

# Annual Report Church Year 2022-2023

St. John's  
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH



Under Construction May 20, 2023

## Table of Contents

President’s Report.....	3
Minister’s Report .....	5
Children’s Programs.....	6
Adult Faith Formation Team .....	7
Choir Team.....	7
Treasurer’s Report .....	8
Fund Trustees.....	10
Pledge Campaign Team.....	10
Master Planning Team .....	11
Safe Congregation Committee.....	14
Security and Health Safety Team .....	14
Committee on Ministry.....	15
Outreach Committee .....	15
Social Justice Committee .....	16
Found House .....	17
Communications and Technology Teams .....	17
Caring Circle Team .....	19
Membership Team.....	19
Spirit Team .....	20
The Wider UU World Team: Cincinnati, Ohio, and the UUA .....	21
Board Game Group .....	22
Appendix Children’s Programs.....	23

## St John’s Mission Statement

St. John's is committed to creating a safe and caring community, working for peace and social justice, and celebrating beliefs that respect freedom of thought.

## President's Report

### Melissa Rowland, President of the Board of Trustees

This has been a year of many changes. Most notably, Rev Mitra resigned after she returned from sabbatical in January and this caused much pain and grief in our community. While some might be relieved, it is those who are hurting that need our support, empathy and care right now. Those of us in pain need to be heard. We held 4 listening circles and ½ of the congregation participated. There are actionable items that came out of the listening circles that the new Board and all congregants will be able to use to better guide our healing process and next steps. We will continue to work from the information the listening circles generated into the new church year.

The board also had significant unplanned turnover early in the church year but, by November, settled into the members that would hold steady for the remainder of the church year. I became vice president after a resignation and then Acting President after another resignation in those first few months of the church year. I look forward to my second of the three planned years serving St. Johns as Board President, and the third year as Immediate Past President.

COVID has continued to decline in numbers. Church services, while ever changed by becoming hybrid, are less impacted by the pandemic this year than in the previous two years. Many members and friends are enjoying the improved AV equipment by having the opportunity to view services live or on their own schedule from our YouTube channel when coming in person isn't possible or practical. Thank you Roberto Henriquez, Claire Wagner, our online ushers and the whole AV Team.

The Board has worked to make board meetings more accessible with the support of Roberto Henriquez by making all meetings of the board either on zoom or hybrid (in person and on zoom) we opened up access to many members who were previously unable to attend the meetings. The Board also instituted a regular time after each board meeting for members to address the board to share their thoughts and feelings. We continue to encourage everyone to join the Board at regularly scheduled meetings see how the meetings run and share your thoughts with your St John's Board of Trustees.

Thanks to the Master Planning Team— Matt Cowperthwait, Tony Potochnik, Kathy Shell, Joetta Prost, Bill Luerssen - construction has begun in the sanctuary. Members of the Board regularly attend meetings on construction updates and Matt offers a construction update at the first board meeting of each month. So far progress has been smooth and on schedule. We look forward to the sanctuary completion later this summer. After that we will begin planning for additional repairs and improvements in other areas of the building.

Our capital campaign team, Joetta Prost and Bill Luerssen, with the help of very generous members and friends, was a huge success! We exceeded our stretch goal of 1 million dollars and have already seen nearly 50% of the funds show up in the church accounts. This has given us confidence that we could move forward with construction without the need of a large bridge loan.

St. John's auction had many choices of events, wine, food, jewelry, and art of all kinds. We raised over \$7,000 this year and many of us will look forward to events purchased at the auction for many months to come. Thanks to Erin Zoller and her team of volunteers, as well as all who donated and purchased.

St. John's members participated in wider faith community events including the Building the World We Dream About class led by our own, Joetta Prost and Linnea Lose of First Unitarian Church. St. John's was well-represented in the UU Council of Greater Cincinnati and participated in a combined service with the other local congregations to bring UUSC Mary Katherine Morn to share with all Cincinnati UU congregations what good work our support is funding. The Sanctuary and Immigration Team (SIT) participated in Global Stews. Wanda Crawford advocated for and the board voted in favor of making the commitment to become a host congregation for Found House, to deepen our support for Cincinnati area families struggling with housing. We look forward to our first host week in October of 2023.

Our Music Director Rob Thacker has worked with the choir to create beautiful and powerful anthems throughout the year. We are grateful to have skillful leadership and dedicated choir members. This summer marks the end of Pengcheng He's time with us. We are forever grateful for the beautiful music he has shared with us each Sunday and on other special occasions. We were blessed with his art for 5+ years. We wish him well.

Many groups of members and friends volunteer to support our church community. Property Team and Grounds Teams combined to better oversee more generally all property maintenance to include building, landscaping and parking areas. The Caring Circle helps members and friends with transportation and meals during difficult times. The Outreach Committee educates St. John's about deserving community organizations that benefit from our financial and volunteer contributions.

Team Elder (look for an official charter in the new year), led by Rebecca Crone, has taken up the task of extra support to our older members. They have helped with moving, locating and delivering furniture and have been helping with other needs that some of our older members are very grateful for.

The Spirit Team helped us to recognize this year that so many of us do good works in the mission of our faith, they had a recognition Sunday where the list of people recognized was over 15 feet long! I can't possibly include everyone in this one document. We are very thankful that so many of us have supported each other and our community through so many kind acts, giving of your time and talent.

We appreciate Nancy Greenlee, our dedicated office secretary, and Jeff Flanagan, who not only cleans and fixes "stuff" in all areas of the building during the week but also makes cookies and coffee for us on Sunday! Ashleigh Rhodes has begun to renew our children and youth programs and recruit volunteers. We now have a consistent group of young ones.

While this year has been a bit of a rollercoaster, and the Board faced big challenges, we have risen to the occasion with the support of our sabbatical/contract minister Rev. Alice Deibel and our UUA congregational consultant Rev. Sharon Dittmar. We created the interim minister search committee composed of Ann Schuur, Nancy Henry and me. We worked to create our profile, interview and research candidates and make difficult choices between several very qualified ministers. This new church year will bring changes big and small as we begin the interim ministry period. We will be very happy to share who our new interim minister is as soon as contract negotiations are completed. Stay tuned to learn more!

## Minister's Report

### Rev. Alice Deibel, Sabbatical/Contract Minister

When I returned to St. John's in September of 2022, I assumed it would be for four short months to cover Rev. Mitra's sabbatical. Little did I know I would be with you nearly a year. The first four months seem like they were a blur, with many weeks spent meeting new staff, on-line worship, and figuring out how to keep the trains running. After January and in the wake of Rev. Mitra's abrupt resignation, my focus changed dramatically.

