

MEETING AGENDA - First UU Austin Board of Trustees

Meeting

Meeting Date Tuesday, February 21, 2023
Start Time 6:30 PM
End Time 8:30 PM (CST)
Location Zoom - <https://zoom.us/j/firstuuaustin> (password = 512452)
 Zoom ID: 940 671 9275
 Dial in number: (346) 248-7799 or (669) 900-6833
Purpose Regular scheduled meeting

RSVP

Accepted: Chris Jimmerson
No response: Donna Carpenter, Vic Cornell, Suzette Emberton, Rob Hirschfeld, Russell Holley-Hurt, Joseph Hunt, Jonalu Johnstone, Jonalu Johnstone, Mateo Kresha, Nesan Lawrence, Sasha Lorenzo, Shannon Posern, Kelly Raley, Dave Riehl, Kelly Stokes, Erin Walter, Nathan Walther

Agenda

1. Coming Back into Covenant

1.1. Chalice Lighting and Opening Words Joseph Hunt / 2 min. (6:30 PM - 6:32 PM)

1.2. Reading of Board Covenant Nesan Lawrence / 2 min. (6:32 PM - 6:34 PM)

With the Values, Mission and Ends of First UU Austin foremost in mind, we the leadership do covenant to:

- Treat our time together and board commitments as spiritual practice
- Work collaboratively to clarify, assess and further our mission.
- Respect our time together by being focused, prepared and timely.
- Keep confidentiality when it is requested.
- Listen actively, address concerns directly with each other in a timely manner, and encourage others to do the same.
- Presume good faith in all our interactions acknowledging the importance of both intention and impact.
- Conduct ourselves openly, show compassion, respect boundaries, and enjoy each other's good humor in times of agreement and disagreement.
- Publicly support one another's decisions and leadership by speaking with one voice at the end of our deliberations.
- Agree to be called back into covenant.

1.3. Confirm Timekeeper and Process Evaluator Nesan Lawrence / 2 min. (6:34 PM - 6:36 PM)

Timekeeper: Nathan

Process evaluator: Dave

1.3.1. Approve Agenda and Consent Agenda Nesan Lawrence / 2 min. (6:36 PM - 6:38 PM)

- January Board meeting minutes 3-8
- Monitoring - End 1.4.4 9-19
- Monitoring - End 1.4.5 20-21

Documents

- Minutes-2023-01-17-v1.pdf
- 1.4.4 monitoring Report 02-2023.pdf
- 1.4.5 monitoring 2-2023.pdf

2. Connecting with our Moral Ownership

2.1. Visitor's Forum Russell Holley-Hurt / 15 min. (6:38 PM - 6:53 PM)

Linkage Committee has invited Richard and Beki Halpern. Please watch this Ted Talk ahead of time.

https://www.ted.com/talks/katharine_hayhoe_the_most_important_thing_you_can_do_to_fight_climate_change_talk_about_source=tedcomshare&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=tedspring

2.2. Recognition of Church Volunteers and Staff Donna Carpenter / 5 min. (6:53 PM - 6:58 PM)

2.3. Moment with Rev. Chris Chris Jimmerson / 10 min. (6:58 PM - 7:08 PM)

2.4. Moment with Rev. Jonalu Jonalu Johnstone / 10 min. (7:08 PM - 7:18 PM)

3. Monitoring our Progress

3.1. FUUCA Financials Update Chris Jimmerson / 10 min. (7:18 PM - 7:28 PM)

The accountants have not yet closed out 2022. I will forward financial reports as soon as they do.

3.2. Interim OKR.3 Jonalu Johnstone / 10 min. (7:28 PM - 7:38 PM)

February 2023 – (OKR.3) interim ministry team has provided congregation a report of their findings and is giving the congregation a chance to provide feedback.



Documents

- Interim Report of the Interim Ministers.pdf 22-30

3.3. Transition Committee Update

Donna Carpenter / 15 min. (7:38 PM - 7:53 PM)

Documents

- Board Transitions Team February Report.docx 31-35

4. Learning & Creating the Future

4.1. Board Book Discussion

Mateo Kresha / 15 min. (7:53 PM - 8:08 PM)

5. Adjourn

5.1. Action Items and Announcements

Nesan Lawrence / 2 min. (8:08 PM - 8:10 PM)

Let's review the action items from this meeting:

Documents

- Who to Contact.pdf 36-37

5.2. Assign Roles for Next Meeting

Nesan Lawrence / 2 min. (8:10 PM - 8:12 PM)

Assign roles for:

- Readings
- Timekeeper
- Process Evaluator

5.3. Process Evaluation page 49

Dave Riehl / 2 min. (8:12 PM - 8:14 PM)

5.4. Extinguishing the Chalice and Closing Words

Joseph Hunt / 2 min. (8:14 PM - 8:16 PM)



MEETING MINUTES - First UU Austin Board of Trustees

Meeting

Date	Tuesday, January 17, 2023
Started	6:31 PM
Ended	8:30 PM (CST)
Location	Zoom - https://zoom.us/my/firstuuaustin (password = 512452) Zoom ID: 940 671 9275 Dial in number: (346) 248-7799 or (669) 900-6833
Purpose	Regular scheduled meeting
Chaired by	Nesan Lawrence
Recorder	Vic Cornell

Attendance

Present:	Donna Carpenter, Vic Cornell, Suzette Emberton, Russell Holley-Hurt, Joseph Hunt, Chris Jimmerson, Jonalu Johnstone, Nesan Lawrence, Kelly Raley, Dave Riehl, Erin Walter, Nathan Walther
Late:	Rob Hirschfeld, Mateo Kresha
Regrets:	Shannon Posern, Kelly Stokes
Absent:	Martha Arrendando, Jonalu Johnstone

Minutes

1. Coming Back into Covenant

1.1. Chalice Lighting and Opening Words

Nesan started with a new year check-in. Misc attendees talked about how the year has gone so far.

Suzette read opening words (A Blessing on the Poets by Annie Finch) while Nesan lit the chalice.

Status: Completed

1.2. Reading of Board Covenant

With the Values, Mission and Ends of First UU Austin foremost in mind, we the leadership do covenant to:

- Treat our time together and board commitments as spiritual practice
- Work collaboratively to clarify, assess and further our mission.
- Respect our time together by being focused, prepared and timely.
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- Publicly support one another's decisions and leadership by speaking with one voice at the end of our deliberations.
- Agree to be called back into covenant.

All present read the Board Covenant together.



Status: Completed

1.3. Confirm Timekeeper and Process Evaluator

- Timekeeper: Donna Carpenter
- Process Evaluation: Kelly Raley
- Timekeeper: Donna
- Process Evaluator: Kelly R.

Status: Completed

1.4. Approve Agenda and Consent Agenda

- December meeting minutes
- Monitoring of End 2.6 Asset Protection
- Interpretations: End 1.4.4
- Interpretations: End 1.4.5
- ...

Kelly pointed out that there were only seven principles listed in one section of the Monitoring of End Report.

The agenda & consent agenda were approved unanimously.

Status: Completed

Documents

- Minutes-2022-12-20-v1.pdf
 - 2.6 Asset Protection rev -01-10-23monitor.pdf
 - 1.4.4 Ends Interpretation intergenerationalFeb2022.pdf
 - 1.4.5 interpretation.pdf
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2. Connecting with our Moral Ownership

2.1. Visitor's Forum

Richard Halpern, Chair of Green Sanctuary

Richard Halpern came down sick, so the Visitor's Forum was cancelled.

Status: Parked

2.2. Recognition of Church Volunteers and Staff

Fred Higgins (for helping out in multiple ways)

The Stedman Family (for their benefit concert)

Leo Collas (for helping with the history workshop)

Donna will check in with Kelly S and Shannon for other names.

Status: Completed

2.3. Moment with Rev. Chris

Rev. Chris presented:

- Has invited people to speak with him about his health issues. He has an ulcer and it's being treated.



- Will be reporting later about search for office manager.
- Proposed change to UUA bylaws, that would potentially eliminate the principles. Don't know if the change to Article II will pass or not, but be prepared.
- Spoke with Rev. Jonalu; the growing leading model for churches of our size is the co-lead minister system. More collaborative, different sets of skills. Rev. Chris would like us to consider that model going forward, no matter who ends up as next settled minister.
- The message will be going out soon to groups, asking them to take attendance and report back, so that we have better info.
- The only attendance pattern (in last two years) to note is that this year it's been on the rise.
- 3 new members signed up this week, 8 people signed up for next Path to Membership class.
- The KUT radio spots are running right now.
- Setting a target of two services for the next church year (2024).
- Board members will be asked by interim ministry team to review sections of the UUA report, Widening the Circle of Concern.
- The Stedman concert raised \$1,000+ for the church.
- Brent is already planning another fundraising concert.
- Gillian Redfern will be doing a fundraiser auction (with Julie Pasche's assistance).
- We have been experiencing implicit bias and microaggressions from congregation members. It has cost us a few BIPOC members and trans members, who have left because of their experiences. Rev. Chris is going to try to speak about it from the pulpit, may offer an adult RE class.
- We will have a minister of color doing a BIPOC listening circle and preaching soon.
- No one has really stepped up yet to revitalize the social services things like sack lunch, freeze nights, etc. Still looking for some people for that.

Status: Completed

Documents

- Attendance.pdf

2.4. Moment with Rev. Jonalu

Rev. Jonalu presented:

- Very successful history workshop with 58 participants. Lots of small group conversations. The history wall will remain up for a few weeks, with people invited to add to it. She has shared a document with her notes and observations.
- The congregation is conflict-avoidant.
- A lot of upset was spoken out loud about Rev. Mari's leaving.
- Rev. Meg had the longest pastorate of the church's history, and left well. Hopefully that equipped the church to better deal with this time of transition.
- Some long-timers have expectations around a much smaller church, which isn't really suitable for a church that's growing (and wants to continue growing). Will need to negotiate those varied expectations. It was good to have both new members and long-time members talking to each other at the workshop.
- Communication issues were raised, again. Many members are feeling uninformed about things that matter to them. We might want to increase our targeted communications.
- Re-energizing the First UU Caring Circle, having a session to train members (possibly in March), to help with those grieving.
- Will not be renewing her contract with FUUCA. She has things that she needs to get back to and feels confident that her tasks will be finished by end of contract (July).

Status: Completed

3. Monitoring our Progress



3.1. FUUCA Financials

Rev. Chris presented on the church financials

- November revenue was higher than budget.
- Multiple one-time expenses that should balance out.
- Our year-to-date is a positive cash flow!
- Projecting an almost fully balanced year for 2022!
- Deposits for December looked good, but still need expenses.
- Our deposit accounts finally made some interest again!
- These are good signs of church health.

Status: Completed

Documents

- November2022Financials.pdf

3.2. Monitoring of Interim OKR.3

(OKR.3) Transition team has developed a plan to contact everyone in the congregation to get input about who should be on the search committee. Implementing this plan will involve everyone on the board. The interim ministry team might give the board a preliminary version of the report that they will share with the congregation in February.

Kelly R presented on Interim OKR3, concerning process for selecting search committee.

- Part of the board packet includes description of our proposed process, which is still open to changes.
- Step 1: congregants nominate search committee members (nominations close on Feb. 20), step 2: identify top 12-14 names and contact those people, step 3: once we have good list of people, we'll have either slate election or individually competitive. Or hybrid approach (i.e. five seats competitive election, two reserved for board diversity selections). Rob suggests rank choice voting.
- The current plan is: rank choice voting, competitive election, hybrid model, with at least two board selected diversity seats.

Status: Completed

Documents

- Transitions Newsletter - Draft.pdf
- Board Transition Team's plans for selecting a Search Committee.pdf

3.3. Congregational Survey

Overview of major themes from free form comments from congregants in the annual survey

Joseph presented re: the Congregational Survey

- Comments have been collected in attached document.
- Both positive and negative comments. Some in direct opposition to each other.
- Includes some suggestions and unasked questions.
- Rob is still working on report with data and graphs; will distribute it as soon as possible. Kelly suggests that some of the themes from the comments should be included in the report, so that people feel heard. Joseph will coordinate with Rev. Jonalu about which comments to be included.

