Unitarian Universalist Church of Concord, NH

2025-26 Yearbook

www.concorduu.org



Connecting in Love and Service



Growing Spiritually



August 2025 - July 2026

Transforming Ourselves and Our World



Our Mission

Connecting in Love and Service:
We are a village of people who care for one another, in ways both spiritual and practical. We extend our care into the wider community to provide resources for refugees and for people experiencing homelessness.

Growing Spiritually:
People of all ages in our church village learn and grow together. While we don't all have the same theological beliefs, we are united in a desire to explore our spiritual paths, collectively and individually.

Transforming Ourselves and our World:
Our church village is a place where we can transform ourselves through our faith explorations. Our faith calls us to be good stewards of the Earth, and to honor each person, creating a world based on justice and equity.



Right: Rev. Michael Leuchtenberger with one of our littlest congregants.

Bottom: A newcomer chats with staff at the 2025 Engagement Fair.



This Yearbook is dedicated to these special volunteers honored in June 2026:

Jim Curley | Volunteer of the Year

Jenn Star | Unsung Hero

Fran Philippe | Lifetime Volunteer

Dan Molloy | Custodial Hero

Our Ends Statements

1. Our thriving congregation is living into a culture of belonging, centered in love, compassion, curiosity, courage, and joy.
2. Congregants give and receive care and support in times of joy, sorrow, and transition.
3. We have the facilities and a broad circle of effective leaders with resources to further our mission.
4. Our congregation benefits from the exchange of wisdom across diverse life stages and experiences.
5. Our rich and diverse worship and religious life nurtures, challenges and inspires us to daily practice of our values, lifelong learning, and transformation.
6. We are grounded in our Unitarian Universalist faith tradition and pass those values to the next generation.
7. We focus our outreach ministries to make a noticeable impact in the larger community.
8. We are full and active participants in the work of both the Greater Concord Faith Community and the larger Unitarian Universalist community.
9. We recognize, understand, and build bridges to dismantle systems of bias, oppression, and privilege within ourselves, our congregation, our community, and the larger world.
10. We live in harmony with the Earth and act to care for the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part.

These ends statements were last updated in March 2025.



Our Yearbook is organized by our 10 Ends Statements, the goals of our congregation.

The Yearbook highlights some of the ways we live into these 10 Ends Statements. As you read, think about what other ways we demonstrate a commitment to these goals. What new ideas do you have to achieve these goals?

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Exploring Membership: Making a Home at Concord UU

We expanded the name of our Exploring Membership Group to better represent its purpose of helping people find their home here, whether they were UUs somewhere else or are brand new to UUism. Rev. Michael Leuchtenberger and Lorraine Ellis led two exceptionally large groups, each meeting four times to share their spiritual journeys, and to explore how to make Concord UU their spiritual home.

Welcome to these new members! Collectively, they brought our number of voting members to 294, the highest it has been in over 20 years!

December 2025:
Tessa McLeod Browne
Alice White
Jana Flynn-Padick
Cheryl Morgan
Russell Lilley
Amir Robertson
Aletheia Smith
Darlene Ketteridge
Thomas Ketteridge
Patricia Pinski
Martha Mae Emerson
Sabrina Stanwood
Jennifer Prospere
Robert Montgomery
Tondy McGowan

April 2026:
Amanda Blair
Bruce Blair
Mary Braiterman
Kristen Curren
Chris Gantner
Dania Jones
Ryan Jones
Dan Molloy
Michael Morris
Gisela Weber
Helen Weigel

Congregant Engagement Team

submitted by Krista Robichaud & Lea Smith

In early 2024, a “Membership Steering Committee” met to reboot our membership and engagement efforts post-COVID. In 2025, it morphed into the Congregant Engagement Team (CET) to mindfully engage congregants in all stages of connection to the church, from newcomers to long-timers. Our goals are to...

- help visitors feel welcome.
- facilitate visitors becoming Members or Friends.
- facilitate engagement in the life of the church.
- re-engage members who seem to be drifting away.
- create a culture of belonging for all who want to be part of our church community.

In 2025-26, the CET hosted 2 events: an Engagement Fair in the Fall and a "Who Do I Contact" event in the winter. CET members watched a presentation on Radical Hospitality, wrote a guide on Spiritual Hospitality and held multiple Greeter training sessions. CET has also been popping into "Pancakes, Play and Planting Peace" to socialize with Concord UU families, and are encouraging congregants to send in their 4 x 6 family photos to the office for a Family Engagement Wall. CET continues to publish the "Why My Heart Is Here" column in Parish Notes, to enable congregants to share what connects them to Concord UU. In the Spring, CET welcomed newcomers to the team and added a "Meet Someone New" Table at Community Luncheons, to encourage people to sit with people they don’t know.

CET greatly appreciates all the work that former co-chair, Lea Smith, put into the forming and molding of this team, as she is stepping down from the role of Membership Coordinator. Renee West has volunteered to serve as co-chair along with Krista Robichaud for the next year.

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Food & Fellowship

Family Picnics

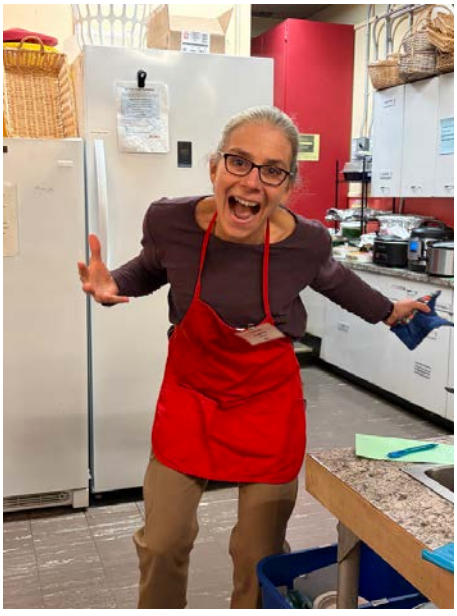
Submitted by Renee West



Our Fall and Spring Family Potluck Picnics were, as always, special events where we gather to commemorate beginnings and endings, celebrate our community, and, of course, enjoy the amazing bounty of delicious dishes brought by our congregants! The star of the show, of course, are the burgers and dogs; Bob Lyon and Bobby Nord were the great grillers, ensuring that everything was tasty and cooked with care to respect the dietary needs of attendees. So many people stepped up to help throughout the event, including some little ones pitching in after enjoying our bouncy house. We showcased our value for the environment by using compostable plates and napkins, as well as our value for our members by creating an atmosphere of care by ensuring accessibility and support.

