

Annual Report 2020–2021

Leadership Team Report

For the first time in our church history, we did “church” online for the entire year, utilizing Zoom and YouTube, getting creative in how we expressed our ministry, and meeting the challenges and opportunities of this time. Through it all, our Mission and Visionary Goals truly guided our work:

Our Mission

In the Universalist spirit of love and hope, we give, receive, and grow.

Our Visionary Goals

- 1. First Universalist is a faith community committed to a transformational spiritual path guided by Unitarian Universalism’s theology and Seven Principles. Our worship, spiritual practices, and rituals unify us, challenge our assumptions, provide comfort, and connect us to the holy.*
- 2. First Universalist is a multi-generational congregation where we connect to ageless wisdom, our ever-evolving religious tradition, listen for the call of love, and build meaningful relationships and community.*
- 3. First Universalist is a multiracial, multi-cultural, and intergenerational faith community of mutual caring and support where people bring all of who they are and welcome each other with joy. Our sense of who we are as a community of faith is ever expanding.*
- 4. First Universalist is a faith community that acts with humility, bravery, and compassion to create a racially just and sustainable world.*

Over the course of this past year, we learned how to create vibrant and dynamic online worship, welcoming people from around the country to our services, sharing

music, song, and story from staff and congregants alike, and providing a spiritual anchor during an unprecedented year. Our Artist in Residence, Aimee K. Bryant, shared her musical, improv, and storytelling gifts, and we’re thrilled to share that Aimee will be with us next year, as well. Our choir, with some incredible support from tech-savvy choir members, created memorable and moving music videos for worship, and every Sunday, the children of the church lit our chalice, reminding us of the power of our covenant to hold and guide us in trying times. We offered relevant and timely online religious education and family ministries, a variety of adult small groups, online membership classes and membership without geographic boundaries. We also learned to create—in online space—caring and compassionate end of life services, honoring and memorializing the lives of members of our community.

Over this past year, we’ve focused on becoming a “Community of Communities,” a place where congregants with particular identities and needs could connect with others for support, fellowship, and spiritual growth. We have an Accessibility and Inclusion Community, a Grief Community, a Single Parent/Caregiver Community, a community of BIPOC/multiracial youth, a UU’s in 12-Step Recovery Community, a community exploring the intersection of wealth and race, applying a racial justice lens to class and wealth, as well as many other communities. This past year, we recognized that we were all in the same storm created by the pandemics of COVID-19 and racial injustice—but not all in the same boat. And thus, in every aspect of our ministry, we sought to support those most deeply

(continued on page 2)



FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF MINNEAPOLIS

Leadership Team Report (continued)

impacted by these twin pandemics.

With the hiring of Julica Hermann de la Fuente as our Director of Liberation & Transformation Ministries, First Universalist sought to bring our commitment to dismantling white supremacy culture and building Beloved Community to a new level. Julica helped the Racial Justice Education Team reimagine their role supporting a spiritually grounded approach to racial justice work throughout the congregation. In the fall of 2020, the Board created an updated Racial Justice Resolution, which was then shared with key communities in the church for feedback and modification, before being shared with congregants in Townhall Meetings prior to the presentation to the congregation at the Annual Meeting on June 6. In the winter and early spring of 2021, over 80 congregants participated in Abolition Circles, spiritually grounded, embodied circles designed to share the rich and deep history of the abolition movement. With this gesture, we are once again finding ways to take concrete actions in support of a more racially just world.

Though we weren't in the building for any of the 2020-2021 church year, our values were alive in the work happening there and our equity focused vendor policy guided Phase 1 of the Capital Renovations and is being utilized in Phase 2, as well. Our new hiring policy, designed to ensure a deep and diverse pool of applicants, has been used in our search for the Director of Worship Arts, who will begin in early August.

This was also a year of transitions. Seth Anderson-Matz, our beloved Young Children's Program Coordinator, left his position in April to continue his education, and Rev. Justin Schroeder is leaving his co-ministry on June 6, 2021. Though there is very real grief at this transition, we celebrate that this is a "good goodbye" and that the church is healthy and strong as it looks to the future.

This has been a year like no other, and in the midst of great uncertainty, we leaned into our values and Unitarian Universalist faith. We learned to trust the fractal nature of things, knowing that what we practiced at the small scale could impact the large scale. Both the Board and Staff explored new ways to be together, to deepen their respective racial justice commitments and practices, trusting that this work would ripple out into the congregation.

Our faith and our spirits have been tested this year, but our resolve and clarity of purpose has never been stronger. As we prepare to return to in-person worship and programming (while continuing to offer a vibrant online ministry), the flame of First Universalist has never burned brighter!

In gratitude,

The First Universalist Leadership Team

Rev. Jen Crow, Rev. Justin Schroeder, Rev. Arif Mamdani, Lauren Wyeth, Julica Hermann de la Fuente, Rev. Karen Hutt and Jenn Stromberg

2020–2021 Board of Trustees

Bryana French *President*
Daryn Woodson *Vice President*
Christa Anders *Secretary*
Keven Ambrus *Treasurer*
Sarah Hedge
Yahanna Mackbee
Benjamin Miles
Dan Moriarty
Zoe Mulvihill

2020–2021 Ministers & Staff

Rev. Jen Crow *Co-Senior Minister*
Rev. Justin Schroeder *Co-Senior Minister*
Rev. Arif Mamdani *Minister of Membership & Adult Ministries*
Rev. Karen Hutt *Adjunct Minister*
Seth Anderson-Matz *Young Children's Program Coordinator*
Chelsea Bertsch *Finance Assistant*
Aimee K. Bryant *Artist in Residence*
Dr. Randal Buikema *Director of Choral Arts*
Allison Connelly *Communications & Worship Tech Assistant*
Liz Farmer *Membership Coordinator & Admin Assistant*
Julica Hermann de la Fuente *Director of Liberation & Transformation Ministries*
Franco Holder *Pianist*
Emma Paskewitz *Senior High & COA Coordinator*
Brad Schmidt *Finance Manager*
John Steitz *Audio Tech & Worship Tech Associate*
Jenn Stromberg *Communications Manager*
Tracy Van Epps *Facilities Manager*
Aj Williams *Video Editor*
Lauren Wyeth *Dir. of Children, Youth & Family Ministries*

Board President's Report

By Bryana French



Greetings, fellow congregants.

