Sunday, June 9, 2024. The meeting will take place starting at 12:00 p.m. after Sunday's service. Please click on the [LINK HERE](#) or on our website [UUJoliet.org](http://UUJoliet.org) under Events to enter. Please enter the meeting BEFORE 11:45 a.m., so that if there are any problems getting in, we can address them.

All voting in person will be done by show of hands. Online participants must be logged into their [UUJoliet.org](http://UUJoliet.org) Teams account. One of the items on the ballot will be the change to Article II. Below is the proposed change. We will vote to accept or reject the proposal.

## Article II Purposes and Covenant

### **Section C-2.1. Purposes.**

The Unitarian Universalist Association will devote its resources to and use its organizational powers for religious, educational, and humanitarian purposes. Its primary purposes are:

- to assist congregations in their vital ministries,
- to support and train leaders both lay and professional,
- to foster lifelong faith formation and spiritual development,
- to heal historic injustices,
- to support and encourage the creation of new Unitarian Universalist communities, and
- to advance our Unitarian Universalist values in the world.

The Unitarian Universalist Association will actively engage its members in the transformation of the world through liberating Love.

## **Section C-2.2. Values and Covenant.**

As Unitarian Universalists, we covenant, congregation-to-congregation and through our Association, to support and assist one another in our ministries. We draw from our heritages of freedom, reason, hope, and courage, building on the foundation of love.

Love is the power that holds us together and is at the center of our shared values. We are accountable to one another for doing the work of living our shared values through the spiritual discipline of Love.

Inseparable from one another, these shared values are:

### **Shared Unitarian Universalist Values**

**Interdependence.** We honor the interdependent web of all existence. With reverence for the great web of life and with humility, we acknowledge our place in it.

We covenant to protect Earth and all beings from exploitation. We will create and nurture sustainable relationships of care and respect, mutuality and justice. We will work to repair harm and damaged relationships.

**Pluralism.** We celebrate that we are all sacred beings, diverse in culture, experience, and theology.

We covenant to learn from one another in our free and responsible search for truth and meaning. We embrace our differences and commonalities with Love, curiosity, and respect.

**Justice.** We work to be diverse multicultural Beloved Communities where all thrive.

We covenant to dismantle racism and all forms of systemic oppression. We support the use of inclusive democratic processes to make decisions within our congregations, our Association, and society at large.

**Transformation.** We adapt to the changing world.

We covenant to collectively transform and grow spiritually and ethically. Openness to change is fundamental to our Unitarian and Universalist heritages, never complete and never perfect.

**Generosity.** We cultivate a spirit of gratitude and hope.

We covenant to freely and compassionately share our faith, presence, and resources. Our generosity connects us to one another in relationships of interdependence and mutuality.

Equity. We declare that every person has the right to flourish with inherent dignity and worthiness.

We covenant to use our time, wisdom, attention, and money to build and sustain fully accessible and inclusive communities.

### **Section C-2.3. Inspirations.**

Direct experiences of transcending mystery and wonder are primary sources of Unitarian Universalist inspiration. These experiences open our hearts, renew our spirits, and transform our lives. We draw upon, and are inspired by, sacred, secular, and scientific understandings that help us make meaning and live into our values. These sources ground us and sustain us in ordinary, difficult, and joyous times. We respect the histories, contexts, and cultures in which these sources were created and are currently practiced. Grateful for the experiences that move us, aware of the religious ancestries we inherit, and enlivened by the diversity which enriches our faith, we are called to ever deepen and expand our wisdom.

### **Section C-2.4. Inclusion.**

Systems of power, privilege, and oppression have traditionally created barriers for persons and groups with particular identities, ages, abilities, and histories. We pledge to replace such barriers with ever-widening circles of solidarity and mutual respect. We strive to be an Association of congregations that truly welcome all persons who share our values. We commit to being an Association of congregations that empowers and enhances everyone's participation, especially those with historically marginalized identities.

### **Section C-2.5. Freedom of belief.**

Congregational freedom and the individual's right of conscience are central to our Unitarian Universalist heritage.

Congregations may establish statements of purpose, covenants, and bonds of union so long as they do not require that members adhere to a particular creed.