Before her sabbatical, Rev. Mitra wrote a letter inviting the congregation to consider what St. John's is for, and how we might address Institutionalized Islamophobia within. With the support of the Adult Faith Formation team, I organized four on-line sessions to talk about conflict, implicit bias, cultural competence, and congregational systems and anxiety. The sessions were well received, but too short! I hope you will continue to work in all these areas. It will take a lifetime of ongoing relationships to live into our values. After all, isn't that what church is for? How do we live together on this planet? I also preached on this subject, once directly and often weaving ideas about community relationships into other sermons.

After January, I agreed to stay on in a limited capacity; I couldn't commit to more because I had already agreed to preach twice a month to another congregation. That is why I haven't been in the pulpit very often. The commitment to St. John's focused on pastoral care, worship coordination, supporting the board, and staff relationships. I wrote baseline evaluations of all of the staff and have asked the board to write an evaluation of me. Evaluations are an opportunity for reflections and growth on shared goals. We have a way to go before we even identify shared goals! These habits of setting shared direction will need to be cultivated among you.

None of it has been easy, but it has been extraordinarily rewarding to see the commitment to St. John's and to Unitarian Universalism. I have valued this congregation since I was with you as an intern. Coming back as a contract minister has been rewarding as well. You continue to inspire me with your strength.

In the aftermath of Rev. Mitra's resignation, the board and I organized listening sessions to get people's thoughts and feelings out in the open and try to discern next steps for St. John's. A report is forthcoming. Healing is slow and rushing through these things is not always healthy. I know some of you wanted to hold these sessions immediately, but that would have been when anger was high. What matters most to me is that we learn and grow into a healthier St. John's, focused on our mission.

I will be saying farewell at the end of July as you welcome an interim minister in August, if all goes well. May it be so. I likely will not be around during the interim period but will be available to support the interim minister should they desire that help. In all that is ahead, I wish you well. My last Sunday with you will be July 16<sup>th</sup>.

## Children's Programs

### Ashleigh Rhodes, Director

Since I first became involved with St. John's in 2018, there has been a lot of effort put into exploring a sustainable model for children's programming that meets the needs of the children, their families, and the volunteers that support it. We were just trying to pilot an ambitious program when the pandemic started, which has not been revisited.

There are still serious and important conversations that can be had about how to best serve families and children at St. John's, and what resources we have to put toward making the church friendly to families and children. For a variety of reasons, those conversations are on the back burner for now - it may be they can be moved forward in the future.

Before the pandemic, I was often asked about growing the program. I hoped to make what we were offering attractive enough that families that attended sporadically would attend more regularly, or where parents attend but children and teens are staying home or doing other activities. That seemed reasonable, and I hoped that families would get something out of the consistency of coming most Sundays as they were able.

After being rehired, the situation doesn't seem the same to me. The families that are participating value St. John's and they are attending as often as their family situations make possible. Growth would involve bringing in either new families, or families that have not attended at all in a long while. This is a more difficult task, and one I personally have never been suited for, honestly! It is something that could be focused on over time, if there is a desire to do that for the church as a whole, but it would require a real investment in the program and revisiting those large questions that are on the back burner.

As it is now, we have a small consistent group of school age children that show up most Sundays and enjoy their time at St. John's while their parents are able to participate in the service. The set of volunteers is small and mostly consists of parents and a few dedicated folks that have been involved in the program for many years. This is a sustainable but small model, and these kids may eventually become middle schoolers that attend consistently, or they may get busy and do other activities.

For this group I hope to revisit presenting themed and directed materials in the fall, based on my experiences from this year. For the middle school age range I hope to offer programming aimed specifically for them outside of the service, as well as explore OWL options.

I'd like to end with huge gratitude for the volunteers who have helped repeatedly this year, or been part of the programming team: Amy Monson, Matthew Peterson, Bill Gordon, and Alicia Rosselot.

Also thank you to the parents, who have all been very willing to help during the service when needed. Thank you for the opportunity to spend time with and get to know your children!

**Please see the Appendix for background information provided by Ashleigh.**

## Adult Faith Formation Team

### Pete Asman and Diana Long, Co-Leaders

When the RE staff position was restructured to focus on children and youth, the Adult Faith Formation Team was formed to address Adult programming. The four team members met for the first time in October to begin planning and approve its charter. The team's purpose, as outlined in its charter, is to plan programs for adults in support of St. John's Mission and the UUA Seven Principles. In addition, the team may collaborate with the Religious Education Director concerning multi-generational programming.

Early meetings focused on learning church processes around scheduling and communications, brainstorming program topics, exploring curricula/resources and learning what programs other church teams were planning. We also spent time, gathering information about past programs including Chalice Groups and Forums. We conducted a survey to help guide us in setting priorities for future programs. Unfortunately, not enough people responded to give us clear direction other than there was interest in all the listed program topics/types. Several people indicated that they were interested in facilitating Chalice Groups and we hope to restart that program in the late summer. We are also considering offering Forums once a month. Forums could be offered more frequently if a volunteer was willing to coordinate them.

We set a goal of offering at least one program per quarter. Programs supported/offered to date include:

- Working Toward Interpersonal Harmony – Rev. Alice Diebel (November-December 2022)
- Building the World We Dream About – UU Council of Greater Cincinnati (January-April 2023)
- Nonviolent Communication workshop and practice group - Pamela Wilz (February-April 2023)
- A Case for the Afterlife - Rick Mitts (March 2023)
- UUA General Assembly Article II – Joetta Prost (March and April 2023)
- Mistakes and Miracles – Diana Long & Pete Asman (scheduled for May 23 to June 13)

## Choir Team

### Kathy Rentz, Team Leader

On April 16, 2023, the choir agreed, by consensus, to have a Choir Team, guided by the team charter. I offered to lead the team. The other volunteers/members are Randy Altenau, Meg Harman, Emily Hodges, and Dave Rentz, with Rob Thacker, our Music Director, an ex-officio member.

Our work has consisted so far of . . .

- reviewing Rob's proposed budget for the music program and adding one item (covering the cost of a membership for Rob in the Association for UU Music Ministries).
- planning (a) tribute(s) to Pengcheng, whose last day with St. John's will be May 21, the date for the choral service.

- helping to recruit and review the candidates for the accompanist position (three of us—Randy, Emily, and I—are on the search team, and Emily has spent many hours getting the word out about the open position).
- helping to fill in for Rob when he's out of town.

