



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Grand Valley



536 Ouray Ave.
Grand Junction, CO 81501
(970) 257-0772
www.grandvalleyuu.org

Annual Report 2024



From Your Minister

Rev. Wendy Jones

The Annual Meeting is on Sunday, June 9, 2024, starting at approximately 12:15 pm.

Minister: As this calendar year comes to a close, I would like to express my love and appreciation for this faith community.

into her new position as our programming director. We have had amazing music through the leadership of Joanna, and the office and facilities are running smoothly under the leadership of Trent and Diane.



If I had to describe this year with a few words, I would say that this has been the year that we have officially turned the corner and left the chaos and impact of COVID behind us.

The board and TLC have done a wonderful job of providing leadership, vision and guidance for UUCGV. Our Sunday mornings have pre-COVID numbers of people attending. The property team is up and running again with a number of long-term projects in the process of coming to fruition. We have a very compassionate care team who has been holding space for the spiritual and

Inside this year's report:

We have had a full staff this year with Maya transitioning

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UUCGV Minister, Rev. Wendy Jones

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emotional needs of the congregation. Wendy Metzger has done an amazing job as our leadership team lead helping to get more and more people involved in the day-to-day operation of this faith community.

We also have a number of new members and families who have become an integral and valued part of our community.

Our worship services continue to be offered as a hybrid option. We are lucky that our facilities coordinator Trent is also skilled in sound technology and his expertise has been very much appreciated and deeply valued this year as we have embraced a combined platform of virtual and in person worship. We continue to be able to offer high quality worship on Sundays in a large part

due to Trent and his technical expertise.

We will continue to offer the hybrid option moving forward. While the services are never “perfect” they are always filled with joyful connection and community which is what matters the most.

For the 2nd year we opened our UUCGV building to participate in the WE shelter program offering two weeks of safe lodging for up to 16 men to stay during the coldest winter months. Thank you to everybody who volunteered their time, provided food and helped to finance this important program under Tom Acker’s leadership and guidance.

I’d like to acknowledge & thank our wonderful staff, Maya, Diane, Joanna & Trent for helping hold everything together in such a professional manner. I am honored to

work with these four amazing people, and we are a true team.

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

With Love,
Rev. Wendy



Director of Music, Joanna Wernette

Music Report

Joanna Wernette,
Director of Music

The UUCGV Music programming world has had an exciting year! The choir had a wonderful fundraiser in December which greatly helped us reach our budget goal for the year.

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The adult choir has had some beautiful new stoles made by Jan Hyland and together at the First Congregational Church for them. They'll be making our Relief Fund fundraiser for the some very special music-sharing.

We explored adding karaoke nights to UU Nights with wonderful inter-generational results and feedback, and attracted new folks to UU as the nights went on. New congregation member, Sally Sheneberger, donated an awesome new karaoke machine.

The youth music program had fun exploring songwriting, our new boomwhackers, and percussion this year, with the kiddos getting their hands on the bass that was purchased last year, as well as the numerous guitars that have been donated by various congregation members.

The adult choir has had some beautiful new stoles made by Jan Hyland and together at the First Congregational Church for them. They'll be making our Relief Fund fundraiser for the some very special music-sharing.

We recently lost our long-time choir member, Liz Norris, and the choir member, Sally Sheneberger, donated an obituary to be printed in the Sunday Sentinel paper (written by Jeanne Hendricks.) We look forward to the music program continuing to grow and develop in the coming year!

Programming and Community Outreach

Maya Kraushaar, Director of Programming and Community Outreach



UUCGV Program Director, Maya Kraushaar

This is the first year post-COVID that we have seen our Children's Sunday Program (Children's Religious Education, RE) grow. We ended last year with 7 children registered and have climbed to 17 and growing.

As in year's past we used the Soul Matters themed ministry curriculum which uses the same monthly themes in RE as the ones used in adult worship. On Sunday mornings we had two primary groups: PreK and 1st-4th grade.

In addition to Sunday mornings, we had an array

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of other events for our children, both social and service. Most memorable were our intergenerational hikes including the Fall Colors Hike to Lost Lake on the Grand Mesa and the Spring Wildflowers in Bloom Hike on Rustler's Loop in Loma, CO. Equally exciting were the Children's Haunted Halloween Costume Party and Intergenerational Field Trip to the Botanical Gardens and Butterfly House. We also learned that it's a lot of fun doing things for others, such as when we beautified our Blessing Box and served complimentary warm beverages out of the community garden on a cold day this past winter.

We have formed a dedicated team of volunteers to work on creating an outdoor space for children. The team has launched the vision into reality!

This year we were also successful in implementing several new programs which have served as a platform for community outreach, community building, fundraising for UUCGV, fundraising for local causes, and causes around humanitarian and environmental issues. Some of these events included an Alternative Healing Fair, Jewelry Swap, Community Diversity Mosaic, two Sounding Healing Gong events; one for adults and one for children, two Cloudspotting events with Gavin Pretor-Pinney; one for adults and one for children, weekly Chair Yoga classes, weekly Yin Yoga classes, Active Hope and an Independent Documentary Film Series.