Well, we made it through the 2020–21 church year! At the start of this year, we were four months into the COVID-19 pandemic and Minneapolis was in the national news as folks took to the streets for racial justice, sparking the largest protests in U.S. history.

And for the first time in

history, the entire church year was held remotely. It was against this backdrop that the Board served as leaders of the Church.

Looking back over the year, I feel proud of the work we accomplished. Our Co-Senior Ministers, Revs. Jen and Justin, along with their leadership team, led the church with grace, focus, and commitment to our values. They realized what mattered most and focused on those key aspects, namely pastoral care and racial justice. Rev. Jen along with the Board, especially treasurer Keven Ambrus, worked to ensure the financial health of the Church and we are proud to present a balanced budget for next year that prioritizes our values. We also voted to approve an increase for Phase 2 of the Capital Campaign project—largely to improve the accessibility of the building after renovations—making it more inclusive of everyone. And of course, we coped with, and planned for, the news of our beloved Co-Senior Minister Justin's decision to leave ministry.

The Board worked together in powerful and challenging ways. We continued to work from adrienne maree brown's fractal model, where we tried to create the type of community on a small scale that we hoped to see on a larger scale. One way we did this was through our Board membership. Given two unforeseen openings on the Board, we took the opportunity to live into our third Visionary Goal of becoming a multiracial, multicultural, and intergenerational faith community. Through the visioning of Daryn Woodson and Ben Miles, we appointed two outstanding youth members to the Board and it's one of the best decisions we could have

made. Yahanna Mackbee and Zoe Mulvihill brought so much joy, humor, authenticity, clarity, and creativity to our board meetings. They have been such a gift to the Board and, as a result, to the church, and we sought to institutionalize this practice by encouraging youth representation on the Board in the future and making Board participation more inclusive. Another way we worked from a fractal model was to incorporate anti-oppression and liberation into every meeting. Blessed with the gifts of Julica Hermann de la Fuente, we held team building anti-racist sessions in the beginning of each Board meeting where we connected to one another, held our positionality, and thought critically about our work of the church. Through this process, we strengthened our ability to identify and name institutional racism and White Supremacy Practices and worked on envisioning different ways of operating. We were also intentional about incorporating joy through celebrating milestones, music, and laughter.

As a result of this fractal work, the Board leaned into revising our 2015 Racial Justice Resolution to better respond to the racial terrorism and increase our anti-racist accountability in the coming years. We worked hard with Julica and received feedback from multiple stakeholders, including the POCI Caucus, Change Team, Racial Justice Education Team, and the Environmental Justice team, to get multiple perspectives while centering BIPOC voices. White Board members worked in white caucus spaces to discuss the resolution with the congregation and hold Q and A sessions about its contents, recognizing that emotional labor of educating about racism and liberation can be particularly exhausting for BIPOC folks. This culminated in the revised RJ Resolution you will vote on at the annual meeting.

I am encouraged by the work of the Board and all that I have seen these past two years as your President. We have all faced so much collective and personal loss, and yet continue to care for one another and stay committed to our values. We need that now more than ever. Thank you for placing your trust in us.

Humbly,
Bryana French

Financial Report

By Rev. Jen Crow

Photo by Jeff Cords cordsphotography.com



The pandemic has brought unprecedented operational and financial challenges to organizations around the world. With our building largely closed and all ministries occurring online, the church has made significant changes in staffing and operations. Thanks to the continued generosity of members and

friends and a restrained approach to spending, we expect to end our current fiscal year with a balanced budget.

As we prepare for a new fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021, we are in a transitional time. With Rev. Justin's departure, the continued impact and unpredictability of the COVID-19 pandemic on our lives and our ministries, and the continued impact of oppression and our collective awakening and empowerment for liberation and justice—so much is in flux. While transitional times can be challenging and full of anxiety, they can also offer opportunities. My hope is that in this transitional time for the congregation and our larger community, we will grasp hold of the possibilities before us while continuing to care for each other with generosity and steadiness.

As we prepare to imagine our shared future through the creation of new visionary goals, return to in-person offerings and hire new staff, now is the time to double-down on our commitment to spiritually grounded racial justice and collective liberation. Fear could lead us to slow down, but now is not the time to pump the brakes on the momentum we are experiencing. We need each other, and we need continued intensive support as a congregation if we are going to do what few other Unitarian Universalist churches have been able to do and live into our vision of becoming a multiracial, multicultural, intergenerational faith community of mutual caring and support where people bring all of who they are and welcome each other with joy. A church where our sense of who we are as a community of faith is ever-expanding. The budget we present includes the necessary and bold support for the inclusive future we collectively long for.

The proposed operating budget includes the Board's direction to proceed with hiring a full-time minister/director of worship arts, focus our resources on youth and BIPOC needs, continue progress toward our visionary goals, and deliver a balanced budget.