Status: Completed

Documents

- FUUCA Survey comments.docx

4. Learning & Creating the Future



4.1. Board Book Discussion

Do Better: Chapters 8, 9 and 10

Russell led board in discussion of book; Do Better: Spiritual Activism for Fighting and Healing from White Supremacy by Rachel Ricketts (Chapters 8-10)

- Definition of spirituality from Brené Brown: "Spirituality is recognizing and celebrating that we are all inextricably connected to each other by a power greater than all of us, and that our connection to that power and to one another is grounded in love and compassion. Practicing spirituality brings a sense of perspective, meaning, and purpose to our lives."
- Do you agree? How do you define 'spirituality'?
- How do you think that spirituality (however you're defining it) affects your anti-racism work?
- How do you reconcile 'righteous rage' and your 'spirituality'?
- How does UUism's pulling from multiple sources reconcile with cultural appropriation? Possible responses include it being about relationships, and honoring sources and their requests.

Status: Completed

5. Adjourn

5.1. Action Items and Announcements

Let's review the action items from this meeting:

Transitions committee will finalize nomination selection process and distribute

Congregational Survey report should come out soon

Status: Completed

5.2. Assign Roles for Next Meeting

Assign roles for:

- Readings
- Timekeeper
- Process Evaluator
- Snacks

Readings: Joseph

Timekeeper: Nathan

Process evaluator: Dave

Book discussion: Mateo

Snacks: volunteers being accepted

Status: Completed

5.3. Process Evaluation

Kelly R found the board satisfactory across all categories

Status: Completed

Documents

- Board process review form.docx
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5.4. Extinguishing the Chalice and Closing Words

Suzette read opening words (Walk With Me by Annie Finch) while Nesan extinguished the chalice.

Board went into Executive Session after adjournment.

Status: Completed

- Monitoring Report 1.4.4: We care for one another in intergenerational community and connect in fun and fellowship.

February 2023

Interpretation:

The first interim goal is at least indirectly related to this end, as this end has to do with engagement.

We take this to mean that all of us intentionally involve the children, youth, adults, and elders in as much church programming as possible. We teach the children and youth ways to care for others. We reach out to church members when they are ill or struggling.

We realize that connection with one another is richer when, in addition to Sunday morning connections, ministry team connections and social justice project connections, we make connections with one another in the context of parties and just-for-fun events.

Measures:

We have a Care Team who sends cards, arranges for meals, occasionally gives rides, and provides some connection for our elders who can no longer attend regularly.

The children wear nametags and the adults are encouraged to learn their names

We have a “caring fund” which can be used to support members who are in financial difficulties.

We mark special occasions with parties.

The church adults and children speak to one another in the hall. The adults know the kids’ names. The children are considered in church plans as much as the adults are.

Families know one another, and they are engaged with one another. Those who are ill do not feel forgotten.

Evidence of Progress:

2023

Please see the attached report from Kelly for a number of intergenerational and family activities and RE updates, including our Halloween Party, family lunches on the playground, Surprise Pals, OWL classes and more we have reinstituted now that we are able to have in person activities.

Likewise, our fun and fellowship team has reactivated and held a number of events including helping with the Halloween festivities, holding a Thanksgiving meal and gathering and a number of celebrations after worship on Sundays.

Our First UU Cares Team and Memorial Services Team are implementing several new ways of assuring that our community provides care to one another. We continue to send the caring cards, and I and the other ministers have also had several pastoral visits and phone calls with church members.

We have also reactivated the Healthy Relations Team.

We have held at least one intergenerational service each month.

Music Report by Brent Baldwin

The First UU Music Program has fully bounced back from the pandemic shutdown, with opportunities for music-making for people of all ages and ability levels. Worship music continues to broaden so as to nourish First UU members and visitors of all ages and backgrounds, so as to better represent the Beloved Community we aspire to be.

Religious Education and Family Ministry Report by Kelly Stokes

Children and Youth

After two years of online RE and choir classes, canceled OWL classes, mailed family care packages, and limited in-person events, 2022 saw our return to in-person classes for all ages and a return to worship for Children and Youth. In January and February, when the church went virtual again, we took a break from RE classes. When we returned to in-person services at the end of February, children, who had been staying on the playground, were once again invited into the first 15 minutes of worship every week.

In September, we returned to all pre-pandemic groups meeting inside: Nursery, PreK-First Grade, First-Fifth Grade, Middle School, High School, as well as 8th & 9th Grade OWL and Youth Choir. Every week throughout 2022 we saw families returning who had not participated in church activities since covid began. We also saw a large surge of new families with children and youth who are looking for a new faith home after the challenges of the past two years. While attendance remains low for middle school, high school, and nursery-aged children, in the fall we began seeing attendance numbers approaching pre-pandemic levels.

Sunday Morning Classes:

PreK-K and 1st-5th grade -

- In the spring, these classes met outside on the playground, offering reading, crafts, coloring, and unique activities each week, allowing children to choose to participate in these activities or play.
- Over the summer we combined classes and used the new Magic RE curriculum.
- In the fall the classes separated and moved back inside the classrooms.
- Pre-pandemic, the PreK-Kinder class was our largest, with 10-12 children at each service. Now, our First-Fifth Grade class regularly has close to 20 children, and our younger class is much smaller. Consequently, we are encouraging First Graders to stay with the younger children to even things out. We all them to choose.

Middle School

- There was not much interest in the spring or summer, so we relaunched our Middle School group in September.
- For the 3rd year, we are using the Crossing Paths Curriculum, which explores other religions. In the fall we studied Unitarian Universalism and Buddhism.

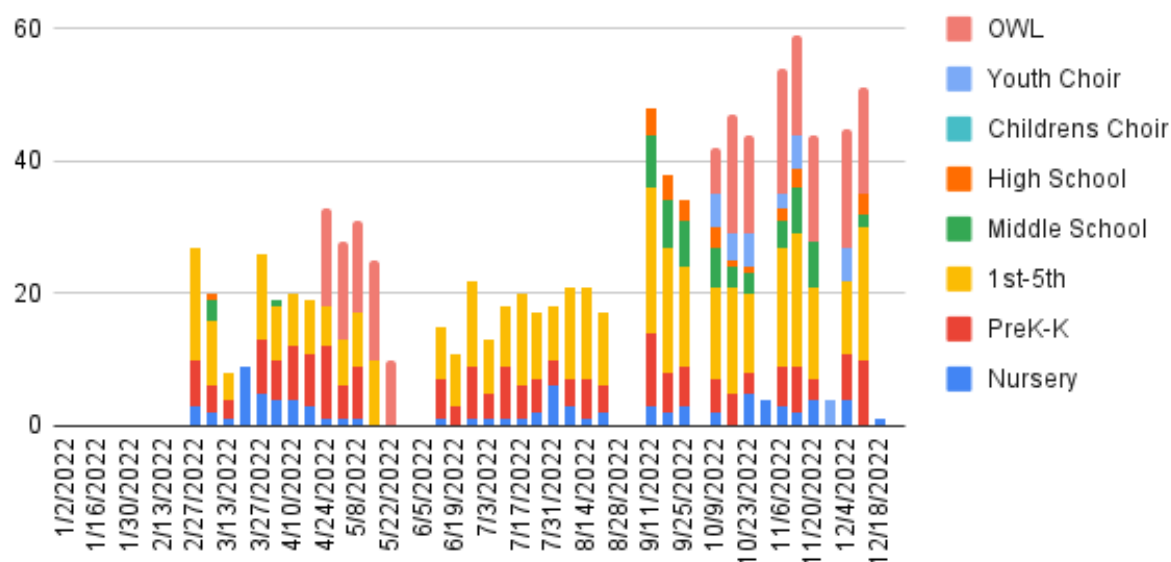
High School

- Discussions inspired by the Soul Matters youth packet
- Attendance has dropped most dramatically in this group, which is consistent with this age group across the country, and has been slow to return.
- Like the Middle School group, we relaunched in September. Since then, two regular students have been attending, with very few visitors.

Nursery

- This group was very slow to return, but towards the end of 2022 we began to see pre-pandemic numbers again.
- Staffing for child care has been one of our biggest challenges.
- We began offering middle and high schoolers the option to help out in the nursery, either as volunteers or paid staff (ages 14 and above). The result has been very sweet but erratic, due to youth schedules.

2022 CandY Attendance



Virtual Jan-Feb; Outside March-May; Full classes started Sept

(see end of report for comparison to previous years)

Children & Youth Choirs:

- Youth Choir began meeting in person in the fall, with a new model of rehearsals leading up to a performance, instead of meeting every week
- We experimented with offering a hymn-singing practice in lieu of Children's Choir/Children's Music Ensemble, with a new hymn each month to practice before singing in worship together. This was poorly attended, so we discontinued it.

OWL

- We offered 5th & 6th Grade OWL in the spring, with 18 students.
- We began 8th & 9th Grade OWL in October (it is continuing through May 2023), with 18 students.
- In September we partnered with TXUJUM to offer a facilitator training for the adolescent levels of OWL. This is an intense, whole-weekend-long training, which attracted participants from all over Texas (and a few out of state). It was a massive amount of work, but we are very proud that our training will allow so many more students access to inclusive sexuality education, particularly in states like ours where LGBTQ people are being persecuted.

Family Ministry:

- We communicate with families with children weekly about what's going on via emails and Facebook.
- In the fall we revived the pre-pandemic Family Lunch on the Playground, which happens monthly after All-Ages Services. This has been very well attended.
- In the fall we created a BIPOC Families Group, with the intention of providing support and fellowship to any families with children or youth who have at least one family member that identifies as Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian-American, or as a person of color. Two parents with children in our program are ready to lead it, but no one else has signed up.

Faith in Action

Most volunteer and donation drives have not been revived this year, due to lack of volunteer energy. There is considerable interest among parents of children and youth to have intergenerational service opportunities.

Volunteers

All our classes are led by volunteers, who determine their own schedule. We have lost many volunteer teachers, but those who stayed are teaching more often.

At the end of 2022, we had 20 adults regularly volunteering in Sunday morning RE classes.

Special Events

- Surprise Pals in January & February
 - We reinvented this beloved tradition while we were virtual in January and February, matching up adults and children and inviting them to send each other letters through the mail. When we returned to in-person church, they met each other and made art together. This program was so well received and appreciated, and is the easiest way for adults who don't want to teach to meet and develop relationships with children in the congregation.
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Camp UU '22: Fun, Friendship, and the Magic of Our Faith in July
 - 30 children and youth and 21 adult volunteers participated in our week-long, full-day summer camp

- Our Camp Director, Laura Miller had covid and was unable to attend the whole week. Kelly had covid the week before and was unable to attend on Monday. Kinsey Shackelford, who had just been hired as RE Assistant, courageously stepped in and led the camp.
 - This year we were able to involve more staff, with Brent and Katrina leading music classes, Rev Erin leading a morning worship, Rev Chris making a guest appearance, and Kelly and Kinsey directing the camp.
- Splash Day in September
- Halloween Festival
 - This year we were able to return to our pre-pandemic experiment in inviting adult church groups to provide activities for the children.
 - Since we no longer do a church group sign up event, we invited church groups to use this as an opportunity to talk to church members about what they do and sign up new members.
 - Groups that participated: Fellowship, First UU Cares, YA Worship, TCS (Transformation Connection Service), Monday Mindfulness Practice, LGBT Community Heart Circle, Pagan Alliance, Social Action Council, Gallery Team, Inside Amigos/Veganistas.
- Youth Game Nights - in the fall we began offering a monthly game night for middle and high schoolers, hosted by Mei Ling Isaacs

Adult RE

Ongoing Adult Programs

- Chalice Circles - 6 groups in the spring, 5 in the fall
- Wellspring Groups - 2 in the spring, 1 starting in the fall
- Religion and World Views Book Club
- Mind and Meaning Book Club
- LGBTQ+ Community Heart Circle
- Mindfulness Meditation Group
- Path to Membership (resumed)

New in 2022

- Anti-Racism Book Group (fall)

- OWL Facilitator Training (September)

