



Unitarian Church in Charleston

2022 Annual Report

What's Inside:

04 Milestones

05 Minister's Letter

09 Social Justice Memories

11 Vestry Board Chair Letter

13 Finances at a Glance

14 From the Executive Director

18 From the Director of Faith & Community Development

20 From the Music Director

21 Photo Gallery





Unitarian Church in Charleston

2021-2022

“The Unitarian Church in Charleston is an inclusive community of inspiration, love, and service committed to creating a better world.”

Vestry Board

Chair: Hillary Hutchinson

1st Vice-Chair: Bill Walsh

2nd Vice-Chair: Jeffrey Fleming

Secretary: Diane Boyer

Treasurer: Ren Manning

Assistant Treasurer: Suzanne Hardie

Bob Egelson

Kathleen King

Priscilla Shumway

Minister:

Rev. Rebecca Hinds (*Ex-Officio, Non-Voting Vestry Board Member*)

Staff:

Executive Director: Sandra Selvitelli (*Ex-Officio, Non-Voting Vestry Board Member*)

Music Director: Susan Conant

Director of Community & Faith Development:
Danielle Lopez

Communications Manager: Regina Ruopoli

Finance Manager & Human Resource Specialist:
Christine Magnarella Ray

Facilities Manager: Joe McCormack

Sunday Hospitality: Owen Reidesel

Childcare Workers: Amanda Gabriel, Mashica
Edwards & Selena Reynolds



Milestones

In Memoriam

Roy Hiller (1949–2021)
Laura Morris (1943–2021)
Mason Olds
Mark Van Buren (1968–2021)

2021–2022 At a Glance:

Membership: 383
Friends: 28
New Members: 26
Deceased: 3
Archived: 34
Pledge Units: 226

Weddings

9/25/21 Alexander Kenney and Charlotte Cash
10/30/21 Rob Bouton and Hannah Piazza
11/7/21 Lucio Siano and Irina Glinyany
11/13/21 Kayla Parnell and Chase Phillips
1/15/22 Lisa Coles and Daniel Castillo
1/22/22 Grace Meizer and Collin Laird
2/26/22 Kathryn O'Brien and Pater Dolbir
3/26/22 Julie Klions and Eric Dobson
4/9/22 Darby Shuler and Shreyansh Gaur
4/23/22 Elise Powers and Brent Sullivan
6/10/22 Christine Bergstrom and Martin Gold



Minister's Letter



Dear Members and Friends:

This past year was not always easy. The pandemic continued to provide many challenges for all of us. But for me, and for this church, despite all the loss and disruption, this past year also provided many rewarding and meaningful opportunities for growth.

Moving here and starting a new life with you all has been a great joy. Thank you for all your help welcoming me and my family to the Charleston area and for orienting me to this ministry.

My installation service and celebration of our shared ministry on Saturday, May 7, 2022, was one of the best days of my life. Thank you. I am so grateful and honored to have been called to serve you and help advance our mission of building “An inclusive community of inspiration, love, and service committed to creating a better world.”

One of the reasons I choose to come here is because I believe in this mission, I believe in you, and I see how this congregation is poised for growth and depth. Let me share some examples:

- This congregation excels in the areas of worship, music, social justice, pastoral care, and faith formation. Thanks to all of you, your commitment to these areas of ministry, and your willingness to join in and actively participate, we have a vibrant, relevant, transformational ministry going on that is touching lives and making a real difference.
- This congregation is financial stable and well managed by the Vestry Board, staff, and volunteers. We will continue to thrive into the future.

- The staff are the best I have ever worked with! They have done a remarkable job keeping everything on track and moving forward this year. I am deeply grateful for their partnership in this ministry and look forward to working with them for a long time. Of course, it was bittersweet to say goodbye to our Music Director, Susan Conant, but I am delighted she will still be in our community and may even offer her talent in worship again on occasion.
- The Vestry Board is focused and skilled. They have done an incredible job this year transitioning us into Policy Governance. I honor their work and celebrate this great accomplishment with them. Because of this effort, we are now ready to unleash our creativity energy and truly make our mission real in the world.
- ALL OF YOU, the members, friends, team leaders, team members, and committed volunteers are dedicated, loving, passionate, and kind. I have treasured getting to know you all and look forward to working with you and serving with you for many years. (I work with all of you in the various areas of our ministry and church life, but there are some teams that I work most closely with including, worship, social justice, pastoral care, and planned giving. You will see their reports below.)

The year ahead will bring more challenges, more growth, and more joy. I look forward to fully emerging from the pandemic with you all and finding ever more creative and fulfilling ways to advance our mission and be the beloved community.

**In faith,
Rev. Rebecca Hinds
Minister**

Ministerial Teams

Pastoral Care

Co-Chairs: Marcia Castaño & Judy Bruce

Area Leaders:

Downtown—Karen Abrams & Mary Ann Hughston

Mt Pleasant-Daniel Island—Judy Bruce

West Ashley—Mela Khedouri & Elle Setser

Summerville-North Charleston—Aliix Plaxco

James Island-Johns Island-Folly Beach—Marcia Castaño

Marcia Castano and the Caring Team have kept the Book of Life going strong (both virtually and physically!) throughout the pandemic and as we have been transitioning out of virtual only worship and into hybrid worship.

In addition, this team of volunteers makes phone calls, house calls, and wellness visits. They organize meal trains and rides to church and doctors' appointments. They send cards and flowers. In other words, they are love in action, reaching out and tending to the needs of those among us who need extra care.

Here are some highlights from this year's Book of Life:

Oct. 31, 2021

Great news from Nancy Hild and the Social Justice Committee! Ana, the Guatemalan mother of three little girls has received her work card and Social Security number which will enable her to secure a more reliable job. Let's keep in our hearts Ana's 6yr old daughter Sylvia who recently arrived from Guatemala and is facing extensive dental surgery on Nov. 9th. Nancy is also currently working on a new passport for Sylvia and Green Cards for the other two children, Lucia age 9 and Sharon age 4. Nancy has been working closely with the family on just about every aspect of their lives. Thank you Nancy for all you do for them.