Over the next 3 years, we will continue to diversify our income streams through building rentals, coaching and consulting that supports individual and institutional anti-racism and anti-oppression goals, and launching a family spiritual resource center. These efforts will support not only our church community, but our larger community. We'll continue to transform our focus so that our building and ministries are truly Not for Ourselves Alone. Recognizing that two income streams (PPP loans and capital campaign operating budget support) will end at the conclusion of the 2021–22 church year, we intend to use the 2021–22 fiscal year as a runway to help us build the needed infrastructure and staffing to successfully grow our income through consulting, coaching, rentals, and our new family spiritual resource center.

Now, for the details.

2021–22 Operating Budget

Our operating budget is a tangible expression of our values, vision, and mission. The budget presented focuses on:

- Responsible financial stewardship
- Maintaining the staffing levels needed to care for our congregation and our community
- Continuing progress toward our visionary goals, especially our third Visionary Goal which states that First Universalist is a multi-racial, multicultural, and intergenerational faith community of mutual caring and support where people bring all of who they are and welcome each other with joy. Our sense of who we are as a community of faith is ever-expanding.

There are significant increases in expenses to meet our basic operating needs. As we re-open to in-person gatherings while maintaining our online presence and accessibility, we will incur significant new costs in staffing.

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Financial Report (continued)

Changes in income include:

- Annual Giving total of \$1,200,000
- Includes Paycheck Protection Plan forgivable loan of \$102,000
- Rental income of \$92,000, welcoming Freedom School and a preschool
- Combined Close the Gap and Fundraising planned for \$40,000
- Coaching for religious professionals and congregations seeking to build anti-racist and multicultural/multi-racial communities
- Staff continue to allocate hours to the capital campaign budget for work done to prepare for and accomplish building renovation projects (\$20,000)

Changes in expenses include:

- Additional staffing for Facilities and Office Management while maintaining current tech and membership support staffing.
- A full-time Director of Liberation & Transformation Ministries (previously known as our half-time Director of Anti-Racism & Anti-Oppression Ministries)
- An increase in Rev. Karen Hutt's time with us from .25 to .33 FTE.
- Increased Children, Youth & Family Ministry staffing.
- Increased health insurance costs.
- Increased building related costs.
- A 5% increase in our commitment to the UUA.
- Continued steps to pay all staff positions within minimum salary guidelines.

Proposed 2021–2022 Operating Budget

	<u>2020–21 Budget</u>	<u>2020–21 Year End Projections</u>	<u>2021–22 Proposed Budget</u>
<u>REVENUE</u>			
Support			
Annual Giving	1,005,400.00	1,028,574.96	1,140,000.00
Donations/Fundraising	350,100.00	299,132.34	320,200.00
Released from Restriction	166,866.80	121,628.32	20,000.00
Total Support	1,522,366.80	1,449,335.62	1,480,200.00
Earned Revenue			
Rental Income	15,400.00	15,083.64	92,500.00
Investments	9,125.00	17,306.54	11,500.00
Other Income	12,333.00	19,428.00	40,000.00
Total Earned Revenue	36,858.00	51,818.18	144,000.00
Total Revenue	1,559,224.80	1,501,153.80	1,624,200.00
<u>EXPENSES</u>			
Expenses			
Personnel Expenses	1,132,050.00	1,058,879.71	1,279,499.31
Program Expenses	71,350.00	41,132.21	67,900.00
Administrative Expenses	179,737.96	127,395.52	176,130.26
Building & Grounds	113,150.00	96,327.84	100,600.00
Other Expenses	57,000.00	170,934.28	0
Total Expenses	1,553,287.96	1,494,669.56	1,624,129.56
NET TOTAL	5,936.84	6,484.24	70.44

Statement of Financial Position

as of March 31, 2021

ASSETS

ASSETS

Current Assets

Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$254,853.62
Cash & Cash Equivalents Foundation	\$11,320.80
Investments	\$2,268,885.03
Investments Foundation	\$1,896,794.07
Other Current Assets	\$17,254.59
Total Current Assets	\$4,449,108.11

Fixed Assets

Accumulated Depreciation	(\$2,581,174.13)
Building & Improvements	\$3,990,251.79
Furniture & Fixtures	\$209,884.44
Land	\$250,000.00
Total Fixed Assets	\$1,868,962.10

TOTAL ASSETS

\$6,318,070.21

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$205,095.51
Benefits Payable	\$24,697.69
Misc. Other Liabilities	\$146,602.18

TOTAL LIABILITIES

\$376,395.38

FUND BALANCE

Unrestricted Net Assets

Contingency Reserve	\$271,109.21
Legacy Fund	\$1,026,170.77
Miscellaneous Unrestricted Net Assets	\$1,744,930.30
Total Unrestricted Net Assets	\$3,042,210.28

Donor Restricted Net Assets

Capital Campaign Fund	\$536,940.67
Cummins Ministerial Intern Fund	\$293,311.49
Foundation	\$2,054,794.03
Miscellaneous Donor Restricted Net Assets	\$796,481.17
Total Donor Restricted Net Assets	\$3,681,527.36

TOTAL FUND BALANCE

\$6,723,737.64

Excess Cash Received

(\$782,062.81)

TOTAL LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCE

\$6,318,070.21

Capital Campaign & Renovations Update

This year brought significant progress on our capital campaign building renovations. Phase 1, which included renovation of our Religious Education wing and offices, was completed in November 2020. Completed on time and under budget, this first phase offered us a glimpse of all that is possible in an updated, accessible, welcoming space. Thank you to everyone who fulfilled their pledges early so that we could complete as much work as possible as quickly as possible, and thank you to everyone who painted, conserving valuable resources.

