

**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Plattsburgh
Annual Congregational Meeting January 26, 2025**

Opening Words: Rev. Nicoline Guerrier

Chalice Lighting: Tana Hanley

Quorum: Nicholas Hunt-Bull, Board Co-Chair, called for a quorum count. Mark counted 20 in sanctuary and Jason Murray counted 4 on zoom, total of 24. Quorum of 22 needed, quorum met.

Year in Review: Nicholas Hunt-Bull

Nicholas spoke of this past year's accomplishments. A few of them are Community Sundays, Fine Art Fundraiser, Refugee Project, working to solidify endowment and planning for the Minister's sabbatical. Major repairs done were to the Handicamp Ramp, paved the driveway making it handicap accessible and electrical upgrades. Many thanks to the Building and Grounds Committee and Ursula Jones.

UUFP Congregational Meeting 1/26/25 Treasurer Report – Ursula Jones

As of the end of last year(2024) we had collected 111.31% (\$132,145) of the projected income excluding the projected \$35,905 from savings. This includes 94.8% of pledges or \$95,843. The income by percentage and actual amounts includes the following:

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Contributions | |
| Share the Plate | 98.91% (\$5,934) |
| Other donations | 719.76% (\$14,395) |
| Pledges | 94.80% (\$95,993.22) |
| Interest income | 133.90% (\$10,711.70) |
| Other income/fundraising | |
| Misc. income | \$865.00 |
| Rental income | 70.15% (\$430) includes zoom rental |
| Community/Mem Ser | \$750.00 |
| Rummage Sales/other | 143.27% (\$2,865) |
| Total excluding Amt from Savings | 111.44% (\$132,295) |

Total expenses for 2024 were 97.69% (\$151,049,64) of projections, with most costs being close to projected amounts. Expenses by percentage and actual amounts include the following:

Religious Life expended 93.01% (\$26,959.06) of their budget distributed as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Living Our Mission | 124.85% (\$5,156) includes STP |
| Communicating | 85% (\$2,1674 |
| Religious Exploration | 49.52% (\$2,213) |
| Worship | 91.5% (\$4,712) |
| Professional Ministry | 100% (\$5,009) |
| UUA Fair Share | 99.9% (\$7,694) |

Operating Expenses reached 98.77% (\$124,090.58) of the projected budget including:

| | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Admin Expense | 80.2% (\$11,876) |
| B&G | 146.47% (\$22,276) |
| Payroll | 94% (\$89,938) |

The total amount of Religious Life and Operating expenses spent in 2024 was 97.69% (\$151,049.64). Our total income this year (2024) minus the total of the expenses equals a net income of -\$16,809.54 versus the projected shortfall of \$35,905 added from savings to balance the budget.

Cash Balances as of 12/31/24

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Community Bank Checking Account | \$8,877.27 |
| Glens Falls National Bank Checking Account | 1,000.00 |
| Glens Falls National Bank Savings Account | 17,728.31 |
| Refugee Project bank Account | 3,100.00 |
| Oak View National Bank 12 mos CD | 31,199.29 |
| UUA Common Endowment Fund | <u>162,843.06</u> |
| Total Cash | \$224,738.93 |

In 2024 we collected 111.44% of the projected income including 94.8% of pledges despite the loss of two long time members. We received unexpected income from the dissolution of the Adirondack UU Society of over \$10,000. We covered unexpected expenses in paving the driveway, repairing the handicap ramp, purchasing an air purifier, and completing electrical upgrades.

The Finance and Fund Development Committees decided to invest the money from our maturing CD with Oak View National Bank into the UUA Common Endowment Fund in Dec 2024 which is reflected in our cash balances. We plan to write procedures for the management of this fund this spring and with the board's approval of same to bring them to a vote to the congregation at the annual meeting in June 2025.

Ursula Jones, Treasurer

Nicholas made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, unanimously accepted.

Ursula answered the questions from zoom. First question is the UU Endowment Fund accessible by the congregation? Ursula explained the endowment fund was added to our by-laws but additional procedures need to be written for doing this. Second question is about Kansas Ave property, any interested offers yet? Ursula stated no but the development in the neighborhood is seen as positive by our realtor.