Many of you may have read the article in the Life section of last Sunday's Post & Courier about a new book by James Lundy titled, *The History of the Poetry Society of SC: 1920 to 2021*. Included is a portion about our own Carol Furtwangler who as the Society president in the 1990s was productive in furthering racial diversity by facilitating the appointment of a Black board member and including Black poets for readings. What a wonderful legacy!

Nov 7, 2021

New member Nathan Woodliff-Stanley would like to let everyone know how delighted he is to attend services in person today for the first time.

He recently moved from Denver to Charleston with his wife Ruth who was consecrated on Oct. 2 as Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of SC, the first woman elected Bishop here. She has a "Seating" ceremony at Grace Cathedral this afternoon. He is an ordained UU minister and says it has been a pleasure to meet Rev. Rebecca and begin to get to know this community. Nathan, we welcome you!

Mary Ann Terry says she is ever so grateful to have lighted the new chalice today. This chalice is what she envisioned for this church long ago. She sends many thanks to her friends who helped along the way to make this effort possible: Paul Garbarini, Jeff Fleming, Priscilla Shumway and the amazing metalsmith Addison de Lisle. Mary Ann, the congregation thanks you for the donation of the beautiful chalice!

Jan 16, 2022

Ron and Claudia Updike are proud to let us know that their daughter Tessa, who is the Archivist at the Citadel has been awarded their 2022 MLK Humanitarian Award. Tessa will receive the award this Tuesday evening at Charleston Southern University. Tessa, congratulations on achieving this important and timely recognition!

Apr 3, 2022

Simon. Lewis is very pleased to have the forward in the forthcoming book *Ukweli: Searching for Healing Truth*, by Horace Mungin. We are all so happy to hear of your part in the publishing of this timely new book!

May 15, 2022

Priscilla Shumway emailed that Lisa Lindahl was recently inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame for her invention of the first women's sports bra, called the Jog Bra. The mission of the National Inventors Hall of Fame (NIHF) is to recognize inventors, promote creativity and advance the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship. Congratulations Lisa, the women of the world thank you!

Planned Giving

Chair/Co-Chair:

Trip Banner/Hillary Hutchinson

Team Members:

Prudence Finn, Steve Wilson, Maureen Porter, Floy Work, Ex officio

- Maureen Porter joined the committee replacing Sue Weller. Maureen has deep knowledge and knowledge of our church and its members.

contd.

Ministerial Teams *contd.*

- The brochure for Planned Giving was updated and mailed along with a letter to all congregants in November 2021 informing and encouraging to pledge a legacy gift to the church.
- There were two significant legacy gifts received in the church year coming from the estates of Will Moredock and Robert B. and Gail F. Schulz totaling over \$230,000. These names have been engraved on the The Samuel and Caroline Gilman Society Plaque the churchyard.
- The Samuel and Caroline Gilman Society plaque was updated with new names.
- The current pledging members in the Gilman Legacy Builders group have been contacted this year as a check-in and to answer any questions they have about the legacy gifting they have pledged.



Will Moredock



Robert B. and Gail F. Schulz



Samuel & Caroline Gilman Society Plaque

Social Justice

Core Leaders:

Richard Hayes, Chair; Diane Narkunas, Co-Chair, and Rev. Rebecca Hinds

Team Leaders:

Matthew Cressler, CAJM; Connie Hayes, Green Sanctuary & Environmental Climate Justice; Nancy Hild, Refugee Support; Amy Bradshaw, Mini-Grants Endowment; Maureen Porter, Mini-Grants Community Outreach Giving; Jeffrey Fleming, Welcoming Congregation; Richard Hayes, Coffeehouse Concerts; John Narkunas, Mitchell School; Richard Hayes & Diane Narkunas, Racial Justice; Ren Manning, Medicaid Expansion; Backpack Buddies, Lisa Hajjar & John Klintworth.

Active Team Members:

Kay Haun, Priscilla Shumway, Simon Lewis, Danielle Lopez, David Ray, Frank Hardie, Suzanne Hardie, Carol Tempel, George Tempel, Mark Farnham, Libby Smith, Laura Moses, George Costano, David Ruef, Nina Fair, Ron Malcolm, Gail Schiffer, Nathan Woodliff-Stanley

- This year we awarded over \$10,400 to Habitat for Humanity with our Community Outreach Grant Program. Members of our congregation helped with the building of the house.
- The Medicaid Expansion Team energized South Carolina UU Churches to support the right to medical care and the national Medicaid Expansion program. The Team partnered with the League of Women Voters and the Palmetto Project who produced a highly successful webinar on Medicaid Expansion.
- Although we had no Coffeehouse concerts, the Coffeehouse Team was still able to support Mitchell Elementary by funding several “virtual” and real field trips that are part of their enrichment curriculum. We have donated over \$2800 this year to Mitchell School, and over 140 students have made visits to the following sites: The Old Exchange Building, Middleton Place, Cyprus Gardens, Charleston Air Force Base & Charleston County Parks Education Program.
- The Racial Justice Team had a series of sermons, Forums & Webinars to educate our Congregation on racial injustice, white supremacy and white privilege, support our new 8th principle that charges Unitarian Universalists to “accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”

contd.

Ministerial Teams

contd.