Thanksgiving Feast

Submitted by Elm Sheys and Renee West



Our Thanksgiving Feast, held November 22, 2025, was a truly amazing occasion! We had approximately 150 guests, including over a dozen youngsters, who enjoyed the delicious turkeys (cooked by Bob Gabrielli in our brand-new ovens) and yummy sides and desserts brought by attendees, all looked after by our kitchen crew with Sarah Keniston (photo right) as our awesome head chef. We had a fun (and loud!) social hour with congenial hosts Susan Casey and Susi Nord and bartenders Betsy Black and Cathy Menard. Concord UU's Thanksgiving Feast was, as always, a most joyous occasion, leaving everyone with full bellies and happy hearts.

Our thriving congregation is living into a culture of belonging, centered in love, compassion, curiosity, courage, and joy.



Congregants connected through ongoing groups for shared interests. Here are just a few:

- Knitting Group
- Softball Team
- "UU Pickles" Pickleball Group
- Community Drum Circle
- UU Art Lovers Group
- Senior Singles Group
- Music Literacy for Singers
- Choir
- Games & Chocolate
- Dungeons & Dragons
- Laughter Yoga

Covenant Groups

Over 100 people were in 10 Covenant Groups which met monthly for small group discussions, usually around the same monthly theme that worship was focused on. Covenant Groups form strong bonds as they share the joys and sorrows of their lives in a committed, caring group. Open enrollment for Covenant Groups happens each January.

Our long-time Family Covenant Group is a special group for parents of young children. It includes a simple dinner (usually pizza) and childcare, giving parents the opportunity to engage in heart-centered conversation with other adults.



Left: Our Laughter Yoga leader Betsy Kennedy, aka Grandma Ha Ha, along with Dan Frye.

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The UU Pickles have fun and get some exercise at a variety of locales.





The UU Art Lovers Group made a road trip in May to see the new exhibitions at the Addison Gallery of Art in Andover, Massachusetts.

Our softball team had an incredible turnout (more than 20 players!) and enjoyed some outdoor summer fun while playing with other church teams in the Concord area.



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Senior Singles Group

submitted by Martha Mae Emerson

The Senior Singles Group (SSG) is in its second year!

A goal of our group this year has been to ensure that many of our activities are accessible and comfortable to many levels of ability and disability. This has led to new members who previously might have found our activities uncomfortably challenging. It has been wonderful to experience new levels of diversity within our membership because of this intentional effort to be more inclusive.

Another benefit of being in our second year is the deepening bond among members, thus creating a more nurturing community within the group. It is joyful to see the evolving connections and caring, a true expression of UU values.

The purpose of SSG is to provide opportunities for senior singles to build connections with each other, to socialize and to have fun together, all the while exercising our minds and bodies. Our events include four “Stay Active Wednesday” activities each month, a monthly Social Hour (often more than an hour as living alone seems to build a store of things to share!), and a Monthly Meeting to plan activities for the future month plus any other topics we need to discuss.

Here’s a sampling of some of our activities from the past year: apple picking, deck and dock party, the Bookish Club, Holiday Yankee Swap, movies, concerts, visits to art galleries and studios, snowshoeing, nature walks, swimming and kayaking, a Supper Club, and crafts (origami boxes, flower arranging, Christmas centerpieces, Easter egg decorating).

In case you are not familiar with who we are, the SSG is a fun-loving group of single UUs aged 55+ who enjoy sharing interests and a wide variety of activities, all in good company. We are supportive of each other in many ways. SSG is also a place where people who might feel lonely can find connections. Sometimes people ask if we are a dating group, and the answer is no.

Congregants give and receive care and support in times of joy, sorrow, and transition.

Saying Goodbye to Beloved Members

We remember with love
our members who died:
Karen Landsman
Martha "Meg" Bower
Loren Hill
Deb Bridges Cooper
Richard Blood

Photo below: We celebrated the life and legacy of Loren Hill with a special edition of Games and Chocolate, held in his honor in November 2025.





Our Pastoral Care Associates delivered Grief Kits to congregants suffering from a recent loss.

Photo at left:
In October 2025, children decorated tiles for the Grief Kits, at Pancakes, Play, and Planting Peace.

Congregants give and receive care and support in times of joy, sorrow, and transition.

Elder Circles of Healing and Wholeness

Older congregants met on the second Friday of each month (October to May) to share wisdom and support, followed by a light lunch.





Memorial Garden

- A new bench was installed near the columbarium.
- The handicapped accessible trail from the parking lot to columbarium was repaired and resurfaced.
- Several bottlebrush were planted to provide a visual screen between the Memorial Garden and the neighboring hospital.

Parkinson's Support Group

submitted by Peggy Herbert

Our March meeting saw the one year anniversary of support group. Laurel and I were both moved by how many people talked about the importance of the group as they make their way through this challenging and often lonely journey. New friendships have been made and an exercise group has grown out of it. We are always open to new members...both people with Parkinson's and the care partners.

Congregants give and receive care and support in times of joy, sorrow, and transition.