It has been my honor and pleasure to serve as your Program Director this year. I love this community and look forward to another amazing year together!



Board President, Richard Hyland

UUCGV Board

Members: Richard Hyland (President), Angie Ecker (Vice President), Kitty Tattersall (Treasurer), Elizabeth High (At-Large), Dave Collins (At Large), Laurel Carpenter (Past President)

Serving as your President for the past year has been



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a learning experience in a different kind of faith community requiring a different kind of leadership: a strange, hybrid kind of leadership that is spiritual as well as secular; collaborative not authoritarian. For UUCGV is a community of “free thinkers” each seeking her/his spiritual path as we journey together, guided by our 7 principles or rules of the road. And what a journey it has been over the last 12 months!

It began with a leadership retreat where Reverend Wendy and your new Board and Team leaders pondered *“Leadership in Uncertain Times”* and shared their answers to three basic questions:

- 1/ What attracted you to UUCGV?
- 2/ What keeps you at UUCGV?
- 3/ Why did you say “Yes” to Leadership?

The answers were profound and exciting. But don’t take my word for it, ask us.

We then set goals for the year. These included:

- 1/ *Reviving Teams after COVID;*
- 2/ *Restoring balance in staff/congregant involvement in UUCGV programming and operations;*
- 3/ *Strengthening membership and leadership development;*
- 4/ *Strengthening connections with the larger community;*
- 5/ *Improving facility safety and security.*

In short, getting involved without being overwhelmed.

In the remainder of this piece, I would like to



share my perceptions of what we achieved, and the challenges that remain.

Achievements

- *Program expansion in both depth and diversity.*
- *Outreach expansion strengthening connections with the larger community.*
- *Team revival, specifically Property, Membership, Leadership development, Caregiver Support and Finance.*
- *Security/safety improvements, among them a new Code of Conduct for all who enter our property.*

The inspiration and creativity of Maya Kraushaar, our Director of Programming & Community Outreach, and Reverend Wendy Jones, our Minister, were central to the first two achievements

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above. Here are a few more words about what they did.

In January, Maya launched *“Active Hope Training”*, a 7- part, video-based training and discussion program developed by Chris Johnstone and Joanna Macy. The program goal is to *“help us face our concerns about the world and respond in ways that contribute to positive change.”* Still underway, this program has attracted 15-20 participants, roughly 50% of whom are from outside of UUCGV. Discussions have been intense, heartfelt and profound.

Last Fall and this Spring, Reverend Wendy led two discussion groups focused on *“Building Your Own Theology”*. The first was a deep, 6-week exploration of 9 personality types

entitled *A Deep Dive Into Enneagram*. The second was a similarly deep, 6-week exploration of death and dying entitled *“What Happens When We Die?”* In it, we explored our own attitudes toward consciousness and death and the death paradigms of the world’s major religions. There were some 15-20 participants in both groups, 50% of whom were comprised of folks outside of UUCGV. Again, the discussions were intense, heartfelt and profound.

Reinforcing these high quality UUCGV program offerings and outreach to the larger community were others, also developed by Maya Kraushaar. These included a rejuvenated RE program and a 6-part film series open to

the public as well as the Congregation featuring locally made documentary films. Several of these were made by Mike Youngren, Tom Acker, Linda Stout about life and challenges on the Western Slope and far beyond. These were stories of conflict and hope in Western Colorado, Ukraine, Africa and Gaza. Again, some 30 to 40 people attended, at least 50% of whom were from the larger community.



It is worth noting that Tom Acker, our Social Action Team Leader, has long been active with the Hispanic Affairs Project and is deeply involved in local efforts to combat human

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trafficking on the Western Slope. His activities and connections have strengthened UUCGV ties with the Latino population in this region.

Similarly, Barb Zind has long been active as a pediatrician working with Palestinian children in Gaza, the West Bank and Jordan. Her compassion and first-hand knowledge of the situation in Gaza after October 7, 2023 drew a large crowd when she was finally allowed to return to the US.

With regard to the third achievement area mentioned above, Team revival, perhaps the most dramatic of these revivals was the rebirth of the Property Team under the dedicated leadership of Barb Zind. Working together, she and a talented group of fellow congregants identified, prioritized, planned and have already begun executing the first of 17 major facility related tasks, indoors and outdoors. This included an energy audit by Xcel

performed at no charge. Working closely with her, Angie Ecker's OS4C Team is finally carrying out long delayed RE-related children's play area improvements.

Not to be outdone, Wendy Metzger and Debbie Buchele have rejuvenated both the Membership and Leadership Development teams,



thus simultaneously improving our welcoming of visitors and potential new members, our skill at detecting their sparks of passion and matching these to the tinder of team activities, and finding ways to persuade congregants to "say yes to leadership". Debbie has also rejuvenated the Circle Supper program, which may make it even easier to "say yes" over a plate of scrumptious food.

The Committee on

Ministry (COM) has also been reborn under the leadership of Jan Hyland.