Phase 2, which includes renovation of the sanctuary, social hall, atrium, and exterior, has begun. We look forward to welcoming everyone into a fully renovated building in mid-September, complete with:

- Warm and welcoming central entrance & atrium
- Exterior tuckpointing and ramping, repair of historic steps, playground, security
- Sanctuary: improve accessibility with chancel ramp, increase space in front of choir loft, hearing improvements, livestream capacity, A/V, carpet, paint, lighting.
- Social hall: improved lighting, paint, storage, increased wall space for art and displays, AV, sound mitigation, restore original stairs.
- A new sanctuary roof
- Solar panels on the roof of the RE wing

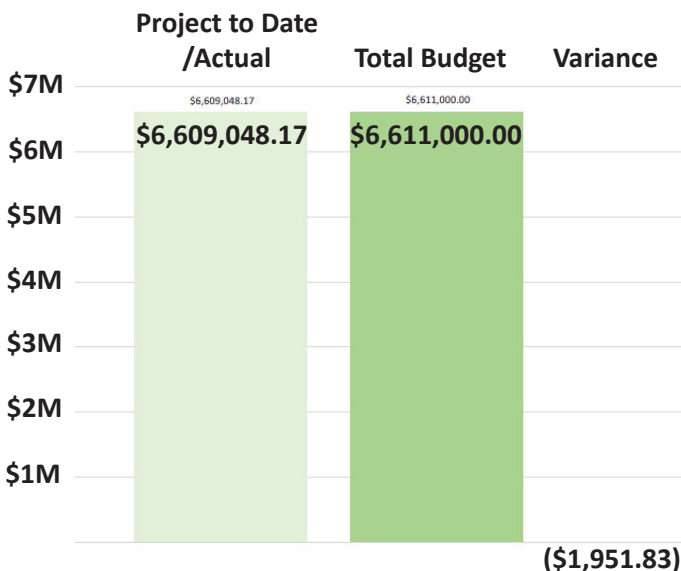
- Increased and improved ventilation and improved heating, ventilation, and air conditioning controls.
- Welcoming and accessible spaces. Prioritize spending on accessible areas, and limit spending on spaces that cannot be fully accessible at this time (balcony, Arches, 3rd floor & mid-level rooms and restrooms).

Increasing accessibility is a major focus of this phase. In March, Rev. Crow met with members of the Accessibility and Inclusion Group to hear feedback and suggestions about how to make our building more accessible. In addition to the improvements already planned, the group made a variety of suggestions (increased hearing accessibility, railings, doors) that have since been added to the project. Enhanced heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment has also been added to the project, along with enhanced audio visual equipment to ensure high quality live streaming from the sanctuary.

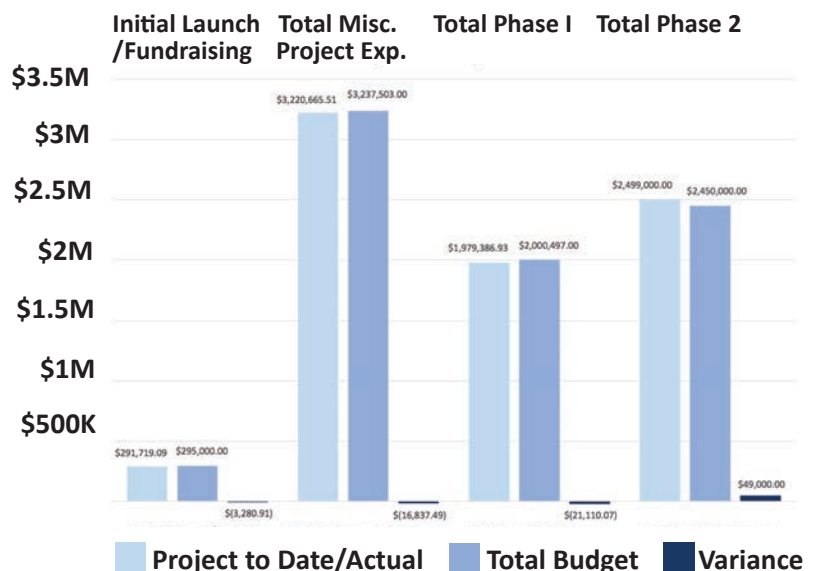
Given the unavoidable increase in construction costs and the importance of these additions to our goal of a more accessible and inclusive facility, the Board approved a \$300,000 increase in the scope of Phase 2. With this increase, the gap between current fundraising and the total cost of the project is \$1.3 million. Thanks to the generous support of church members and friends, we are confident that we will be able to reduce this gap together, leaving the church in a strong financial position.