Caring Network

Meals

submitted by Renee West

Over the past year, members of the Caring Network Meals Team have delivered delicious meals from their kitchens (or their grocer) to the homes of congregants in need. Whether someone had surgery, was having a new baby, or had an illness, meals catered to the dietary needs and preferences of the recipient, allowing them and their family to focus on themselves and their health. Many thanks to more than a dozen chefs for helping a member of our beautiful and beloved community feel held in love. If you are experiencing a time of need where meals from others would be of real help, please reach out and we'll take care of you, too!



Above: The Caring Network helped to host the reception following the Celebration of Life for Karen Landsman.

Memorial Receptions

submitted by Renee West

Our Caring Network Memorial Reception Team, coordinated by Renee West, once again provided those attending Memorial Services a place of comfort and care as they gathered to mourn and celebrate the loss and life of a loved one. As always, these events are created by the hands of ten dedicated folks who brought delicious baked goods, set/cleaned up, gathered flowers if needed, and ensured everything ran smoothly. It was my pleasure to enjoy the company and tasty treats of those helpers.

As a recipient of the meal train by the Caring Network, I am reminded over and over again that food is the universal language of connection to people and the village. I appreciated the personal connection with members and the extended connection with the congregation, knowing that I was held close.

– Jim Curley

We have the facilities and a broad circle of effective leaders with resources to further our mission.

Our flexible and multi-talented staff

Rev. Michael Leuchtenberger served his 16th year as our Senior Minister. This made him the longest-serving Minister since we were founded as the Second Congregational Society in 1827. The Board of Trustees recognized this milestone with a plaque at Annual Meeting in June 2026. In addition, Michael served his third year as Choir Director.



Heather Maconaghy, hired as Accompanist in January 2025, was promoted to Music Ministry Coordinator in January 2026.

Our longest-serving staff member, Lea Smith (22 years), continued as Director of Membership & Administration. Becky Bosse (3 years) continued as Church Administrator.

Dory LeCount, hired as Young Explorer Guide in 2024 (5 hours weekly), was promoted to Family Engagement Coordinator in 2025 (18 hours weekly.) Beloved by kids, families, and staff, we were sad to accept Dory's resignation in June 2026, to work full-time with preschoolers.

Amir Robertson was hired in August 2025 and flexibly filled several roles throughout the year: Children's Program Assistant, Young Explorers Guide, Youth Group Assistant, and Summer Services Host. Beth Draper served as Young Explorers Guide for part of the year, and we were sorry to see her leave for full-time employment. Bayshay Bruss and Riley Carr rounded out the Sunday morning children's program staff.

We had multiple transitions among our custodial staff, with Russell Lilley, Agnes Sesay, and Melissa Bennett each playing a role. In the late winter, we found ourselves without any custodial staff. Thank you to Chris Moore and Dan Molloy for donating many hours to keep the church clean during that time. In April we were delighted to welcome Joe Bonavita, who is now our part-time Custodian/Facility Manager. Joe quickly proved to be a dependable, flexible, and capable member of the team.

I am excited to be expanding my scope in music ministry at Concord UU with this new role, Music Ministry Coordinator! Continuing with my same musical contributions as ever, the plan going forward is also to layer in ever more musical collaboration from fellow congregants.

Our aim in this is that we will be able to see and experience a wide diversity of voices in our shared worship.

– Heather Macognaghy, in her March 2026 Parish Notes article

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Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees engaged in deep work on topics including:

- a financial reorganization to replace a Treasurer with a more broadly distributed set of financial roles
- development of bylaws changes for the congregation to vote on at Annual Meeting 2026. This included a change in the number of Board members from 6 to 7.
- oversight of an intercongregational financial evaluation team that exchanged evaluations with First UU Society of Burlington (VT.)

2025-26 Board of Trustees:
Craig Whitson, Chair; Susi Nord, Vice-Chair; Anne Meyers, Secretary; Jim Curley, Bank Signatory; Arthoen Wolf, Larry Davis



June 2026 Board Meeting, including outgoing and incoming board members : Steve Elgert, Craig Whitson, Arthoen Wolf, Jim Curley, Beeler Lile-Sexton, Anna Morrison, Anne Meyers, staff Lea Smith, Larry Davis, Susi Nord

Do you have an idea to help us achieve our church goals? Are you ready to lead?

To tap into the energy and enthusiasm of congregants to offer new events and activities that help achieve the church's ends, we created a streamlined way to get approval for new ideas. This approval process prioritizes connection and inclusivity for all, while taking into account the church's financial and human resources. A simple form gives potential leaders the opportunity to reflect on how their idea helps us achieve our goals, explains what their responsibilities as a leader would be, and requires interest from five congregants. Rev. Michael Leuchtenberger or Lea Smith can then give the go-ahead.

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The Operations Leadership Team (OLT) is charged to "help the senior minister interpret and implement the mission and ends (goals) of the church as identified by the Board of Trustees."

The Operations Leadership Team was in a "building year." It had just two members continuing from prior years, with five new members joining between October 2025 and January 2026. In spite of being a building year, the OLT accomplished many things. To name just a few, the OLT…

- brainstormed ideas for celebrating the 200th anniversary of the founding of our church.
- awarded Downing grants to an intern minister and to two small, struggling UU churches.
- provided guidance on rebuilding a grounds team, and creating a library team.
- approved a change to our personnel policy about health insurance.
- gave suggestions about a process for deciding on configuration/furnishings for the Sanctuary.
- provided feedback about budget priorities, in particular a proposed expansion of the Family Engagement Coordinator position.
- discussed leadership development.
- modeled a culture of gratitude by sending dozens of thank you notes to volunteers every month.