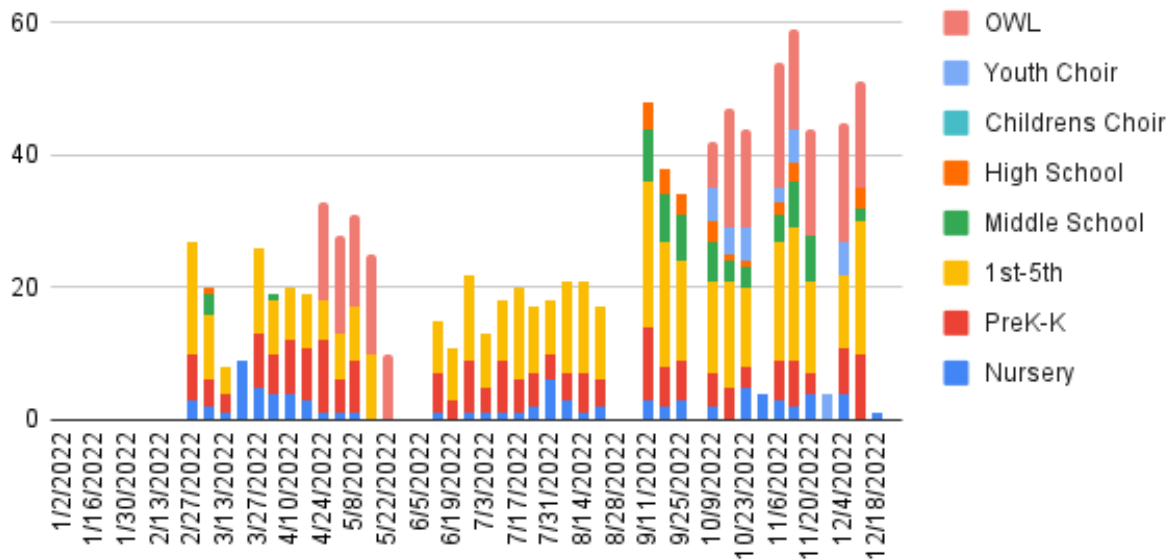
Note: Interim activities have taken precedence over new RE offerings in the fall of 2022. More new Adult RE offerings are beginning in the Spring of 2023.

RE Staff

- In May, Carrie Reed, who had been serving as our RE Coordinator, moved to Baltimore
- Kinsey Shackelford was hired as RE Assistant, to replace Carrie, but was promoted to RE Coordinator after taking a leadership role in summer classes and camp.

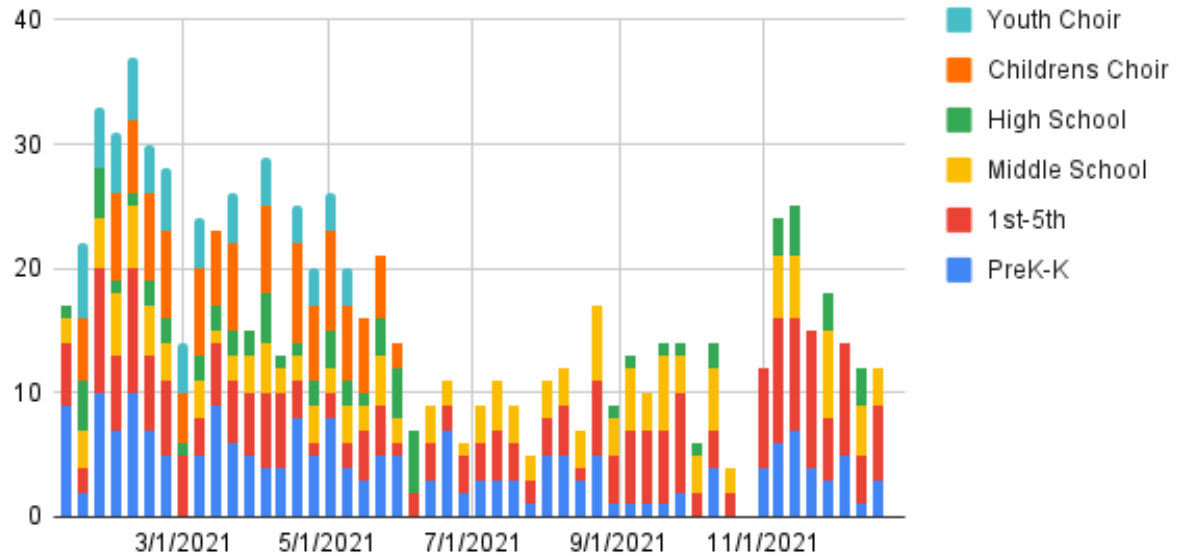
Children and Youth (CandY) Attendance comparisons

2022 CandY Attendance



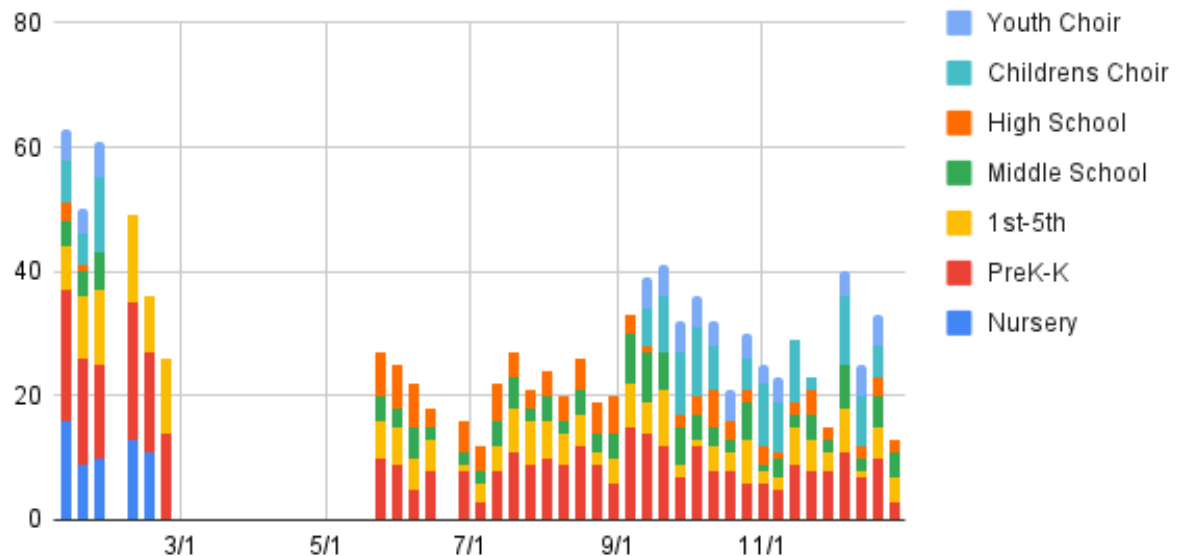
Virtual Jan-Feb; Outside March-May; Full classes started Sept

2021 Candy Attendance



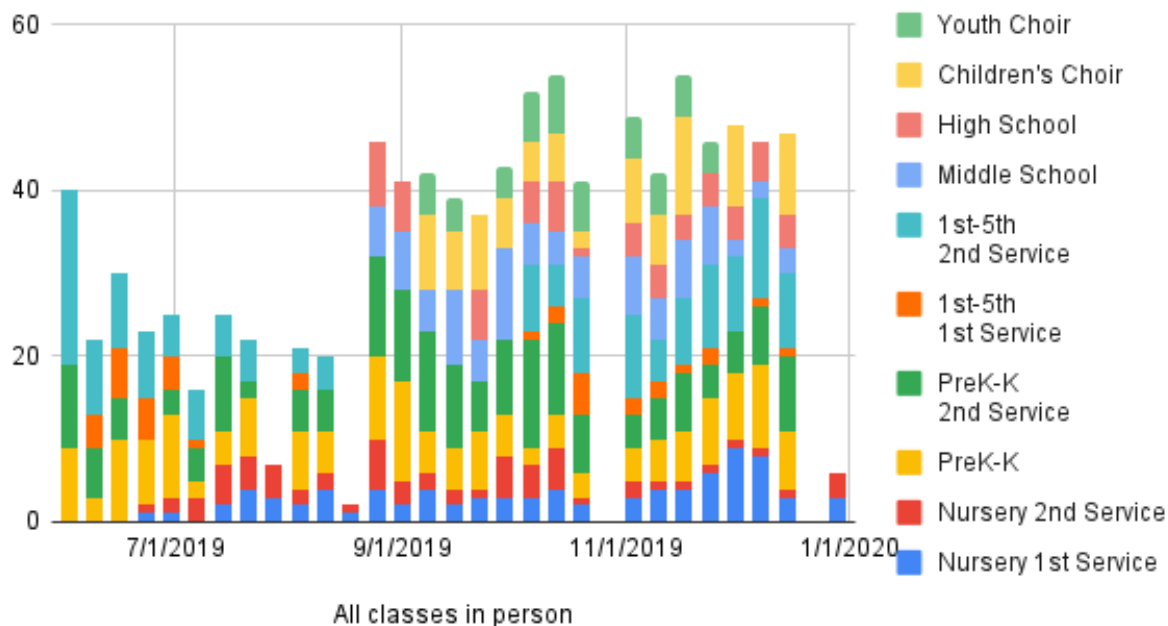
Virtual through Sept; Outside beginning in Oct (Covid shots available 11/1)

2020 Candy Attendance



No attendance data March-May, but classes were held; Virtual March - Dec

2019 CandY Attendance



2022

Because of the Pandemic, we were virtual for most of 2021. Rather than looking for “progress” we were focused on providing opportunities to connect: to enable people to continue feeling connected to the church and each other. Both Staff and Committees found creative ways to have fun together safely.

Sunday morning classes:

- From January- September, zoom classes continued every week for PreK-8th Grade and less frequently for High School, following their interest.
- From October - December, Babies through 5th Graders met outside on the playground every Sunday; Middle and High Schoolers met every other week indoors, with masks
- “Fun and Fellowship” was the guiding principle behind outdoor R.E. classes - the focus was on connection rather than curriculum.
 - Children participated in chalice lighting and covenant with teachers, then practiced being a Unitarian Universalist by choosing whether to play, read, color, craft, or chat with friends.
 - Children were engaged and happy. Teachers reported feeling joy and fulfillment getting to spend time with the children in person.
- Youth Choir met on zoom every Sunday in the spring and fall
- Children’s Choir met on zoom every Sunday in the spring

Monthly Care Packages:

- From January - May, we sent monthly “care packages” to families with kids that included faith support for all ages.

Our Whole Lives:

- OWL is not permitted to be taught online, so we supported families by sharing online sexuality education resources for a variety of ages.

Special Gatherings

This year we hosted:

- Easter Egg Hunt
- All-ages Halloween Festival
- Monthly all-ages gatherings in the courtyard during the summer, when outdoor in-person gathering was permitted
 - This included an intergenerational art project, where all ages sat around a table creating together
- All ages participated in our Christmas Pageant, our first in-person multigenerational worship service since the start of the pandemic
- All-ages gift swap in December
- Youth Sunday, produced virtually by the high school group

Adult RE:

- 6 Chalice Circles - monthly
- Wellspring: Sources group - bimonthly
- Emerging Adult Listening Circle - monthly
- Reproductive Justice Seminar - January & February

Adult Fellowship

- Weekly Coffee with Kami and Minister Hangout Zoom Meetings
- Austin LGBTQ Community Heart Circle monthly meetings
- Neighborhood Scavenger Hunt - finding the houses of church members that live nearby

Adults

Members who are sick, have had a baby or have experienced a death in the family receive cards and phone calls from the Care team and the ministers. Visits are not permitted these days until someone has been moved into Hospice Care. The Sr. Minister gets a “cards report” every few months detailing those who have been sent caring cards. Senior members who can’t get to church are called and kept connected with First UU. This is a new effort, the Senior Ministry, where a group of volunteers are assigned one senior or one couple each, and they make contact a few times a month, visiting when possible and calling.

We have an informal network of women who have been diagnosed at some point with breast cancer who have agreed to talk to and support women who have a new diagnosis.

This is comforting and dispels some of the fear of the unknown that comes with such a diagnosis.

The Caring Fund is replenished from the Christmas Eve offerings, and goes to members and friends who are struggling financially. People can be helped once every six months, up to about 800.00. This year we have helped several people with rent.