Sometime in late May or early June, we plan to have a Choir Team meeting to help Rob think through these topics:

- Do we want a fall retreat?
- Other social activities?
- Re-organize the library into the white boxes?
- Go through the library?
- Other ideas for music on Sunday's?
- Guest musicians. Special music. Etc.?

## Treasurer's Report

As of April 30, 2023

### Chris Wagner, Treasurer

The Treasurer oversees the accounts and bookkeeping processes. Each month I review bank and fund statements, post adjusting entries, reconcile all accounts, and produce financial statements. I provide reports to the St. John's Board, team leaders, and members of the congregation. These reports include financial statements, pledge status reports, and detail listings for programs or administration.

Last year, we approved \$130,930 and disbursed \$166,815 to fund a variety of projects including the sanctuary inspection and report; major roof repairs; and the AV system implementation, as well as other projects. Most of the funding came from the church's cash reserves. This year, we continued executing the previously approved projects, spending \$12,374 on the completion of the sanctuary assessment and \$7,559 with our capital campaign consultant. No new funds have been approved or withdrawn from our endowment funds this year. Our rationale was to allow the endowment funds to recover from poor market valuations and reserve them for anticipated cash flow shortfalls between capital campaign collections and construction costs coming due. We elected to forgo implementation of a construction loan to save costs.

Because this report reflects activity through 10 months, actual income or expense items should be at 10/12ths, or 83.3%. Using that benchmark, we're above on pledge income (thank you!). Other income (building rentals, Luedeking endowment, interest) has returned to pre-COVID levels. (The auction, which brought in over \$7,000, occurred in May is not included here.) Personnel expenses were not as expected, primarily due to the resignation of the minister. DRE, AV coordinator, and child care assistance costs were less than budgeted. Office admin; music director, and custodian costs came in on budget. Contract ministerial costs (found under Religious Development) were more than anticipated. Property expense is higher than the budget due to utilities running about 8% over budget and increased security costs.



**Financial Statements Summary**

<b>Fund Balances</b>	<b>04/30/2023</b>	<b>06/30/2022</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Operations Account [Fifth Third]	\$543,578	\$133,889	\$409,689
Securities Account [Fifth Third]	\$76,137	\$73,678	\$2,459
Union Savings CDs and Savings	\$60,254	\$60,096	\$158
Legacy Endowment Fund	\$276,239	\$257,624	\$18,616
Miller-Lorentz Property Endowment Fund	\$227,362	\$212,041	\$15,322
Music Endowment Fund	\$102,368	\$95,963	\$6,405
<b>Total Fund Balances</b>	<b>\$1,285,938</b>	<b>\$833,290</b>	<b>\$452,648</b>
<b>Income and Expenses</b>			
	Actuals through 04/30/2023	FY 2023 Budget	Actuals % of Bud
<b>Income</b>			
Pledges and other donations	\$246,767	\$279,000	88.4%
Fundraisers and other income	\$4,492	\$15,750	28.5%
Income from cash reserves	\$0	\$18,522	n/a
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$251,259</b>	<b>\$313,272</b>	<b>80.2%</b>
<b>Expense</b>			
Personnel compensation	\$133,727	\$217,465	61.5%
Mission, Religious Development &	\$51,995	\$41,867	124.2%
Admin. Board & Finance	\$19,653	\$23,090	85.1%
Property	\$28,916	\$30,850	93.7%
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$234,291</b>	<b>\$313,272</b>	<b>74.8%</b>
<b>Net Income (from Operations)</b>	<b>\$16,968</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Capital Campaign Status</b>	<b>Contributions</b>	<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>Balance</b>
<b>As of April 30, 2023</b>	<b>\$493,457</b>	<b>\$8,151</b>	<b>\$485,306</b>

## Fund Trustees

### Nancy Johnson, Chair

The Fund Trustees oversee the investments of St. John's three endowment funds and ensure that the money annually available to the Board of Trustees is spent according to the charter for each fund.

The Fund Values as of 6.30.22 and the amounts available for the Board to spend during fiscal year 2022-2023 were as follows:

- Legacy:	Value \$259,094.	Available \$50,440
- Miller-Lorentz Property:	Value \$212,041.	Available \$34,518.
- Music:	Value \$95,963.	Available \$14,769.

The Board has not requested endowment money for any new projects this fiscal year.

The Fund Trustees are gathering materials on planned giving. We intend to assemble a list of known individuals who have left bequests to St. John's. We will also prepare materials with simple instructions on how to remember the church in a will.

Fund Trustees:

Nancy Johnson, Chair

Linda Heath, Secretary

Jim McDonough, Finance Director

## Pledge Campaign Team

### Joetta Prost, Team Leader

- A new Pledge Campaign Team is steering this year's campaign! Charles Spencer and Winnie Goodridge have joined veteran Joetta Prost; they are learning the flow of the campaign processes this year and will continue to provide leadership for the campaign next year.
- Because the Capital Campaign had just concluded in mid-February, we built in a brief break from "fundraising" focus and began the annual campaign three weeks later than usual, on April 2, 2023. The campaign kicked off with an excellent sermon by guest minister, the Rev. Roberta Finkelstein, preaching on the theme of *Building A New Way*. The congregation experienced one of the benefits of our wonderful audio-visual equipment with Rev. Roberta speaking to us live on the big screen from her home on the east coast.
- The campaign materials emphasized the importance of annual support for the operating budget during this time of transition when St. John's is building a new way forward.
- The Team carefully monitors the progress in receiving pledges, providing periodic reports to the Board and a projection of anticipated total pledge amount.

- Two years ago, we had a total of 168 households who pledged. Last year, there was a significant decrease in number of pledging households, with a total of 139, due to many households who pledged the previous year failing to respond to the campaign. It is a challenge to connect with those congregants who aren't active on Sundays and these days many people don't respond to phone calls or emails. This is a longer-term impact from the pandemic, and is being experienced by congregations (UU and others) all over the country.
- The effort to bring in the remaining pledges will continue in advance of the annual membership review process in late summer. During membership review, all current members who have not contributed for two years are reminded that members are asked to make a contribution of record (no specific amount); they are also offered the option of requesting a contribution from the Minister's Discretionary Fund on their behalf.
- The Board is again planning conservatively for the budget that will be brought to the congregation for approval. The Board budgets 95% of the anticipated pledged income as a best practice to anticipate non-payments, deaths, etc.
- Our fundraising efforts during the past several years have benefited from the advice and guidance received from Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Regional staff and the Stewardship for Us (UU consulting group).