Thank you,



W. Ray Thom, Jr., Board President  
815-545-0623

## Roster of Voting Members (80)

Curtis Anderson	Patricia McReynolds
Stephanie Bergner	Randy McReynolds
Michael Boehle	Roger McReynolds
David Bogash	Marimonica Murray
Debbie Bogash	Bob O'Brien
Dorothy Brown-Brumbaugh	Sara O'Brien
Dawn Bullock	Lalania O'Connor
Jillian Carlisle	Kim O'Neill-Treglio
Cheryl Carlson	Jeannie Owen
Chris Carlson	Carolyn Patterson
Allen Church	Sarah Patterson
Cathy Coss	Lois Pedersen
Jennifer Coss	Patrick Pletcher
Sandra Costa	Grant Prellwitz
Kerry Daimid	Lynn Price
Mark Daimid	Mike Progress
Rose Dombrow	Barbara Purdy
Charlotte Droogan	Jennifer Rodriguez
Drew Douglas Duzinkskas	Roberto Rodriguez Hammond
Caren Evans Ebel	Emily Roper
Laurie Garland	Jessica Roper
Lisa Gleason	Frankie Rosales
Sean Gleason	Katilyn Rosales
Michael Gorcowski	Gary Salois
Pam Gorcowski	Ashleigh Smiley
Brenda Gray	Melanie Sprengel
Sandy Griffin	Ron Steinacher
Jesse Hammond -Rodriguez	Becky Studer
Bruce Irwin	Judy Studer
Margaret Juraco	Nanette Taller
Donald Kaes	Ray Thom
Darla Layne	Susan Thom
Gregory Layne	Tonja Thom
Gini Lester	Robert Treglio-O'Neill
Russ Lipari	Sari Villagomez
Betty Lorch	Karla Vosburg
Gary Magruder	Elizabeth Vlahos
Scott Marshall	Richard Wachenheim
Amy Mayer	Kim Wells
Heidi McReynolds	Debra Westhaver-Church

# **187<sup>th</sup> Annual Congregation Meeting of the Universalist Unitarian Church of Joliet**

## **Sunday, June 11, 2023**

The meeting was called to order at 12:11 pm by Ray Thom, President of the Board of Trustees.

The first item is the appointment of a Recording Secretary. Barb Purdy moved to nominate Cathy Coss and Sean Gleason seconded the motion.

Next is the appointment of two proof-readers for the minutes. Ray nominated Sue Thom and Patricia McReynolds. Sean Gleason seconded the motion.

Review and Approval of the Agenda – Barb Purdy moved to accept the Agenda as written and presented. Deb Church seconded.

President's message and report. Ray encouraged everyone to read the report in the packet. He commented on what a difference a year makes and stressed that together, we are better. He also expressed thanks to Sandy Griffin for heading up the multi-platform task force which has now been retired. We are still facing many on-going issues with the building and more. He also expressed his thanks to the Board for allowing him to serve as the President and also to the congregation for the contributions and help with food banks, troops and more that we have accomplished this year.

Lay Minister's Report – Charlotte indicated that this is also in the packet and shared that she has spent most of her time contacting and checking in on the people of the congregation.

Old Business – The minutes from the 186<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting were included in the packet. There were two typos in the minutes which have been corrected. Barb Purdy moved to accept the minutes as written and corrected. Sandy Griffin seconded.

Ray requested that all present vote on the above using the ballots provided. If you sent in a ballot prior to the meeting or brought in a ballot with a number on it, please do not use an unmarked ballot.

Budgets – Cathy Coss presented the recommended 2023-24 Operating Budget to the congregation detailing the current and projected income and expenses. Also presented was the Capital Fund Budget for 2023-24.

Ray reviewed the candidates for the open Board of Trustees and Endowment positions. There was a discussion on terms which was referred to the Board of Trustees to discuss so that our Bylaws provide for staggered terms. Deb Church inquired as to who is on the Board, Endowment and the current Committee Chairs. Ray answered for the Board and Sean answered for Endowment. As many of the Committee Chairs were present they were requested to introduce themselves, their committee and members. All present complied.

Barb Purdy requested that a Financial Statement be included in the packet going forward along with the current reports.

Sean Gleason initiated a discussion regarding the financial requirements of hiring a Minister for UUCJ. Discussion was held and this topic was also referred to the Board of Trustees for discussion and feedback for the congregation.