2025-26 Operations Leadership Team with the term served:

Back row: Jim Schlosser Oct 2025 to present | Ann West Oct 2025 to present
Ann Hoey Jan 2026 to present | Laurel Horne Oct 2025 to present
Ex oficio member Rev Michael Leuchtenberger

Front row: ex oficio member Lea Smith | Dariel Thompson Sept 2023 to May 2026
Deb Bruss Nov 2025 to present | Susan Casey Sept 2023 to present

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Building Maintenance Committee (BMC)

The BMC oversees and participates in ongoing efforts to provide repairs and new projects to ensure the integrity and usefulness of our building as an updated, universally accessible, aesthetically attractive community resource.

Projects/Tasks Undertaken in 2025-2026:
- Completed a Building Energy Assessment
- Pursued having the City of Concord relocate a streetlight to the church entrance
- Various painting projects, including fascia trim, main entrance, beam ends
- Treated exposed beam ends with penetrating epoxy and epoxy filler
- Prepared a conceptual plan for an improved east entrance
- Painted parking lot arrows and speed limits
- Installed a solar post light at the church entrance
- Investigated Fellowship Hall acoustics
- Monitored the roof snow load, including measurements and snow removal
- Added lead filters to Emerson School classrooms, the Abenaki, Rainbow and Kent-Thomas rooms
- Repaired a section of rotting roof deck
- Arranged for an evaluation of the roof and necessary repairs
- Arranged for the installation of a mini-split AC unit in the Kent-Thomas room
- Investigated replacing the dishwasher
- Repaired the Emerson wing playground door hardware, saving the church $3000
- Cleaned gutters and roof debris

The BMC honors the memory of Loren Hill, the building's volunteer handyman for decades.

2025-26 members:
Rob Blakeney, Dennis Casey, Jim Curley, Steve Elgert, Warren Haslam, Ryan Jones, Craig Thomas, Franz Vail and Nancy Wood
affiliates: Trudy Mott-Smith, Gary Schroeder and Jack Wakelin
active helpers: Jeff Abbe, Chris O'Connor, George Otuk, Chris Soule

--submitted by Franz Vail, BMC Chair
(photo at right: Franz repairing the roof)

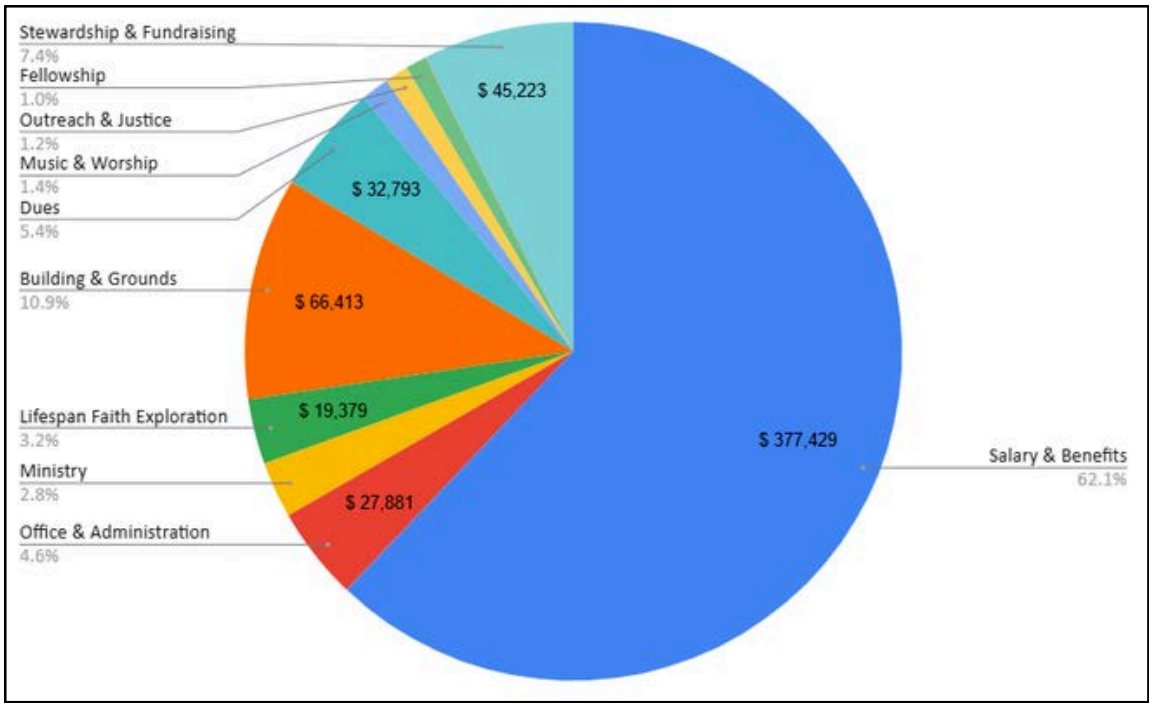


2025-26 Operating Budget Results

Our operating budget was a spectacular success, with generous giving and successful fundraisers enabling us to do all we planned, and even more to help achieve our mission and vision. This is particularly notable in light of the financial struggles we hear from many other congregations. Our operating budget ended the year with an operating surplus of $26,205. We had budgeted for a shortfall of about $11,860, which would have been covered by the Operating Reserve Fund (ORF). No withdrawal from the ORF was needed.
Income exceeded budget in nearly every major area:

- 2025-26 pledge income exceeded the budget by $7,963 due mostly to new Members and Pledging Friends. The number of pledges increased from 214 to 239. Thank you to our Stewardship Team of Jim Curley, Lorraine Ellis, Michael Lecutenberger, and most of all thank you to YOU, our generous donors!
- Non-pledge donations exceeded the budget by $6,450, largely due to newcomers and online attendees. Thank you!
- Net income for fundraisers exceeded budget by $14,156 due to an exceptionally successful Raffle (thank you, Lorraine Ellis and Michael Leuchtenberger!), Auction (thank you again, Lorraine and Michael!), Costa Rica Trip (thank you, Michael!), and Plant & Yard Sale (thank you, Betsy Kennedy and Jim Downie!)
- We exceeded our goal for rental income by $6,438, mostly due to unexpected concert rentals and non-member memorials. Church Administrator Becky Bosse generously adapted her usual work schedule to provide building coverage on Saturdays or evenings, so we did not have to pay extra staff. Thank you, Becky!
- External trust income exceeded budget by $11,321, presumably due to good market conditions.