## Master Planning Team

Matthew Cowperthwait, Team Leader, Joetta Prost and Bill Luerssen

### **BRIEF BACKGROUND**

Beginning in 2018, congregational leaders created a Master Planning Team to examine needed improvements to our facilities. Foremost among possible areas of attention was our sanctuary facade which had experienced leaking for some time. There were also many other ideas for how to make St. John's more welcoming and functional.

The pandemic interfered with our process, putting on hold the planning for fundraising and decisions about the possible designs that had been initially created by an architect. The Team resumed work in January 2021. Last year's Annual Report broadly summarizes the actions taken up through May 2022. That report closed with these identified "next steps".

### **LAST YEAR'S Next Steps:**

- The Master Planning team is requesting approval by the congregation on June 5 to begin a capital campaign to raise funds for the sanctuary exterior façade restoration and church building improvements.
- The Master Planning team is looking forward to gathering feedback on the Master Planning Design Options, as we begin the process of selecting the work we would anticipate performing in the years to come.

- Using the congregation's feedback on the plans, MSA Designs will be developing the details associated with the options we would like to pursue further, under the guidance of the Master Planning team.
- Formal selection of the ideas and options of the Master Plan to be performed will take place in the fall of 2022 following the completion of the Capital Campaign.
- We look forward to work beginning on the Sanctuary façade and envelope this Summer!
- If all proceeds as planned, construction on other parts of the building will commence as early as 2023.

At our June 5th, 2022 Annual Congregational Meeting, the following motion was approved as planned: "Motion to begin a capital campaign to raise funds for the sanctuary exterior facade restoration and church building improvements". (52 Yes, 5 Abstentions)

What follows is a summary of the key events that have occurred since then:

- Following the professional assessment of our sanctuary envelope, the cost for this work had been estimated by two separate architects and an engineering firm at approximately \$300,000. In order to obtain the actual cost, we paid the architect to create the detailed plans that guided contractors and subcontractors as they developed their bids. At that point in time, it was expected that bidding would be completed in late June through July, with construction starting August 1st.
- During bidding, Beischel (our selected Contractor) ran into significant difficulty in soliciting bids on the facade, both due to its unique nature, and the many subcontractors having no shortage of work at the moment. With fewer bids for comparison, the total cost came in higher than expected. The Master Planning team learned this in late July, and shared it with the rest of the congregation in early August after some initial conversations with Beischel. The bids for a guaranteed maximum price for the sanctuary restoration came to \$643,979.
- With how late in the year we received bids, and the gap in pricing from what was expected, the decision was made to delay any construction until the following year. Our contractor and the subcontractors agreed to hold this price until spring 2023. Meanwhile, because of the difference in price, the Master Planning team felt it was important to come back to the Congregation. As a result, the planned Capital Campaign kickoff was shifted to focus on groundwork. In addition, a congregational gathering to discuss the change, as well as another congregational meeting to formally vote, were additionally held.
- To lay the groundwork for the launch of an upcoming capital campaign, a special service was conducted on Sunday August 28, 2022 at the former St. John's Unitarian Church at 12th and Elm Street. For many in the congregation, it was their first time to experience our previous sanctuary, which is now an event space known as The Transept. It was a wonderful celebration of St. John's history and future.
- In order to fully engage the congregation regarding the increased cost of the sanctuary restoration, the Master Planning Team conducted a 'Big Discussion' on Sunday September 25th; the current status of the planning and all options for restoration or replacement of the sanctuary facade were reviewed. This discussion focused on sharing between congregants, and had the congregation talk in small breakout groups both online and in person. We then reconvened to discuss observations from

each group. Following the big discussion, we held a Special Congregational Meeting on October 9th and voted to reaffirm the plan to restore the sanctuary facade, with 94% of 88 members voting in favor. The Motion was: To reaffirm the vote at the special congregational meeting on April 10, 2022, to “begin the restoration of the sanctuary exterior as soon as feasible.”

- Meanwhile, preparation for the launch of the capital campaign was underway. In July, Rachel Maxwell had conducted 30+ interviews with likely donors as part of the Financial Feasibility Study. Her analysis indicated we could likely raise \$800,000 to \$900,000. Campaign co-chairs Bill Luerssen and Joetta Prost set the goal at \$1,000,000. The campaign was launched on Oct. 10 with the theme *Continue the Legacy: Build Our Future*.
- Knowing that the success of the campaign would determine other improvements that can be made to our facilities beyond restoring the sanctuary facade, members and friends were inspired to engage with the campaign. Nancy Johnson and Monica Pellman joined Joetta and Bill as part of the campaign leadership team. Thirty members served as campaign stewards.
- One million dollars was a stretch goal for our congregation - and we exceeded that goal! A total of \$1,030,000 has been pledged to date, with pledges ranging from \$50 to \$150,000.
- Given the desire to begin work in spring 2023 and the goal to not take out a loan to cover sanctuary construction costs, many capital campaign donors committed to pay their pledge in late 2022 and early 2023.
- After the success of the Capital Campaign, a financial assessment and cash flow analysis was performed of the expected pledges to be received, and the timing of anticipated expenses. Early contributions and pledge payments enabled us to have an expected cash on hand of nearly \$500,000 by mid-April 2023. Based on this, at the January 7th board meeting, the board authorized Beischel and the Master Planning Team to proceed with the restoration of the facade in early spring.
- In April of 2023, preparation and preconstruction work began in the sanctuary, and in **May of 2023, restoration officially started with removal of existing glasswork!**
- Despite the changes and construction, we have even managed to continue to host service within the Sanctuary.

#### **NEXT STEPS FOR 2023 - 2024**

At this point in time, the restoration of the sanctuary is expected to roughly follow this timeline:

- June 1 - Replacement of Glass along East / West walls
- June 12 - Replacement of Glass Along South Walls
- June 19 - Repair to Stucco
- July 20 - Painting of Interior and Exterior
- August 3 - Final Cleaning and Inspection



We know that the sanctuary is a unique architectural structure, and with that comes uncertainty in exactly how the work will unfold. However, we are optimistic and thrilled that after years of planning, we are doing the work to restore it.

We know that with the size and scope of the sanctuary work, that it will impact what other improvements may be made within the church facilities. We also know other maintenance and priorities within the church will need to be re-assessed as we start planning for those improvements.

We are amazed by and grateful for the outstanding generosity of our members and friends in supporting this necessary work for St. John's.

## Safe Congregation Committee

### Erna Olafson, Chair

Background Checks: The Safe Congregation Committee worked with Ashleigh Rhodes to establish and implement an ongoing policy in which background checks are routine for new employees, Board members, parent volunteers, and others, as listed in church policy.