All present were requested to complete their ballots and submit them. The office will be compiling the results of the ballots and also the mailed in ballots and advising the congregation.

New Business - Russ Lipari initiated a discussion about modernizing the handbook, the Covenant (removing "God") and this was also referred to the next Board of Trustees meeting.

There being no further business, Patricia McReynolds moved to adjourn the meeting with Barb Purdy seconding. Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 1:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Coss  
Recording Secretary  
UUCJ

The following is the report from the church office with the voting results. This information is not a part of the minutes but is provided here for future reference.

Total Ballots Received – 47

Total Voting Members – 77

Minutes from 186<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, June 5 2022

Ayes 34	Nays 0	Abstentions 12	No Vote 1
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Proposed Operating Budget Fiscal Year 2023-24

Ayes 32	Nays 1	Abstentions 11	No Vote 3
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Proposed Capital Budget Fiscal Year 2023-24

Ayes 30	Nays 1	Abstentions 11	No Vote 5
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Board of Trustees

Grant Prellwitz – 47	Margaret Juraco – 47	Bruce Irwin – 45
Write Ins – None		

General Assembly Delegates

Charlotte Droogan – 46	W. Ray Thom Jr – 45
Write In – Sandy Costa – 1	

Endowment Committee

Sue Thom – 46	Bob O'Brien – 42
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## President's Message & Report –

This church year started a little rough for me, having some health issues that were not fully resolved until November. Thanks to all the support from everyone during that time I can say I am so much now better and all I can say is a normal sinus rhythm is a beautiful thing. I am so thankful to this board and this congregation for allowing me to serve you. It has been a pleasure.

While still settling into the new year with a change of leadership at the helm of the UUA. After saying our goodbyes to Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray and welcoming in Rev. Sofia Betancourt. We started off our year with a bang. First up on the agenda was a change to our Covenant. We held a few town halls and discussed many various possible changes to our historic Covenant. There was finally a version put out there and voted on and it was accepted and adopted as the New Covenant for our congregation.

There was also a request to establish a separate account that would keep track of donations given specifically for the express purpose of securing a minister. That account has been setup and is tracking those donations.

A large amount of the mortgage was paid down thanks to a fabulous benefactor who matched our contributions. How fantastic was that? We showed great stewardship of the church's assets and awesome fiscal responsibility.

Beatification and Aesthetic Enhancements throughout the church both inside and out. There have been some great contributors to enhancing the look of the church. We have to give a great amount of thanks to those volunteers who have been cleaning the church behind the scenes. We don't see them doing it, but they come in during the week and stay late after the service on Sunday. We do see the results in the cleanliness and the décor. We have saved a considerable amount of money not having to pay a cleaning company to do these chores. We have also rekeyed the church.

We continue to make strides in our online production of the Sunday Service and other online meetings. We have had a few new people try their hand at the production computer and see it is not that complicated once you figure it out. We do appreciate them stepping up and helping. We continue to make efforts to bring technology into all facets of the church. We are currently in the process of getting a new electronic digital sign out front of the church to replace the old sign that is there currently.

Carry The Flame,



*Warren Ray Thom Jr.*

## Treasurer's Report -

The church is in good financial shape. So far there have been no extraordinary expenses. We are a little ahead of the anticipated income. However, our expenses have been less than expected. If people continue to honor their pledge for the year, we will be in great shape.

	Jul 23 – Apr 24 Actual	Jul 23 – Apr 24 Budget
<b>Total Income</b>	117,393.25	79,183.30
<b>Total Expense</b>	114,236.34	82,240.25
	3,156.91	-3,056.95

Most of the financial business of the church is done through Busey Bank. A brief overview of our money situation at Busey Bank as of May 20, 2024, is as follows: Cash on hand is \$42,082.09. This does not include the money we have invested in CDs. This is from the general operations checking account and five other accounts. These five other accounts include the savings account and four other accounts that cannot be used in the general workings of the church. These four accounts are Clara Barton Guild; Make A Difference Fund; Memorial Fund; and Treibh na Tintean. The amount of money we have borrowed is \$83,380.27. This is the mortgage.

As stated above as of May 20, 2024, the mortgage is currently \$83,380.27. The monthly payment is \$1,277.33 and is paid automatically on the 30<sup>th</sup> of the month. The board authorized the treasurers to pay \$1,350.00 per month. Thus, an extra \$72.67 is paid toward the principal each month. The mortgage was last renewed on April 30, 2022. The loan is for 60 months and can be renewed at that time.