While we did have significant overages in health insurance and building expenses, the overages were easily covered by the excess income. Most of the surplus ($26,000) was moved to the Operating Reserve Fund to offset any future operating shortfalls.



2025-26 Operating Income

Pledges	$ 311,021
Non-pledge Operating Gifts	$ 30,862
Fundraisers	$ 84,180
Building Rentals	$ 44,362
Parking Lot Rentals	$ 18,720
Investment Draws	$ 69,917
External Trust Funds	$ 43,403
Designated Fund Income	$ 7,158
All other Income	$ 29,193
TOTAL	$ 638,816

Capital Budget Results

We budgeted for three capital projects, and all were completed under budget.

- Sanctuary projector replacement: spent $5,587 of $7,000 budgeted.
- Church-wide mesh wifi system: spent $1,574 of $4,000 budgeted.
- Energy audit update: spent $2,400 of $3,000 budgeted.

The total of $9,561 came from the Capital Reserve Fund. Money that was budgeted to come from the Capital Reserve Fund, that was not needed, remains in the Capital Reserve Fund. The Capital Reserve Fund balance was $12,828 on July 31, 2026.

Finance Committee

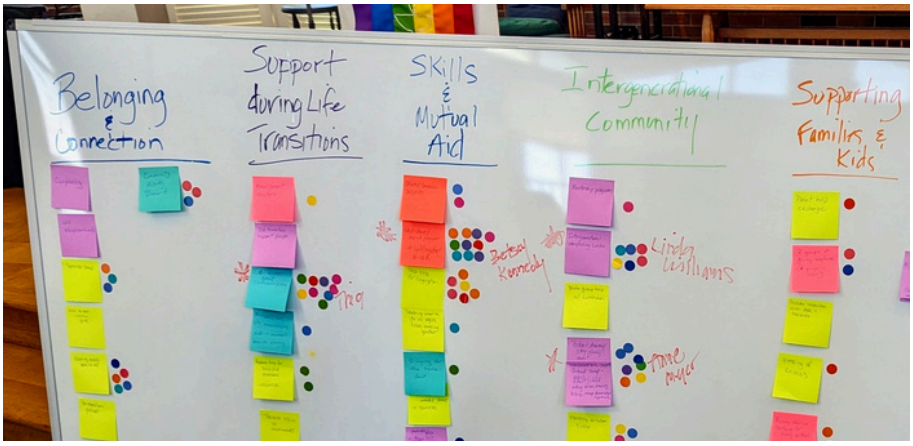
submitted by Jack Wakelin

The main focus of the Finance Committee during the 25-26 Church year was the preparation for and the response to the Burlington UU Church's Financial Review of our financial operations. The Finance Committee reviewed and updated our procedures in the fall, then responded to the report from the Burlington Team during early 2026.

Below: Craig Whitson and Jim Curley helped install a new projector in the Sanctuary.



Our congregation benefits from the exchange of wisdom across diverse life stages and experiences.



Village Team

The Village Team formed in December 2025 as a sub-committee of the Lifespan Faith Exploration Team. They led the congregation to reflect on and imagine what a Concord UU Village could feel and be like. In April 2026, sermon topics focused on this theme, and Second Hour sessions explored our interdependent relationships through a multi-generational lens.

Second Hour

On the second and third Sundays of every month, we offered two or three options for adult learning, service, and contemplative practice, after the worship service. Offerings included:

- Sermon Dialogues
- Teaching Garden Workshops
- Land Acknowledgement Conversations
- Chair Yoga
- Anxious Generation Book Discussions
- Joyful Resilience: The Ultimate Act of Rebellion
- Love-in-Action Gathering
- Nature Walk
- Get Connected with UU Action NH
- Conversations in Spanish
- Mindfulness: It's Easier Than You Think
- Zentangle



Our congregation benefits from the exchange of wisdom across diverse life stages and experiences.

Fun and faith for all ages



Sock Hop

This year's Mud Season Dance theme was a 1950s Sock Hop! On Friday, March 6th, LP records dangled from the ceiling of Fellowship Hall and partiers mugged behind a "Grease" themed cut-out. UUs of all ages danced the twist, lined up to limbo and learned a line dance called "The Stroll" taught by Dan Molloy.

Youth Culture Seminar

Do your grandkids seem to live in a universe apart, accessed by the screen on their phones? Do you sometimes struggle to understand text messages from your kids? Do you look at teenager fashion and think to yourself, "Kids these days..."? Or maybe you wonder what it's like to be at the high school when there's a lockdown - drill, or for real, or how peer pressure around drugs and alcohol is similar to, or different from, what you experienced. On April 10, 2026, our Youth Group shared their perspective on these questions and many more!





Our rich & diverse worship and religious life nurtures, challenges, and inspires us to daily practice of our values, lifelong learning, and transformation.

Sunday Worship

Sunday worship attendance (in the Sanctuary plus livestream) averaged 171 from September to June, the highest average our records show (going back to 1990)! The number of new visitors has increased substantially since the fall of 2024, with 150 new identified visitors in 2025-26 (this doesn't include one-time visitors who may not have left their name.)