Proposed 2025 Budget – Ursula Jones

Ursula reviewed the highlights of the Proposed 2025 Budget

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Revenue/Income | |
| Contributions | \$122,395.00 |
| Other Income-Fundraising | 4,800.00 |
| Total income | \$127,195.00 |
| Contributions from savings | <u>31,355.00</u> |
| Total Income | \$158,550.00 |

Expenses

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Religious Life | |
| Living Our Mission | \$ 5,480.00 |
| Communicating | 2,947.00 |
| Religious Exploration | 10,713.00 |
| Worship | 7,120.00 |
| Professional Ministry | 5,200.00 |
| UUA Fair Share | <u>8,250.00</u> |
| Total Religious Life | \$39,710.00 |

Operating Expenses

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Adm Expenses | \$15,483.00 |
| Building & Grounds | \$10,609.00 |
| Payroll Expense | <u>\$92,748.00</u> |
| Total Operating Expenses | \$118,840.00 |

Total of Religious Life & Operating Ex. \$158,550.00

The Annual Giving campaign which ran from November thru December raised \$101,405.60 toward the goal of \$104,000. The campaign used a strategy of “matching funds” to induce members to increase their pledge by 4%. The proposed budget 2025 includes all our basic expenses, plus adding additional staff including an events coordinator, an additional child care worker, a child care worker for special events, and a tech assistant for Sunday mornings plus monies for food at fellowship events. The budget is balanced with \$31,656.00 from savings.

Mark made a motion to approve the 2025 Proposed Budget and 2nd by Tom Morrisey.

Questions and answers:

Tom asked if we had a digital projector. Jo El stated we have looked into it is but very expensive and no it was not included in the budget. Dawn asked the question how much did members donate to community groups. Ursula stated approximately \$2,500.

Nicholas asked if there were any other questions, no further questions. Vote results: 23 yes, 0 no, 1 abstained, all approved. Budget passed.

Report on Rev. Nicoline's Sabbatical Leave - JoEllen Miano.

Jo El gave an update on the process of preparing for Rev. Nicoline's sabbatical. The Sabbatical Transition Committee consisted of Nicholas Hunt-Bull, Dorothy Latta, Rev. Nicoline and myself. We developed a web page on our website. If you go to that page it explains a sabbatical, describes Rev. Nicoline's sabbatical plan and frequently asked questions.

Minster's Reflection -Rev. Nicoline Guerrier

Minister's Report to January 2025 Annual Business Meeting

When the board asked me to share some reflections at this annual budget meeting, my thinking first went toward a list of actions: things I have been doing; indeed, all the things we have been doing together. But as the events of this past week have unfolded, what came to me is that this is really a time for anchoring everything we do in our values, and for the sacred task of lifting these values up to the light.

This is a time for transparency, for modeling the deep worthiness of being a people who name what we are about and who - when it is called for - are practiced in speaking truth to power. So here is my perspective on the values I've seen illuminating our shared work together over the past months.

I've seen us be a place of refuge. Especially since November, increasing numbers of newcomers are entering our doors saying that they come here needing to gather with others who are committed to being a people who build each other up, not tear each other down. I've seen us be a place where more and more parents are saying: this is a safe place for my children, where they will be able to bring their full selves and flourish in community.

I've seen you be a people of deep generosity: through your financial gifts that sustain this congregation and its work, but also through your gifts of time, gifts of caring, and gifts of wisdom. Thank you to all of you who bring life to what it means to be this fellowship.

I've seen this be a place of learning: for learning, sometimes unlearning, and then learning again what it is to be human, and how to affirm the humanity of our neighbors.

I particularly commend you for the work you have been doing to learn how best to carry forward the values of the UU 8 th Principle, which calls us to dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and in our institutions, and to do so accountably - which means, to listen to and to check back in with those most affected, to see whether our actions have the impact we intend.