The Board authorized the purchase of several certificates of deposit (CD) through Internet One. The following table is a synopsis of our CD performance.

Certificate of Deposit	Date of Maturity	Interest Rate	Interest Earned April 2024	Date of Current Balance	Current Balance
12 Month small business CD-0305	12/27/2024	5.22%	\$196.00	04/30/2024	\$45,879.37
18 Month Small Business CD-0298	06/27/2025	4.96%	\$169.85	04/30/2024	\$41,833.74
6 Month Small Business CD-1909	05/28/2024	5.1%	\$170.55	04/30/2024	\$40,857.53
			\$536.40	Total	\$128,034.24

The capital expenditures so far (through April 2024) this fiscal year are as follows:

- Communications and Technology (extension cords, splitter, microphone) \$2,113.99
- Building Upkeep \$1,588.75
- Total \$3,702.74**

Through the generosity of our congregants and friends, we have received several donations (miscellaneous income) for various causes and activities of the church. These donations are for:

- Blue cabinet for office \$77.51
- Carpet Cleaning (through Endowment Committee) \$1,481.00
- Christmas Donation \$50.00
- Mortgage \$16,170.00

• Peace Pole	\$12,000.00
• Rental of storage unit for Archival Material	\$400.00
• Social Justice	\$17.00
• Towards a new Minister	\$700.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$30,895.51</b>

Also, from October 2023 through December 2023, a generous friend of the church agreed to match up to \$5,000.00 toward the principal on the mortgage for donations given by congregants. We met and exceeded the \$5,000.00 challenge. The members of the church donated \$10,370.00 (in addition to the \$5,000.00 matching) during these three months. This is included in the above number.

Friends and congregants have also been generous in donating to causes and concerns outside the church. Every Sunday all of the money collected in the plate is set aside for these causes and concerns. This is called Split the Plate. This year, the recipients of the split the plate include the following:

• Food pantries	\$863.00
• International Women’s Commission	\$510.00
• Joliet Pride Network	\$10.00
• LOSS	\$482.50
• Maui relief	\$935.71
• Mirth and Dignity	\$1,000.00
• SSIP	\$917.00
• Speak Up	\$453.00
• Will County Children’s Advocacy Center	\$361.30
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,532.51</b>

It has been our honor to serve you and UUCJ this year. Let’s have another wonderful year in FY24-25.

We have done our best to make this report fully accurate.  
 Respectfully submitted with peace, love, and all good intentions,  
 Margaret M. Juraco, Treasurer  
 Jeannie Owen, Assistant Treasurer

## **Lay Ministers' Reports**

This year has been a busy one. I spent five days in Pittsburgh last June attending the General Assembly as your delegate and a member of the UU Society of Community Ministry. I was one of the speakers at our annual get together and spent time every day at our both educating people about lay ministry. I attended many meetings and voted on behalf of our congregation. I especially paid attention to the amendments being presented for the Article II Commission's vote on the new Principles for this year's GA.

Locally, I supported our church contributions to the UU the VOTE with postcard and letter writing directed to our local voters. We had many church members dropping by to do the same after worship on several Sundays.

We also hosted a Town Hall meeting educating congregants about the Pretrial Fairness Act which was passed in Illinois this year. I served as a court sifter with other community members on three occasions. This was to keep an eye on the judges to make sure they were following the new law which happily they were.

We spearheaded a well received social justice project collecting cleaning supplies for the new immigrant community which was very well received by our congregation. I was so happy to see such great participation and the people who received these gifts were smiling and also happy.

I am now embarking on three new projects: the Restorative Justice program, the Economic Justice program (credit union) and The People's Lobby.

More information about these groups will be available in the coming weeks.

Charlotte Droogan  
Lay Community Minister



Sandy Costa  
Lay Community Minister

## **COMMITTEES**

### **Building & Grounds**

The mission of the Buildings and Grounds Committee is committed to continue keeping its members, guests, friends, and staff as safe as possible inside the building and on the property grounds in accordance with the 7 principles.

The top accomplishments for the current fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, are:

- Rekeying the entrance doors to the building with “paddle” on the main entrance and repair of the “paddle” on the side door for easier exiting in case of an emergency while retaining security within the building.
- Replacing the keyed lock on the office door with an electronic lock that accessibility can be made with fingerprint or keypad entry.

