

# UUF Board Meeting, November 19, 2024

In attendance: Connie Shemo, Nicholas Hunt-Bull, Ursula Jones, Rev. Nicoline Guerrier, Mark Preston, Tana Hanley, Jerry Bates (non-voting member) and Lisa Bulriss

Absent: Megan Morrissey

Notetaker: Lisa Bulriss

Item	Discussion	If a task is involved, who is overseeing it and deadline?
Check-in	Rev. Nicoline started the meeting with a check in.	
Minutes	Nicholas asked if there were any comments or changes to the October 15, 2024 board meeting minutes. No objections, minutes of the October 15, 2024 Board meeting minutes are approved.	
Treasurer's Report	<p>Ursula reviewed the highlights of the Treasurer's Report. The report is unremarkable. Pledge Income is at 86%. General donations include the donation from Adirondack UUA that recently dissolved. No surprises with the expenses. Cash balances has not changed significantly due to prepaid pledges and the balance of the endowment fund. The 15-month CD is coming due at the end of the month. The Finance Committee is meeting tomorrow to discuss investment options.</p> <p>Ursula reported the Annual Giving Campaign is underway, pledge responses are coming in slowly. The 2025 Matching Funds Program is at \$5,500, higher than last year. Connie asked if this is typical to not have as many pledges at this time of the campaign. Ursula stated it is not unusual; some people just wait to the end of the week. Rev. Nicoline stated if someone pledges the same amount; there is no response necessary.</p> <p>Nicholas thanked Ursula for all of her hard work.</p> <p>Ursula updated the board on the 2025 budget progress. A draft of the proposed budget has been prepared which reflects a \$10,000 increase. Ursula went back to committees requesting them to review their budget requests and consider ways to reduce the expenses or submit ideas for raising money. Ursula received one response with no changes. The 2025 Budget Proposal will be discussed at a later point during the meeting.</p>	
Minister's Report	Rev. Nicoline asked if anyone had any comments or questions on the report. Nicholas thanked Rev. Nicoline for the great energy at the Sunday Services. Ursula brought up her concerns with the minister's sabbatical. The Minister's Sabbatical is an agenda item and will be discussed later in the meeting.	

<p>Business Arising</p>	<p>Leadership Transitions – Discussion of announcing departure of Kimberley and Nancy to Congregation. Mark stated December 1<sup>st</sup> he plans to be at the Sunday Service; if not he will announce it through Zoom. Tana offered to write something for the Enews; Rev. Nicoline to send Tana information for the Enews announcement.</p> <p>Candidate for Secretary and Leadership Development Committee – Ursula stated the Leadership Development Committee will consist of her and Jerry; Dorothy was unable to commit. Committee reached out to one candidate who declined the invitation. Committee will reach out to potential candidates for the Board/ secretary position in the near future. Discussion took place regarding possible candidates and selection of candidates.</p> <p>Update on Safety Committee – Connie apologized as no action has been taken to call a meeting. Connie wishes to seek a new leader for the Safety Committee so she may step down. Connie to put an announcement in the Enews.</p> <p>Inviting Representations to Board Meeting – Nicholas reported Dorothy was unable to attend today’s meeting. Nicholas will follow up with committees to invite (Communication, RE, Social Justice, Worship, and Buildings and Grounds).</p>	<p>Mark to announce Kimberley and Nancy’s retirement at the December 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Service. Rev. Nicoline to send Tana information for the departure of Nancy. Tana to write an announcement for the Enews.</p> <p>Leadership Development Committee still seeking candidates.</p> <p>Connie to place an announcement in the Enews about members needed for the Safety Committee.</p> <p>Nicholas to follow up with Committees.</p>
<p>Saranac Lake Gift</p>	<p>Nicholas asked the board for ideas on how to acknowledge the recent monetary gift from the dissolution of the Adirondack Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. After discussion the board decided to share the letter with the congregation, acknowledge the gift to the Adirondack UUA and at a future service incorporate the gift with a theme of “positivity coming out of an ending” for a service. Connie to draft a letter on behalf of the board and send it to Ursula. Ursula will complete thank you letter and send it out. Rev. Nicoline will send Ursula the address.</p>	<p>Connie to draft thank you letter and send to Ursula to finalize. Rev. Nicoline will provide address to Ursula.</p> <p>Share letter with the Congregational.</p> <p>Incorporate letter and gift at a future worship service.</p>
<p>Planning for Minister’s Sabbatical</p>	<p>Nicholas stated three issues need to be addressed regarding the minister’s sabbatical plan.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Who will supervise the staff?</li> <li>2) Who is going to assume the role the minister plays at the board meetings and in agenda preparation?</li> <li>3) Who will manage Community Social Events?</li> </ol> <p>1)Board discussed the responsibilities of a supervisor and who is supervised by Rev. Nicoline. The assignments are as follows: Ursula - Office Assistant</p>	<p>Rev. Nicoline to check with Vini on overseeing the monthly social dinners.</p>