It's because of how you value this 8 th Principle that you have been doing the hard work of finding new ways to deeply know each another without using the open mic during

your services. Connect in Community Sundays, the Holiday Friends project, turning to your neighbor for smaller scale conversations during service, and coming out on Fun Fridays - these are just some of the ways you have been leaning into change and experimenting with what might become some of the new fellowship traditions of the future.

I'm so glad that your Black Lives Matter group has planned more learning opportunities for later this winter - a film screening with facilitated discussion; a book study group, and some Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation circles.

I hope you will hear these as not simply add-ons to the list of fellowship activities, but essential practices for learning to become the people of justice we strive to be, and to join in, in large numbers.

Learning, of course, requires changing - ourselves, our practices, our expectations about what it means to be Unitarian Universalists. And change is hard - for some of us more than for others. So here's the last value I want to lift up this afternoon. Because change can feel like such hard work, I deeply appreciate the value you place on being able to let go and have fun together, almost no matter what you are doing.

At our Worship Leader training this past Friday, after small groups spent time excitedly brainstorming how to design some of our upcoming services, one of you said, "This is fun!" And here, I think, is the biggest thing people miss when they think that a spiritual community like this one is not for them.

Our Board Meetings are fun. It's not for nothing that we call our monthly Friday evening meals Fun Fridays - I don't think there was anyone among the 30 or so people of all ages who were here on Friday night who didn't spend time laughing over the meal and lightly structured conversations.

HAWK - the sexuality education program for middle and early high schoolers that I had the privilege to co-lead with the very fun Kelly Predojevic - well, that was full of laughter and fun.

The Wintry Mix Saturday activities for families of young children - by all reports, definitely fun. Our services - even when the topic is sombre - become fun when we Connect in Community, when we join voices and bodies in song, and when we wave goodbye to one another when the service concludes.

And of course, in troubled times like these we are part of the resistance when we collectively say: our ability to experience joy together will NOT be taken away!

A few weeks ago I reached out to you for your input on issues you'd like me to think about during my sabbatical. Many of you wished me less thinking and more opportunities for rest, creative pursuits, inspiration and fun, especially in nature. Your wishes for me also reflected the understanding that my ability to return refreshed and

restored will ultimately enrich you, the congregation, in this context where so many challenges await us in the months ahead.

Some of you asked for guidance around actions that might help the fellowship effectively engage your justice commitments in partnership with the local community and the larger region.

I encourage you to not overlook the opportunities lifted up by the work of the Pink Haven Coalition, a collective of organizations and individuals, founded by UUs, whose goal is to keep our transgender and gender expansive siblings, along with their families, safe. Currently, they are helping with mutual aid in the essential area of health care, but they also help support relocation to safer states.

Safety has always been a concern for gender non-conforming people in this country, but we appear to be entering a new era where many more lives will be at risk. If you believe this community might offer a safer home to transgender UUs who need support (and may not yet have Plattsburgh on their list of sanctuary destinations) I strongly urge you to inform yourselves about opportunities to partner with the Pink Haven Coalition.

I depart next weekend and return May 19th. Although yes, this will mark a change, you are a community of many strong leaders and I have no doubt that you will experience many special moments, anchored by these values of refuge, generosity, learning and fun. As one of you said in your feedback to me, don't forget to document and report back on your special moments during the months ahead, and I promise to do the same. As we wave goodbye to one another, may we already anticipate the time for greeting each other again this spring.

Endowment – Nicholas Hunt-Bull

Nicholas discussed purposes of an endowment fund. An endowment is an investable asset of a non-profit institution, such as ours, a portion of one is used for operating expenses. The fund's investment philosophy is responsible investing, reasonable investment with modest risk. The next few months our goal is to identify specific policies regarding our Endowment fund and present them in June at the annual congregational meeting.

Board Report - Connie Shemo

Connie thanked everyone for coming today. Everyone's presence here today is important without you we would not have enough votes to pass the budget. She also said the board hopes to see an increase in members wanting to volunteer for committees, it's fun to participate. Connie stated you are all needed and welcomed.

Closing Words – Rev. Nicoline Guerrier

Meeting adjourned.