For worship services and Covenant Group discussions, we used these themes from the Soul Matters Sharing Circle, a resource for UU congregations:

- September: Building Belonging
- October: Cultivating Compassion
- November: Nurturing Gratitude
- December: Choosing Hope
- January: Practicing Resistance
- February: Embodying Resilience
- March: Paying Attention
- April: Embracing Possibility
- May: Awakening Curiosity
- June: Flourishing Together



Summer Services

Karen Thomas, Jim Curley and Susi Nord served as Worship Hosts, coordinating with Worship Associates, pulpit guests, and office staff to create a meaningful worship experience each Sunday in the summer of 2026. Average summer attendance (in-person plus online) was 88. Childcare was offered every Sunday, and a group of volunteer parents organized some after-service offerings such as "Splashfest." We hired a staff person, Amir Robertson, as "Summer Services Host" to monitor the building and livestream, and be a backup for childcare.

- June 21 | Blessing of the Animals, Rev. Jim Curley
- June 28 | The Arc of our Time Together, Rev. Jen Youngsun Ryu - General Assembly Service
- July 5 and 12 | no worship service
- July 19 | In Love and at Play in the Water, Margaret Fletcher and CJ Landsman
- July 26 | Got Compassion? Aletheia Smith
- August 2 | The Interwoven Journey: How Hospice Teaches Us to Live, Rev. Evelyn Eddy
- August 9 | UU Action NH's View of Shared Knowledge and Social Action, Anne Grossi
- August 16 | Uplifted by Mountains, Betsy Black
- August 23 | What Would Spirit Have Me Do? Rev. Bevan C. Tulk
- August 30 | The Awkward Space, Jonathan and Beeler Lile-Sexton
- September 6 | The Communities That Carry Us, Joe Cicirelli

Our rich & diverse worship and religious life nurtures, challenges, and inspires us to daily practice of our values, lifelong learning, and transformation.

Earth Centered Spirituality Group

submitted by Rich T.



This was a busy and successful year for the Earth-Centered Spirituality Group. We hosted an event every month, even dealing with crazy weather and challenging circumstances. We're very happy to report that we still get new people at all our rituals and workshops.

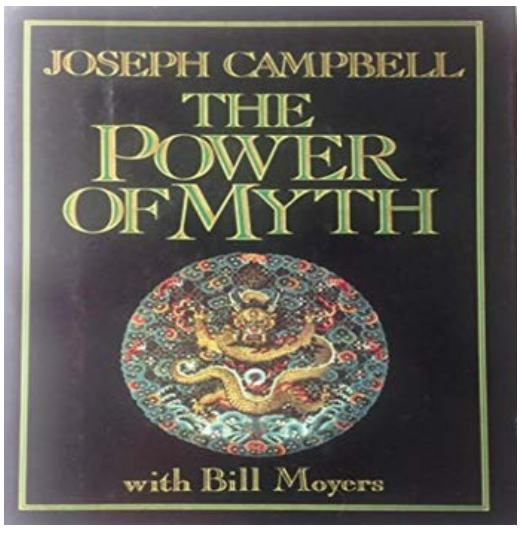
Highlights of the year include: Our food bank donation at Samhain overflowing the tables we set up. We had the largest Winter Solstice service in years, thanks to the core team and all the volunteers who helped. Our annual Fire & Ice dance (photo at right) was a success.

We've been able to do some advance planning, which has helped scheduling and promotion. We continue to expand our offerings with Full and Dark Moon rituals, more workshops like the incredibly successful Making Mandalas and Intro to Plant Medicine. Our "book club", reading the Poetic Eddas, has been going for more than a year. We're looking to expand these further, including bringing back the sacred circle dances.

The ECSG is still the only group of its kind in NH offering free open services throughout the year, and we really appreciate having such a great space here at the UU to do our work and serve the community.

The Power of Myth

submitted by Renee West and Susan Casey



From October to April, folks gathered to watch the Power of Myth viewing and discussion series, hosted by Susan Casey and Renee West. Once per month we watched an episode of the Bill Moyers and Joseph Campbell PBS interview series on Campbell's work and then we explored how these myths help us to understand the world and ourselves, and how we can use myth as an element of our spirituality. The conversations we held were so rich and thoughtful, and it was a delight to bring this idea to fruition.

Our rich & diverse worship and religious life nurtures, challenges, and inspires us to daily practice of our values, lifelong learning, and transformation.

Contemplative Practices Group

submitted by Betsy Black

The Contemplative Practice Group - a committed group whose members love our church and meditation, yoga and all contemplative practices. Many thanks to the many folks who led and lead these offerings! This past year the CPG coordinator was Sharon Arey. Thanks, Sharon.

Special offerings

- Second Annual Churchwide Spirit Week in April, with a day long retreat led by UU and Buddhist John Bell. Every day the church community was invited to explore our spiritual lives individually and collectively supported with sessions led at the church and through music and contemplation. (Committee: Michael Leuchtenberger, Ann West, Janet Kelley-Vail, Margaret Fletcher, Jeanne Ann Whittington, Heidi Page, Betsy Black and many other volunteers!)
- Kindness Clinic Meditation Retreat. (Jeanne Ann Whittington)
- New Year's Retreat, an annual tradition. (Heidi Page, Judi Abbe, Sharon Arey)
- Mindfulness: It's Easier than You Think [multi session] (Lee Leppanen)
- Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction course [multi session] (Margaret Fletcher)

Second Hour offerings - the CPG provides an option every second and third Sunday

- Chair yoga (Susan Casey and Craig Whitson)
- Mt Washington Guided Meditation (Betsy Black)
- Ideal Parent Figure Practice (Jeanne Ann Whittington)
- Study of Lojong Slogans (Janet Kelley-Vail and Betsy Black)
- Earth Awareness and Body Scan (Margaret Fletcher)
- Labyrinth Walk (Janet Kelley-Vail and Sharon Arey)
- Zentangle (Heidi Page and Craig Whitson)
- How to Meditate (Judi Abbe)

Ongoing

- The Morning Sit, 7-7:30 a.m. (every day! on Zoom) (Craig Whitson)
- Mindful Yoga (1st, 3rd and 5th Monday eves) (Susan Casey and Craig Whitson)
- Mindfulness Meditation (2nd and 4th Monday eves) (Craig Whitson and Pam Mosca)
- Taize (1st Sunday) (Michael Leuchtenberger)
- Thursday morning meditation (Jeanne Ann Whittington)

All members and friends of the church are warmly welcome to join in with any of these offerings!