	<p>Connie - RE Director  Nicholas - Music Director  Tana - Digital Outreach Specialist/Tech Position/Event Staff</p> <p>2)Board discussed who would take the role of the board meetings in Rev. Nicoline's absence. The board agreed to split the responsibilities of the board meetings, specifically the check in and check out. The following board members offered to take this role during Rev. Nicoline sabbatical:  Mark – February  Tana – March  Ursula – April</p> <p>Lisa will continue to email Connie and Nicholas for the agenda preparation.</p> <p>3)Board discussed various options on how to handle the community social events. Rev. Nicoline to check with Vini on the monthly Social Dinners; Jason will handle clean up as the event staff position.</p> <p>Nicholas stated the next sabbatical planning meeting is scheduled at the beginning of December; he thanked everyone for resolving the outstanding issues.</p>	
<p>UUA 8<sup>th</sup> Principle</p>	<p>Tana explained the prelude of why this report was done. Tana recommendations from her report are based on the congregation size and financial position. Tana recommendations are commissioning an audit which would include a review of the bylaws and policies to ensure they are open to multi-cultural and education and liberations. Also to provide resources that are multicultural. Nicholas thanked Tana for all her work. This gives the board a good place to start. The board discussed making this topic a service in February or March. Rev. Nicoline thanked Tana for her recommendations. Rev. Nicoline encouraged the board to take this seriously. A discussion took place regarding putting in place a destructive behavior policy. Discussion will continue at the beginning of the year meetings regarding a destructive behavior policy, an audit process for the board and how to share with the congregation.</p>	<p><b>Add to next month's agenda for January's meeting: Destructive Behavior Policy, audit process for board and how to share this with the congregation.</b></p>
<p>Set date for January Board Meeting and Congregational Meeting</p>	<p>The board discussed dates and who would work on the agenda for the congregational meeting. Nicholas, Ursula and Mark agreed to work on the agenda for the Congregational Meeting.  January 7, 2025 – Agenda Committee Meeting, time to be determined.  January 14, 2025 – Board meeting at 6:30 PM  January 26, 2025 – Annual Congregational Meeting right after Sunday Service</p>	<p><b>Nicholas, Ursula and Mark to meet January 7, 2025 to discuss Agenda for congregational meeting.</b></p>
<p>Refugee Project</p>	<p>Ursula stated if travel assurance doesn't come through shortly,</p>	

	committee can request a new match. Most likely will be a Spanish speaking family.	
Composting	Board discussed composting costs and recommended adding \$300 to the 2025 budget.	<b>Add composting cost to 2025 budget</b>
By-Law Revisions	No changes were recommended.	
Next Meeting	<p>Next Board meeting is December 17, 2024 at 6:30 PM</p> <p>Future Board Meeting time is 6:30 PM and dates are as follows:  January 14, 2025, February 18, 2025, March 18, 2025, April 15, 2025, May 20, 2025 and June 17, 2025.</p> <p>Annual Congregational Meeting: January 26, 2025 right after Sunday Service</p>	.

UUF Board Meeting 11/19/24  
Treasurer Report as of 10/31/24

As of the end of October 83% of the year had elapsed and we had collected 98% of the projected income (\$116,447.07) excluding the projected \$35,905 from savings. This includes 86.61% of pledges or \$87,566.38. It also includes \$10,840.84 in a disbursement through the UUA from the AUUC's (Adirondack Unitarian Universalist Community) dissolution. This month's income by percentage and actual amounts includes the following:

Contributions	
Share the Plate	72.11% (\$4,326.47)
Other donations	708.26% (\$14,165.17) includes AUUC
disbursement	
Pledges	86.61% (\$87,566.38)
Interest income	102.42% (\$8,193.80)
Other income/fundraising	
Misc. Income	n/a (\$865.00)
Rental income	60.36% (\$370) includes zoom rental
Rummage Sales/other	10.51% (\$210.25) Art & Craft scheduled in Nov
Total excluding Amt from Savings	89% (\$116,477.07)