- The Green Sanctuary team has increased its scope of activities to include local environmental justice. The Team ran a successful Earth Day Service for the Congregation in April. The Green Sanctuary has been supporting CAJM on the environmental justice actions being taken at Gadsden Creek. The Green Sanctuary team co-sponsored Queen Quet with the Racial Justice Team with 60 people attending in Gage Hall.
- Our Refugee Team has done amazing work helping Ana and her family get settled in the U.S. Ana was awarded sole custody by the court of her 2 girls living with her. It's been a long, complicated journey involving lots of documentation from Guatemala, but our Team and Ana have prevailed. The lawyer tells us that the children are now on a positive track to citizenship and will be able to obtain green cards. This places Ana in a more protected status as their sole custodian. Ana's work card should arrive soon. The team is happy to report that they have been able to provide Ana and her family with a computer. Special thanks to Nancy Hild for her steadfast support of Ana and her three girls and for her coordination of supportive efforts, such as language training.
- The CAJM team, working with 40 other diverse faith communities in the Charleston area has been tackling systematic racism. The current major projects are: affordable housing, education, policing best practices, medical care access, and environmental justice. Through the power and commitment of over 1500 supporters, they have been able to force public officials to make critical changes!
- Welcoming Congregation. Our Church was re-certified a few years ago as a UU Welcoming Congregation and supports PRIDE Quest, Park Circle Pride, and the Charleston PRIDE Parade.
- South Carolina Action Alert Network (SCUUA): our congregation provided crucial support as this organization formed. We provided over \$1300 in support of this critical activity. Richard Hayes is a Board Member and Rev. Rebecca Hinds is on the clergy advisory board.
- Share the Plate has been a huge success, raising:
 - \$785 for Ukraine Refugees
 - \$586 for UUSC Ukraine efforts
 - \$563 Trident Tech Grocery Vault
 - \$469 Mt. Carmel Church Windows
 - \$353 SC UU Justice Alliance
 - \$940 James Island Outreach
 - \$755 Slave Dwelling Project
 - \$1251 for the Haiti Response to hurricane disaster

Pandemic or not, the Unitarian Church in Charleston's Social Justice efforts have been stronger than ever!

Worship

Mark Farnham (Chair), Amy Hudock (Co-Chair), Richard Hayes, Stephanie Masline, Claudia Updike, and Priscilla Shumway.

The Worship Committee was very happy to start the 2021-22 church year with hybrid worship services led in person in the church sanctuary under the leadership of our new minister Rev. Rebecca Hinds. COVID-19 necessitated masking for most of the first half of the year, but this became optional by spring. All services were broadcast online from the sanctuary, so congregants not ready for in person worship were able to engage from home throughout the year. The bulk of Sundays had committee members assisting Rev. Rebecca as worship associates.

The committee organized and led nine services with a variety of guest speakers on Sundays (4th of each month) when Reb. Rebecca was off. These services were generally well received. As the year closed, the committee worked to bring on new members to serve as worship associates in order to prepare for committee succession as several veteran members prepare to move off the committee.





Social Justice Memories

Top: CAJM demonstration for access to healthcare

Middle: Mitchell School Field Trip

Bottom: *Ukweili* Book Discussion

Bottom Right: CAJM Community Problems Assembly





Social Justice Memories

Top: Habitat for Humanity Groundbreaking Ceremony

Middle: Mitchell School Field Trip

Bottom: Earth Day Service with Kelly Thorvalson, SC Aquarium

Bottom Right: Pride Parade





Vestry Board Chair Letter

The Vestry is the Board of Directors for the Unitarian Church in Charleston. We are comprised of nine elected members including the Chair, two Vice-Chairs, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The members of the Vestry Board of the Unitarian Church in Charleston work within the approved policies of the Vestry Board and the UC-CHS Constitution in order to fulfill the church's mission: "The Unitarian Church in Charleston is an inclusive community of inspiration, love, and service committed to creating a better world."

We have had a number of significant accomplishments this year with the highlight being our celebration of Rev. Rebecca's official installation as our settled minister on May 7, 2022, the culmination of her first-year tenure beginning with her call to serve the church, and her acceptance, on May 2, 2021.

We also held a highly successful workshop with Laura Park, Unitarian Policy Governance consultant, in February resulting in the full adoption of Policy Governance on March 24. This created an integrated set of policies, separating out policies from procedures. These policies will be used in conjunction with the church mission and the Ends statements created by the Congregation and adopted by the Vestry Board on December 23.

Those Ends Statements are:

In order to fulfill its Mission and in congruence with its Values, the Unitarian Church in Charleston will be:

1. A community of love, integrity, and inspiration;
2. A spiritual home that accepts others and welcomes everyone of good will;
3. A church that supports members in spiritual practices that nurture reverence, connection and joy;
4. A leader and partner in achieving social justice;
5. An attractive and vibrant spiritual home that retains current and new membership;
6. A community where people are actively engaged in church life;
7. A church that has the human and financial resources to fulfill our mission.

These adopted policies and Ends will help the Vestry Board stay on track to make decisions for the good of the whole organization, constantly keeping the financial well-being of the church front and foremost, maintaining fiscal integrity with the help of professional staff and the minister. We will do this by using a "perpetual calendar" specifically designed for the Vestry Board to help measure our progress in achieving our Ends. You should expect to see at least one survey in the spring of 2023 to see how you, the Congregation, think we are doing.

contd.

From the Vestry Board contd.

We also anticipate that the newly installed Vestry Board for 2022-23 will continue to work on revisions to the Constitution to align it with the newly adopted policies through an Ad Hoc Constitutional Task Force.

I would be remiss in not mentioning the magnitude of the full reopening of our church after the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic at the beginning of March. This marked a huge turn towards the better and it was a joy to be together again! Shortly after reopening our doors fully and with the help of our Executive Director Sandra Selvitelli, and Stewardship Chairs Jack Hurley and Karen Abrams, as well as Finance Manager Christine Magnarella Ray and many volunteers, we held a successful stewardship campaign resulting in the raising of 92% of our goal. With a dedicated team of staff and volunteers who all worked together, the drive was both fun and inspiring, and we thank them for their creativity and dedication.

I have enjoyed working closely with Rev. Rebecca and Sandra Selvitelli, but I wanted to remind our congregation that all of our staff brings incredible energy and competency to the activities in the church.

Regina Ruopoli continues to produce the weekly Gateway e-newsletter and updates, as well as the Order of Service; Joe McCormack has returned as a part-time facilities manager, and it is good to see him around our campus again; Owen Reidesel has done an excellent job moving Sunday hospitality inside or outside depending on weather and safety (COVID) needs. Danielle Lopez created many multi-generational events for hands-on social service projects including beach clean-ups and Habitat for Humanity builds. Last but not most certainly not least, we want to thank Susan Conant, Music Director, for all her many contributions to the church as she retires from this position, though she promises not to leave the church. We look forward to hearing her continued creative musical contributions to our programming.

It has been my privilege and delight to serve as Vestry Board Chair this church year.