Analysis of Revenues & Expenses: Capital Campaign Forecast

Revenue Summary



Expense Summary



Analysis of Revenues & Expenses: Capital Campaign Forecast

	Project to Date Actual/Forecast	Total Budget	Project to Date Variance	Comments
Revenues				
Revenues				
Donations	\$ 4,609,048.17	\$ 4,611,000.00	\$ (1,951.83)	\$760K of Remaining donations to be collected
Donations Phase 2	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Construction Loan	\$ 2,000,000.00	\$ 2,000,000.00	\$ -	Loan not yet taken but modeled to be taken
Total Revenues	\$ 6,609,048.17	\$ 6,611,000.00	\$ (1,951.83)	Budget Unfavorability - Due to actions not yet taken (timing)
Expenses				
Initial Launch/Fundraising				
Architectural Pre-Work	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 27,000.00	\$ (25,000.00)	
Consultants	\$ 229,030.00	\$ 230,000.00	\$ (970.00)	
Launch Event	\$ 52,689.09	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 22,689.09	
Printing/Supplies	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ -	
Total Initial Launch/Fundraising Expenses	\$ 291,719.09	\$ 295,000.00	\$ (3,280.91)	Budget Favorability - This phase is complete
Miscellaneous Projects				
Architect Fee	\$ 187,765.87	\$ 166,795.87	\$ 20,970.00	Over Budget
Debt Retirement	\$ 649,151.38	\$ 649,151.38	\$ -	
Merchant Services	\$ 4,108.96	\$ 5,000.00	\$ (891.04)	Under Budget - At this point
Misc. Capital Expenditures	\$ 83,538.87	\$ 79,555.75	\$ 3,983.12	Over Budget
Staff Salaries	\$ 54,100.43	\$ 95,000.00	\$ (40,899.57)	Under Budget - At this point
Tuckpointing	\$ 122,000.00	\$ 122,000.00	\$ -	On Budget
Loan Principal	\$ 2,000,000.00	\$ 2,000,000.00	\$ -	Yet to be paid but model to be paid
Loan Interest	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 120,000.00	\$ -	Yet to be paid but model to be paid
Contingency	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Total Miscellaneous Projects Expenses	\$ 3,220,665.51	\$ 3,237,503.00	\$ (16,837.49)	Budget Favorability - Primarily due to actions not yet taken (timing)
Phase 1				
Architect Fee	\$ 134,872.70	\$ 134,372.00	\$ 500.70	Over Budget
Flannery	\$ 1,525,804.00	\$ 1,521,669.00	\$ 4,135.00	Over Budget
Flannery Permits	\$ 19,614.13	\$ 19,614.00	\$ 0.13	On Budget
Misc. Consultants	\$ 14,381.00	\$ 14,381.00	\$ -	On Budget
Misc. Construction	\$ 72,212.00	\$ 53,559.00	\$ 18,653.00	Over Budget
Owners Representative	\$ 87,654.10	\$ 87,654.00	\$ 0.10	On Budget
Owner Supplied Systems	\$ 124,849.00	\$ 169,248.00	\$ (44,399.00)	Under Budget
Total Phase 1 Project Expenses	\$ 1,979,386.93	\$ 2,000,497.00	\$ (21,110.07)	Budget Favorability
Phase 2				
General Contractor	\$ 1,495,000.00	\$ 1,450,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	Over Budget
General Contractor - Board Approved Increase	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 300,000.00	\$ -	Board Approved Increased Spending
Consulting Fees	\$ 240,000.00	\$ 265,000.00	\$ (25,000.00)	Under Budget - At this point
Owner Supplied Systems	\$ 203,000.00	\$ 140,000.00	\$ 63,000.00	Over Budget
Solar Panels	\$ 111,000.00	\$ 105,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	Over Budget
Contingency	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 190,000.00	\$ (40,000.00)	Under Budget - At this point
Total Phase 2 Project Expenses	\$ 2,499,000.00	\$ 2,450,000.00	\$ 49,000.00	Budget Unfavorability - Primarily due to overspend
Total Expenses	\$ 7,990,771.53	\$ 7,983,000.00	\$ 7,771.53	Total Budget Unfavorability - Primarily due to actions not yet taken (timing)
Net Revenue Minus Expenses	\$ (1,381,723.36)	\$ (1,372,000.00)	\$ (9,723.36)	
Total Rebates	\$ 50,253.00			
Total Net Revenue Minus Expenses	\$ (1,331,470.36)			
% Budget over/(under):	16.68%			

Rebates	
Greenshare Solar Rebate	\$ 9,344.00
MCC BEEGP	\$ 3,000.00
MPLS GCS	\$ 14,894.00
Centerpoint and Xcel	\$ 13,015.00
Estimated LED Phase 2	\$ 5,000.00
Estimated HVAC Phase 2	\$ 5,000.00
Total Rebates	\$ 50,253.00

Recommendations from the Nominating Committee for 2021–2022

Boldface type indicates those who require a vote by the congregation

POSITION	NAME	TERM EXPIRES
Board of Trustees		
New trustees (three-year term)	Matt Keller	2024 (first term)
	Rebecca Slaby	2024 (first term)
	Cathy Geist (two year term)	2023 (first term)
Continuing Trustees	Keven Ambrus	2024 (second term)
	Bryana French	2023 (second term)
	Sarah Hedge	2023 (first term)
	Benjamin Miles	2022 (first term)
	Dan Moriarty	2022 (first term)
	Daryn Woodson	2022 (first term)
Officers (one-year term)	Daryn Woodson, President	
	Dan Moriarty, Vice President	
	Keven Ambrus, Treasurer	
	Sarah Hedge, Secretary	

Foundation Board		
Chair (one-year term)	Janet Merrill	
New Members (three-year term)	Janet Merrill	2024 (first term)
	Bonita Hill	2024 (first term)
	Rui Rui Bleifuss (one year term)	2022 (first term)
	Deborah Talen (two year term)	2023 (first term)
Continuing Members	Ginny Halloran	2024 (second term)
	Suzan Klein	2023 (second term)
	Anne McBean	2023 (second term)
	Jared Cruz	2022 (first term)
	Roberta Haskin	2022 (first term)

Nominating Committee		
Chair (one-year term)	<i>Appointed by Board of Trustees</i>	
New Members (three-year term)	Evelyn Browne	2024 (first term)
	Susannah Marshall	2024 (first term)
Continuing Members	Jim Ramnaraine	2023 (second term)
	Ray Dillon	2023 (first term)
	Valerie Garber	2022 (first term)
	Cathy Manning	2022 (first term)