In terms of expenses, our total expenses so far this year are at 77.93% (\$120,501.73) of projections, with most costs being close to projected amounts. The most expensive of the increases was the paving of the driveway at \$5,552 versus the budgeted \$2,600. Expenses by percentage and actual amounts include the following:

Religious Life has expended 69.62% (\$20,178.66) distributed as follows:

Living Our Mission	86.45% (\$3,570.41) includes STP
Communicating	62.41% (\$1,588.41)
Religious Exploration	46.61% (\$2,082.97)
Worship	52.85% (\$2,721.87)
Professional Ministry	77.40% (\$3,864.52)
UUA Fair Share	82.51% (\$6,350.48)

Operating Expenses has expended 79.85% (\$100,323.07) of its budget including:

Admin Expense	62.41% (\$9,241.05)
B&G	102.69% (\$15,618.47)
Payroll	78.92% (\$75,463.55)

The total amount of Religious Life and Operating expenses spent so far is 77.93% (\$120,501.73). Our total amount of income so far this year minus the total about of our expenses gives us a net income of -\$2,239.66.

Cash Balances as of 10/31/24

Community Bank Checking Account	\$17,985.02
Glens Falls National Bank Checking Account	1,000.00
Glens Falls National Bank Savings Account	17,725.36
Refugee Project Bank Account	3,000.00
Oak View National Bank 12 mon CD	31,199.29
Oak View National Bank 15 mon CD	96,765.34

UUA Common Endowment Fund

69,226.93

Total Cash

\$236,896.94

2025 Prepaid Pledges received as of 10/31/2024-\$10,000 not recorded as revenue until 2025 but reflected in the cash balances.

We moved \$10,000 of our cash reserves to the Endowment Fund this month. The 15 month CD with Oak View Bank comes to maturity on 11/23/24. We (Finance, Fund Development and Endowment Fund) will be researching the best investment strategy for this account. At maturity the balance will be \$99,179.29.

The Annual Giving Campaign began Sunday Nov 3; Rev Nicoline's sermon/message reflected on the spirituality of giving financially to the Fellowship, the campaign's slogan was introduced, Help Us Strive in 2025, and included asking members and friends to volunteer some of their time in addition to pledging financially. The campaign runs until the end of the month with follow up the first week in December. The budget may be revised to reflect the amount raised by the campaign and our reserves, and approved at next month's meeting.