- Replacing the kitchen faucet with a single lever handle.
- Replaced mailbox with better secure unit.
- Installed Ring Doorbell at main entrance.

General ongoing tasks:

- Volunteers cleaning the church and restrooms including periodically coming in throughout the week for restrooms needs and trash/recycling removal, saving the church thousands of dollars for the year.
- Policing the outside grounds for trash and recycling when possible.
- Maintaining our aging heating and air conditioning units which includes replacing the air filters every 6 months.
- Renewed mowing and snow removal contracts.
- Volunteers trimming overgrown landscaping shrubs surrounding the church building.

Respectfully submitted,  
Richard Wachenheim, Chair

## **Building Usage**

The Building Use Committee is in place to assure that groups/individuals that are requesting the use of our building and/or grounds “express a philosophy consistent with the Unitarian Universalist values and principles. Church functions and standing committees of the church are considered pre-approved for usage and have priority in scheduling.” (More can be found in the current Congregational Handbook; page 32).

Requests for the usage of the building/grounds are to be turned into the church office administrator at least two weeks prior to the event that is requested. The church office administrator forwards the request to the Building Usage Committee (BUC) for review/comments. After reviewing the request, the BUC sends back to the office administrator any comments/recommendations and/or approval or disapproval.

Since the BUC has been meeting online via email/text/phone calls, we have had several event requests to process that have been approved with few caveats. We do need more church members who have keys to the building to be able to open and close the building for non-church groups who have been approved to utilize our building. Generally, the time needed is on weekends, but some may include weekday evenings.

The main highlight for the current fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, is the revised Building Usage form that has been implemented. The new form was revised by the office administrator with input from the C & T committee as well as the Building Usage Committee.

The Building Usage Committee is comprised of 3 members. They are Grant Prellwitz, Sandy Griffin, and Richard Wachenheim.

Respectfully submitted, Richard Wachenheim, Chair

## **Communications & Technology**

### **Committee members**

- Grant Prellwitz (chair)
- Jen Rodriguez

- Ray Thom
- Chris Carlson

Over the past year, the C&T committee has continued improving the weekly church service production and supporting technology use by other committees. We've welcomed a new committee member, Chris Carlson, and said goodbye to a valued producer, Greg Layne. With the assistance of a number of other producers, including Greg Layne, Curtis Anderson, Derek Rodriguez, and Frankie Rosales, we have successfully recorded almost every church service and multiple individual events during that period. We have enabled the board and every committee to have hybrid meetings to accommodate both those who are able to come to church and those who need or wish to attend remotely.

We have a new microphone on the podium and a wider-angle lens, allowing us to show the entire altar or choir. We have a "new" computer in the minister's office. We have been successful in bringing in remote presenters and sharing them with the congregation. We have mounted a second computer on a cart with a large monitor for the Dickens Room. We have transitioned to a new accounting system, QuickBooks Online, and are looking to make fuller use of its capabilities. We have installed a Ring video doorbell to allow the office personnel to screen visitors and provide video evidence in case of vandalism or theft of the package box. We have taken measures to improve the delivery rate of our blast emails like the ScUUp.

Over the coming year, our goal is to improve the experience of the congregation. We intend to do this by further improving the sound quality with a microphone for the congregation. Additionally, we want to assist in training the congregation on how to use the technologies and features that we already have available, such as Office 365, Teams meetings, a website to communicate both within the organization and with the external community, and individual email so that all can reach you. We will also be transitioning to a new event type for the weekly service as Microsoft retires the Live Event in favor of a Town Hall Event.

### **Congregational Caring**

These two committees have a great deal of overlap. We have provided support to people during their times of illness and other stressful situations with cards, phone calls, and in person visits. We provided a transportation ministry that assists people who need a lift for personal reasons and, or a ride to church.

Please feel free to contact us for these services or any other way we can help you in a time of need.

Charlotte Droogan  
Sandy Costa  
Sandy Griffin  
Jeannie Owen

### **Finance & Fundraising**

This year's Canvass theme is "Standing Together". That is exactly what we have done and are doing. Not only are people returning to in-person services and activities, but we are standing strong supporting the work and the witness of this church with our financial pledges and our gifts of time and talent.

2023-24 has been a good year for UUCJ. Not only are our bills paid, we have savings to cover emergencies and our actual budget is in the black.

Thanks and gratitude to everyone who has financially supported UUCJ this year, and pledged to do so again for the upcoming Fiscal Year. Our pledges at this point are over \$77,500. Special thanks to our treasurers Margaret Juraco and Jeannie Owen for all their work with our income, outgo and monthly reporting.

Another shout out to the people who participated with our Murder Mystery Dinner Theater this year – yes we're back – and have cleared over \$2,600 for our church. Thanks go to the actors, the support folks, the audience and more.

Looking forward to Standing Together with all of you!  
Carry the flame of peace and love,

Cathy Coss  
Finance Chair

## Hospitality Report

Becky Studer assumed Chairperson on 2/27/2024 following the passing of our beloved Marilu Dos Santos. The committee members are Cheryl and Chris Carlson, Carolyn Patterson, Rose Dombrow, David Garbacz, Jessica Roper, Emily Roper, Liz Vlahos, our newest member Dawn Bullock and anyone else who would like to join the committee would be most welcome. Special thank you to Richard Wachenheim and Barb Purdy for their continued support of keeping the kitchen well stocked. Richard, thanks for your continuous labor keeping the kitchen clean, maintained in good working order and bug free!! It is a pleasure to work with our occasional coffee hour helpers Riley and Robin McReynolds.

In the past fiscal year the kitchen has passed two WCHD inspections with no infractions 🍷🍷. A new faucet has replaced the leaking one.

The hospitality committee continues to help with setup and cleaning up of coffee hour every Sunday, along with the annual church picnic, canvass kick off potluck, holiday potluck and other programs, workshops and memorial services.

Hospitality would like to see more participation signing up for sponsoring Sunday coffee hour. Whether it be an individual or a group effort it does not have to be elaborate. Just snacks to accompany the coffee. You can be reimbursed for your expenses. Also you are not obligated to do setup or clean up, this wonderful committee will take care of that 😊.

We are grateful for all the money, food items and supplies for coffee hour— YOU MAKE IT HAPPEN!!

The bistro tables have made it more comfortable, so nice to see you enjoying coffee with friends. That was a good idea Richard.

The kitchen is looking forward to getting a new refrigerator. The chairperson would like to put a toaster on her wish list to use on Sundays.

Congregational picnic is being planned for late September this year looking forward to more comfortable weather. Summer weather has been unbearable.

I'm looking forward to having a short Hospitality Committee meeting every other month on a Sunday after coffee hour has been set up. We need to start planning the picnic fun!

In closing, I would like to say it is my pleasure and honor to work with such a productive and positive team.

Becky Studer  
Chairperson for Hospitality



## **Membership Report**

The Membership Committee was happy to welcome sixteen new members to our church family. The following people now consider themselves a vital part of the Universalist Unitarian Church of Joliet.

Emily Roper

Jessica Roper

Caren Ebel-Evans

Frankie Rosales

Kaitlyn Rosales

Cheryle Carlson

Chris Carlson

Judy Studer

Becky Studer

Heidi McReynolds

Randy McReynolds

Liz Vlahos

Sari Ann Villagomez

Ashley Smiley

Dawn Bullock

Betty Lorch

Junior UU's Robin and Riley McReynolds

The membership is also meeting on the third Sunday of the month participating in the Build Your Own Theology curriculum.

Thank you to Jeannie Owen and Dorothy Brown Brumbaugh for assisting in the New Membership Ceremony.

Our greeters for this year are Darla Layne, Rose Dombrow, Sari Villagomez. and Carolyn Patterson. Dorothy Brown Brumbaugh is joining us for the next church year.

Respectfully,  
Charlotte Droogan

## **Music and Worship Committee**

The fiscal year of July 2023 to July 2024 is not quite finished as yet, however, it has been a good year to date!

We not only have two wonderful speakers who speak monthly at UUCJ (The Reverend Ms. Denise Tracy and Lay speaker Beverly Feldt) but we have had a variety of diverse speakers. The speaker schedule for the months of August to December, 2024 is being filled now.

Our pianist (Lorna Mae Ehlert) is with us most Sundays throughout the year but there are times when we fill in with alternate pianists, or guitar players. Lorna Mae Ehlert and Carolyn Patterson have worked with a small group of our congregants who have fulfilled our wish to have a choir again at UUCJ!! We hope to increase the size of the choir this next year! It is such a pleasure to have such wonderful voices fill our sanctuary!

This past year has brought seasonal and holiday decorating to our sanctuary!! We have had positive feedback on how cheerful the atmosphere is at UUCJ. Our plan is to continue on with the decorations to nurture our community!

Music and Worship at UUCJ will continue to strive for unique speakers to guide our congregants to ponder a wide variety of topics. Music, as well, is a highlight we are striving to experience more types of during our services.

The Music and Worship Committee is, as always, available to any of our congregants who might wish to join in or offer suggestions in how to improve this wonderful community that is UUCJ.

Music and Worship would like to thank those who volunteer as Worship assistants, our pianist, the Communication and Technology team who produce each service and those who donate the great decorations we have on hand!

Please contact Sandy Griffin, M&W Chair for any information needed

Be well, blessings to you all!  
Sandy Griffin,  
Chair, Music and Worship

### **Religious Education Committee**

There is still so much more to be done in this area. We have worked together to improve the rooms for RE. However, we need to start focusing on staffing them regularly and providing lessons for our youth. We are leaving a gaping hole in our commitment to the church community by not addressing the absence of a Sunday School experience for our kids. If we could get a handful of participants, we could share in the responsibility. If you feel you are not qualified for this role, don't worry; we will work with you to ensure you have all the necessary tools and support. It is essential that we develop a program that not only engages but also educates our youth in the principles of our faith.

Additionally, we should consider reaching out to neighboring congregations to see how they manage their Religious Education programs and whether there are any collaborative opportunities available. Training workshops and guest speaker events can also be explored to enrich our educational offerings.

Another critical component is parent involvement. We need to actively communicate with the parents of our youth to understand their expectations and suggestions. Conducting surveys or holding informal discussion groups can provide valuable insights and help tailor our programs to better serve the needs of our community. Ultimately, our goal is to nurture a generation that is well-versed in our religious values and traditions. Let us work together to turn this vision into reality. Your participation and dedication can make a significant difference in our church's future

W. Ray Thom, Jr.  
Board President

### **Social Justice Committee**

#### **Social Justice – Environmental Committee**

Since offering some form of recycling to church members and friends at UUCJ over 5 years ago, the types of recycling have had its ups and downs as well as the cost of recycling. Generally, the only changes have been with the recycling of plastic. Almost all of the plastic products that are thrown in the waste baskets in the church are cleaned and recycled. Most of this plastic is not currently recycled through the municipal recycling services. We need to do better to adhere to the 7th principle which is: “We believe in caring for our planet Earth, the home we share with all living things.”

We have this year offered single use battery recycling, LED/CFL/Fluorescent lights recycling, all metal recycling including aluminum foil, and pans; paper recycling, plastic packaging recycling, coffee pods recycling and Styrofoam take-out container recycling to name a few. Total actual cost of TerraCycle boxes purchased: \$4,587.05; Lampmaster (fluorescent light tubes) recycling box: \$79.95; Cirba Battery Solutions: \$118.90; this fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.

Paper recycling was taken to locations in Joliet and Romeoville. Styrofoam recycling was taken to Aurora. Scrap metal was taken to scrap yard in Romeoville.

Respectfully submitted, Richard Wachenheim

**Social Justice – Black Lives Matter** – none submitted

**Social Justice – First Thursday Films** –

Had an average of 4-6 people at each event.

Showed the following films this year.

Sept Amazing Grace

Nov Wild Life

Dec Loving

Jan Milk

Feb Persepolis

March Yentl

May Chevalier

June God & Country

## **GROUPS**

### **Clara Barton Guild/Women's Connection**

The Clara Barton Guild renewed their activities every second Thursday of the months September through June with the exception of January. Although the Guild is a voting membership of nine, all women of the Church are considered members. Men are always eligible to join us. (The voting members are Dorothy Brown Brumbaugh, Cathy Coss, Amy Mayer, Patricia McReynolds, Carolyn Patterson, Sally Patterson, Lois Pedersen, Barb Purdy [Secretary] and Sue Thom [Treasurer].)

The Guild began its fiscal year with a balance of \$1,064.11 and that balance remains the same as of May 2024.

Since September of 2023, the ladies painted and assembled another UUCJ Flag. The Guild lost a Member, Marilu dos Santos, to Liver Cancer and the ladies donated to the UUCJ Memorial Fund in memory of longtime Member Paul Brumbaugh and husband of Dorothy Brown Brumbaugh. The ladies completed the seasonal floral arrangements for the urn tables aside the Dais in the Sanctuary. The Guild continues to be a supporter of the National Women's Historical Museum (Washington, D.C.).

Our ladies continue to send Birthday Cards to those of the Church who have shared their dates with the Guild. The Guild continues to purge the list as it adds new Congregants to the list.

The ladies actively planned and presented a Lay Led Service in March of 2024, the month of the International Month of Women, to honor the women who work/ed to save our Planet.

The sharing of Comfort Shawls/Stoles/Lap blankets have been a Guild project for many years for both Joys and Concerns. Since it's onset the Guild has handcrafted over thirty for individuals in times of duress and celebration. The Guild was able to share a Baby blanket (for granddaughter) and comfort shawl with Marilu dos Santos before her passing. As well, the Guild shared comfort shawls with Patricia McReynolds and Sandy Griffin.

The Guild will close its year with a June Luncheon Meeting at a local restaurant.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara J. Purdy, Secretary

Clara Barton Guild/Women's Connection, UUCJ

### **Treibh Na Tintean**

We continue to celebrate the 8 major sabbats and full moons.

We maintain the woods with mowing in select areas, trimming overhanging limbs, seeding bare areas with grass/clover seed. Improving nighttime lighting of our main entrance trail including adding new gravel for the trail. We will be adding wood mulch to the other trails where the grass does not grow in heavy shade.

We planted two new trees this spring: Prairie Crabapple and Hardy Almond Tree.

We are in the planning stages of offering workshops.

We have a new Elder: Jen. Current Elders are Sari, Ci Ci, Frankie, Sandy C. and Richard.

We have been drawing in new members—30 people at Beltane. Interest in pagan practice is growing in our area.

Covenant Woods is a warm and friendly place. We are attracting gay, lesbian, bi, trans, nonbinary pagan folk who appreciate the safe space we have built.

Respectfully submitted, Richard Wachenheim

### **Endowment Committee**

• World	\$ 1,156.66
• Community	\$ 2,110.00
• Education	\$ 2,077.00
• Physical Plant	\$ 2,394.01
• Re-invest to endowment	<u>\$ 689.20</u>
• Checking balance	\$ 8,426.87

Disbursements – \$1,481 to UUCJ for cleaning (Physical Plant)

Income –\$0

Principal balance -\$50,486.23

If you have a need that is supported by one of the donation funds purposes, please feel free to send a funding request. Your bylaws have a good explanation of what each fund is designed to support. We typically meet quarterly to review any pending business.

If you have a desire to provide for the long-term funding of UUCJ, we graciously accept donations of any amount.

Carry the flame of peace and love,  
Sean Gleason, Endowment Treasurer

### **Universalist Unitarian Church of Joliet 2024-2025 Proposed Budget**

See attached PDF.

### **Universalist Unitarian Church of Joliet 2024-2025 Proposed Capitol Expense Budget**

See attached PDF.

## **UUCJ 2024 Annual Meeting Ballot Instructions**

This year the meeting will be conducted on-line and in person, which may affect our discussions and how we vote.

All voting members are encouraged to attend in person or on-line to vote. All voting in person will be done by show of hands. Online participants must be logged into their UUJoliet.org Teams account.

Absentee Ballots must be requested by phone or email. Returned absentee ballots must be received in the office **no later than 9 A.M. on June 9, 2024**. Please return the ballot by email to [UUCJOFFICE@UUJOLIET.ORG](mailto:UUCJOFFICE@UUJOLIET.ORG), turning into the office during business hours, or through postal mail.

You will be asked to vote for up to two Board Members for three-year terms, one Endowment Committee Members, and up to two General Assembly Delegates. Blank lines are provided by category for write in candidates put forth during the meeting. The maximum number of votes in each section will still apply.

We will also vote on two budgets, the normal expense budget and the capital budget that allows the board to spend that money indicated without coming back to the congregation for a vote each time.

Please mark your vote with an X through your choice.