Safety: Safe Congregation leadership, Security and Health Safety Team leadership, and Rev. Diebel collaborated with leadership of First Church, Heritage, and the Gathering at Northern Hills to deal with a renewed threat from an unstable outsider when he violated a court-ordered protection order by mailing manifestos to each of the congregations. The situation is ongoing with no current threat because, at present the suspect is undergoing court-ordered psychiatric hospitalization. St. John's has taken leadership in working with our lawyer, and the joint leadership of Safe Congregation and Safety will continue to monitor any changes and work with local UU congregations when future action is needed.

By-Laws: Safety and Safe Congregation leadership worked with Board members to revise by-laws about disruptive and/or dangerous members, guests, and outsiders. The revised documents were submitted to the Board and approved.

## Security and Health Safety Team

### Kathy Shell, Team Leader

The Security Team undertook and completed training of several church members in using St. John's Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

The Security Team worked extensively with the Safe Congregation Committee, in collaboration with First Church, Northern Hills, and Heritage, to manage a renewed threat from an outside person. The situation is ongoing, but the potentially threatening individual is currently receiving court-ordered mental health treatment at a local facility.

## Committee on Ministry

### Greg Terhune, Chair

The Committee on Ministry (CoM) was reformed in the summer of 2022 with new members after having ceased activity at the start of the COVID pandemic. Edie Holder, Erin Zoller, and Greg Terhune joined CoM at that time, and Gay Glasscott joined the committee beginning in February of this year.

We plan to add 2 new members in 2023 and every year thereafter. In 2024 we will have 2 members drop off as 2 new members are added for 3-year terms, maintaining a rotating membership of 6.

The church's bylaws related to CoM needed to be updated, and the policy related to CoM was nonexistent. We've been working with a subcommittee of the board to rewrite the church's bylaws related to CoM and create new policy to help direct the committee in its work.

There are many directions that a CoM can take in its work, and the role of these committees in UU congregations has changed significantly over the years. We spoke with previous members of CoM to determine how the committee operated in the past and the tools that were used.

We determined that the best approach for now is to focus on evaluating the health of the congregation using the Appreciative Inquiry model (AI). We've been looking at the various ministries of the church (worship, fellowship, outreach, etc) to identify the groups and individuals with whom we'll need to meet. We've also been looking into AI training resources. The committee members will need to be trained on AI before we can begin our evaluations.

Although we've been unable to perform any evaluations this year, I believe the work we've done this year has positioned the committee to be successful moving forward.

## Outreach Committee

As of May 1, 2023

### Deb Potochnik, Chair

#### FY 2022 – 2023 Split the Plate Recipients

<b>Month</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Amount</b>
July, 2022	No Split the Plate	0
Aug, 2022	No Split the Plate	0
Sept, 2022	Hosea House, Newport, KY	\$475
Oct, 2022	Cincy. Recycle & Reuse Hub, Cincinnati	\$489
Nov, 2022	Women Helping Women, Cincinnati	\$451
Dec, 2022	Opportunity House, Northern Kentucky	\$506
Jan, 2023	Found Home IHN, Cincinnati	\$727
Feb, 2023	Community Matters, Lower Price Hill	\$753

March, 2023	People Working Cooperatively. Cincinnati	\$675
April, 2023	Cincy Interfaith Workers Center	TBD
May, 2023	Su Casa, Cincinnati	TBD
June, 2023	Ohio Justice & Policy Center	TBD

#### **FY 2022 – 2023 Outreach Grant Recipients**

Jan, 2023	Sanctuary Congregation Coalition, Cincy	\$1,250
Feb, 2023	EPIC House, Cincinnati	<u>\$1,250</u>
F.Y. 2023	Grand Total	\$2,500

#### **FY 2023 – 2024 Outreach Committee Members**

Deb Potochnik	2020-2023 - Retiring chair
Linda Heath	2022-2024 - Chair 2023 - 2024
Charles Spencer	2021-2024
Howard Tolley	2021-2024
Anne Septic	2022-2025
Ashley Carpenter	2022-2025
Marty Harrington	2023-2026

## Social Justice Committee

### John Kachuba and Wanda Crawford, Co-Coordinator

Financial Support: This past year St. John's supported the following Social Justice initiatives and organizations:

The Women's City Club (national speaker support)	\$300
IJPC (annual sponsorship & Flying Pig)	\$650
UUJO (membership)	\$600
OJPC (membership)	\$300
Total	\$1850

#### Activities:

In addition to our financial contributions, several social justice-oriented committees, such as Found House, Outreach, and Green Sanctuary, continue to be active at St. John's and numerous individual members are regularly and passionately engaged in social justice work.

St. John's Sanctuary and Immigration Team, led by Sarah Seibert, continues to meet regularly, and has several active members. This past year members presented on the current situation for immigrants in our community and sought ways faith communities could offer support. Several members of the SIT team have been helping on a weekly basis with food distribution to apartment complexes housing large immigrant populations.



A high point in the SIT team's activities was the Global Stews dinner presented for 200 immigrants and friends at Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church, in cooperation with other churches and nonprofits working on immigration issues.

The SIT team continued to support the Kaziala family who were living in the sanctuary at Clifton United Methodist Church (and recently transitioned into their own housing). Support is now being given to a family from Ghana who have moved into the sanctuary.

SIT team members have continued to form strong supportive relationships with other immigrant support organizations in the area, including attending the Immigrant Dignity Coalition meetings.

## Found House

### Wanda Crawford, Coordinator

In November, the Board approved a proposal for St. John's to become a host congregation for Found House/IHN. Our first host week at St. John's will be in October. We will welcome 4 unhoused families in the Found House program for overnight shelter for 7 nights. We plan to host at SJUU twice a year after that.

First UCC-College Hill will lend us their cots, and First Unitarian will lend their bedding and all other supplies. This will greatly reduce our start-up costs. We also have commitments for volunteers and evening meals from Heritage UU, Cincinnati Southern Baptist, Our Lady of the Rosary, and likely First Church. We will recruit additional congregations and groups.

The FH Implementation Team (Wanda Crawford, Laura Bange, Matthew Peterson, Emily Hodges, and Charles Spencer) has done much to prepare, and we are in a good position for remaining preparations. We appreciate the Board's and congregation's support, and will have many ways members and friends can get involved.

St. Johners are invited to learn what hosting is like before we welcome guests to Resor Avenue. See monthly opportunities here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040b49aaa62aa75-2023#/>

## Communications and Technology Teams

### Claire Wagner, Communications Team Leader

#### **Delivering Services Electronically**

When this fiscal year began, we were 27 months into pandemic mode, having switched in September 2020 from delivering services via prerecorded videos on YouTube to delivering them online live using Zoom, then in July 2021, in multi-format – in-person and on Zoom.