**Hillary Hutchinson
Vestry Board Chair 2021-22**

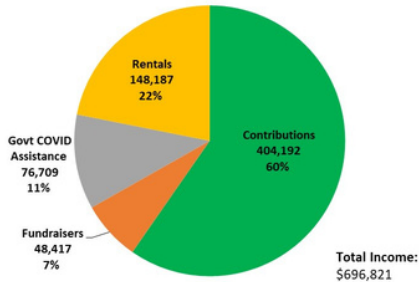


Vestry Board 2021-2022

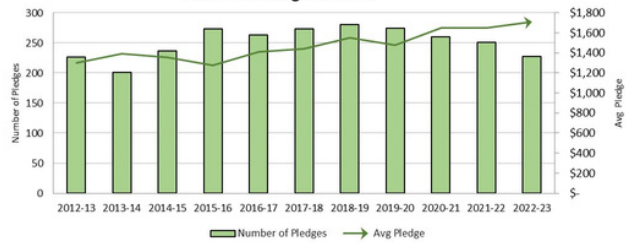
Back to Front: Suzanne Hardie (*Zoom*), Bob Egelson, Laura Park (*UUA Consultant*), Jeffrey Fleming, Ren Manning, Kathleen King, Diane Boyer, Bill Walsh, Priscilla Shumway, Hillary Hutchinson, and Rev. Rebecca Hinds (photo taken by Sandra Selvitelli)

Finances at a Glance

2022-23 INCOME SOURCES
July '21 - May '22



Number and Average Amount of Pledges
2012-13 through 2022-23



Endowment Investment Board

The Endowment Investment Board members are John Jamrogowicz, Richard Hayes, Steve Wilson, Fred Himmelein, Ellie Setser and Clarence Manning (ex officio as Treasurer). Terry Walsh (consultant) calculates the protected inflation adjusted principle distributions for the shares of the funds that are used for the Social Justice Committee, the Churchyard funds, the Music Committee and the Unrestricted funds. John Warren is ex-officio consultant with Baird Investments. This year a significant percentage of funds was transferred into ESG investments.

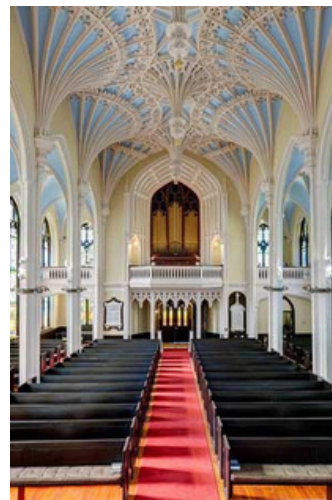
Policies were rewritten and clarified with the help of Clarence Manning and Fred Himmelein and were adopted by the EIB and approved by the Vestry.

Ellie Setser and Steve Wilson will go off the EIB on June 30, 2022. Bill Finn and Clarence Manning were elected to the EIB by the congregation in May and will begin service on June 30, 2022 along with the treasurer of the Vestry.

Funds based on the value of the distributions calculated on December 31, 2021, will be distributed at the end of the fiscal year. The EIB will distribute 5% of the actual value of unrestricted funds (\$52,819-\$6,000 already used for the new policy governance of the Vestry), Social Justice (\$9,614), Churchyard (\$6,221) and Music (\$4,037).

Unrestricted funds may be used for capital improvements or other special projects to enhance the mission of the Church, but not for the budget of the Church except in extraordinary circumstances outlined in the policies.

Ellie Setser, Chair





From the Executive Director

I am so grateful to Rev Rebecca and thrilled that we have welcomed her as our settled minister. She is terrific to work with! I am also grateful to our committed Vestry Board and all of the staff and congregant volunteers I have the pleasure of working with.

I would like to give a special thanks to the staff members that report to me. They are all wonderful and dedicated folks who jump in, work hard and always keep us moving forward.

Regina Ruopoli who has beautifully streamlined our communications. From the Gateway newsletter, to updates on the website, social media, and printed collateral she does a really impressive job of keeping everything organized and easy for people to find and understand.

Christine Magnarella Ray who has not only streamlined our financials and the reporting of them but found and got us two Government loans related to COVID and had them forgiven, resulting in over \$75,000 in our pocket! On a personal note, we are humbled that Christine worked so seamlessly through a difficult year personally and we are very thankful for her dedication and good health.

We are excited that Joe McCormack has rejoined us, now as our Facilities Manager. He will be with us on Sundays over the summer but will primarily work Fridays and Saturdays as a point of contact for contractors, oversee our cleaning crew, report maintenance issues and help volunteers and event setup.

Owen Reidesel joined our team this year to coordinate Sunday hospitality, and that has been a really nice transition. Our formerly known "Sexton" position was a hodgepodge of duties and this separation of duties is proving fruitful.

Susan Findlay also reports to me as our Events and Wedding Coordinator. Sue does a super job and has seen us through a ton of weddings and concerts this year. I don't think she has missed a single one!

As your Executive Director, a big part of my job is monitoring the finances of the church. I am pleased to report that overall, our finances are in good shape, and I wanted to highlight a few in this report.

The churchyard ghost tours are exclusively booked with Buxton Books Touring and their revenue has skyrocketed. In 2018, we budgeted for a \$5,000 profit from them and for fiscal year 2023, we are expecting \$34,000.

The Buxton's also rent our apartment which has been a dream for the fact that they are low maintenance tenants and we have established a great working relationship. We are working with them on ideas for paid book discussions in both the Sanctuary and Gage Hall, other event rentals and even a potential "banned book" book club for our teens.

contd.

From the Executive Director contd.

As I mentioned before, Susan Findlay has been extra hard at work with around a dozen weddings and over 35 candlelight concerts!

Our parking rental is also very strong. We have new 3-year contracts with Charleston Day School and Southeastern Management.

Gage Hall rentals are steady, and we have even contracted with a local food truck to bake in the kitchen very early weekday mornings.

Charleston Day School still uses Gage Hall regularly and I am happy to report that despite some staff changes there our working relationship is as strong as ever. We are lucky to have them as our neighbors.