Ursula Jones, Treasurer

**UJFP 2024 BUDGET WORKSHEET**

		ADOPTED	As of		
		2024	10/31/2024	change	October
<b>REVENUE/INCOME</b>					
<b>2024 Contributions</b>					
	Share the Plate Donations	\$6,000.00	\$4,326.47	72.11%	\$462.25
	Other Donations	2,000.00	14,165.17	708.26%	11,857.08
	Pledges includes the matching funds	101,105.00	87,566.38	86.61%	4,655.35
	Uncollectables (1.5% 2021) - 3% in 2022 & 2023	-1,000.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00
	Interest Income	8,000.00	8,193.80	102.42%	1.87
<b>97%</b>	<b>Contributions</b>	<b>\$116,105.00</b>	<b>\$114,251.82</b>	<b>98.40%</b>	<b>\$16,976.55</b>
<b>Other Income</b>					
	Misc. Income	\$0.00	\$865.00	n/a	\$0.00
	Rental Income	\$613.00	370.00	60.36%	\$0.00
	Community Outreach/Memorial Services	\$0.00	750.00	n/a	\$350.00
	Rummage Sales, Other Fundraisers	2,000.00	210.25	10.51%	0.00
<b>2%</b>	<b>Other Income-Fundraising</b>	<b>\$2,613.00</b>	<b>\$2,195.25</b>	<b>84.01%</b>	<b>\$350.00</b>
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$118,718.00</b>	<b>\$116,447.07</b>	<b>98.09%</b>	<b>\$17,326.55</b>
<b>Contributions from Savings</b>					
	Restricted funds from OWL	\$2,755.00	\$1,815.00	65.88%	\$285.00
	Savings	\$33,150.00	\$0.00	0.00%	0.00
<b>2%</b>	<b>Contributions from Savings</b>	<b>\$35,905.00</b>	<b>\$1,815.00</b>	<b>5.06%</b>	<b>\$285.00</b>
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$154,623.00</b>	<b>\$118,262.07</b>	<b>76.48%</b>	<b>\$17,611.55</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
<b>RELIGIOUS LIFE</b>					
<b>Living our Mission</b>					
	Social Gatherings (food, activities)	\$600.00	\$444.53	74.09%	\$0.00
	Faith Formation	200.00	124.17	62.09%	0.00
	Faith in Action (BLM, UUtheVote, Climate, others)	300.00	664.60	221.53%	0.00
	Share the Plate donations	3,000.00	2,205.74	73.52%	248.63
	Community Outreach/Ceremony	0.00	350.00	n/a	0.00
	Interfaith Council	30.00	30.00	100.00%	30.00
<b>3%</b>	<b>Living Our Mission</b>	<b>\$4,130.00</b>	<b>\$3,819.04</b>	<b>92.47%</b>	<b>\$278.63</b>
<b>Communicating</b>					
	Advertising (brochures, posters, print ads, LED Signage)	\$800.00	\$0.00	0.00%	\$0.00
	Supplies (tablecloth, clips, canopy for events)	\$0.00	\$52.07	n/a	\$52.07
	Website domain/backup service/New website domain	250.00	120.99	48.40%	0.00
	Printing	175.00	135.55	77.46%	12.11
	Online subscripys (Zoom, Mailchimp, Canva, GGeeks)	570.00	514.40	90.25%	26.50
	"Licensing (CVLI, CCS, OneLicense)"	750.00	765.40	102.05%	0.00
<b>2%</b>	<b>Communicating</b>	<b>\$2,545.00</b>	<b>\$1,588.41</b>	<b>62.41%</b>	<b>\$90.68</b>
<b>Religious Exploration</b>					
	RE Professional Development (incl LREDA membership)	\$55.00	\$0.00	0.00%	\$0.00
	OWL Instructors: Training *restricted funds	250.00	250.00	100.00%	0.00
	OWL Facilitator includes FB*restricted funds	3,964.00	1,565.00	39.48%	285.00
	Materials/Supplies (snacks/supplies)	200.00	267.97	133.99%	136.93
<b>3%</b>	<b>Religious Exploration</b>	<b>\$4,469.00</b>	<b>\$2,082.97</b>	<b>46.61%</b>	<b>\$421.93</b>
<b>Worship</b>					
<b>Music</b>					
	Professional Development	\$550.00	\$215.00	39.09%	\$0.00
	Piano subs & guest musicians	1,000.00	375.00	37.50%	0.00
	Hymnals, Supplies	0.00	91.87	n/a	0.00
	PERMISSIONS/DONATIONS (music, streaming rights)	300.00	145.00	48.33%	0.00
	Equipment & repairs	300.00	132.00	44.00%	0.00
	<b>Music</b>	<b>\$2,150.00</b>	<b>\$958.87</b>	<b>44.60%</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