In late March 2022, following a vendor bidding process the previous year, American Sound and Electronics installed a livestream-quality new audio/visual/projector & screen system for the sanctuary.

We began livestreaming services on YouTube from the sanctuary and having an online “usher/greeter” helping from home or in sanctuary. That works well – even better since the church hired a part-time AV-IT professional in Roberto Henriquez, who manages the equipment, has improved the AV desk set-up and streams our services and meetings.

Church meetings are mostly now held in multi-format mode virtually and streamed. We store some of our service recordings on our YouTube page so that those interested, and those curious, can see and hear them.

A church Zoom account was renewed again and in addition to several staff using it, a small number of church-related meeting coordinators continue to use it.

A team of volunteers such as Joetta Prost, Monica Pellman, Bridget Shoe and I volunteer as online ushers for services. It’s easy: more are welcome.

Bill Surber, Lyn O’Brien and Dirk Iwema helped with sound during services this year.

### **Communications**

This year I again worked with Rev. Mitra, then Rev. Alice, the board and others every week on Tuesday E-news emails and other emails as needed, all sent via a free MailChimp account. An ad hoc team of Pat Brown, Debbie Combs, Nancy Henry and I updated the list of email recipients in MailChimp, categorizing current names as member, friend, staff or visitor.

I try to keep an active presence on the church website, Facebook page and St. John’s CommUUnity Facebook page for invited participation of congregants and friends, where we can share more personal and specific information than on the public-facing Facebook page. I have admin. rights on that page as well as the main church Facebook page.

Our Twitter account is live but not active. I am the primary person who posts.

### **Church Website**

Our website uses a UUA-developed theme (design infrastructure) on a WordPress platform (technical pieces that make the design work). In September, we changed our ISP (Internet Service Provider) from GoDaddy.com to DreamHost, following recommendations in a UU tech forum, for lower cost and similar service and protections.

A website homepage is an entity’s front door. Subsequent pages let people know our news, programs and values. When newcomers fill out visitor cards, the majority say they learned about St. John’s online. When our minister left in January, we lost the great technical help of Greg Franseth, her husband. For good business practice, I removed Greg’s access to numerous church-related Web accounts.

Melanie Malaviya and Monica Pellman have helped post items to the website.

## **Internet at church**

We've enjoyed a year of good Internet access following improvements made in 2021-2022.

## **Team changes**

Team members in a spring meeting formally split into two teams: Communications, to include E-news and web content plus occasional marketing; and AV and Technology, to support church needs and assist our AV-IT operator with computers, equipment and other technical needs. I will no longer be interim IT chair, and Bill Gordon has graciously agreed to chair the AV and Technology Team. The teams will likely work together often. New members are welcome on both. We submitted new charters that were accepted by the board in early May.

## Caring Circle Team

### **Sharon Loeb, Team Leader**

Three to four members meet monthly by phone.

We continue to send birthday cards, sympathy, get well and congratulations as we learn of congregant's life events through Joys and Concerns.

Our volunteers provided meals and transportation to families and individuals who had needs. Volunteers continue to be supportive, flexible, and generous.

We assisted with all memorial events through our budget and our time. We provided information about the memorial garden.

## Membership Team

### **Pat Brown, Team Leader**

197 active members  
1 member emeritus  
48 friends  
16 resigned  
3 died

Membership has undergone a transition this year that is reflective of St. John's ministerial journey. Although we signed 9 new members on 2022 and 2 more in March of 2023, we have lost members through resignations and deaths. We also reviewed the Friends listed in the People Book and the Enews subscribers and removed many who had not come for a very long time. As of this writing (4/24), we have had 14 visitors since January 1, 2023.

The Membership Committee consists of the Greeters, and a small group of official “Welcomers.” However, anyone who speaks to a new guest and makes them feel welcome is part of this group. We like to encourage them to get the weekly E-news to know more about us. This means filling out the orange sheet with their email address and saying yes to getting the E-news. Some guests choose not to do that initially. Happily, many guests return.

Membership at St. John’s is on one hand very easy: sign the book & membership commitment form promising time, talent, and treasure. On the other, it requires one to engage with oneself and others to find their truth.

We are looking forward to engaging on that journey with many more this year.

## Spirit Team

### Lyn O’Brien, Acting Team Leader

Dot Wehrmeyer, Mary Newman, and I were delighted to welcome Melanie Malaviya to our team in 2022. Besides taking over as leader in July of 2022 Melanie learned how to update our web page. Until that point, the way we honored our Spirit Award winners was to publish their details in the eNews and send them our Thank You note. With Melanie’s help we were able to honor the latest winner on our webpage as well, and, by a click or two, showcase all the honorees since the Spirit Award program was launched.

We kept busy with our normal activities of generating and working with nominations, researching, writing up tributes, sending thank you notes, and preparing what goes on the webpage. In addition, this year we facilitated several programs.

We partnered with the Board to put on what we called “The Big Thank You” on October 9, 2022. During that service, we spotlighted the many teams on which to serve and honored all those who have volunteered past and present. Our purpose was to illustrate how many unseen hands are needed to contribute to the running of the church.

We partnered with Debbie Combs to present the Community Fair on October 29, 2022. In preparation, we interviewed many St. Johners to ask what they got out of volunteering their time and talent to St. John’s and posted what they had to say.

Our own big event, the Spirit Award Service happened on March 19, 2023. We were able to give away the tokens of our appreciation, St. John’s keychains, to truly honor our 66 honorees and we celebrated them with posters of the eNews articles, which some had never seen, and cupcakes.

We lost our fearless leader, Melanie, who moved to California, but we hope to finish filling the team and launching several new initiatives to continue to highlight and acknowledge the undaunted Spirit of our St. John’s community.