I cannot go without a huge thank you to all that made our Auction the biggest success in our history! There were lots of dedicated folks involved but I want to give a special thanks to both Susan Garrison and Terry Walsh. With their dedication and hard work, we were able to expand and grow and rethink in ways we never would have before. COVID forced us to think outside of the box but lots of hard work made it successful!

Lastly and most importantly, I want to give a huge shout out about Stewardship. Not only did we have an amazing team of volunteers helping but we ended our drive at 92% of our goal with 226 pledges received to date averaging \$1,768. Although this was the lowest number of pledges received since 2013, the average pledge this year was the second highest amount going back at least that far, demonstrating not only the 2-year impact on our membership but also the generosity, spirit and dedication of our congregation. Over 70% of our budget comes from our member and friend pledges so thank YOU!



On top of that, we had the best time ever! It's not often churches look back at their year and say, wow, stewardship sure was fun! With a flash mob, a "Travoltameter," chili cook-off, an ice cream social and more we really did have fun. The team and I felt that with two years of COVID, it was more important than ever to remind people how much fun we can have together!

While it's obvious that we need to re-grow our membership, we are so fortunate for our strong financial footing and that the seeds are planted for growth with excitement around our settled minister and hard-working and creative staff, resumption of in-person gatherings and an energized, optimistic congregation that others will want to join.

I cannot contribute this report without recognizing Ren Manning who has been our Assistant Treasurer/Treasurer for three years. He helped tremendously as we navigated ministerial changes, COVID concerns, and changed our finance systems and reporting. He is not only an incredibly intelligent and dedicated church member, but a supportive and cherished friend. Christine Magnarella Ray and I have thoroughly enjoyed collaborating with him.

Under Policy Governance, I have multiple teams that I work closely with. These teams include the Alliance, Archives, Auction, Buildings & Grounds, Churchyard, Docents and Stewardship. Please see their reports on the coming pages.

Sandra Selvitelli
Executive Director



Executive Teams

Alliance:

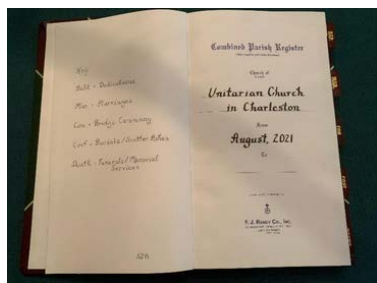
Alliance President Susan Garrison reports that their fellowship to the church and the community is still going strong. This wonderful group of volunteers helped all year with special events like our annual Easter brunch, a first-ever Christmas wreath fundraiser led by Priscilla Shumway, a sidewalk book sale and our first return to an indoor rummage sale since COVID began, resulting in sales of \$1,000! The Alliance has had to be creative and continues to redefine themselves to stay current with the times and recruit new members. In addition to supporting the church, members of the Alliance vote on community non-profits to support financially as well.

This year, they were pleased to offer support to the Charleston Area Justice Ministry (CAJM), My Sister's House, Tri-County S.P.E.A.K.S (formerly People Against Rape), Pet Helpers, and Planned Parenthood.

Archives:

Team members Randi Hoffman, Susan Robinson, Gail Schiffer and Rose-Marie Williams report that their activities this year largely revolved around catching up on filing, making sure that church documents were properly catalogued and placed in the appropriate file for future reference. They also completed an inventory of all church paper documents, disposing of those no longer needed and placing the others in appropriate storage. In addition, they bought a proper register for recording Dedications, Marriages, Memorial Services, and Scattering of Ashes which we will be giving to Rev. Rebecca soon. A new initiative this year has been a quarterly column in the Gateway e-newsletter titled *Archclips* where they share some of the snippets of our history that they find as they work. (Please see the Appendix A.)

While archival work is detail-oriented and at times intense, this team has a lot of fun together, and would welcome new members who have a love of history, particularly as it relates to our church. The team looks forward to having more time to create exhibits and other ways of sharing the remarkable story of our congregation and its building.



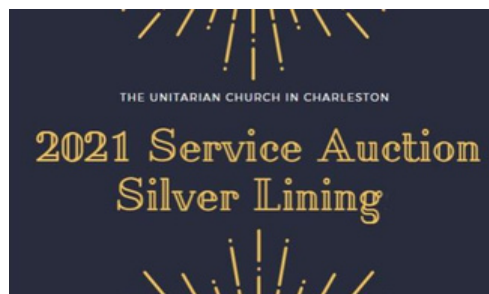
New Register for Rights of Passage

Auction:

Outside of actual church services and events, the Auction team has had to learn to pivot with COVID the most.

What were once an all in-person events, went fully virtual for two years. Led by Susan Garrison and Terry Walsh, we decided to have the Silent Auction at our typical time in November, fully virtual, and then hold off for an in-person Live Auction with the hope that COVID would subside, and we could be together. Alas, we were not able to do this and held our Live Auction online as well. This was quite an accomplishment to pull off! Thanks to donors, bidders, and a lot of behind-the-scenes work, we were able to have our most successful Auction to date!

Proving that there are, indeed, Silver Linings! The changes that were forced upon us allowed us to rethink the future of the Auction and we have decided that this upcoming November, we will have a full week of the Silent Auction virtually and then a 2-day Live Auction online event that will focus on items like our wonderfully successful dinners. We will wrap up with a celebratory Sunday brunch and item pickup. Remember the Auction if you are moving – we always appreciate your generous donations!



Buildings & Grounds:

Under the guidance of Sandra Selvitelli and Judy Manning, the volunteer team and Joe McCormack have primarily worked to get our buildings back up and running after a year-and-a-half away due to COVID. This includes initiatives to ensure regular maintenance of items around the campus, including safety items, are documented and performed properly. With volunteer and staff involvement, along with a healthy campus maintenance budget, we are happy to report that we are in good shape. Of import, Judy along with Sandra and Reverend Rebecca will be homing in on large projects around our campus that will improve our campus allowing for growth in membership, event revenue and general beautification.

contd.

Executive Teams

contd.