	<b>Sunday Services</b>				
	Worship Materials	\$200.00	\$73.00	36.50%	\$0.00
	Guest speakers*10 lay, 3UU	2,800.00	1,690.00	60.36%	350.00
	<b>Sunday Services</b>	<b>\$3,000.00</b>	<b>\$1,763.00</b>	<b>58.77%</b>	<b>\$350.00</b>
3%	<b>Worship</b>	<b>\$5,150.00</b>	<b>\$2,721.87</b>	<b>52.85%</b>	<b>\$350.00</b>
	<b>Professional Ministry</b>				
	Minister Professional Development	\$4,993.00	\$3,864.52	77.40%	\$370.00
3%	<b>Professional Ministry</b>	<b>\$4,993.00</b>	<b>\$3,864.52</b>	<b>77.40%</b>	<b>\$370.00</b>
5%	<b>UUA Fair Share</b>	<b>\$7,697.00</b>	<b>\$6,350.48</b>	<b>82.51%</b>	<b>\$671.75</b>
19%	<b>RELIGIOUS LIFE TOTAL</b>	<b>\$28,984.00</b>	<b>\$20,427.29</b>	<b>70.48%</b>	<b>\$2,182.99</b>
	<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>				
	<b>Administrative Expenses</b>				
	Internet-Telephones	\$2,472.00	\$1,919.16	77.64%	\$179.37
	Office Supplies (General)	400.00	151.69	37.92%	0.00
	Postage	75.00	20.40	27.20%	0.00
	Board Expenses	175.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00
	Payroll Service	1,790.00	1,429.36	79.85%	129.60
	SS Medicare, Emp taxes	3,118.00	2,222.03	71.26%	342.86
	Insurance, WC, Disability (est.)	1,953.00	1,626.54	83.28%	128.01
	Minister's disability insurance	665.00	535.00	80.45%	53.50
	Breeze/PayPal Fees	1,210.00	986.88	81.56%	99.50
	Technology	500.00	299.99	60.00%	0.00
	Leadership Development	600.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00
	CLM Training/Development	300.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00
	Safe Congregation Screening	200.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00
	Contingency & Miscellaneous	1,050.00	50.00	4.76%	0.00
	Minister's Discretionary Budget	300.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00
10%	<b>Administration</b>	<b>\$14,808.00</b>	<b>\$9,241.05</b>	<b>62.41%</b>	<b>\$932.84</b>
	<b>Buildings and Grounds</b>				
	Utilities: Palmer	\$1,692.00	\$1,176.76	69.55%	\$64.80
	Maintenance/Repairs Palmer	1,400.00	641.68	45.83%	581.69
	Handicap Parking	2,600.00	5,552.46	213.56%	0.00
	Building Equipment-Purifer	2,500.00	2,450.00	98.00%	0.00
	Trash Removal	240.00	176.83	73.68%	17.69
	Insurance	2,677.00	2,547.00	95.14%	211.00
	Grounds	1,600.00	1,383.00	86.44%	156.00
	Cleaner-Contractor/Supplies	2,000.00	1,544.90	77.25%	275.00
	Kansas Ave/Montana Drive Property	500.00	145.84	29.17%	0.00
10%	<b>Building &amp; Grounds</b>	<b>\$15,209.00</b>	<b>\$15,618.47</b>	<b>102.69%</b>	<b>\$1,306.18</b>
	<b>Payroll Expense</b>				
	Ministerial Salary	\$35,933.00	\$30,404.88	84.62%	\$4,146.12
	Ministerial Housing Allowance	14,000.00	11,846.12	84.62%	1,615.38
	Ministerial Retirement Contribution/Salary	4,993.00	4,224.88	84.62%	576.12
	Staff (Office Assistant, Music Director, digital outreach, RE, RE Childcare & worship serv tech)	40,696.00	\$28,987.67	71.23%	4,482.05
62%	<b>Payroll Expense</b>	<b>\$95,622.00</b>	<b>\$75,463.55</b>	<b>78.92%</b>	<b>\$10,819.67</b>
81%	<b>Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$125,639.00</b>	<b>\$100,323.07</b>	<b>79.85%</b>	<b>\$13,058.69</b>
	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$154,623.00</b>	<b>\$120,750.36</b>	<b>78.09%</b>	<b>\$15,241.68</b>
	<b>REVENUES</b>	<b>\$154,623.00</b>	<b>\$118,262.07</b>		<b>\$17,611.55</b>
	<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>154,623.00</b>	<b>120,750.36</b>		<b>15,241.68</b>
	<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>-\$2,488.29</b>		<b>\$2,369.87</b>
	<b>Cash Balances as of 10/31/2024</b>				
	Community Bank Checking Accounts	\$17,985.02			

	Glens Fall National Bank Checking Account	1,000.00		
	Glens Fall National Bank Savings Account	17,725.36		
	Refugee Project bank Account	3,000.00		
	Oak View National Bank- 12 months CD	31,199.29		
	Oak View National Bank- 6 months CD	96,765.34		
	UU Endowment Fund unrealized gains/loss recognized at year end	69,221.93		
	Total Cash	\$236,896.94		
	<b>2025 Prepaid Pledges received as of 10/31/2024-\$10,000 not recorded as revenue until 2025 but reflected in the cash balances</b>			

## November 2024 Bi-Monthly Board Report

These are sombre times for the country and for those who appreciate our movement's values. I've been doing what I can to support staff, congregants, and visitors to the fellowship in the wake of November's election results. At the same time, this national crisis (with international implications) has made the importance of a community like ours ever more apparent. If the lessons of our sibling congregations in more conservative states turn out to be relevant, we should prepare to expect more visitors to our community over the coming months. I've invited the Communications Team to reflect on how our messaging might be adapted accordingly.

**Supporting and Developing Leadership** With the departure of Amelia Stevens, Digital Outreach Specialist, staff transitions have once again come to the forefront of my responsibilities. I'm so grateful to Jason Murray for having agreed to step into this position on an interim basis, and to the Communications Team for pivoting to quickly support Jason's learning. I also want to share how appreciative I am of all the staff, who've been working extremely hard to offer really high quality programming and infrastructure support, with only between 4-10 weekly hours in their contracts.