Our rich & diverse worship and religious life nurtures, challenges, and inspires us to daily practice of our values, lifelong learning, and transformation.

Music Ministry

Blue Moon Music House

On the second Tuesday of each month, our open mic Music House provided a stage for musicians of all genres and all ages.



Music Committee

submitted by Vicki and Jack Wakelin

The Music Committee has responded to the rapid growth of the Choir during church year 25-26 as follows:

- Oriented the new members:
- Supplied them with new choir folders.
- Instructed them in returning music used in prior Sundays to the Music Room.
- Assisted new members regarding their appropriate choir section.
- Provided support to the music staff during rehearsals and Sunday morning services.
- Managed the music inventory.
- Supplied new choir folders when necessary to replace worn choir folders.



Krista Robichaud led Musical Literacy for Singers.



Youth Group Jam Session



“House Band” members gathered for pizza and conversation.

We are grounded in our Unitarian Universalist faith tradition and pass those values to the next generation.

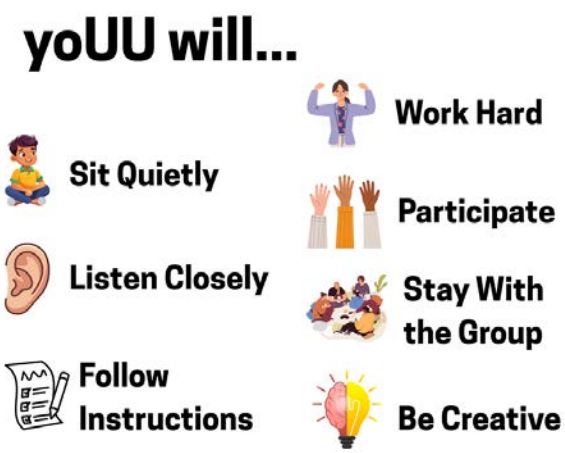
Children's Ministry

Young Explorers is our Sunday morning nature based faith exploration program for ages 5 to 13, which celebrated its second year!

On the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Sundays of each month, Young Explorers began their morning in the Sanctuary with their parents or guardians. After a Time for All Ages in the sanctuary, they were invited to go with our Young Explorers Guide and childcare assistant to our natural playground for outdoor play based learning. Around 11:15, the children were offered a snack, and transitioned to faith exploration, engaging in activities and crafts meant to bring them deeper into exploration of our UU values. Children played outside in all weather!



Above: Young Explorers Guide Beth Draper with the Young Explorers



In spring 2026, our Family Engagement Coordinator, Dory LeCount, launched a new program called "How will yoUU worship?" During Second Hour, children could choose from a variety of programs, including some adult/intergenerational programs, with guidance about which skills they'd need for each program. Pictured at left is the "skills key" to help the children and their caregivers decide.



At our second annual Meet and Greet Breakfast for Families in January 2026, families came together before worship to chat about "What Do You Need?" We learned families need practical support like meal prep. This guided future family programs such as a Pancakes, Play, and Planting Peace event where kids prepped veggies for a family dinner.

We focus our outreach ministries to make a noticeable impact in the larger community.

The Friendly Kitchen



submitted by Fran Philippe

We have been serving meals on the first Wednesday of the month for about 43 years. That, times 12 months, times about 60 guests a week is about 31,000 dinners! Kudos to all of our cooks through the years!

Thank you to this past year's meal planners, Bob Holleman, Kath Butcher and Diane Creel, and to their cooks: Deb Campelia, Melina Cessna, Beth Corcoran, Kathy Everest, Beth Gabrielli, Courtney Germano, Chuck Gilboy, Irene Hanslin, Pat and Manfred Hoertdoerfer, Donna Moore, Pam Mosca, Vincent Negron, Bill Parke, Fran Philippe, Heather Pike, Dana Sansom, Cathy Sturtevant, Kits Tunney and Ann West.



Family Promise

We hosted unhoused families with children four times during the church year. Church volunteers cooked meals, played with kids, and slept overnight at the church, along with the families.

Left: In December 2025, we invited our Family Promise guests to join in for our monthly Pancakes, Play, and Planting Peace event. Slime-making was enjoyed by all!

We focus our outreach ministries to make a noticeable impact in the larger community.

Refugee Support

UU Friends of Refugees provides practical support for refugee families in the Concord area. UUFOR welcomed its 18th family in March 2026. They are from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

UUFOR often partners with Project STORY, which is "dedicated to empowering youth from culturally diverse communities," to offer recreation and support for children in our area.

Alleviating Homelessness

Annually, we donate $1,000 to two organizations helping to alleviate homelessness in our local area: the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness and Family Promise of Greater Concord. These donations are funded through several Outreach Offerings collections that happen throughout the year.



Caroling with the Homeless has become a UU tradition. Around 10 to 12 UUs of all ages brought cookies and sang with guests at McKenna House, the Cold-weather Shelter and Hospice House.

We are full & active participants in the work of both the greater Concord faith community and the larger Unitarian Universalist community.

We paid our full Annual Program Fund request to the Unitarian Universalist Association, earning recognition as an Honor Congregation.