We have a new fund for Religious Education, funded by John and Karen Franks, to help pay for people to take OWL training, RE training, seminary, conferences, and to help pay student intern ministers. This fund granted 5.000 to Bear for his seminary tuition. I need a board member to be on this granting team with me and Chris, and another church member not on the board.

2022 RE Report:

The pandemic invited us to shift our focus from outreach to finding ways to make sure that we are continuing to be a spiritual home for people already here.

Our choice to stay virtual to keep everyone safe when other churches were returning in person was deeply rooted in our first, sixth, and seventh principles.

Transforming Connection service

Weekly coffee hours

New people have been welcomed to and participated meaningfully in:

Young Adult Worship led by Bis Thornton
Emerging Adult Listening Circle led by Julia Heilrayne
6 Chalice Circles
Wellspring: Sources

Music Program:

December - first in-person choir gathering to record Silent Night
Youth Choir has continued meeting
Children's choir met in the spring, shifted to Rina recording hymns in the fall

Ends Interpretation 1.4.5: We embody the principles of Unitarian Universalism and invite people of goodwill to find a spiritual home with us.

First UU Church of Austin

February 2023

The first OKR relates to this ends statement

This end and its interpretation may need to be revised if the UUA bylaws are changed to reflect values rather than the principles.

Interpretation:

By this we mean that we as individuals will keep the eight Principles in mind and use them as a guide for living at home and at work as well as at church. As a congregation, as well, we will use the Principles as our guide for decisions made as we live into our Mission.

We will invite people to join this church through becoming more visible in the community, through ads and outreach, through livestreaming the services. We will encourage church members to speak about the church and invite friends to come visit.

We will have a staff member who is in charge of membership, who can guide people as they take steps to move from visiting to joining, and then to more meaningful involvement. Our Transformation Through Service (as of 2022, Transformation, Connection, Service) program will provide a more detailed and intentional path for members to find their calling in the church and, through involvement and experience, make it more and more their spiritual home.

We say “people of goodwill” because we have been tasked with making this a safe space, so if a person comes in whose behavior is disruptive, we will go through the steps outlined in the Disruptive Behavior Policy* to keep the church safe.

*see link at the end of this report

Measures:

How many of our members know the seven Principles?

Is our congregation growing in numbers? How many views do our livestreams have? How many ads have we run? Are our visitor numbers increasing?

How many people have been served by the TTS team?

Do we have a staff member whose job it is to run the Membership Team?

Evidence of Progress:

Our visitor and membership numbers have been growing again after we were able to return to in person services.

The following are the numbers for the Path to Membership classes:

2022:

In November's Path Class, we had 10 participants, with 8 joining.

In July's Path Class, we had 10 participants, with 9 joining.

In February's Path Class, we had 5 participants, with 1 joining.

Several more members have joined through meeting with me, including five in just the last few weeks. We have 22 people registered for our next path to membership class.

We have been averaging 15 to almost 40 visitors on any given Sunday.

Our attendance at in person service grew through the second half of 2022. Our online views have been in the 250 to 350 range.

Our membership grew from by about 40 people from the May congregational meeting to the December meeting.

The congregation approved the 8th principle at the May congregational meeting after extensive discussion of it, and I have been preaching on the Widening the Circle of Concern report, which is centered on how we can become more welcoming and support the spiritual needs of folks within a multi-cultural world. I have also preached on our church's values and ends and am leading a session on the proposed values that would replace the current principles in the UUA bylaws. Both Jonalu and I have both also mentioned this in sermons.

We ran sponsorships on KUT for 11 weeks in 2022 (July, the start of new church year and over the holidays) and have run them for 5 weeks at the beginning of 2023. On the recommendation of some of our BIPOC church participants, we will also explore other avenues for conducting such outreach.

We have redesigned our website to make information about worship more easily found, as well as other information for folks who are new to the church and/or who may be considering becoming a member. We have also added information on how to get connected and who to go to about what.

We have been more active on social media over the past few months, have added a video blog that goes out over Facebook and by email and have utilized more frequent email and text messages to try to help people feel more connected and welcomed.

We have placed signage at the major church entrances and by the doors to the sanctuary on Sundays inviting visitors to speak with the minister after the service and providing my email address. A group of congregants greets and have conversations with visitors in Howson Hall after our services. This arose spontaneously. Membership is exploring slightly formalizing it just to make sure we continue to do so each Sunday.

Our transformation through connections and service team has been very active, and we have reconstituted the health relations team

[Last updated on 02/15/23]

Link to disruptive behavior policy: <http://austinuu.org/wp2013/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/DisruptiveBehaviourPolicy.pdf>

Interim Report of the Interim Ministers
 First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin
 February 6, 2023
 Rev. Jonalu Johnstone
 Rev. Erin Walter

Interim ministry officially began August 1, 2022, when Rev. Erin was hired, with Rev. Jonalu fully joining the team in October, so we are roughly six months into the interim. Participation in interim activities has been strong, with 116 members and friends joining a listening circle, and 58 attending the History Workshop. Besides those specifically interim activities, the two part-time interim ministers have observed the church through all we have participated in from individual meetings to committee meetings to worship to off-hand encounters. We also received input from two sessions with BIPOC members that were led by guest BIPOC ministers (many thanks to the Rev. Addae Kraba and the Rev. Chris Long). We continue to be interested in feedback and comments from leaders and members to test and hone our observations and analysis. This report focuses on themes we have noted. Again, feedback is encouraged!

The church comes into this time following a largely successful ministry by the Rev. Meg Barnhouse for more than 10 years, the longest-term ministry the church has ever experienced. Her unexpected retirement due to illness sadly disappointed both her and the church. During Rev. Meg's tenure, considerable healing had occurred around the divisive departure of the Rev. Davidson Loehr, the former minister immediately prior to Rev. Meg. What's more, the church, along with the rest of the world, has come through the worst part of COVID-19 pandemic, returning to in-person worship and meetings, having learned how to use technology to increase participation and involvement for those who must or desire to remain virtual, at least for some functions.

Church Organization and Communication

Coming out of a pandemic is something that none of us has ever done before, so the process is not easy. During the pandemic, staff was overtaxed at the same time as volunteers lost capacity and availability. This church year is seeing revitalization of several teams, groups, and committees as lay leaders are picking up what had been set aside. Staff continues to provide support to these groups, so it can't all happen at once. Among the groups currently reviving are:

- Healthy Relations Team
- Grounds (they are creating a new name)
- Membership Committee
- BIPOC group
- White anti-racism allies group
- First UU Cares Council

- Religious Education Committee
- Green Sanctuary Team Spring into Action
- Senior Lunch
- Parent Lunch on the playground

Having fellowship and fun activities coming back into church life enriches the communal experience. We look forward to more fun and connection in the future.

Policy-based governance is working for the church and seems to have fairly wide acceptance, where it is understood. The committee and staff structures are less well understood, so when in doubt, people tend to go to one or two points of contact – Rev. Chris (Co-Lead Minister) or Shannon Posern (Executive Director, previously Congregational Administrator). Increased level of activity among reviving committees and teams, along with communication about what they are doing, and where to send questions and concerns, may help.

A key element of church organization that will require extensive attention is communication. The website needs reorganization to be more user-friendly and less text-based (i.e., more pictures and videos). More generally, a communication plan needs to be developed that includes website, Church Center, emails, newsletter, order of service, pulpit announcements, postering at the church, mailings, social media, targeted communications, and text messaging. This may require a consultant. Important factors to keep in mind:

- A plan needs to include internal communications as well as external communication (that is, outreach, publicity and communication with the larger community). Some modes of communication, such as the website, overlap in their uses, and that must be kept in mind.
- Not everyone needs – or wants -- to know everything. What's more, many people are overwhelmed with messages from various sources, so they pay less attention even to the things they want to know. This argues for developing ways to target messaging, so that those who need or want to know something can find it out easily, while others do not have it filling up their inboxes. In order to prioritize input and engagement from BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and youth/family members of the church, these groups may be particular priorities for more personal and specific communications.
- Not everyone uses the same communications strategies in the same way. Some do not read emails. Some do not use social media. Messaging needs to be redundant and in different delivery modes, preferably the preferred delivery mode for each person.
- Some members, particularly in an older demographic, desire a return to more printed materials. Such a change would increase costs, both financial and environmental. However, it should be considered whether there are certain

messages that are worth the costs – perhaps those things that are most evergreen or up-to-date information that could be handed to guests.

Facing Conflict

The creation and implementation of the Covenant of Right Relations and Right Relations Team, beginning during the last interim and continuing during Rev. Meg's tenure, provide guardrails to prevent and regulate conflict in the church. However, many members continue to avoid conflict, fearing that difference could erupt in unexpected ways. Not only does this feeling ground in recent history, but it's also a common sign of white supremacy culture, as described by Tema Okun and Kenneth Jones [<https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/comfort--fear-of-conflict.html>]. Conflict avoidance can be seen in the reluctance of members to raise issues directly with leadership (including with the Healthy Relations Team), uncertainty around how to deal with conflict when it arises, blaming of anyone who names a problem, and the tendency for people with concerns to fade away and leave the church rather than work together toward solutions to problems.

The structures to deal more effectively with conflict are in place; now both congregation and leadership need to learn to work with them and trust them. There are bound to be errors, but in covenant, we begin again in love, even when we are uncomfortable. It is only with practice that we develop effective ways to deal with conflict in ways that are counter-cultural (i.e., non-violent, affirming of people who have experienced oppression, and grounded in relationship rather than win-lose).

Commendably, some issues were brought forward during the History Workshop that had never been so publicly named previously, including acknowledgement of the pain around Rev. Marisol Caballero's departure from her role as Assistant Minister of Faith Development and Congregational Engagement. We cannot learn from or resolve issues, or deal with the feelings around them, unless we are open about them within the church community.

Social Justice

The church has a strong social justice identity, grounded in its history, from the nineteenth and twentieth century Unitarians whose influence shaped the church's formation, through the fights for racial integration and promotion of LGBTIQ+ rights and visibility. One of the most meaningful parts of the church history for many was the commitment to provide sanctuary for Sulma Franco, then later with Alirio. The social justice identity is reflected in connection with community groups like Austin Sanctuary Network, PFLAG, Texas UU Justice Ministry (TXUUJM), and so many more. Taking special collections each month to support groups further demonstrates the commitment.

And, of course, members are very involved in community efforts to build Beloved Community.

The Social Action Council maintained itself better through the pandemic, with 78 people subscribed to the SAC email list. There is particular energy in the church around reproductive justice and climate chaos. However, like social justice groups in many churches, the SAC is rebuilding and considering how to effectively engage and activate its members. Some members also hope to return to direct service efforts that previously provided assistance to community members as well as camaraderie in a common effort – tasks like feeding people and building homes.

Continuity of Goals, Programs and Projects

Rev. Meg's successful tenure prepares the congregation for long-term ministry which may allow the church to develop and pursue longer-term goals more fully. There has been some history of starting and stopping, often due to turn-over in lay leadership, staff, and particularly ministers. With policy governance solidly in place and committees and teams re-activating after pandemic hiatus, the church is well-positioned for a long-term ministry. The success of the music program, under Brent Baldwin's twenty-four year direction, demonstrates what long-term leadership can create.

One of the particularly prickly historic problems has been continuity and quality in religious education. Turn-over of Directors of Religious Education (of various job titles) has challenged the program, as evidenced by the difficulty members had at the History Workshop in even naming who has headed this significant part of the church at particular times in the past.

Again, we note progress. Members – parents and non-parents – universally praise Kelly Stokes as Director of Lifespan Religious Education for a few years. Children are included and celebrated in worship and Coffee Hour. The Time for All Ages seems widely accepted as for *all* ages, and monthly Services for All Ages appear successful. The OWL program is particularly acclaimed, and First UU can be proud of hosting an OWL facilitator training with TXUUJM last fall, to support further OWL education across the state and beyond. While more opportunities for youth are encouraged and high school and older middle school students report missing their church friends from years when their youth groups were larger, the religious education program for children and youth is more successful currently than many RE programs in other churches which continue to struggle following the peak of the pandemic. Adult religious education, widely valued, is restarting and well-subscribed.