The Worship Team has gained some new volunteers but continues to struggle to cover their slate of responsibilities. As a result, I have worked extra Sundays this year, sometimes in a support role like that of Zoom host. Though my agreement with you has me present two Sundays/month, I worked 4 of the 5 Sundays in September, and 3 of the 4 Sundays in each of October and November. As you might imagine, I have accumulated overtime once again, though I expect to take this time back between Christmas and early January. Developing Connect in Community Sundays (where we break into three multi-age groups for the second half of the service) has also proved to be time-consuming. More moving parts = more needs for communication and discernment. One area still under development is the question of the skills required for being a CIC Sunday facilitator. I sense that the congregation continues to feel traumatized by the events of September 2023, leaving them uncertain about their ability to responsibly host public conversations.

**Pastoral Care** As more of our elders are becoming vulnerable and/or isolated by loss of autonomy or caregiving responsibilities, I've been paying attention to the need for something to replace activities like the Forget-Me-Nots gatherings for seniors, or the ladies' luncheon, both of which ceased operation when the seniors responsible for them died. Informal polling of members suggests that there would be interest in a monthly brown bag lunch, on the main floor of the building (so as to address accessibility concerns) with possible light programming, as well as occasional outings to restaurants. Once again, these activities would need leadership from people other than me. I've had two offers of "help" but no sense there is someone willing to take full responsibility for making events like this happen.

**Outreach and Engagement** With volunteer support, I staffed our Pride table, though turnout was disappointingly low this year. I have continued to host Fun Fridays (though again, additional leadership is still needed for tasks like arranging rides for those who need them, and developing/leading an "engagement" activity.) I am hopeful that the bingo game developed by Tana Hanley will help surface new leadership.

Kelly Predojevic and I have offered a final series of HAWK sessions to fellowship youth, though the number of participants dropped from 6-7 to 4 this fall. I note that the remaining youth expressed disappointment that the activity will not continue beyond November. It seems that a small cohort of fellowship youth remains motivated to learn and be in UU community together. It would be wonderful if eventually we could offer them something more.

And finally, since the Sunday I preached in Jericho, VT, I have been exploring partnering with the Jericho congregation, as well as with Burlington area Quakers, to host a "Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples" workshop perhaps in May 2025. See <https://friendspeacetteams.org/trr/>

One gap that might need to be filled during my time away: an activity for people interested in membership, perhaps timed to line up with a ceremony for welcoming new members, sufficiently in advance of them to be able to vote at the June congregational meeting.

**Professional Growth and Development** I attended the annual fall chapter retreat with UUMA colleagues, and have been especially grateful for collegial resource sharing and support during this election season. My UU colleagues are generous and ready to support each other in all situations that can arise; they are an invisible support, in a way, to the well-being of this congregation.

I continue to mentor one minister in Preliminary Fellowship, and to receive mentoring. In October I also attended a short online workshop, *Resourcing for Public Intimacy and Leadership*, hosted by Meadville Lombard Theological School.

**Organizational Health** Many people have commented on the extraordinarily positive energy in the room on Sundays, particularly on Connect In Community Sundays. It has also been extremely heartening to learn how valued this community is by the new families who have been attending. What we now need is more people power! I have tried to support these signs of good organizational health (that now just need a boost of additional energy) by inviting the Annual Giving team to add an "ask" for volunteer commitments to the campaign letter.

Here, as a testimonial to all the good work this fellowship has been doing, is a testimonial Sarah Cramer, one of the new parents, recently posted on Facebook (shared with permission):

"What really allowed me to commit was that they provide high quality childcare with a wonderful and experienced provider. Which meant that Warren and I could actually enjoy some time with other adults. Everyone we met has been genuinely kind, interesting, and welcoming, and the subjects and themes of each service are beautifully presented and always resonate with me.

It is an intimate space but very flexible for every individual - you can be as involved or reserved as you want. It is kind of a millennial parent's dream, and filled a void I wasn't entirely aware that I had. They are proactive about tackling the injustices in the world, while at the same time providing an escape from them to a more innocent and gentle version of life. I always enjoyed the peaceful rituals of church, but organized religion is not for us. I am pleased to find a place that has all the warmth, charm, and care of a church community without the hypocrisy or required belief system. Honestly, it checked all the boxes for our family's needs at this time in our lives, and I was feeling empowered and grateful for discovering it.

To anyone in the North Country community who is feeling especially downtrodden right now, I invite you to join me and your fellow friends and neighbors at the UU Fellowship. I have a feeling you might realize this is just the puzzle piece you were missing."

Respectfully submitted, *Rev. Nicoline Guerrier*