Delegates to the 2021 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Martha Easter-Wells, Liv Dalby

Nominating Committee Recommendations

Nominees for Officers of the Board of Trustees



Daryn Woodson, President

Daryn has been consistently attending First Universalist since she moved back to Minnesota in the summer of 2017. She also used to attend First U from 2007–2008 until she moved away to Japan to pursue a career in teaching and education. Since her return, she has gotten involved with the church by participating in monthly POI circles, being a Worship Associate, and acting as a mentor for the Coming of Age program. She joined the Board in 2019. Daryn’s greatest passions lie within the areas of: traveling (especially to Paris), working with youth, education, and actively fighting systems of oppression and anti-blackness through racial and social justice work.



Dan Moriarty, Vice President

Dan became a member of First Universalist in 2009, along with his wife Martha and two children, Ailee and Keenan. He joined the church pledge team the very next year for a three year stint of stewardship. Over the years Dan has been also been active as an RE teacher, usher, greeter, small circle, and welcome team member. He runs a web agency called Electric Citizen, with a focus on serving clients in the civic sector, including nonprofits, education, government, arts and science. Outside of work, Dan enjoys listening to music, attending indie rock shows, visiting local restaurants and breweries, and reading good books. He is looking forward to continuing his family’s support of First Universalist Church.



Keven Ambrus, Treasurer

Keven and his wife, Jill, joined the church when their two daughters Muriel (20) and Leila (18) were little girls. After watching the girls grow up in the church and Jill become more active with the Racial Justice program, Keven decided his contribution would be volunteering to be a worship associate. Professionally, Keven has worked in the finance arena for over 25 years and really enjoys his work. One of the things that Keven is proudest of is the fact that he was raised by a strong Black woman who taught him the value of education, family, and love.



Sarah Hedge, Secretary

Sarah has been attending First Universalist since 2002. Her three children have been Religious Education participants and staff: Hirut (20), Helen (17), and Binyam (14). Over the years, Sarah has been involved in a variety of ways at church: advocating for anti-racist practices with the Change Team, co-facilitating and chaperoning Youth Cultural Exchange, teaching 7th grade Neighboring Faiths, serving as chaperone on the high school Boston Pilgrimage, and many years ago, facilitating the Young Adult Group. Sarah is a special education resource teacher, currently focused on including kindergarteners with a variety of disabilities in mainstream classrooms, at a community school in Minneapolis Public Schools. She continuously strives to bring a lens of equity and access to all she does.

Nominating Committee Recommendations

Nominees for Board of Trustees



Cathy Geist

Cathy became a member of First Universalist in 2018 after attending the church for several years. As she continued to attend the Sunday services and get to know some of the congregation, she began to have a sense of coming home to a church that truly nurtured her spirituality. She enjoyed being a part of the Soul Matters group (2018) and the Wellspring program (2018–19) and has also participated in some activities with the Environmental Justice Team. Professionally, Cathy was a teacher for more than 40 years. Initially she taught high school biology and then became a teacher in the Safe and Drug Free Schools Program in St. Paul Public Schools. After earning a graduate degree in Conservation Biology in 1997, she became a Biology/Environmental Science instructor at a local community college. At the heart of her teaching is her love for all of life. Cathy has been especially happy to see and learn about the seventh principle of Unitarian Universalism: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.



Matt Keller

Matt has been attending First Universalist since 2009. Two of his three daughters, Sophie and Tess, attended Religious Education up through the OWL program. Matt has been involved in UU volunteering since joining. He was a Religious Ed teacher for 5 years; helped in strategic planning around the Sunday morning experience; was on Rev. Ruth's advisor group as she readied herself for ministry; and is currently a Care Companion. Matt works in children's publishing and plays trombone in a couple of bands. He loves the mission and activist nature of First Universalist and believes that you need to get involved in your own unique way to make a difference for yourself and others.



Rebecca Slaby

Rebecca and her family have been coming to First Universalist since 2016, drawn to the racial justice commitment of the church and the openness of the UU community. Rebecca's children, Emma (15) and Clara (10), have been involved in RE and volunteered with Families Moving Forward. Rebecca served on the Racial Justice Education Team for a year, co-facilitating one of the first Beloved Conversations workshops. She has also been involved in the BIPOC spiritual circle and the BIPOC Caucus. In her professional life, Rebecca was a middle school teacher for 15 years before coming to AMAZEworks, a nonprofit that provides anti-bias education curriculum, programs, resources, and tools for schools and other organizations. She is excited to use her equity, social/racial justice lens on the board to support the mission and vision of the church.

Nominating Committee Recommendations

Nominee for First Universalist Foundation Board and Chair of the First Universalist Foundation Board



Janet Merrill

Janet has been attending First Universalist since 2010, when she and her husband, Steve, moved to Minneapolis from Bismarck, N.D., where they had attended a small UU Fellowship. Over the years Janet has been involved in a variety of ways at the church, including volunteering in the RE pre-school, heading a greeter team, leading a small ministry group, attending Wellspring, and being on the board of the Thursday Daytime Connections senior group. She has volunteered to serve on the memorial reception team for several years. Janet is a retired teacher and, retired Guardian ad Litem, representing children in court for neglect and abuse cases. She is the trustee for the special needs trust of her brother who has disabilities. Janet is interested in the work of the Foundation Board in furthering the commitment of the church to equity for all.