## The Wider UU World Team: Cincinnati, Ohio, and the UUA

### Joetta Prost, Team Leader

#### CINCINNATI UU WORLD

- On the local level, St. John's is an active member of "UUCGC" – the **UU Council of Greater Cincinnati**. There are six member congregations of the Council.
  - A major initiative of UUCGC this year has been a continuation of anti-racism programming that was begun in 2021. This year the UUA curriculum titled Building the World We Dream About provided a framework for 12 gatherings conducted on Zoom from January to April. The program was for UUs seeking to become better anti-racists and work to make our congregations more welcoming. This cross-congregational learning environment proved to be very enriching for the 19 St. John's members who were part of the 33 area UUs who participated. Joetta Prost from St. John's and Linnea Lose from First Unitarian have continued to serve as co-facilitators of the programming.
  - In April, the Council sponsored a Saturday potluck at St. John's followed by a joint service at First Unitarian with guest minister the Rev. Mary Katherine Morn from the UU Service Committee (UUSC). With beautiful music, an inspiring message about the international work of the UUSC, it was an uplift for the many who attended in person and online. Over \$2,300 was raised for UUSC from contributions collected that weekend.
  - Our dues to the UUCGC enable the UU Council to be a represent UUs on the Metropolitan Area Religious Coalition of Cincinnati or [MAARC](#) which works on social justice projects such as Court Watch and Community/Police relations.
  - UUCGC will once again have a presence at the Cincinnati Pride parade and festival, as well as at the Festival of Faiths, now called [Equasion](#).
  - St. John's representatives for the UUCGC this year were Carol Fencl, Pat Brown and Joetta Prost.

#### STATE UU NETWORKS

- A number of St. John's members continue to be active with [UUJO \(Unitarian Universalist Justice Ohio\)](#), including serving in leadership and engaging in social justice activism and lobbying. John Kachuba serves on the UUJO Board. UUJO's work over the last year has supported women's reproductive rights and the fight against the Ohio state legislature's efforts to disenfranchise voters. John reports that this is a time of reflection for UUJO leaders, with review of bylaws, policies and procedures, and updating the UUJO website underway. UUJO's Executive Director, Pastor Hank Osmundson, is resigning effective June 1 and so UUJO will soon be engaged in the process of finding a new Executive Director.
- Launched in 2020, [KUJJAN \(Kentucky UU Justice Action Network\)](#) represents the 900 UUs who live in the Bluegrass State, including St. John's members living in Northern KY. This year KUJJAN focused on two issues: reproductive rights and voting rights. Kentucky UUs helped to defeat the anti-abortion constitutional amendment in Nov. 2022, showing the country that reproductive rights are supported by the majority, even in a conservative state like Kentucky! During the January – April legislative session, KUJJAN worked with other organizations to lobby for restoration of voting rights for individuals with a history of a felony in their past.

## **UU ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONS (UUA)**

St. John's, one of approximately 1,000 Unitarian Universalist congregations in North America, is a member congregation of the **Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, commonly known as the UUA**. Learn more at [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org).

### **Proposed Revision of the UUA Principles and Purposes in Article II**

Beginning in early 2023, St. John's has explored the proposed revision of our UUA Principles and Purposes, which are part of Article II of the UUA Bylaws. In June congregational delegates will be voting at UUA General Assembly on the proposed revision.

First, the [Article II Study Report](#) and a [video](#) about the report were shared with the congregation in January. On Feb. 19 a Adult Faith Formation program explored [UUA, GA and Article II – What's It All About?](#) In March there was a discussion about the proposed changes with [guests Rev. Dennis McCarty and First U Cincinnati leader Tim Kraus](#).

On Apr. 23, our third program focused on suggestions for improving the language proposed by the Article II Study Commission. St. John's member Joetta Prost reviewed the UUA's process to submit suggestions for changes; then St. John's member Howard Tolley, guest Russ Araujo from Heritage UU Church, and the Rev. Alice Diebel shared the suggestions they had submitted.

In May and June, work within the wider UUA will continue, with discussions about possible amendments to the proposed language.

St. John's four delegates for General Assembly (Alicia Rosselot, Edie Holder, Joetta Prost and Melissa Rowland, along with alternate Nicole Stanforth) are interested in members' perspectives about Article II. Everyone is encouraged to respond to the [Article II Survey](#).

**How does the work of the UUA happen?** It happens because we – the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) – provide the necessary financial support through the [Annual Program Fund](#) or APF (which is sometimes referred to as our "UUA dues.") St. John's has kept its commitment to our Association of Congregations by providing our "Fair Share" contribution and being designated as an [Honor Congregation](#) for the past 18 years.

## Board Game Group

### Pete Asman, Leader

The Board Game Group met on five Saturdays during this church year to play boardgames, hang out, and share snacks. Gatherings were typically 10 to 15 people with ages ranging from young children to senior citizens. We are grateful to have the use of space at the church to have fun and make community.

## Appendix Children's Programs

### Background Information by Ashleigh Rhodes, Director

Currently I am the Director of Children's Programs at St. John's. I was hired at St. John's to work with the children in the fall of 2018, and then stopped working during the pandemic, and then was rehired this past fall. As part of my annual report, I decided to include some background from my whole experience at St. John's. Part 1 is a summary of my experience starting in 2018. Part 2 talks about my experience this past year. Part 3 talks about current and future possibilities.

#### Part 1

My family and I moved to Cincinnati in the summer of 2018. I visited St. John's with them that fall. I was raised Unitarian Universalist and had attended a number of congregations over my life. My youngest was a toddler, but I thought maybe we would have the energy to get involved in a congregation again.

Shortly after visiting I was told the church was in search of a Director of Religious Education. An absolutely beloved DRE had left in the previous year, and there had been some upheaval in the program. There was a need for a DRE, as well as someone to coordinate OWL. I was hired to be a part-time DRE, and Marie Inanli was hired on to coordinate OWL.

I had a background in education and I was very excited about the prospect of exploring children's programming that met the needs of today's families and children. I remembered doing Sunday School as a child in the 1990s, and I remembered the things I enjoyed, as well as the ways I think it did not serve my family. In particular I remembered that during the entire time we attended as a "family," my father attended services upstairs, my mom volunteered downstairs, and my sister and I attended separate Sunday school classes. I still remember my childish disappointment that my mom never taught \*my\* RE class - she usually ended up teaching my sister's. The only time I remember doing activities at church as a family were Christmas eve services - something we kept doing for a number of years after we stopped attending on Sunday. Those Christmas Eve services were the only times I attended services in the sanctuary - and those are where my memories of wonder and magic come from.

Please forgive me for restating information I have stated over and over - most members of the congregation have heard some version of this from me. In fact, after I was hired, I had many conversations with Rev. Mitra Jafarzadeh and other staff and congregation members about building a children's program that accounted for the desire for everyone to have access to worship. Volunteers want to be able to attend services, meaning it's difficult to get enough volunteers to break age groups out into separate RE classes as was historically done. Children also need an experience of worship themselves, not to mention a sense of belonging to the larger community.