Churchyard:

The Churchyard team works to restore the churchyard to a condition where volunteers can effectively manage gravesites, tombstones, and plantings as well as to showcase the beauty and variety of seasonal plantings and the historical significance of the space. This year, the team under Bob Jontos and Stan Boyer, consisted of Sarah Cothran (recording secretary), Karen DelPorto, Krystina Deren, Stan Hunton, Tom Ivey, Pat Jontos, Scott Morgan, Laura Moses (communications), and Sharon Strong. The team reports that regular maintenance and repair continues to occur including repairs to tombstones, lighting, irrigation, and other general infrastructure. We continue to hire professional landscapers to periodically assist with items outside the reach of volunteers such as the removal of trees and aggressive and invasive plants.

The team, along with Sandra Selvitelli and Rev. Rebecca continue to work with two talented landscape architects to complete a Churchyard Management Plan which will create zones for volunteer management vs. professional management, spaces in the churchyard to generate revenue and an overall understanding of what plants we have and what invasive plants we need to control.

Excitedly, we continue to learn about and plant more Noisette roses with the help of local expert, Beth Ilderton. We also were thrilled to be mentioned in an article about Noisette roses in the Charleston Magazine. (*Please see Appendix B.*)

We continue to thank our dedicated volunteer gardeners, the Eden Keepers. Their love of our garden is a true gift to us all!

Docents:

Our Docent program has been booming in the last few years. Abby Himmelein has done a wonderful job of giving our volunteer-led church tour program a real boost. On top of regular tour hours, she has gotten us included in major community events/tours including the Home and Garden Tours, Spoleto USA, and the Spirited Brunch. Abby is also creative about trying technology to reach new visitors and reports that our docent training YouTube video had 253 views. The video is a wonderful history and presentation of our church by Dr. John Newell. It was a joint project with The Charleston Inter-Religious Council for their Sacred Spaces Tours.

The program had a record number of new members this year including Valinda Dickerson, Nancy Hild, Diane Milani, Kellyanne Morgan, Scott Morgan, Nancy Hild, and Catherine Rhea.

We are all so glad they have joined the program and hope that they stay for many years. Abby let us know that 24 of the 35 members have been docents for 5 years or longer with Kay Haun, Cameron Mitchum, and Gail Schiffer reaching a 20-year anniversary as a docent! Now, that's a success story!

Additionally, the Docent's communication guru Susan Robinson retired in December after fifteen years and was replaced by Ginny Morgan. Susan did yeoman's work for a long time, and we thank her! Ginny jumped right in and has done a super job organizing many details and moving pieces for us.

We reach visitors from around the world and with a test marketing project we conducted, we show that we could increase visitor counts on Saturdays from 50 to 100 % for the day by running two 2.5-hour shifts. We would need 6 more Docents to make that happen. If you have a love of history (especially our church's), enjoy making friends and meeting people from around the world, we encourage you to reach out to Abby and find out more.

Stewardship:

This year the Stewardship drive had the most involvement to date from Sandra Selvitelli who along with a talented team of volunteers created a fun and successful pledge drive. Our goal for the drive was to have fun. COVID made getting together and having fun beyond challenging for two years. While many churches were leading their fund drives with thoughts of impending doom, we worked on flash mobs and chili cook-offs and music that makes you want to be in church and sing along. Jack Hurley and Karen Abrams along with Christine Bergstrom, John Narkunas, Mark Tesenier and Christine Williamson all took a chance and dived right in. Collecting pledges, dancing for the flash mob, planning and facilitating thank you events; there was no stopping their dedication. We would be remiss in not giving a huge thanks to Regina Ruopoli for her choreography of the Flash Mob and James and Kate Selvitelli for creating the John Travolta "Travoltameter" to gauge our success. Get ready for next year... ideas are already in the works!





From the Director of Community and Faith Development

This year provided us a unique opportunity to embrace something new. Not only did we welcome a new and wonderful minister, Rev. Rebecca Hinds, but we were ready to come back together after a time of social distancing and isolation. I think the Unitarian Church in Charleston did a great job embracing the new and the old.

Let me highlight three important and exciting successes in relation to my ministry of community and faith development.

Community and Membership

This year, the answer I heard most when I asked visitors what they were seeking in a church home was “community.” After almost two years of social distancing and isolation, people wanted community and we were excited to provide them opportunities to find it. It was important to me that we offer all types of community: spiritual, social, compassionate, and more.

Of course Sunday morning worship is the anchor in our community. You know where you will find your friends every Sunday morning at 11 am.

We also fostered community partnerships within the greater Charleston area. We regularly offered volunteer opportunities with local organizations such as the Lowcountry Food Bank, Habitat for Humanity, We Are Family, the Charleston Area Justice Ministry and more.

Within our own community, we continued to offer educational and spiritual growth programs such as Bible Study, Mediation, the Religious Naturalism Discussion Group, book clubs, and other small groups to help deepen individual curiosities.

In summary, as people were seeking a church home, they wanted multiple ways to get involved and grow their own community and we were able to offer several opportunities for everyone.

At the end of this church year we had a total of 383 members. We welcomed 26 new people, including 5 new families.

Our Whole Lives

As the world re-emerged and adjusted to life in the midst of a pandemic, we prioritized one of our most important programs for teens: Our Whole Lives, also known as OWL. OWL is a comprehensive, lifespan sexuality education curriculum for children and adults. This year, we collaborated with Circular Church and offered the program to 15 8th and 9th graders. While following unique COVID-19 protocols between both churches, we were able to adjust the curriculum based on the needs of the youth and families. Thanks to committed and passionate volunteers and families, we were able to complete the curriculum and provide important resources for the youth as they continue their spiritual growth.

contd.

From the Director of Community and Faith Development contd.

Re-Opening Sunday School

After months of in person worship, we made the decision to restart in person Sunday programming for children. This took a lot of planning and patience. We hired 2 new staff people for the preschool and nursery and we relied on a small, but mighty group of volunteers for the elementary aged classroom. We also adjusted the calendar to accommodate other big events such as an outdoor service and Easter so that we only offered programming on 2 Sundays a month.