Nominees for First Universalist Foundation Board



Bonita Hill

Bonnie Hill is a long term member of First Universalist Church, joining with her husband George Dow, in 1986. They were married at Unity Church in St. Paul, and brought up their three children in the RE program here at First Universalist. She is a retired Family Physician, having worked at Park Nicollet, and at Lakeview Clinic in Chaska, a total of 35 years. She has a longstanding interest in giving back, similar to her parents, who joined the White Bear UU church about the time she was born. At First Universalist Bonnie has been on the Visual Arts committee, co-chaired an Intern Minister Committee, and co-chaired an Annual Giving Drive. In recent years Bonnie has been a board member for Northern Clay, and is currently on the Advisory Board for Audubon Minnesota, with birding as a newly found hobby. Other volunteer work includes Immigration Court observation, service dog training, and fifteen years as a member of a senior tap dance group, which performs at senior living facilities. She believes in the Foundation's criteria for grant recipients, and looks forward to the challenge of matching local worthy organizations with our available funds.



Deborah Talen

Deborah has attended First Universalist Church since 1988. She raised her three daughters in the church and has been involved in many capacities in the church over the decades. She served twice on the Board of Trustees, as a member of the Nominating Committee, chair of Membership Committee, member of Ministerial Committees, a Worship Associate, an RE teacher, a choir member, a Wellspring participant, and currently serving on the Faithful Action Committee. One of her most meaningful involvements was serving on the Senior Ministerial Search Committee in 2008 for Justin's selection. Deborah's worklife has been in nonprofit management, most notably, founding Rainbow Families in 1995, an advocacy organization of LGBTQ families, and continuing as its executive director. Deborah has been a consultant with nonprofits on membership growth and leadership development. Recently retired, Deborah is looking forward for to this new involvement with the First Universalist Foundation.

Nominating Committee Recommendations

Nominees for First Universalist Foundation Board (continued)



Rui Rui Bleifuss

Rui Rui Bleifuss (17) is a current junior in high school, and she has been a member of the congregation since she was a toddler. She attends church with her parents, Sherry and Ethan, and her sister Ava (14). Rui Rui has participated in RE since pre-school, doing Neighboring Faiths, OWL, Coming of Age and the Boston Trip. You can find Rui Rui organizing and planning meetings and agendas for her Disability Alliance club at school, Special Olympics Student Board of Directors, and the Accessibility and Inclusion group here at First Universalist. When she's not busy with all that, she likes hanging out with her friends and family, baking yummy treats and spending time with her many pets.

Nominees for Nominating Committee



Evelyn Browne

Evelyn has attended First Universalist for twelve years and she and her spouse have been members for the last six years. Evelyn is a retired clinical psychologist and a potter. Before moving to Minneapolis in 2006, she lived in Augusta, GA for 12 years, where she served in the local UU Church in many roles, including as Board President, Chair of the Ministerial Search Committee, and as Membership Chair. Here at First Universalist, Evelyn is an active and enthusiastic member of the Association of Universalist Women (AUW) and has served on the AUW Board. Evelyn's husband, Bill, is a retired Army physician whom she met while they were both on active duty (Evelyn as an Army clinical psychologist). With a lifelong commitment to social justice and community building, Evelyn has had roles reflective of these interests in the many places she has lived. Pre-pandemic, for over a dozen years Evelyn volunteered teaching English conversation to adult English language learners who represented over 40 different nationalities.



Susannah Marshall

Susannah has been attending First Universalist since 2019, and became a member in 2020. She is originally from Seattle, and came to Minneapolis to help her sister with her new baby in 2019. After only a few months, she decided to stay in the beautiful, sunny Twin Cities to be closer to her sister and amazing baby nephew, and become a part of this wonderful congregation. Over the last couple of years, Susannah has been very excited to participate in Church life. She helped lead the UU the Vote effort at First Universalist leading up to the 2020 presidential election. She has also been a regular participant in several Church-offered classes, including racial justice classes, environmental justice classes, and a longstanding Soul Matters group. Professionally, Susannah is a Registered Nurse Case Manager, specializing in working with kids in behavioral health. She cares a lot about promoting health equity and providing compassionate, trauma-informed care.

Recommitment to Racial Justice Resolution

Whereas:

- The state of Minnesota has some of the worst racial disparities in the country;
- The murder of George Floyd, an African American man, by a White police officer in Minneapolis, the violence inflicted upon Iyanna Dior, a Black trans woman, and full ICE detention centers in Minnesota and family separation policies confirm that White supremacy culture (e.g., White-body supremacy, White guilt, White savior complex, White fragility, and White rage), structural racism, race-based immigration policies, colonialism, misogyny, transphobia, ableism and other systemic oppression remain pervasive and insidious elements of our community;
- We continue to experience the violation of the rights, territories, and bodies of Minnesota's Indigenous People, as evidenced by the disappeared and murdered Indigenous women, and the approvals of crude-oil pipelines that destroy ancient lands and threatens water supplies;
- White-identified communities and religious organizations, including First Universalist Church, have benefited from White supremacist systems of oppression, capitalist structures and anti-Blackness practices including but not limited to those related to law enforcement, policing & incarceration, environmental extraction and destruction, housing, land use patterns, health care, voter suppression, education, access to community services and resources, and economic opportunity, and whereas these truths impact our ability to live into our values;
- First Universalist Church of Minneapolis publicly declared its commitment to continuing the fight for Racial Justice through ongoing changes to the processes of the church, leadership, education, advocacy, self-reflection, and relationship-building in a Resolution approved by the Congregation on May 31, 2015;
- In that same resolution, First Universalist Church committed to addressing structural racism and Whiteness in the church through intentional efforts in every area of our ministry and work;
- The third visionary goal of the church states that "First Universalist is a multiracial, multicultural, and intergenerational faith community of mutual caring and support where people bring all of who they are and welcome each other with joy. Our sense of who we are as a community of faith is ever expanding;"
- This third visionary goal has not yet been realized, as measured by the small percentage of current members that do not identify as White (1-2 percent), and by the fact that some of our Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) members report experiencing our practices and services as still culturally White;
- First Universalist Church has engaged in education, training and work to learn about systemic racism and the history of White supremacy culture in America;
- Despite this education, training and work, we acknowledge that we have a long way to go before Black, Indigenous and People of Color in our congregation feel a sense of fully belonging, support and love;
- First Universalist Church has experienced success in supporting transformational change in public opinion, policies and laws as most recently demonstrated by our collective work to ensure that same sex couples have the legal right to marry and our efforts led by our Lakota brothers to return the traditional name to Bde Maka Ska;
- Dismantling White supremacy requires a re-allocation of resources, reconciliation, and reparations, and it requires individual, congregational and communal sacrifice and discomfort for those with privilege;
- Our faith demands that we continue to educate ourselves and move to action to create a more just, equitable, safe, and healthy community and environment for all;