We are long-time members of:

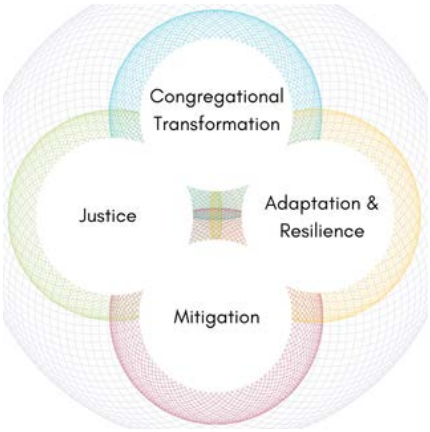
- Greater Concord Interfaith Council
- NH Council of Churches
- UU Action NH

For the first time, we became members of the **Granite State Organizing Project**, "New Hampshire's largest faith-based, grass-roots, community organization, [which] seeks to strengthen communities, empowering them to find their voice and effect change. "

We hosted the Annual Meeting of UU Action NH on April 25, 2026.



We are engaged with the UUA's Green Sanctuary 2030 program.





Right: A flame within a chalice (a cup with a stem and foot) is a symbol of the Unitarian Universalist faith. In this chalice lighting class, children learned how to help us open each worship service by lighting the chalice.

We recognize, understand, and build bridges to dismantle systems of bias, oppression, and privilege within ourselves, our congregation, our community, and the larger world.

Service and Learning Trips

Rev. Michael Leuchtenberger led a trip to Costa Rica for service, learning, fun, and fundraising. Concord UUs volunteered at the Foundation for International Medical Relief of Children and brought supplies from the US for the clinic.





Our Youth Group went on a Civil Rights Tour in Alabama.





We recognize, understand, and build bridges to dismantle systems of bias, oppression, and privilege within ourselves, our congregation, our community, and the larger world.

ICE Out

The "ICE Out of Minnesota" clergy rally and "Day of Truth and Freedom" was held on January 23, 2026: a massive protest against increased federal immigration enforcement by the Trump administration. Protests escalated following the fatal shooting of Renée Good by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer in Minneapolis on January 7, 2026. Rev. Michael Leuchtenberger traveled to Minnesota to protest and to assist with providing food to immigrants who felt unsafe to leave their homes to get food.





Learning about homelessness



We invited Cynthia Tokos, a photographer and Director of Parish Life at Christ the King Parish, to share her moving photo display involving pictures of homeless people and hand written testimonials from the people. Cynthia took the photos at the Friendly Kitchen over the course of ten months. Cynthia offered a Second Hour session where she shared some of what she learned from this experience.

We live in harmony with the Earth and act to care for the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part.

Green Sanctuary

submitted by Margaret Fletcher

The Green Sanctuary team established a new group, the Land Acknowledgement and Kin (LAKE) circle, to consider how we can best respect and love our land and the peoples of this ancestral homeland. This group has begun exploring the history of our church's land and asking ourselves about ways to engage the congregation in this educational and reflective work.



WindowDressers pulled off its first Concord Build, in partnership with the Concord Lions Green Team. 199 low cost/no cost insulating window inserts were added to the Concord area.

The Green Legislative ADvocacy team again urged the congregation to get involved with our state legislators, toward protecting our beautiful NH resources and encouraging green energy policy.

In our building

- We generated enough solar energy to meet 100% of our electricity needs.
- We engaged Margaret Dillon of Sustainable Energy Education Demonstration Services (SEEDS) to complete a Building Energy Assessment, an update to the assessment that was done in 2012.

A snap shot comparison of energy usage between 2012 and 2025:

- *Consumed 1928 fewer therms of gas*
- *Reduced the Energy Utilization Index (EUI) 22%: from a Site EUI of 79 to 65 KBtu/ft2*

The EUI can be expected to be decreased further in 2026 since the gas cookstove was replaced by very efficient induction stovetops in August of 2025.

--- from the SEEDS Energy Assessment completed in 2026

We live in harmony with the Earth and act to care for the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part.

Around our grounds

Ecological Land Management (ELM)

submitted by Laurel Horne

The 2025-26 church year started out with ELM's first off-site public education event. Dana Sansom and Fran Philippe represented UU ELM at the August 2nd Pollinator Festival at Rollins Park in Concord, with an engaging interactive display of invasive plants.

During the 2025 growing season we completed our focus on the Memorial Garden for invasive removal and worked with landscaper Michelle Fischer, with significant improvements made.

Fran designed, planted and watered the beautiful native entry garden at the driveway entrance from Pleasant Street. Dana and Fran created and posted signage to clearly indicate where Grounds materials (invasives, brush, weeds, leaf mulch, leaves, grass) are to be placed which has helped tremendously during our twice monthly Grounds/ELM work days and our twice yearly All-church Grounds cleanups.

With the significant support of many members of the congregation, we successfully made our goal for a November 2025 targeted appeal, to fund the Grounds & Forest Visionary Plan. This, and the additional cost-share support we were granted from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), has enabled ELM to procure the services of ecological forester Matthias Nevins with Meadowsend to help us develop a grounds and forest management plan that is reflective of congregational goals and vision for the 18 acres we steward.

To encourage congregational input in this process, we developed a survey that many congregants completed, providing us with valuable insight as we move forward with the process. We shared the survey results in Parish Notes. We also led the May 3rd service and followed with a 2nd hour input session with attendees sharing their ideason potential goal categories. In addition we offered a weekday evening Zoom presentation followed by discussion and input.

With the generous gifts from the Brian Wills Memorial donations directed to ELM, we have been able to procure native plants to improve the ecological health of the grounds as we continue to remove invasives. Huge thanks to all who have volunteered their time with these efforts!



Right: Fran Philippe, Nancy Wood, and Nancy Wills behind a huge pile of invasive plants that they removed

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