Worship and Music

Churches are famous for struggles around worship styles. That means there's always a need to attend to what works in worship in a particular setting. The renowned historian of Unitarianism Conrad Wright described how worship seemed to be about a generation behind societal trends, in part because people in churches tended to be older and in part because church tends to be a conservative institution, rarely on the forefront of change. Still, that calls us to examine our worship practices regularly to be sure we are ministering to our congregation and to those who might become part of the congregation if they feel included in the worship. That tension between existing members and potential members will always be real and, at its best, can foster creativity and theological reflection.

Discussion of worship must respect that the ministerial team has the final say in worship. At the same time, if a ministerial team – or a particular minister – ignores what feeds the congregation, their ministry will suffer, if it survives at all. (See the theological concepts of [“freedom of the pulpit”](#) and [“freedom of the pew.”](#)) Because we as ministers are in a relationship with a congregation, we have to be open to feedback, balancing comfort and challenge, along with desires and needs of different parts of the congregation – different generations, people at different stages of life, people needing pastoral consolation, people wanting inspiration, people who have been marginalized and those who have been centered – as well as the needs of the world, which our mission demands we address.

Worship Consultant Dr. Marcia McFee delineates four worship energies, based on coordination patterns that come out of kinesiology and the dance world. She sees individuals as having a “home pattern,” that is, they are drawn to particular forms of worship energy based on their particular neurophysiological profile. In other words, different strokes for different folks. Taking a look at the worship energies she posits may help us understand some of our differences – and clashes:

- Shape – formal and restrained, structure and organization prevail, clear and easily repeated rituals, familiarity and tradition; *evident in the repetition of the mission statement weekly*
- Thrust – inspiring call to action, sending people forth to change the world, purposeful movement; bright colors, processions, and prophetic preaching; *the Beloved Community Moment, at its best, does this*
- Swing – a focus on fun and building community, responding to the moment, a loose and easy style, much improvisation and play; celebratory and creative; *such as circle worship often seen in youth and young adult groups*
- Hang – being at one, meditative, flowing with no particular direction, reflected in chant, silent or guided meditation; *evident in candle-lighting portion of the service*

Each energy feels comfortable to some people and puzzling, if not annoying, to others. That can be compounded by cultural factors – what people have appreciated in their own culture, as well as what has alienated them. Each style has its strengths and drawbacks. Music, too, fits into these different energy frames. They mix, as well. For example, the song “Breathe In, Breathe Out” naturally has a hang energy – meditative and open. But the way it’s used in the service gives it shape energy – because it is a repeated ritual that marks a transition in the service.

A sign of the differing perceptions of worship is the issue of applause. Applause generally comes with thrust or swing energy – moving forward enthusiastically with a call to action or feeling connected in the swing of music that draws us into one body. Applause feels out of place in hang energy and often in shape energy as well since it is more restrained than expressive. However, it’s not simply about applause. It’s about the form, style and energy of worship.

In addition, we have to consider how to respectfully and authentically connect multi-cultural sources into worship. That, of course, is part of our 8th Principle conversation.

All this to say that the ministerial team continues to play with worship energies, and as part of that, welcomes different guests – with different perspectives and backgrounds – into the pulpit to see what they offer. As the search process proceeds, it may be helpful to have conversations around style and energy of worship to better inform the Search Committee and prospective candidates of the church’s culture.

Expectations Based on Church Size

First, we must acknowledge that the church is at an in-between place. It has been – and has functioned as-- a large church. However, due to pandemic losses, it is currently a large mid-sized church. Since the clear desire is to be a large church again, it makes sense to maintain the structures and practices of a large church, though at times, there may be tension in doing so because the numbers (people and money) are not yet there.

With that, some notes about large church expectations – which may clash with what members express as their personal desires:

- Pastoral care: In a large church, the Senior Minister provides pastoral care in a limited way – primarily to key lay leaders, to the staff team, and to others only in the worst circumstances, primarily death or life-threatening illness or injury, or at times of widespread challenge, such as a natural disaster. In the latter case, much of that pastoral care comes through communication media rather than on a personal, individual basis. The Senior Minister, in other words, is charged with the care of the whole church, rather than the individuals within the church. That

does not mean an end to individual pastoral care. Rather, that care is provided by other staff, by lay leaders, and by members of small groups that someone is part of. For some members, this feels like a dereliction of duty by the Senior Minister, especially if they are used to a smaller church where they get individual attention from the minister and/or when structures are not adequately in place to be sure that other leaders do provide care.

- Staffing: In a large church, staff becomes increasingly specialized. This requires increased coordination, generally through the Senior Minister and/or the Executive Director (previously Congregational Administrator). Staff supervision, coordination and management require extensive time and energy, which are not available for other ministerial tasks. Increasingly, the specialized staff are assigned to work with lay leaders on particular teams or committees. Lay leaders may feel they have been replaced by staff, though the actuality is that the ways of being responsible have shifted. Staffing is not yet at levels appropriate to a large church, though plans are being developed for that. In the meantime, this is likely to be an area of tension and uncertainty, as roles of lay leaders and staff shift.
- Communication: In a large church, communication becomes more dispersed and targeted. Not everyone needs to know everything, and no one wants to be overwhelmed with all the details, so targeting communication becomes crucial. What's more, communication needs to become more redundant for people to take it in fully. Communication has not been adequate and has been more like a mid-size than a large church. As mentioned elsewhere in the report, this area needs extensive work and consideration. We also encourage members to embrace a role in improving and receiving communication, by actively seeking out and reading church communication via emails, Facebook posts, and austinuu.org, as well as extending church invitations to their friends and community, within and outside First UU. One-on-one invitations are powerful!

8th Principle Implementation

The congregation approved the 8th Principle last spring. Even though the UUA is at work modifying Article II of the bylaws, which includes the principles, the implementation of the 8th Principle remains a strong commitment. The congregation expresses a desire to be multicultural and anti-oppressive, while individual white members often experience either ignorance about what to do or a reluctance to make major changes. BIPOC members and former members report that based on their experience much work remains to be done for them to feel fully welcomed and celebrated. White members do microaggress, and BIPOC members do question whether they belong. And models of fully multi-cultural UU congregations do not yet seem to exist, though we can look to other congregations and groups like [DRUUMM](#) and [BLUU](#) for lived experience, inspiration, programs, and calls to action. As Rev Dr. Natalie Fenimore has said, we dream of a Unitarian Universalism – of a First UU Church of Austin, we might say – that does not yet exist [[UUA, Widening the Circle of Concern](#) (2020)].

Implementing the 8th Principle requires more than a technical fix. Rather, it requires adaptive change which is slow, thoughtful and feeling-ful. The 8th Principle calls us both to internal work – realigning our own structures and practices – and external work – challenging the laws, regulations, practices, and culture surrounding us. To do that does require reflective work, which we are beginning to do through study of the UUA report *Widening the Circle of Concern: Report of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change*. Various groups within the church are reviewing the work, making recommendations and changes based on it.

Every aspect of church life needs to be addressed. For example, in worship, BIPOC members have requested more authentic multicultural music, and less active teaching about White Supremacy Culture, which centers the white experience. As we consider where to place resources for outreach, we want to attend to more than the places UU's "usually" come from (such as NPR), as these can promote recruitment of more people like those already in the pews, tending to be white.

In the meantime, the church and its leaders are taking a number of specific steps:

- Providing the presence of BIPOC ministers through guest sermons and in other guest leadership roles
- Continuing to include readings, thought, story and music from a variety of racial and cultural sources in every Sunday morning sermon
- First UU co-sponsored and members attended the Jubilee III anti-racism workshop last fall
- the Trans Inclusion in Congregations curriculum, which 27 members are participating in. Church staff are also viewing and discussing the videos.
- Encouraging BIPOC members in lay leadership
- Supporting revival of the BIPOC group, to provide support to BIPOC members and a place for our leaders to turn for accountability.

A couple of strong recommendations:

- Restart and support an ongoing space for white anti-racism anti-oppression work, so that white folks have a place to process the work with less potential harm and microaggressions to BIPOC members of the church.
- Engage in the curriculum "Beloved Conversations," which approaches anti-racism anti-oppression work as a spiritual practice, through a personal and institutional view:

<https://www.meadville.edu/light/fahs-collaborative/beloved-conversations/>

Loss and Grief

Finally, any interim report would not be complete without addressing loss and grief. That is so much truer given the circumstances of this particular interim in a time of pandemic and with the particularly sad retirement of Rev. Meg. Some members continue to refer to Meg as their minister. Additionally, the loss of a beloved staff member, Kami Cornell, to cancer activated more grief. Further, the accumulation of deaths and memorial services may have even created a numbing effect for some people. The attention given to loss and grief thus far in the interim has been through memorial services and individual interactions. In March, we'll offer a service specifically to address the layers of grief that have been touched. Conversations about caring are also scheduled in March, where some of the grief may be expressed, as we consider ways to provide caring in our church community.

Board Transition Team February Report

Transition Team accomplishments for January-February

In concert with announcements that the process for forming a nominations committee has begun, we began accepting nominations for search committee membership. We have been present in Howson Hall after service on Sundays to accept nominations, in addition to some other outreach efforts (e.g. presence at senior lunch, email to parents).

Presence at the February 12th discussion of the interim interim report.

Developed procedures for establishing the ballot (see below).

Drafted document describing procedures for electing search committee

Determined that we will need to find new interim minister(s) for period starting in August.

Determined date of Search Committee Election (April 30th)

Transition Team objectives for February-March

Establish and distribute search committee ballot

Finalize and communicate voting procedures

Process for creating ballot for search committee election

After February 17th, we will combine paper and online survey nominations to get a list of nominees, number of times nominated, and reasons for nomination. We will sort nominees by number of nominations and identify the top X nominees, where X might be in the range of 12-14. Ideally, the cutoff will be at a natural break in the distribution. We will see if our list of top nominees covers a wide range of perspectives and experiences of the church. In the likely case that some perspectives are not well represented in the list of top nominees, we will elevate individuals with perspectives we want represented on the search committee to the list of “top nominees”.

Board members will call the list of nominees and identify who on the list is willing and able to serve, possibly with help from members of the Nominations committee. If everyone participates, then each of us will call 1-2 people. Each nominee will be informed that being on the search committee will take a great deal of effort as described here. (Note that this effort might be especially great if they/we decide that we want co-lead ministers.) If they are willing to serve, then we will ask them to assemble a bio describing their background, interests, and reasons why they would like to be selected for the search committee, as well as a photo. (see below for example bios). If have a strong, diverse ballot we won't need to go down the list beyond the “top nominees”.

By March 31 we will assemble the materials provided by the nominees into a ballot which will be distributed to the congregation along with an announcement of an April 30th meeting to introduce the nominees and to describe voting procedures. Absolutely no new nominations will be accepted after March 31.

Draft of election process...

We will be selecting a 7 member search committee via an anonymous, ranked-choice vote.

- The Board will distribute to the church by March 31st a list of candidates for the search committee, the bios and photos of the nominees, and a description of our voting procedures.
- On April 30th the board and nominated search committee members will be available to discuss the search process and search committee membership.
- At the meeting we will have computers available where members can vote and board members can provide technical assistance for those who have trouble. Before voting, members will provide name and email address. (see example ballot below)

FUUCA Search Committee Election

* 1. Please rank candidates from 1 to 12 (1 most favored; 12 least favored)

		Candidate 12
		Candidate 11
		Candidate 7
		Candidate 10
		Candidate 4
		Candidate 5
		Candidate 8
		Candidate 3
		Candidate 1
		Candidate 9
		Candidate 2
		Candidate 6

Done

- After the meeting we will distribute via email a link to a ballot where candidates are voted on via rank-choice vote. Those who voted in person will not receive an email.
- Five committee seats are selected by congregational vote and two are selected by board appointment.
- Once the search committee is selected the board should introduce the search committee the following Sunday (May 7th) with some fanfare.

Troubleshooting:

Only members should be able to vote. Each member should be able to vote only once. The best approach I can identify is for us to email the ballot to church members. Each respondent can vote only once per email address. Problems with this approach include: members without email addresses, members who share an email address, members who dislike using computer to submit responses. (This seems to be common in our congregation).