UU congregations all over the country have looked at these same challenges and changes and found a variety of solutions. We spent time doing research into what was working for congregations of other sizes. Marie Inanli and I shifted to Co-Directors of Religious Life and we both worked part-time. The intent was for us to work together to coordinate provide programming and religious education for all ages, to help make sure that children were integrated into the life of the church as a whole.

We ran an all-ages children's program during the actual service, and planned events and activities outside the service intended to provide opportunities to socialize, serve, and experience praxis. Examples are involving the children and youth in the church's volunteer efforts with Matthew 25 and Found House (at the time it was Interfaith Housing Network), as well as a sleepover Easter weekend for the middle school students that was followed by a brunch that the entire church was invited to attend.

In fall of 2019 we were just attempting to pilot a shift toward a model that a number of UU churches are doing very successfully - multigenerational services most Sundays, with added programming focused on specific age groups during a separate hour before or after service.

We had just started a version of First Hour programming a couple of months before March 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States. My impression is that the church as a whole still didn't really understand what was going to be gained by making these changes - I was hoping that once we had done it for a few months, maybe it would become clearer.

Then with the pandemic St. John's shut down the physical church building, and didn't reopen it for a full year for safety reasons. My personal ability to work immediately went down a great deal and stayed limited, since I had two school age children and a preschooler at home.

Marie Inanli and volunteers kept virtual programming going for families, and provided activities that could be picked up. Some families were very consistent about participating in virtual programming, but many others never attended.

My family, over the course of the next two years, went through a divorce, two moves, and my children all switched schools across town. We spent so much time simply at home, not even seeing friends or extended family - most of my relationships shifted in one way or another, and have not gone back to the way they were. We did not attend or participate in church - it was enough to try to keep my children in school and keep one or two other activities going.

This past summer was the first time I could even consider trying to reconnect with the church - I reached out to Rev. Mitra and was told that they were again looking for someone to work with the children. I was told that Marie Inanli had left the church that spring. No programming was being provided for children during the service.

## **Part 2**

When I was rehired I suggested a program based on my previous experiences with St. John's, and the research I had previously done. I wanted to do an all ages program, with open ended theme based materials. I started at the end of August 2022 and we did two themes in the fall - one on trees and one on baking, while Rev. Mitra was on sabbatical.

My experience prepandemic was that we had a few families who showed up fairly consistently, and a much larger set of families that attended occasionally - maybe once a month. Some more than that, and some less. My desire to do the open ended theme based materials was partly based out of this experience - I wanted children and youth attending to be able to show up and not feel lost, and still feel like they were moving toward something.



My experience this year has been that a handful of families showing up very consistently, with an attendance of about 10 most Sundays, between the ages of 2 and 12, with most of the kids between 5 and 9. The kids liked the materials I created, but because of the age, didn't engage as deeply with the activities as I hoped, and weren't as self-directed as I had imagined. And also they weren't as able or willing to tell me what they wanted to do or what activities they liked.

Partly in response to this, and partly in response to the shift in direction brought on by Rev. Mitra's resignation, in the spring we shifted to an even more open ended style. I didn't choose a theme or make packets - the children chose activities from the materials we have available.

The thing I really loved about this was that the kids became comfortable really just choosing their own activities. When this age group had a packet in front of them, they just sat through and worked through it front to back, just to get it done.

With the open ended activities, I have had a chance to find out who is passionate about what, and the activities the kids are really excited about. The things that have drawn them have at times surprised me. I've also gotten to see them relax and engage with each other, and simply practice sharing space and materials.

### **Part 3**

Our children's program is still smaller in attendance than what it was pre-pandemic. Many families stopped attending, even sporadically and have not returned. However, for those families that are attending on Sundays, they show up pretty consistently, and the kids are at home in the space downstairs and with each other. I expect that to continue.

Some considerations for next year and beyond:

**High school:** We have not had high school student participation in the separate programming since I was hired in 2018. Prior to my time there was an active YRUU group that met during the service, however no attempt has ever been made to bring that back and I don't see that happening. Just prior to the pandemic the discussion was that teenagers and older children were encouraged to stay in the service if they wished, and come downstairs with the younger children if they desired. That is still my goal. At this time we don't have any active high schoolers that have participated in programming.

**Middle school:** We do have a group of about a half dozen middle schoolers that were interested in the themed programming, and that seemed interested in working together on some projects. One of my hopes for the spring that didn't come to pass was to get that group together. One of the struggles is that many of those families - including my own middle schooler - just cannot make it to Sunday service in any consistent way.

My hope moving forward is to plan some activities set up specifically for that group - movie nights and game nights, possibly. The particular group of kids we have is all very interested in art, so I was hoping for some group art projects as well, coordinated with the families.

**OWL:** Previously St. John's participated in a citywide OWL program with other UU churches in Cincinnati. Citywide OWL has not run a program since 2019. Even before the pandemic citywide OWL was

considered on pause so some serious concerns could be addressed, including by possibly retraining all staff and volunteers involved in the program.

At one point the hope was to get adult OWL underway at St. John's - Marie Inanli and a church member were trained, but as far as I know, the program was not ever offered.

When I was hired again in the fall of 2022, there was hope of finding a volunteer coordinator to coordinate OWL at St. John's, and it was stated that OWL was not intended to be under my job description. No volunteer coordinator has been identified, so I have had some conversations and fielded questions when they come up. There are a few middle schoolers active at St. John's who will be the right age for the 7th-9th grade OWL program in the next year or two, and parents have asked about it.

St. John's does not have the numbers or resources to run an OWL program alone. There are options to coordinate with other churches in the city - other UU churches as well as other progressive churches - and we have discussed those, but no decisions or firm plans have been made. The hope is to explore that over the next year.

**School age:** Our program is currently serving the elementary ages well, and we have a small, committed core group of children. The numbers can be managed with myself and one volunteer.

**Babies, toddler, and preschool:** In the first two years I worked at St. John's, we paid two childcare workers during the service to watch children ages zero to four years. During that time period attendance in that age group was typically 1 to 2. Sometimes no children were in childcare for that age group. During that period the younger children were upstairs in Krolfifer instead of in a separate room downstairs - the goal was that it would be easy for parents and kids to get to each other as needed.

As far as I know, childcare has not been rehired since the church shutdown.

When I was rehired in the fall, I moved the area designated for the zero to four year olds down to Rosa Parks with us. My plan was that if we had the 1 to 2 children in this age range that we had prepandemic, I would have a dedicated volunteer who would focus on these kids in their area, in the larger room along with us.

We've had one child in this age range participate semi-regularly, who actually really enjoyed doing almost the same activities as the older children. So we have not had a separate volunteer set up for this age range - but the area is still there and available as needed.