With all those details in place, it was such a delight to see both familiar and new faces. The children were excited to see old friends and meet new friends and get back into the groove of Sunday morning at church. We kept the lessons simple and focused on fun and community. Parents were thrilled too! They knew their children were safe and with friends while they enjoyed worship in the sanctuary. On average, about 10-12 families attended on Sundays when we offered programming which included about 18-25 children in the classrooms.

On the Sundays when children's programming was not available for the elementary aged children, we encouraged the families to enjoy worship together. We invited families to assist with Sunday morning duties such as being a greeter. We hope this lays down the foundation for future family involvement in Sunday worship.

Closing Note

I am so grateful to be a part of a church that encourages new ideas and helps foster existing ideas as we embrace a season of change. With the support from Rev. Rebecca, the staff, the board and church members, I feel excited about what we have done in 2021-22 and what we will continue to do in the future!

Danielle Lopez
Director of Faith and Community Development





From the Music Director

This was a year to celebrate! Our musicians were finally able to come together in person. At first we met in small groups, masked and socially distanced, then in larger groups and then at last with no limits and everyone singing along! That first Sunday we sang together without masks was a revelation and a relief. How great it is to be able to smile at each other and connect through song!

Adjusting to follow COVID protocols required that each of us learn new skills and become more comfortable with our own voice. As the Church re-opened, our musicians returned with renewed energy. They were met by a wonderful bunch of new members who added their talents to the mix. Needless to say, music making this year at the Unitarian Church in Charleston was pure joy!

Our Music Team included the choir and member musicians, outside professionals, our regular piano accompanists Bill Gesin and Richard White, Jr. These folks were supported by our expanded tech team led by Jeremy Holenko, Music Committee Chair, Susan Findlay, and our Music Director, Susan Conant.

As we navigated from virtual to hybrid formats our responsibilities changed. During the Zoom broadcasts, which ended mid-year, I continued to supervise the technical team. When we transitioned to BoxCast, that supervision was transferred to Rev. Rebecca. But the hybrid format brought new responsibilities including proper copyright licensing and reporting of music and weekly creation of hymn lyric slides for the broadcast. The more mundane tasks continue including pre-programming of the summer service music and maintaining our digital & physical music library.

But back to the fun stuff. Thanks to Rev. Rebecca's supportive and creative leadership we experimented with new formats including outdoor concerts and services, a movable Pageant with roving musicians, dancing in the park, electronic looping, and more.

The number show our continued mission to provide a diverse and inclusive set of performances and participation opportunities including:

- 52 worship services including our biggest musical dates:
 - Opening Sunday
 - Cantata
 - Stewardship Sunday
 - Easter
 - Rev. Rebecca's Installation
- Four Outdoor services – Pageant, Church Picnic, May Day and PRIDE
- Performance of over 330 individual pieces of music
- Engaged over two dozen musical guests from all genres and including 4 School of the Arts students
- Hosted 36 choir rehearsals
- Welcomed over 25 individuals to sing in choir
- Enjoyed instrumental or vocal solos from 22 of our members
- Four *Lift Your Spirits* concerts in the Churchyard on Sunday afternoons
- Outdoor drum circle
- Brazilian Body Percussion workshops with Alva Anderson

It was a special year and one that I will cherish as I head into retirement. I look forward to returning this Fall in my former role as a member and participating musician. Special thanks to the amazing staff team, to our loving church family and to all the wonderful folks who joined in the music making.



Susan Conant
Music Director









Appendix A

Archives Team - ArchClips

The Minister Who Was for the Birds

Had you been walking down the Gateway Walk between our churchyard and King Street in the 1930s, you might have wondered about the cacophony of cooing emanating from the area behind Gage Hall. Upon investigation, you might have seen a friendly looking young man attending to his beloved flock of White King pigeons! His name was J. Franklin Burkhart, and he was the minister of the Unitarian Church. From the end of December, 1922, through the spring of 1941, the Rev. J. Franklin Burkhart endeared himself to members of the congregation with his optimism and energy, and under his leadership, the church grew greatly in both stature and membership.

Realizing that his first job was increasing the size of the congregation, Burkhart began finding ways to attract young people and children to the church. In his first year, he created a young people's society and sponsored parties for junior members of the congregation. He put a radio in the church hall for young people to enjoy, and pushed the Vestry to invest in hymnbooks so that the congregation could sing the hymns at Sunday services. To help create a good atmosphere for those services, he urged people to be on time and asked the Vestry to initiate family pews with the family names on them. He introduced evening services that were so popular that the Vestry chair commented that attendance for them was "larger than had been observed for many years at regular services." Sunday School attendance increased remarkably. In later years, he suggested broadcasting sermons and was rewarded by the Vestry's agreeing to fund this once a month. A very popular improvement was to move from a paid trio for Sunday music to a volunteer choir with a music director and an organist.

Burkhart also put his efforts toward improving the Sanctuary and Gage Hall, pushing for heating in both buildings then installing electrical wiring in Gage Hall in 1926 and in the Sanctuary in 1929. In fact, he designed the lighting plan for the church such that, according to Vestry records, "the aesthetics of the church are not marred." At one point, an electric meter was installed in Gage Hall for the moving picture machine that was used to increase rental income.

In 1925, the Vestry "approved that, as Alva Gage had made provision for a parish house to be used as a Parsonage, that Mr. Burkhart be permitted to occupy it as a home." (He had been renting a room at the YMCA). It later voted more funds to paper the walls of upstairs Gage Hall and discussed a suitable gift for Mr. Burkhart and his bride. This made Reverend Burkhart and his wife the first clergy couple to live in Gage Hall.

Governance was on Burkhart's agenda. When he started, the minister never attended Vestry meetings. That changed within a few years, and soon after he suggested that the Vestry be expanded to allow for a wider representation, and that the Vestry terms be staggered so that 1/3 be elected each year. During his tenure, the congregation took the unprecedented step of electing women to the Vestry. He also proposed that the administration of endowment funds be in the hands of a small group, not the Vestry, who were to be elected by the congregation—the beginning of our Endowment Investment Board.