We could allow members to submit votes in person at our meeting on April 30, by asking them to register their name and email address with us before voting. Then we would email the ballot after completing in-person voting and remove those who voted in person from the email list.

Remaining problems:

People who will be discouraged from voting if they have to use a computer

Ranking 12 people is difficult. Some people will give up.

Bios from last search committee

Michael Kersey, SMSC Co-Chair

Michael Kersey and his wife, Karen Cleary, have been attending FUUCA since 1992. Their 10-year-old son, Evan, sings in the Youth Choir. Michael has coordinated Hands-On Housing teams; volunteered in Religious Education; developed and presented a leadership skill seminar; served on the interim minister's Transition Team; and he most recently served on the Bridge Builder Team. Michael has a bachelor's degree in history and political science from the University of Tulsa and a master's degree in organizational leadership and ethics from St. Edward's University. He served for a year in the Lutheran Volunteer Corps. He is an analyst for the Texas Department of Information Resources and has extensive experience in computer operations and management.

Sharon Moore, SMSC Co-Chair

Sharon Underwood Moore, a member of FUUCA for almost 14 years, has also been a member of Dallas's First UU Church and the Princeton, New Jersey, UU church. She was the church administrator in Dallas and was also business administrator for St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church in Dallas. She

graduated from Rice University and taught English and humanities at Spring Branch High School in Houston. At FUUCA she has chaired the Adult Education Committee; served on the board; chaired the first Intern Committee; facilitated covenant and interest groups such as Women in Transition, Evensong, Living By Heart, and Couples Club; and worked for the Distinguished Speaker Series. A fiber and collage artist, Sharon has five grandchildren under the age of 10. She and her husband, Brian, owner and engineer with HMG and Associates, each have two adult children.

Gary Bennett

Gary Bennett and his wife, Amy, joined FUUCA when they moved to Austin five years ago after Gary retired from teaching high school. They lived in the Philadelphia area for 32 years, where they were members of the BuxMont UU Fellowship of Warrington PA. They also belonged to All Souls UU Church in Shreveport, LA. Gary became a UU after being reared as the son of a Southern Baptist minister. He has served as an RE teacher, an usher, a canvasser, a lay leader, a member of the BuxMont board of trustees, and at FUUCA he has served on several committees. He and Amy, a nursing instructor, have three grown daughters who live in Seattle and Boston, along with three cats and a dog still at home.

John Franks

John Franks and his wife, Karen, joined FUUCA in 2002. He has served on the web site and media committees and participated in the men's breakfast group, UBarU men's retreats, Hands-On Housing, and many other activities in the church. John was born in Iowa, grew up in Wisconsin and Minnesota and was baptized in the Missouri Synod Lutheran church. He served in the U.S. Air Force, working on

B52-H's. After the Air Force he had a career in the computer industry as a troubleshooter and Headquarters support engineer for Control Data Corporation and Amdahl Corporation. He and Karen have three adult children and two lovely grandchildren.

Maria Nehring

Maria Nehring has been a member of FUUCA since 2003. She is a native of Michigan and moved to Austin in 1986 with her husband, Neil, an English professor at the University of Texas at Austin. They have two daughters, Julia, 18, and Sarah, 15. A classically trained violinist, Maria sometimes accompanies FUUCA's intergenerational choir and is a member of the adult choir. She has served as an RE assistant in the middle- and high-school classrooms, helped with Sunday suppers at ARCH, and participated in Bridge Builders and other transition activities during the past year. Maria works at the University of Texas Development Office, where she headed the communications office for many years and currently serves as a director and liaison with charitable foundations.

Jill Smith

Jill Smith, and her husband, Russell, moved to Austin in 2005. Before that they were members of the First UU Church of Houston for several years. Since joining FUUCA, Jill has served as a greeter, RE classroom volunteer, and helped coordinate the Potluck Play-dates for families with young children. Jill and Russell have three daughters, Kaileigh, 19, and twins Alexis and Abby, 9. As a social worker, Jill has held a variety of positions related to child abuse prevention and intervention, both in direct service and administrative roles. She currently works for Travis County HHS helping people in the rural areas of the county.

Lynda West

Since joining FUUCA in the early 1980s, when she and her husband, Michael, sought a place where they could explore their own spirituality without the constraints they had felt growing up in more traditional churches, Lynda West has worked on the Flower Committee, Ushers, RE Committee, Committee on Ministries and as part of the Bridge Builder team. She recently facilitated a Bridge to the Future session. She is a care coordinator with Congregational Care. Lynda and Michael have one adult son. Lynda taught English at Westlake High School for many years and was a presenter for College Board. After retiring from Westlake she worked in marketing for textbook publisher Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Dale Whiteaker-Lewis

Dale Whiteaker-Lewis and Corinna Whiteaker-Lewis began attending FUUCA in 1991 after deciding to be married by then-minister Fred Wooden and joined the church later in 1991. With Corinna, fellow committee member Michael Kersey and others, Dale helped start the local Austin chapter of Amnesty International, Group 500. Dale has served on the Board of Trustees, volunteered with Hands-On Housing and other social action projects, and is responsible for maintaining the church's network and Internet connection. Dale has worked for the past 11 years for Dell, most recently in computer security. He is a proud graduate of Trinity University in San Antonio and UT-Austin. He has two vivacious UU daughters, Audrey, 13, and Bridget, 10.

Jill Wiggins

Jill Wiggins has been a member of FUUCA since 1982. She sings in the adult choir and served on the search committee that resulted in the hiring of the current music director. She has served as lay leader, on the worship services committee and has participated in other church activities. Jill was born in England, christened in the Church of England, and confirmed in the Presbyterian church after moving to

Ohio at the age of eight. She earned a B.A. in art from St. Edward's University in Austin in 1988. She recently retired from the position of public information officer of the Texas Medical Board. She is married to fellow UU member actor-producer-director Gary Payne and has two grown daughters and two perfect grandchildren.



WHO TO CONTACT

Contact information for staff can be found on page two.

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (LISTED ALPHABETICALLY)	STAFF CONTACT
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	SHANNON POSERN
DATABASE UPDATES	SHANNON POSERN
ANNOUNCEMENTS (EMAIL, ONLINE)	SASHA LORENZO
BULLETIN BOARD (WELCOME CENTER)	SASHA LORENZO
BUTTERFLY WALL	SHANNON POSERN
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN	REV. CHRIS JIMMERSON
CHILDCARE	KELLY STOKES
CHURCH CALENDAR	SHANNON POSERN
CHURCH DIRECTORY	SHANNON POSERN
COPIER	SASHA LORENZO
DELIVERIES (FLOWERS, PACKAGES)	SASHA LORENZO
FACEBOOK	SASHA LORENZO
FACILITIES (REPAIR SUBMISSIONS, CONTACT/SCHEDULING VENDORS)	SASHA LORENZO
FLOWERS	SHANNON POSERN
GENERAL QUESTIONS	SHANNON POSERN
IT/TECHNOLOGY	SHANNON POSERN
KEY CHECKOUT	SHANNON POSERN
KITCHEN	SHANNON POSERN
LIFESPAN FAITH DEV. (GENERAL INFO, NURSURY, CLASSES, ETC.)	KELLY STOKES
LIFESPAN FAITH DEV. (REGISTRATIONS)	KELLY STOKES
MEMBER CONTACT INFO UPDATES	SASHA LORENZA
MEMBER/VISITOR GUIDE	KINSEY SHACKELFORD
MEMBERSHIP	KINSEY SHACKELFORD
MEMORIALS	SHANNON POSERN
MINISTRY LEADERSHIP LIST	SHANNON POSERN
CHURCH CENTER APP	SHANNON POSERN
NEWSLETTER	SASHA LORENZO
RENTALS	SHANNON POSERN
ROOM RESERVATIONS	SHANNON POSERN
OFFICE SUPPLIES	SASHA LORENZO
ORDERS OF SERVICE (CONTENT/LAYOUT)	SASHA LORENZO
PAYROLL/HUMAN RESOURCES/BENEFITS/TIMESHEETS	SHANNON POSERN
PLEDGES/CONTRIBUTIONS/DONATIONS/GIFTS	SHANNON POSERN
VISITOR CARDS	KINSEY SHACKELFORD
WEBSITE UPDATES/ISSUE	SASHA LORENZO

Staff Position	Staff Name	Phone Number	Church Email Address
Co-Lead Minister for Values and Mission	Rev. Chris Jimmerson	(512) 452-6168 x1308	Chris.Jimmerson@austinuu.org
Co-Lead Minister and Minister of Reflection & Discovery	Rev. Jonalu Johnstone	(512) 452-6168 x1304	Jonalu.Johnstone@austinuu.org
Minister of Joy and Justice (interim team)	Rev. Erin Walter	(512) 452-6168 x1306	Erin.Walter@austinuu.org
Director of Religious Education	Kelly Stokes	(512) 452-6168 x1305	faithdevelopment@austinuu.org
Religious Education Assistant Membership Coordinator Special Event Assistant	Kinsey Shackelford	(512) 452-6168 x1305	Kinsey.Shackelford@austinuu.org
Executive Director	Shannon Posern	(512) 452-6168 x1313	Shannon.Posern@austinuu.org info@austinuu.org
Office Manager	Sasha Lorenzo	(512) 452-6168 x	Sasha.Lorenzo@austinuu.org news@austinuu.org
Director of Music	Brent Baldwin	(512) 452-6168 x1314	Brent.Baldwin@austinuu.org
Assistant Director of Music	Katrina Saporsantos	(512)452-6168 x1314	Katrina.Saporsantos@austinuu.org
Children's Choir Director (K-3rd)	Katrina Saporsantos	(512) 452-6168 x1314	Katrina.Saporsantos@austinuu.org
Youth Choir Director (4th-8th)	Chantel Mead	(512) 452-6168 x1314	Chantel.Mead@austinuu.org

2022 Survey Analysis for First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin (FUUCA)

This document covers results of the 2022 First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin annual survey.

Summary

The 2022 FUUCA survey shows an engaged and committed spiritual community. In several areas, the sentiment expressed this year was less positive than in previous surveys as can be expected of a congregation rebuilding after a pandemic and after losing a beloved minister. This year's survey includes summaries derived from new open questions about giving motivation (community & spiritual) and participating via remote online (Sunday in person, others hybrid).

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General Results

Survey Participation

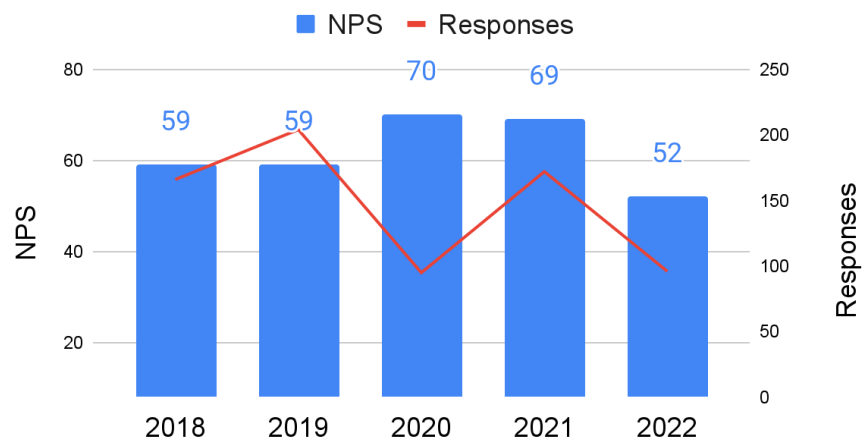
The survey was open during November 2022 and we had 97 total responses which is low compared to previous years (typically over 150). They were mainly linked from direct email (93) and other (4) requests. This is a sufficient response to consider the results useful for analysis.

Net Promoter Score (NPS)

Our survey “[net promoter score](#)” metric of 52 was our lowest recorded NPS. This measure asks how likely each respondent is to recommend First UU to a friend or relative, with 10 being extremely likely. While the number is still within a positive range, it dropped significantly from 2020-2021.

This year’s report was updated to use a traditional NPS calculation rather than an average of responses. We have recalculated the previous years results to use the same formula.