Therefore, be it resolved that First Universalist Church of Minneapolis publicly declares its commitment toward BIPOC liberation and joy, as we dismantle White Supremacy, anti-Blackness, colonization, racism, environmental destruction, and other oppressions, both in ourselves and our institutions by:

- Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by building a diverse, anti-racist, Beloved Community, as envisioned by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.;

- Ensuring and redefining safety in our communities for ALL BIPOC bodies and at-risk individuals and communities (especially Indigenous Women and Women of Color, immigrants, people with disabilities, gender expansive people, survivors of domestic and sexual abuse), without relying on police or prisons;
- Challenging and advocating for fundamental change in the criminal punishment system/prison industrial complex; unjust immigration policies and laws; voter suppression of all forms; disparities in health, education, housing, and economic policies and wherever racial disparities are present;
- Demanding fair access to the resources and healthy environments we all need and an end to violence, so that ALL people experience safety;
- Developing a deep understanding of the need for healing for ALL (both as individuals and as a collective);
- Investing in holistic strategies for addressing violence that speaks to the intersection of ALL forms of oppression through community-based initiatives/organizations;
- Humbly following the leadership of Black Minnesota leaders as well as other leaders of color and Indigenous leaders that are aligned with our theology, and refraining from performative action;
- Supporting re-allocating resources, reconciliation and reparations, recognizing that the intersectionality of racial justice, economic justice, and environmental justice is central to our goals;
- Continuing to work with and through Community Partner organizations, whose work is at the intersection of racism and economic injustice, environmental injustice, housing injustice, immigration injustice and/or other oppressions impacting BIPOC communities;
- Holding each other and our local leaders accountable (both for their words and their actions) in compassionate (though not always comfortable) ways;
- Investing our time and treasure in ways that support these goals;
- Grounding our actions in Unitarian Universalist principles, especially the 8th Principle;
- Engaging in continuous intentional learning, especially as we willingly engage the discomfort and self-examination that is necessary to change the White supremacist culture present in our own congregation; and
- Staying in this struggle for now, and for generations to come, because this work for racial justice and planetary survival will not be done in our lifetimes.

Bylaws Change to Encourage Youth Participation in Leadership

Article III.1.e. The church may elect two Youth Trustees of the church to serve on the Board, in addition to the 9 Trustees elected under Paragraph a. Youth include those who are between the ages of 16-24 years of age, to align with the developmental periods of older adolescence and emerging adulthood. Youth Trustees may be elected for one-year terms, renewable for up to three times/years. There should be two Youth members serving at a given time to reduce isolation and tokenization of youth on an otherwise adult Board. Youth Trustees shall be voting members of the church and are full voting members of the Board. Youth members are recruited and selected by the Director of Youth Ministries and other youth in consultation with the Nominating Committee and approved by the Board.

Annual Meeting Agenda

**162nd Annual Meeting of the Members
First Universalist Church of Minneapolis
Sunday, June 6, 2021 — 11:30 a.m.**

Call to Order	Bryana French, President
Chalice Lighting and Opening Words	Rev. Jen Crow
Authorization of Board of Trustees to Approve the Minutes of this Meeting	
Appointment of Parliamentarian	
Co-Senior Ministers' Report / Visionary Goals Review	Rev. Justin Schroeder, Rev. Jen Crow
Special Recognition	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outgoing Nominating Committee Members• Outgoing Foundation Directors• Outgoing Church Trustees	Jim Ramnaraine, Chair Suzan Klein, Chair Bryana French
President's Report	Bryana French
Financial Report & Presentation of Recommended Budget for 2021–22	Keven Ambrus, Treasurer; Rev. Jen Crow
Consideration and Vote on Annual Budget	
Update on Capital Project and Phase 2 of Fundraising	Rev. Jen, Rev. Justin, Keven Ambrus
Report of the Nominating Committee	Jim Ramnaraine
Election of:	
Trustees, First Universalist Church	
Officers, First Universalist Church	
Directors, First Universalist Foundation	
Members, Nominating Committee	
Delegates to the 2021 General Assembly of the UUA	
Motion to allow Board to approve further delegates to General Assembly	
Approval of Revised Racial Justice Resolution	
Approval of Bylaws Change to encourage Youth Board participation	
Honoring Rev. Justin Schroeder	Board & the Good Goodbye Team
Closing Words	Rev. Jen Crow