Outreach was another of Burkhart's interests during his time with us. He spoke frequently to local groups, and his sermon series on "The Place of Religion in the Life of Man" attracted widespread interest and enticed many visitors. During his tenure, the Gateway Walk was established, running from St. John's Lutheran Church, through our churchyard, and on to the Circular Church and St. Phillips. Our minister suggested occasional joint services with the Congregational church and the Savannah congregation, and strengthened ties to the national organization, then the AUA. In fact, in 1924, the church (along with churches in Dallas, Louisville, and New Orleans) agreed to pay \$375 toward the funding of a field secretary or executive for the Southern Conference, and in 1929, the church hosted the Annual Meeting of the Southern Conference.

All of this happened within the first ten years of the installation of The Reverend J. Franklin Burkhart in Charleston. He continued to grow our congregation and, according to one Vestry Chair, to increase the acceptance of the church as evidenced by the increase in visitors, more articles published about the church, and the request by a local paper to publish the minister's sermons.

There is much more to learn about the tenure of Rev. Burkhart, such as how the church came to sell the block along King Street that it once owned, or about his interesting campaign against blue laws and for a five-day work week, not to mention how the congregation reacted to his beloved doves, but that will all have to wait for another time.



Appendix B

Charleston Magazine Article
April 2022, by Anna Miller

Our Hometown Rose: Learn About The Noisette, Charleston's Heritage Rose Breed, And The Rescue Mission That Brought It Back Into Local Gardens And Churchyards

If there's a plant that deserves a place in every Charleston garden, it's the Noisette rose. Created amid elaborate "pleasure grounds" in Ravenel at the start of the 19th century, it set off an international craze, bearing clusters of fragrant flowers nearly all year. Today, Noisettes flourish in high-profile places—from the Gaillard Center to Hampton Park to historic churchyards—and claim a cult following among rosarians, horticulturists, and other green thumbs. So why do they still bloom under the public radar?

The story of this undercover beauty begins with planter John Champneys, an amateur horticulturist who cultivated 10 acres of gardens on his sprawling estate in Ravenel. There, he raised flowering trees, shrubs, and perennials from around the globe, including the 'Old Blush' China rose (*Rosa chinensis*). One of the first repeat-blooming roses to reach the Western world, it had recently arrived in the United States from Asia, thrilling gardeners who only knew roses that gave a single spring performance.

It's unclear whether Champneys knowingly crossed 'Old Blush' with the European musk rose (*Rosa moschata*), or whether bees made the fateful match, but scholars agree that between 1800 and 1814, an extraordinary bloom was born. Known as 'Champneys' Pink Cluster,' it was America's first hybridized rose—and a spectacular one at that. Never before had there been a repeat-blooming rose that thrived in warm regions like the Lowcountry but was also hardy enough for cooler climates.

Champneys propagated his treasure and shared it with colleagues, including his neighbor, Philippe Noisette. A French-born botanist whose father had served as a gardener to the future King Louis XVIII, Noisette ran a popular nursery on the Charleston Neck, along today's Rutledge Avenue. He continued to breed the rose, ultimately creating the frillier, fancier 'Blush Noisette'.

Around 1814, Noisette shipped plants to his brother, Louis, who quickly showcased them in his well-known Paris nursery. The Europeans went wild. "Perhaps no new rose was ever so much admired as this," wrote Thomas Rivers in his 1837 *Rose Amateur's Guide*. "When first introduced, its habit was so peculiar and so unlike any other known variety, that the Parisian amateurs were quite enraptured with it." At Louis's invitation, famed botanical artist Pierre-Joseph Redouté painted one of the Charleston-born blooms in 1820, labeling it "Rosa Noisettiana" and "Rosier de Philippe Noisette."

And thus, the new class of roses was promoted to the world with the name of Noisette. Some—from rosarians of the era to the Tumbleston family who today runs Champney's Blueberry Farm on the site of those long-ago pleasure grounds—contend that the rose should actually immortalize Champneys.

Rose breeders enthusiastically cultivated Noisettes, conjuring up dozens upon dozens of varieties in white and shades of pink. Around 1830, Europeans crossed it with a new introduction from Asia, the tea rose, creating a strain of climbing Noisettes that boasted bigger flowers in smaller clusters and new hues of yellow and apricot.

But in the end, the charming old Noisettes couldn't compete with the dazzling newcomers to the market. "People brought teas, as well as Chinas and Bourbons, to rose shows because the blooms are amazing—five or six inches across," says Elizabeth Ilderton, who has spent the last decade collecting and propagating Noisettes at her Mount Pleasant home. "Their glamour knocked everyone's socks off." Noisettes began to vanish from Southern gardens—even those of their Holy City birthplace.

Reviving the Noisette Rose -- If it weren't for one woman, Ruth Knopf, they may never have returned. In the 1970s, the Upstate gardener struck out to find a fragrant shrub she remembered from childhood and wound up a "rose rustler." Members of this intrepid ilk hunt for untended old roses—often in historic cemeteries and churchyards, where mourners planted the shrubs beside gravestones. They clip off portions of stem to root in their own gardens and work to discover the original names and histories of their "foundlings," sometimes saving these tenacious growers from extinction.

Rustling all over South Carolina and beyond, Knopf found many similar-looking roses that bloomed repeatedly in fragrant clusters. It took a lot of digging, literally and figuratively, but she finally learned that all were of a class called Noisette that traced its roots back to Charleston. She was enchanted—and determined to reawaken interest in the historic bloom.

To continue reading, [click here](#).





UNITARIAN CHURCH
IN CHARLESTON

Est. 1772

The Unitarian Church in Charleston is an inclusive community of inspiration, love, and service committed to creating a better world. We seek to inspire, love and serve with open faith, open hearts and open minds! We're active in the struggle for racial equality, gender equality, sexual orientation equality, civil liberty, religious freedom and peace. We're the oldest UU congregation in the South, and the second oldest church in downtown Charleston, SC.

For more than two hundred years, The Unitarian Church in Charleston has welcomed those seekers of meaning and purpose who are not satisfied to search alone. We gather, not because we have found all the answers, but because we wish to question together.

All are invited to join us for Sunday services at 11 a.m.





Unitarian Church in Charleston

4 Archdale Street
Charleston, SC 29401
charlestonuu.org