Net Promoter Score over Time



Radio Ad Word Cloud

Since we are advertising on KUT, we asked respondents to create an ad for us. We had many wonderful ideas! We took all the phrases offered and created the word cloud below.

justice work Austin everyone
music Open accepting progressive together
place welcoming love
liberal inclusive community friendly know
action vibrant church
social justice

Demographics

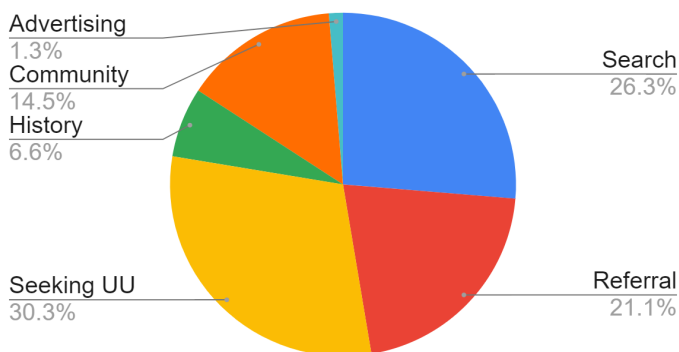
Our demographic results were consistent with previous surveys. The age distribution in 2022 was consistent with the past where 84% are 45-85 (38% 45-64 | 46% 64-85). Nearly Twenty percent of respondents had children, with most (63%) in the 7-12 age range.

For 2022, we omitted the gender field and made left racial identity open text. Most respondents answered white/Caucasian (80%) with the remainder including a mix including human, biracial, black, mixed, and more.

We have a wide range of membership longevity from months to over 20+ years (27%); refer to the appendix for more detail.

In this year's survey, we left the "how did you learn about First UU" question open ended. We analyzed results to create general groupings. Over half of the responses showed that people rely on our online presence to locate the Church.

How did you learn about First UU?

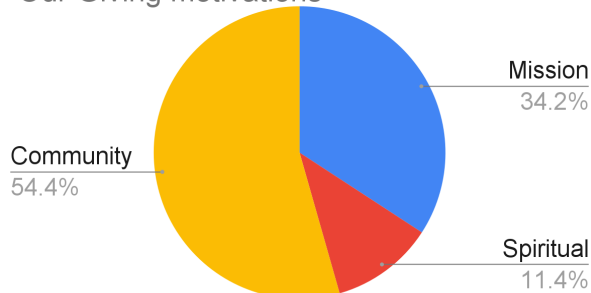


Learn about key:

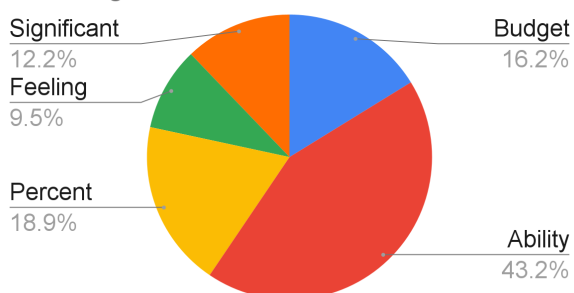
- Advertising: learned from an ad (1.3%)
- Community: was aware of church from related community activities and programs (14.5%)
- History: had a history with the church (6.6%)
- Seeking UU: was looking for a UU church in Austin (30.3%)
- Referral: had a friend or connection recommend (21.1%)
- Search: Google, phone book or similar (26.3%)

This year we asked about people's motivations for donating to the church. Most respondents (75%) answered about their motivation for making a financial pledge to the church. The data presented is based on the charts below and reflect a grouping analysis of all responses.

Our Giving motivations



Deciding how much to donate



Deciding how much to donate key:

- Significant: the donation is a significant amount to the giver
- Feeling: the giver did not have specific metric or method
- Percent: the donation is based on a % of the giver's income (most commonly 5%)
- Budget: the donation is set based on the household budget
- Ability: the giver felt the donation was within their financial capability

Living Our Values

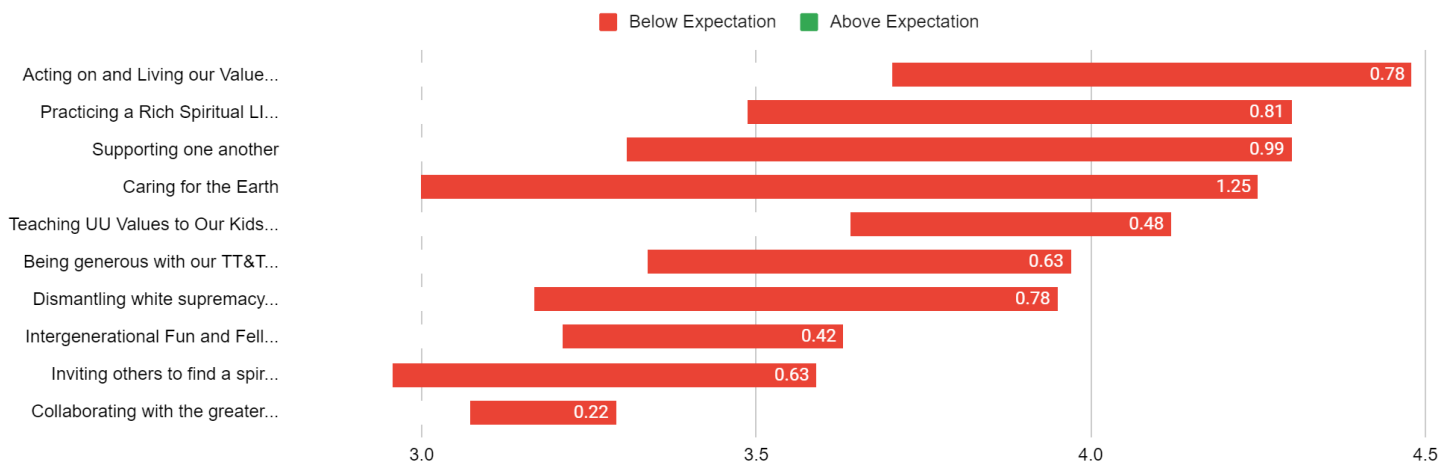
Each year, we review how the First UU Austin community values our ten stated ends and attempts to assess how we perform in meeting those ends on a 5 point scale.

We've ranked the ends here based from most critical to least in terms of this year's survey.

1. Acting on and Living our Values (4.48 average score)
2. Practicing a Rich Spiritual Life (4.30 average score)
3. Supporting one another (4.30 average score)
4. Caring for the Earth (4.25 average score)
5. Teaching Unitarian Universalist Values to Our (collective) Kids (4.12 average score)
6. Being generous with our time, talent and treasure (3.97 average score)
7. Dismantling a culture of white supremacy (3.95 average score)
8. Intergenerational Fun and Fellowship (3.63 average score)
9. Inviting others to find a spiritual home with us (3.59 average score)
10. Collaborating with the greater Unitarian Universalist Community (3.29 average score)

The following chart shows the difference between the importance and effectiveness scores where a longer bar means more room for improvement. For example, "Caring for the Earth" has the largest gap between importance to the community and our level of execution.

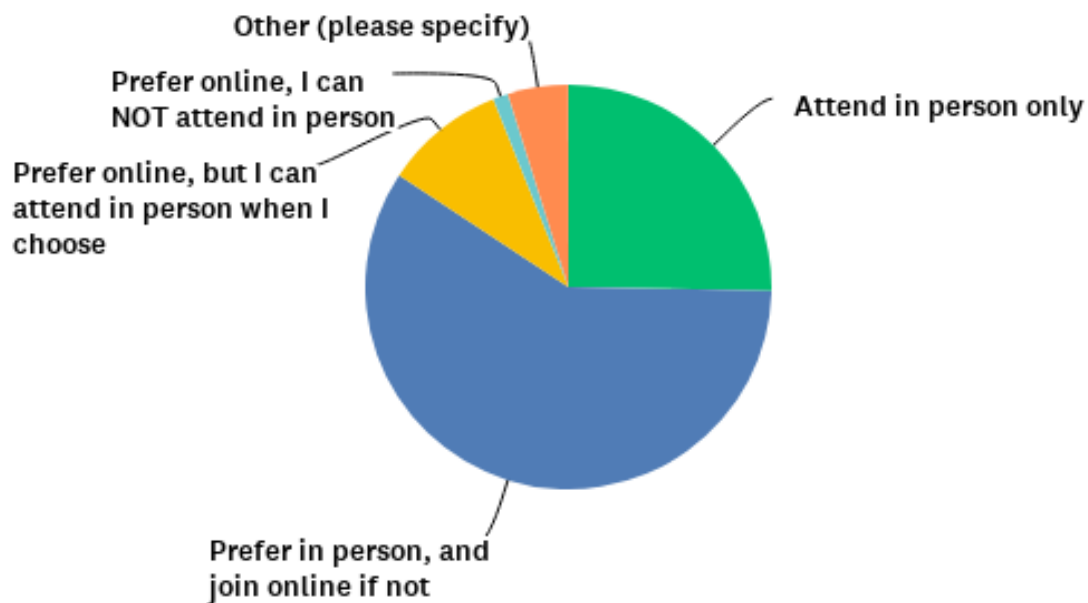
Ends Performance (left edge) vs Mission Importance (right edge)



The appendix includes charts showing how these results vary year over year. Note that we adjusted the scoring slightly this year from previous years so the lower 2022 results are likely a result of recalibrating the question. These values are highly subjective and should be used as a reference to inform action rather than an absolute critique of performance.

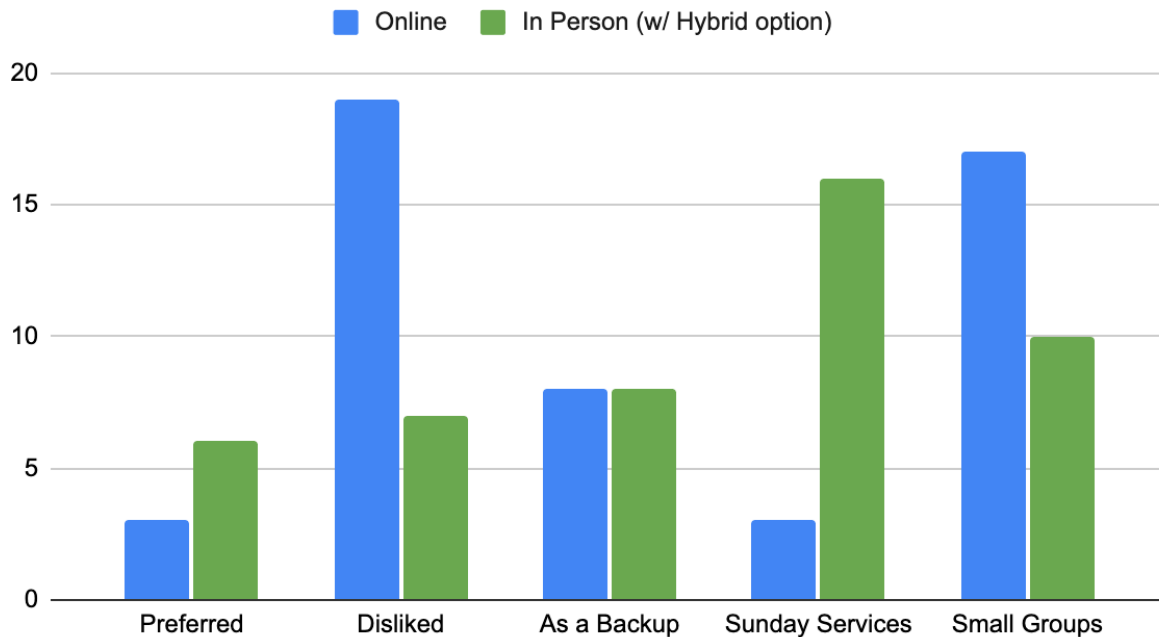
Impact of Virtual Services

As we emerge from pandemic lockdown, we wanted to better understand people's preference for online vs in-person meetings. While many people strongly prefer in person meetings exclusively, there are a significant number in the community who rely on online meetings to engage in the community.



To gauge the community preference for online vs in person activities, we asked two open ended questions about each type of meeting. We reviewed all the answers and compiled them. They fell into the general categories about all meetings (strong preference for, strong preference against, and useful as a backup) or specific feelings about services vs. other meetings. The analysis shows that the community wants the option for non-Sunday meetings to be online or hybrid.