Meanwhile, Patricia Eble and her Care Team have continued to respond to congregant needs promptly and compassionately.

Likewise, Penny Youngren and her Caregiver Support Group quietly support and guide caregivers in our congregation who find they are not alone.

Finally, a word about the Finance team and its leader, Kitty Tattersall. Over the past two years, her drive and dedication, together with Janet Cumming's knowledge and expertise, have opened up new funding possibilities for UUCGV growth well into the future.

Challenges

While our achievements have been impressive this year, challenges remain for 2024- 2025. The spiritual community Jan and I have found at UUCGV is precious to us. Strengthening it for the journey ahead in these uncertain times

requires all of us, not just a few. We all must step up. Here are some ways we can:

- *Continue Team revival, specifically Worship, Social Action, Stewardship, Safety, Green Sanctuary. All need new participants.*
- *Restore balance in staff/ congregant involvement in UUCGV programming and operations. Maya needs all of us by her side.*

It has been an honor to work with my fellow Board members to serve you and our community over the past year.

Richard Hyland

Finance Report

Kitty Tattersall,
UUCGV Treasurer

Kitty Tattersall was the treasurer and finance team members included Janet Cummings, Steve Watson, Joel Prudhomme, Lee Carie, Leigh Cowley, Floyd Joramo, and Tad Hutchins. Meetings were held monthly at the church. The Church Administrator handles the financial affairs of the Congregation with the treasurer and finance team providing oversight.

We started the church year with a new Administrator, Val Stow, who did a great job until she got a full-time job elsewhere in February. We were fortunate to overlap a few days between Val and our next new administrator, Diane Brown.

Pledge payments and offerings have continued to be strong and we received a grant. We have been fully



UUCGV Treasurer, Kitty Tattersall

staffed the whole year and still expect to end this year with a surplus.

The money paid on pledges makes up about two thirds of the expected income of UUCGV. The rest is from offerings, grants, and fundraisers such as the service auction.

Salaries and benefits for our talented staff (the minister, director of programs and

community outreach, administrator, facilities coordinator, music director, and child care) make up two thirds of our expenses. Mortgage and interest, utilities, maintenance, insurance, supplies, and contributions to the UUA and Mountain Desert District comprise the rest of the expenses. The Property Team and Outdoor Space for Children group have started spending money from long-ago Paddle Auctions. It is great to see needed projects getting done.

Looking ahead to next year, the finance team has recommended to the Board that we raise money to replenish the capital fund to be used for mortgage payments and property improvements. We have prepared a budget with less income expected from our traditional fundraisers. Please remember that everyone is welcome in our congregation, no matter whether you have cash to share or not.

Kitty Tattersall, treasurer

Staff Congregation Relations (SCR)

Monte High

For those who are unaware of the SCR's purpose, I will attempt a short explanation of what we do. Our most important role is to periodically meet with staff, listen deeply, and determine how we can best support them in their job. We hold monthly meetings, and the top of the agenda is always the report from the staff supervisor, Rev. Wendy Jones. We make recommendations to the board, which are varied and can include things such as asking the board to draft a code of conduct so that the staff can feel safe in the workplace, and yearly cost of living pay increases. We help with the campaign to raise money for staff holiday bonuses. We are also tasked with the process of hiring new employees. This year the board accepted our recommendation to hire a new administrator – Diane Brown.

The process included selecting a search team, four initial

candidate interviews and then two more interviews for the finalists.

SCR members are Kathleen Hedlund and Monte High. When I first joined the SCR we had four members. It is not an easy job, yet very rewarding because we have an amazing staff, and honestly, our congregation would fall apart without them. Kathleen and I



muddle along as best we can, with help from Richard Hyland and Rev. Wendy. If there is anyone out there foolish enough to join us, you would be most welcome.

Monte High, SCR member

Property

The property committee was reborn this past year with Joel

Prudhomme, Stuart Church, David Collins and Trent Nakagawa and Barb Preston.

In the past year we have outlined projects that need to be done as we approach our 10th anniversary in this building. We have started to beautify the front of the church with some repainting after assuring the structural soundness. Joel has singlehandedly repaired our irrigation system, Stuart has repaired and repainted every wood surface in our patio, David has repaired and repainted in the front and Trent has been cleaning our carpets and chairs with our new carpet cleaner. We have a hardworking team. We have a new choir ceiling mic. Excel energy did an energy audit and replaced all of our bulbs with LEDs and will be back to replace all of our fluorescent fixtures with LED. This is at no cost to us. Gutters are repaired and there are a lot of other hidden improvements

done.

By the end of the summer, you will see a new message board on the front of the church to replace the notes taped to the door. You will also see a new memorial bench in the back with remembrance bricks in a meditative area designed by our aesthetics committee. We are working with the Children's area team to enclose the north patio and create a safe, fun space for our younger congregants. Please join us for a workday planned June 1 for landscaping and painting.

In the next year we hope to resurface the parking lot and complete the tasks on our extensive spreadsheet. We welcome any other property improvement suggestions and helping hands.

Barb Preston



UUCGV Property Team