Attending Online vs In Person



Free Form Responses

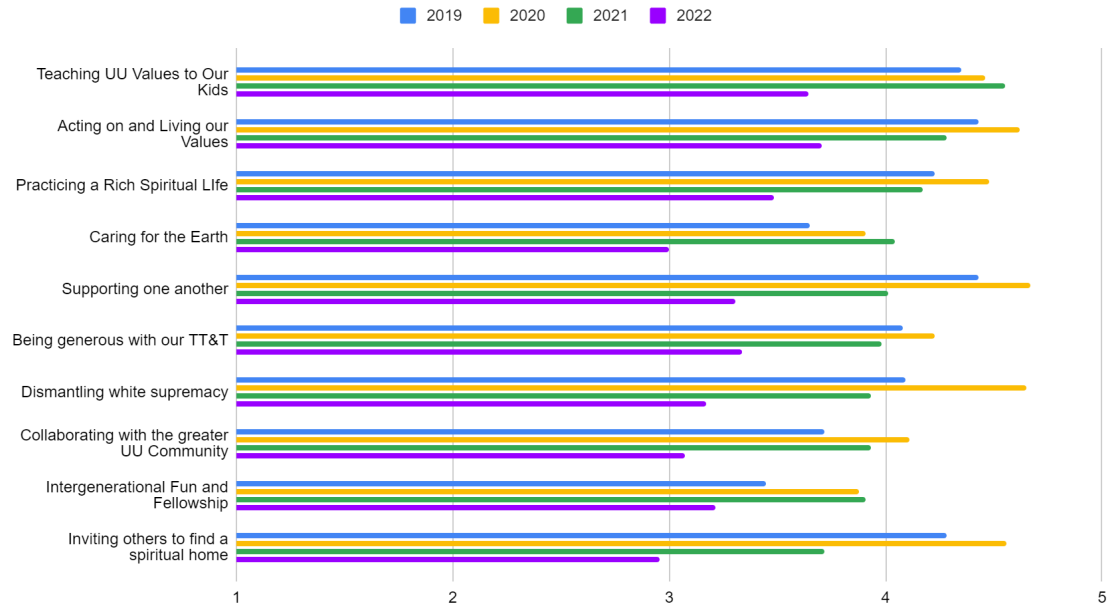
The open comments section of the survey included topics such as Religious Education, communications, ministers and staff, expanded opportunities, environment, social change, spirituality, and accessibility. These comments help the ministers, staff, and the board to investigate improvements and enhance cherished programs.

More specifically, members had a variety of views of Sunday Services; some praised more active services while others sought a more contemplative service. Many suggestions are looking for the church to resume the activities to pre-pandemic levels which are often led by volunteer leaders. Others point out areas of needed improved communications through the website, electronic messages, and personal contact. Social change was also a topic where members suggested increased focus on broader issues, challenging our beliefs, or getting involved outside church walls. The ministers and board members have met to review and discuss these comments and how to address them.

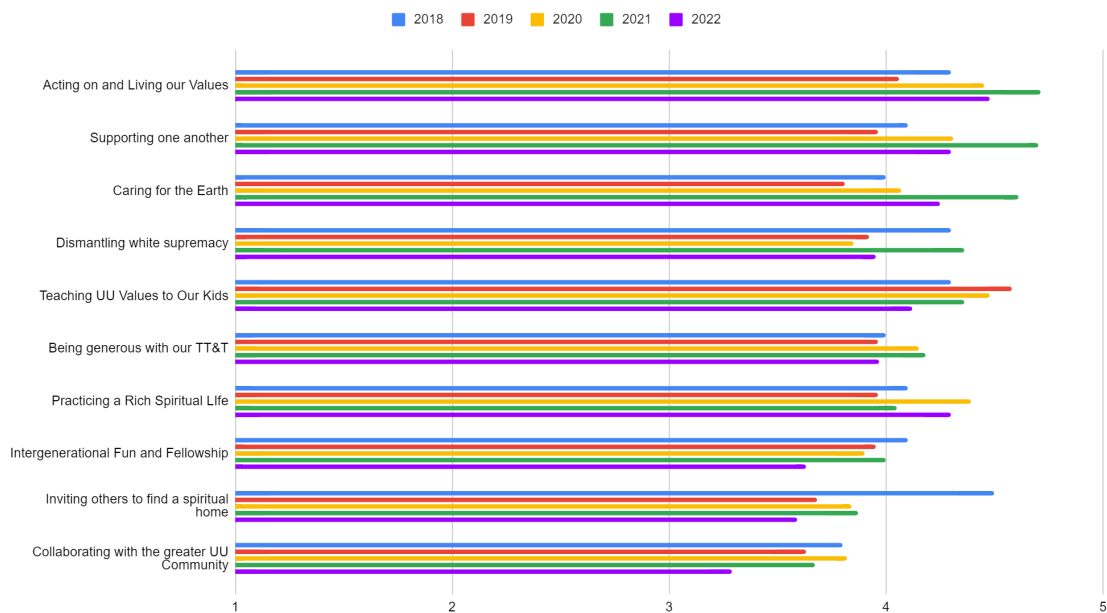
On the subject of "questions you wished we asked" members suggested that we should ask what they think about the Sunday services, the ministers, RE programs, and the transition period. These will be considered for this year's survey.

Appendix: Ends Performance over time

How well are we, as a congregation, meeting our Ends?



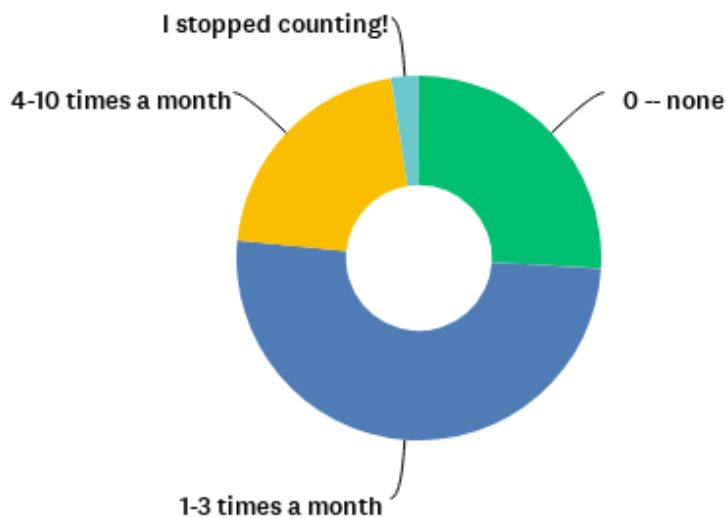
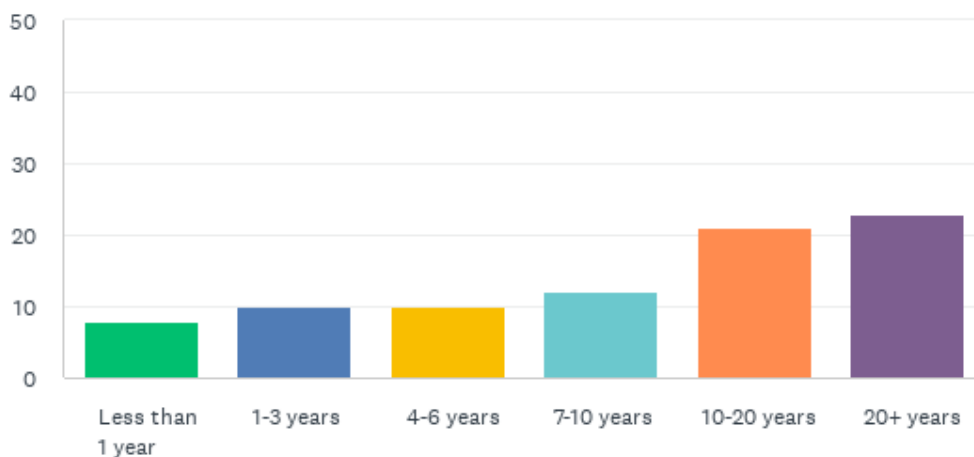
How important is each End to you and your spiritual growth?



Appendix: Demographic Charts

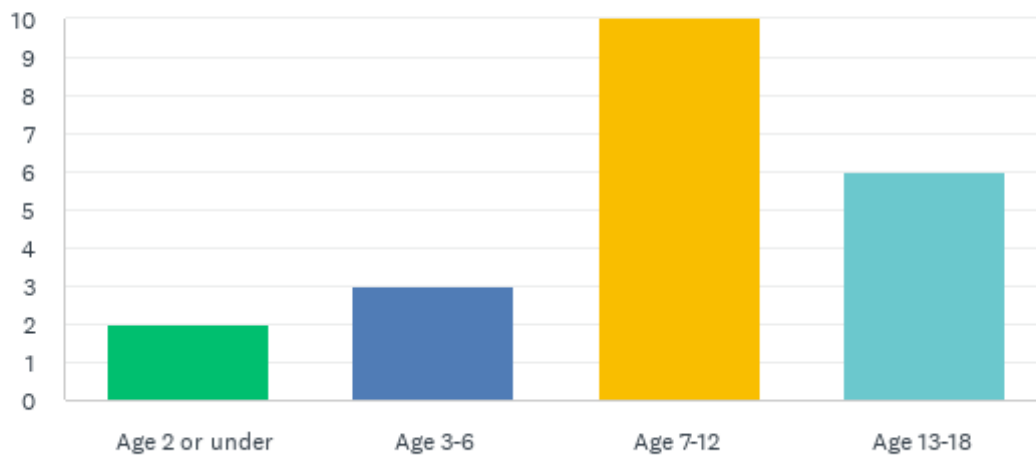
The following charts provide additional insight into the demographic answers from the survey.

How long have you attended First UU Church of Austin?

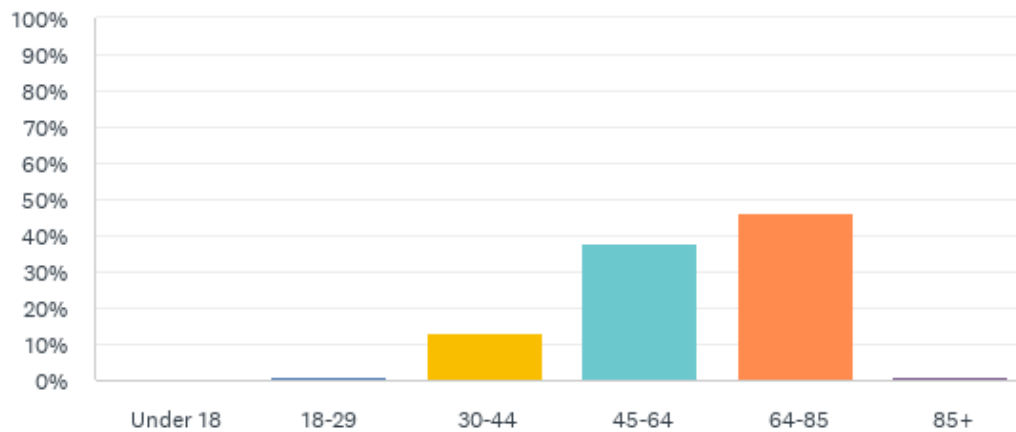


Beyond Sunday services, how often do you engage?

Do you have children under the age of 18 living at home?



Age of Respondent



**First UU Austin Board of Trustees
Meeting Process Review**

Date: _____

Name of Evaluator: _____

Ratings: S indicates Satisfactory; NI indicates Needs Improvement; UNS indicates Unsatisfactory

1. Preparation

The board was prepared for this meeting.	S	NI	UNS
--	---	----	-----

2. Action Items - Previous

Last month's action items were completed.	S	NI	UNS
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3. Timing

Appropriate time was allocated and spent on agenda items.	S	NI	UNA
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4. Policy Governance

Policy governance was observed.	S	NI	UNS
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5. Covenant

The board covenant was observed.	S	NI	UNS
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6. Participation

All board members had the opportunity to participate in discussions and decision-making.	S	NI	UNS
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7. Action Items - Current

Clear action items were identified from this meeting.	S	NI	UNS
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8. Overall

	S	NI	UNS
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Comments: