

---

# Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert

## Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

January 16, 2024

---

### Attending:

A meeting of the UUCOD Board of Directors was held on Tuesday, January 14, 2024.

**Board Members attending in person:** Bob Rancourt, President, Julia Alberg-Burbank, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Fran Hoag, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Jerry L'Hommedieu, Treasurer, Claudia Simmons, Secretary, Rev. Ian W. Riddell, Minister, Walter Gendell, Director at Large, Carol McDaniel, Director at Large.

**Others Present:** Dave Emmerson

**Others Present Online:** Rod Belshee

### Welcome and Call to Order

Bob called the regular Board Meeting to order at 4:59 PST.

### Chalice Lighting

Rev. Riddell offered inspirational sentiments and lit the chalice.

### Check-In

Bob welcomed everyone and he and the Board checked in.

### Process Moderation

Process monitor was assigned to Julia Alberg-Burbank.

### Consent Agenda

- The Board approved a motion to approve the December 19, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes [Moved by Jerry L'Hommedieu and seconded by Walter Gendell].

### Voices of the Congregation

- Review, Consideration, and Discussion of Sacred Grounds Initiatives and Proposed Geocaching on Campus
  - Ann Iwata approached Dave Emmerson about opening UUCOD up under the Coachella Valley search on the Geocaching and Adventure Lab Apps on mobile devices. Dave Emmerson explained what geocaching is. Geocaching is an outdoor recreational activity, in which participants use a Global Positioning System receiver or mobile device and other navigational techniques to hide and seek containers, called geocaches or caches, at specific locations marked by coordinates all over the world.

- Those who participate in these apps would find the church's parking lot. Once at the parking lot, there would be 5 sensors leading the participant to different points of interest on the Sacred Grounds, and then a question will be asked of the participant for each of the sensors.
- The App has been tested out by Dave and Rod Belshee, and it is working properly.
- The App tells the participant to stay on the trail.
- Ann Iwata is the outside person in charge of UUCOD's presence on the App, and she can turn off the church's participation at any time, if requested.
- Fran Hoag suggested putting a link to the church's website in the church-related geocaching link on the App.
- Fran Hoag made a motion to allow Geocaching to go forward, and Carol McDaniel seconded it. Approved by the Board.

## Old Business

- Review and Consideration of 2024 Pledge Drive
  - Rev Riddell, Jerry L'Hommedieu and Bob Rancourt met to discuss the upcoming Pledge Drive and the budget for 2024.
  - Jerry sent out Pledge Drive letter to Board members and would like for the Board members to complete and mail in their Pledge Sheets prior to the Pledge Drive Kick Off.
  - Pledge goal has increased to \$195,000 for this year, as Church expenses have risen appreciably over the course fiscal year 2023/2024.
  - Pledge Drive Kick off will be on Sunday, January 28, 2024, with the annual Chili Cook Off following the service that day.
  - Pledge Drive email will be sent to the congregation on the January 27, 2024.
  - Pledge Drive Theme: Watch Us Grow! Growth in our connections, growth in spirit.
  - Chris Eager will have a Pledge Drive video that will be incorporated with the January 28<sup>th</sup> service.
  - Testimonials will happen every Sunday conveying feelings about the church and why the individual is committed to supporting the church.
  - Pledge Drive wraps up the end of February, with a celebration after the March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, service.
  - Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu reported that \$ 307,000 is the budgeted income for this year, noting that expenses have gone up appreciably, and explained the reasons for a \$22,000 shortfall to fill this year. See further explanation in Treasurer's comments below.
  - Pledge Drive accounts for 2/3 or less of expenditures for the year.
  - Friends of church accounts for about 25% of pledge drive.
  - 7-8 Stewards will be contacting people about the pledge drive.
- Review and Consideration of 2024 Harvey Milk Diversity Breakfast
  - UUCOD has participated in this cause previously.
  - It was agreed that UUCOD will purchase a table for this May 9, 2024, event, and will invite any congregants who would like to attend. Individuals who choose to go need to reimburse the church \$95/person. Several people on the Board have already made a commitment to attend.
- Review and Consideration of 2024 UUA Congregational Certification
  - Bob Rancourt, LeGrand Velez and Claudia Simmons will complete the Certification for 2024, along with assistance from Barb Storms and Pam Bibo.

- Nomination and Designation of Attitude of Gratitude Note Recipients
  - Rod Belshee and Rev Barbara Fast, the Sacre Grounds Steering Committee (Jack Fitzsimmons, Sue Engel, Dave Emmerson, Sue Engle, John Ressler, Mel Wilkinson, Randy Steel, Diane Leslie and Jerry, L’Hommedieu), along with Michael Allen and Eddie Cardoza.
  - Rod Belshee will send Speakers names and addresses to Walter for thank you notes.

## Unfinished Business

- Further Review, Consideration, and Discussion of Current Leadership and Committees’ Needs
  - Membership is thinking about merging with Stewardship and asking Stewardship to think about the same thing.
  - Jerry L’Hommedieu pointed out that Stewardship is not a standing committee, whereas Membership is. Conversation ensued regarding the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President’s role in leading Stewardship, particularly the fundraising aspect. The concern is that future, potential Board Members may not want to take on the role of 2nd Vice President because they might not be interested in the “fundraising” aspect of the position. If the position was to be modified, the By-laws would have to be changed or amended to eliminate that responsibility.
  - The Board Retreat is slated for February 24<sup>th</sup> and it was suggested that the topics cover governance, vision and mission values.
- Review of Placement of John Ressler’s Stamp.
  - Board asking that Sacred Grounds to place John Ressler’s stamp.
  - It was suggested and decided that a “Draft” of the Board Minutes be posted on the website as soon as practicable, and before Board approval, so that involved parties can move on actions discussed at said Board meetings.
- Review and Discussion of Board Reading: “Transforming Conflict: The Blessings of Congregational Turmoil” (Ch. 4-5).
  - All participated in conversation citing meaningful points revealed in these chapters.
  - Read Chapter 6 only for next month’s meeting.

## New Business

- Review and Discussion of Monthly Reports
  - See attached detailed reports.
  - Fran Hoag talked about the Natural Habitat Dedication and felt that this event showed what we can do as a congregation, and what we can do and do successfully. It was a great outreach event and a very positive experience getting people involved. As well, there were many first-time volunteers.
  - Treasurer Jerry L’Hommedieu reported cash flow projection for balance of 2024. \$52,000 currently in available funds in account. Projecting \$66,000 come in in next 6 months from rent, plate collections, and pledges, there should be \$118-\$119 by end of June. The projected expenses are also \$119,000. That would leave \$936.00 in the bank. We need to carry \$20,000 in checking account due to two payrolls every month. UUCOD’s expenses range between \$20-\$25,000 a month. Total projected revenue, 283,743 and expenses \$305,8129. This leaves a \$22,000 gap. The Church needs to pull \$22,000 from somewhere. There are unrestricted funds that can be used to cover this shortfall, however, that amount will need to be made up and restored at some point.

- In the name of transparency, it was felt that the Treasurer should draft and send a letter to the congregation to let them know the financial situation, and that this information should be done prior to the beginning of the Pledge Drive. At the same time, this would not be a letter to cause alarm or concern, but rather purely informational.
- Director-at-Large Walter Gendell and Rev. Riddell and the Committee on Ministry met on Monday, January 15, 2024, to review a draft Assessment Form. They will provide feedback so that an assessment form can be presented to Board next month. At that time, there will be ideas on structuring the assessment feedback. The process will be the Assessment, the gathering of the evaluations, and then deliver of feedback to Rev. Riddell. Good progress.
- Review and Consideration of Employee Jury Duty Leave Policy.
  - The topic of Jury Duty Leave will be carried over to the February Board meeting.
  - Also at the February 2024 Board Meeting, President Bob Rancourt wishes to discuss the Church's observance of the Martin Luther King holiday.

### Process Moderation

- Julia Alberg-Burbank reported that the Board Meeting ran 5 minutes over, and that everyone had been heard.

### Chalice Extinguishment

- Rev. Riddell extinguished the chalice with words of gratitude.

### Adjournment

- Bob adjourned the regular Board meeting at 7:35 pm

### Respectfully Submitted,

*Claudia L. Simmons*

Claudia L. Simmons, Secretary

Date Approved: February 20, 2024

### Attachments

Monthly Reports  
 Sacred Grounds Update  
 2024 Pledge Letter  
 Harvey Milk Diversity Breakfast Fundraising Info  
 Jury Duty Info

# President's Report



MEETING DATE:	<b>January 16, 2024</b>
REPORTING PERIOD:	<b>Dec. 20, 2023, to Jan. 16, 2024</b>
TYPE:	<b>Monthly Board</b>
AUTHOR:	<b>Bob Rancourt</b>

My assigned Board liaison constituencies are the Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Ministry (DIBM), Leadership Development Committee, and Personnel Advisory Committee. Additionally, I prepare agenda for and preside over Board meetings, and, as time permits, I volunteer as a greeter and usher for the Membership Committee.

## **DIBM**

Due to scheduling conflicts and the status of current committee work, DIBM did not meet during this time. Members are continuing to study neurodivergence and possible recommendations to enhance diversity and help our beloved community continue to work on being more welcoming.

## **Leadership Development Committee**

No meeting convened during this time. President Ex Officio Savard presented an oral update at the last Regular Meeting concerning the perceived current leadership and committees' needs, which discussion remains on the unfinished business agenda.

## **Personnel Advisory Committee**

No meeting convened during this time. Rev. Riddell and Walter are finishing up the draft of the ministerial evaluation form and process for the new Settled Minister.

## **Additional Information**

During this time, I wrote a President's Column article for the January newsletter reflecting on the church's losses of some of its Members this past year. I received positive feedback about it. After my monthly Board planning meeting with Rev. Riddell, I prepared the agenda for and presided over the December 19 Regular Meeting. On January 2, the minister, treasurer, and I met and planned for the annual pledge drive and next fiscal year's budget.

The Board's Ad Hoc Communications Team Creation Committee's draft charter and general ideas remain pending and additional work and meetings will continue to finalize an outline for approval of the new Communications Team.

On January 7, I along with other Board Members attended the Sacred Grounds Initiative's opening and dedication of the first native habitat demonstration garden after service. I served as usher during service. It was a huge success, and, on behalf of the church, I accepted the National Wildlife Federation's recognition of our campus as a certified wildlife habitat. The framed certificate presently is placed below the news bulletin boards in the lobby.

To: UUCOD Board  
From: Julia Alberg-Burbank, 1st VP  
RE:January 2024 Board Report

**Participation:**

- I was Worship Associate for the Christmas Eve Service
- I attended and supported the Sacred Grounds Desert Canyon Habitat dedication

**Denominational Affairs:**

Jane is working on information about the GA in June to try and increase interest and awareness of what the GA does. Plus, information about the cost of GA with a new GA sponsored payment plan. She'll ask Pam to put it in the Feb. Newsletter.

The GA published promotional resources (e.g. banners, logos, a printable flyer) that have already been emailed to Pam so she can pull from the choices to enhance a GA article.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Alberg-Burbank

**Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> VP report to the Board**  
**January 16, 2024**

**Stewardship**



The main focus for Stewardship this month has been preparing for the Chili Cookoff on January 28. It is the Pledge Drive Kickoff event.

Jerry and I met with Jack Fitzsimmons to create common imagery that could be used for both the cookoff and pledge drive communications. He created consistent imagery intended to send the message that the events were connected.

I created the constant contact registration, the January newsletter articles and filled in the details on the website calendar. I also included a gallery of past winners on the calendar.

Jane and I staffed a table before and after the service on January 14. Linda made a display for the table. To date we have 12 chili entries, 8 of them with meat and 4 vegetarian and vegan. We will staff another table on January 21 to hopefully get more vegan and vegetarian entries.

**Growing Connections To Our CommUnity**

Stewardship and Membership began publishing a series of monthly newsletter articles on the meaning of stewardship to our community. These will appear throughout the year. The first articles was titled “Attend Sunday Services Frequently” and spoke of how regular attendance strengthens the bonds of community. The February article is being written.

**Chuckwalla Preserve**

I am writing a letter of support for the creation of the Chuckwalla Preserve. Katie and Colin Barrows, Representatives of the Preserve s were at the January 7 Desert Canyon Habitat Dedication. I talked to both of them about our support for the preserve. I also noted that many of our congregants were quite interested in learning more about the preserve. At the end of the event, Colin asked to return for a speaking engagement. That, along with other environmental speaking events, is under discussion.

**Lifespan Spiritual Growth**

We are in the beginning stages of discussion for events to be offered in March and April. Under consideration are a Lifespan/Sacred Grounds series to included speakers from the January 7 dedication. We are also looking at activities which can be focused in the gardens like painting, shamanic practices to name a few.



## **Desert Canyon Habitat Dedication**

Outreach Within and Volunteerism are the focus of the work of the Stewardship Committee this year. The Sacred Grounds Initiative achieved a resounding success in outreach to the wider community which is a broader aspect of outreach within. The wider community was exposing to our values and joyfully celebrated with us. The number of volunteers that it took to run the event was large and they all worked together seamlessly. We as a congregation can learn from their example in communications and recruitment. I concur with the Sacred Grounds Initiative that we should communicate the outstanding results of the Outreach campaign to the congregation so that they see they are being heard.

Submitted by Fran Hoag

## UUCOD Treasurer's Report December 2023

As of December 31, UUCOD held cash deposits of \$275,949.43 which includes \$208,239.48 invested with UUA and a CD with Pacific Premier Bank. Of the total amount, \$223,612.94 is held in either dedicated or restricted funds. This leaves \$52,336.49 in available unrestricted funds; up from \$48,998.10 in November.

December pledge payments totaled \$17,649, largely due to one-time calendar year end single payments. We have received a total of \$135,728 in pledge payments for the fiscal year to date against a total budgeted amount of \$182,000. UUCOD investments recovered earlier losses incurred since July. The MacLean Endowment Circle fund gained \$8,595 in value in December. The UUCOD Investment Fund gained \$9,429 in value. For the month, revenues exceeded expenses by \$3,431.

Of the \$36,110 in total expenses for December, \$9,405 was attributable to charitable endeavors. Through our holiday programs, UUCOD provided \$2,650 in Walmart gift cards for toys for CVUSD students, \$4,200 in food for migrant families, and \$1,000 in gift cards for residents of Safehouse of the Desert. Through our Share the Plate program, we donated \$565 to Compassion & Choices and \$908 to Doctors Without Borders. This was our most successful holiday program ever. The only exceptional expense for the month was \$4,515 in gardening expense that included monthly services, tree trimming, and the repair of several irrigation lines.

Fundraising for our Sacred Grounds in December totaled approximately \$5,300 with additional funds received for sacred stones. The Sacred Grounds Reserve account balance currently stands at \$15,979. Total expenses from July 1 to the present are \$15,921 with some outstanding expenses yet to be paid.

A first draft of the FY 24-25 budget was sent to the Finance Committee for review and comment at their January meeting. This draft reflects expenses of \$358,990 and revenues of \$296,810; a gap of \$62,180. Part of the analysis focused on remaining projected revenue and expenses for the current fiscal year. As of December 31, UUCOD held \$52,336 in unrestricted funds and we project receiving an additional \$66,612 in revenue by June 30; a total of \$118,948. Total projected expenses for the remainder of this fiscal year are \$118,012. This results in UUCOD having a cash flow challenge which will largely deplete our unrestricted funds.

Preparation for the Pledge Drive is substantially completed. A chili cookoff is planned for the campaign launch on January 28 and a pizza luncheon will be held on March 3 to celebrate the end of the Pledge Drive. Annual statements have been provided to all Members and Friends who made financial contributions in 2023. Tax statements have been sent to all employees and contractors.

Jerry L'Hommedieu  
January 11, 2024

## **Minister's Report to the UUCOD Board**

January 16, 2023

The Rev. Ian W. Riddell

No overall summary this month, my apologies: extra worship at the holidays, a week of study leave, a week of vacation, and I came home from my vacation with an ear infection (which is greatly improving each day).

*Summary Outline of the work I've been involved with for the past month. This is not an exhaustive list, but is meant to give you a general idea of what I've been up to as your minister.*

### **A. Counseling and Pastoral Care**

- The Care Team continues to check in and share our contacts with congregants and offer each other guidance and support in our support of congregants' needs.
- The Care Team and I will present a workshop after the service on January 21 sharing our new guiding document and engaging the congregation in conversation and exploration around the questions of "How are we a caring community?" and "What does it mean to care for each other?"
- I continue to meet with congregants in need of connection and conversation by phone and Zoom and in person.
- I am heartened, as always, by the ways I see you all take care of each other when people are in need.

### **B. Administration, Governance, and Staff**

- I meet weekly with Pam Bibb to check in on work expectations and how things are going.
- The Committee on Ministry met this month and laid out some plans for several projects we'll be exploring in the new year, including the CoM's involvement in ministerial evaluations
- Because of vacation, I did not meet this month with President Bob Rancourt and First Vice President July Alberg-Burbank.
- Walter and I continue to meet to discuss ministerial evaluation. He will present where we are at this month's meeting.
- I met with President, Bob Rancourt, and Treasurer, Jerry L'Hommedieu to work on next year's budget and the pledge drive letter.

### **C. Membership and Committees**

- I meet monthly with the DIB Ministry team. We are educating ourselves about issues of neurodivergence as we explore a broad view of inclusion and welcome. We are also

working with the assessment last year's team did of our congregation around ARAOMC issues in the ways we live out our goals in community.

- I worked with Mel Wilkinson, Jane Zaun, and other congregants to put up and decorate our holiday tree. Mel and Jane and I took it down again on January 4.
- I attended the Men's Breakfast on Friday, January 5.

#### **D. Lifespan Faith-Development**

- I meet monthly with the Chalice Circle Facilitators. The Chalice Circles continue to follow our monthly themes based on the newly articulated Article II values.

#### **E. Worship**

- We have service leaders planned through the beginning of April
- I continue to lead the weekly Production meetings, though others take the lead when I am out of town or away. In our production meetings, we continue the practice of reflecting on the service the day before and noting any issues we need to address.
- I led or participated in worship several times:
  - December 24 morning — The Story of Love with Ginger Hemingwat as Worship Associate. [we did not stream this service]
  - December 24 evening — Christmas Eve: The Gift of Love with Julia Alberg-Burbank as Worship Associate and our fabulous choir!
  - December 31 — The Fire of Love with Bryna Blum as Worship Associate.
  - January 14 – Voting Rights as Justice with Steven Toporoff as Worship Associate
- What a huge celebration we hosted on January 7! So many people were here from so many places. Deep thanks to Rod Belshee and Rev. Barbara Fast for organizing such a wonderful event!
- We are regularly having high attendance at our worship services again. This is a wonderful thing and I'll want to work with our ushers to help latecomers find good seating.

#### **F. Denominational Activities**

- I regularly consult with local and regional colleagues on issues affecting our congregations.
- I continue meeting monthly as a mentor to a person in the ministerial formation process for feedback, support, and context setting as they move through the credentialing process. I have taken on the role of mentor to another new minister as he enters Preliminary Fellowship. Both of these mentoring roles together will take about 2.5 hours a month of my time.

#### **G. Prophetic Outreach, Interfaith Activities, and Local Collaboration**

- I participated with 4 congregants in the distribution of holiday meal food at the Galilee Center on December 21.

## H. Personal and Professional Growth

- I continue meeting monthly with a coach for ongoing support, learning, and accountability as I minister to the congregation in our diversity transition work. My coach is Rev. Julica Hermann de la Fuente
- I meet monthly with a small group of colleagues in our region in reflection, sharing, and collegial support and learning.
- I am grateful for the week of Study Leave December 25 through December 30 and the week of Vacation from January 6 through the 13<sup>th</sup>.

in peace and deep love



### **My weekly schedule is as follows:**

Currently, my day off is Friday. Thursday continues to be my writing/reading day, which I try to keep free of meetings.

### **Upcoming Travel Schedule:**

- I will be on Vacation visiting family in Canada from February 5 through February 11

Monthly Report – January 16, 2023  
UUCOD Secretary Claudia Simmons

---

1. I was present and took the minutes of the December 19, 2023, Board Minutes. The draft has been prepared, reviewed by Board members and is awaiting approval at the January 2024 Board Meeting.
2. I had the privilege to hang some of my artwork in the Community Room along with Lisa Spencer. John Ressler helped me in this effort.
3. On January 7<sup>th</sup>, Lisa Spencer and I represented the UUCOD Wednesday Crafters at the Sacred Grounds public dedication with a fun display of 'for sale' artwork. A percentage of the sales proceeds will benefit the Sacred Grounds Fund.

# **Director at Large Board Report January 2024**

## **Hospitality**

- **No new updates since last month.**

## **Human Resources**

- **Rev. Ian and I met on January 3rd to continue crafting a Ministerial Evaluation Form (assessment). We reviewed a rough draft that Ian revised prior to this vacation. Our next meeting is January 14th upon his return.**
- **When we meet on the 14th it will be to finalize the assessment form to be presented to the Board in February (due to Ian's vacation schedule there was insufficient time to present to the board in January).**
- **As mentioned in the December Board meeting, in tandem to crafting the assessment form, we will be recommending the structure of the Evaluation Team, their role and who will be a part of this team. Our intention is to also bring to the Board our recommendations on the evaluation process in February.**

## **Attitude of Gratitude**

- **Prepared and mailed a thank you card to Joni and Bill for their work on the Food Drive and their Thanksgiving dinner.**

**Submitted by:  
Walter Gendell  
Director at Large  
January 11, 2024**

Board Mtg. 1-16-24

Carol McDaniel, Director at large

These are the Committees I check.

AV

They have done a great job these last few Sundays. More help is needed so they are going to start a "This is Fun" campaign. Hopefully, this will bring people in.

Facilities

Nothing new. This month's weed pull party was well attended with people bringing snacks too.

Social Justice

They are working on "Get Out the Vote" now. Also Safe Schools for this month's Share the Plate.

The scholarship given will be in the name of Gloria Kapp.

Carol McDaniel



## **Sacred Grounds Report to the Board January 2024**

### **Dedication of the Desert Canyon Habitat, January 7**

*Wow! Just Wow! Still tingling!*

Rev. Barbara Fast, our retired prior minister, led the combined Worship Service and Desert Canyon Habitat Dedication. The event was amazing, energizing, informative and inspiring. Rev. Ian delivered his remarks by video. All of the program came together with the theme of our Interdependence of all existence. Dr. Cameron Barrows, a guest speaker and non-church goer, followed Rev. Barbara and started his remarks with “What she said”! Indeed while one was from the spiritual and sacred side looking towards nature and the other was from the ecologist side looking towards our interdependent existence, the two speakers delivered wonderfully overlapping and reinforcing messages.

The Desert Canyon Habitat and the Dedication event completely met our three goals of 1) provide habitat, 2) help people connect to the land, and 3) inspire people to put native species in their yards.

Months of promotion to many conservation groups in the valley, plus social media and publicity, led to huge attendance (see more below). The sanctuary was packed with overflow into the community room (which was set up with chairs for overflow watching the stream on the TV).

Membership counted 161 people in attendance, plus 26 viewed online. If half of those screens had two people we had a total of around 200 people! And a few more that stayed at the labyrinth may not have been counted. Perhaps 75-100 were new guests who were exposed to UUCOD in our largest Outreach event in memory.

Guest Speakers include Dr. Cameron Barrows, UCR Ecology Conservationist, Lisha Astorga of DesertStrawHouse and Elizabeth Ogren Erickson of UCR Palm Desert Center.

Musicians include Joel Baker (piano), MacKenzie Zaun (soloist), and Diane Annie Mathias (native flute) plus Michael Allen as DJ during the Exhibitor Fair.

Many, many people helped pull off this huge event. This was by far the most complex service AV has ever attempted, it had huge logistical challenges for physical setup of chairs and tables in multiple locations, involved boosting our wifi, and challenged hospitality. Amazing teamwork by all!

### **Exhibitor Fair**

Eight organizations joined the Exhibitor’s Fair:

- California Native Plant Society, Katie Barrows
- UCR Palm Desert Center, Elizabeth and Bob Erickson
- DesertStrawHouse, Lisha and Mark Astorga
- The Living Desert, Jose Marfori and Baltazar Pimentel
- Friends of the Desert Mountains, NJ Bradeen
- Oswit Land Trust, David Paisley

Milkweed for Monarchs, Christine Hammond and Roy  
Chuckwalla National Monument, Colin Barrows

In addition UUCOD had four tables:

UUCOD Artists, Claudia Simmons and Lisa Spencer  
Sacred Grounds Merchandise, Denise Stevens, Leslie Gebhart, Jane Betts-Stover  
Hospitality, Sandy, Margaret, Sue E, Diana and others  
Membership

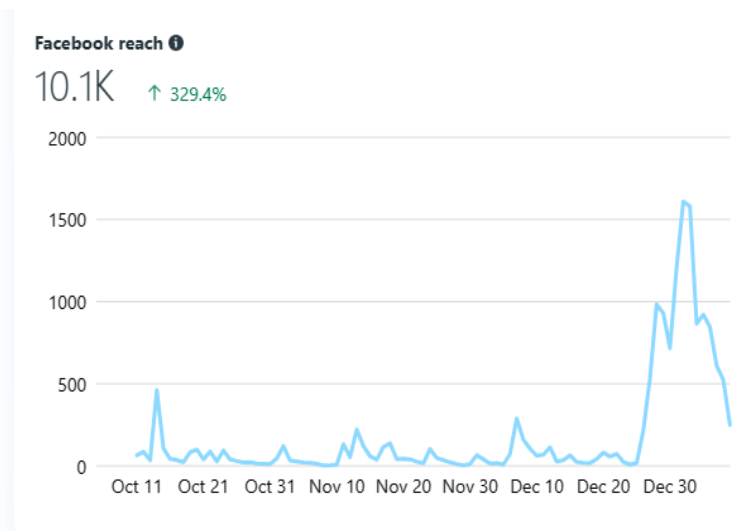
The Exhibitors were quite pleased with the Fair. For example, the Palm Desert Center had five people sign up with interest in taking the California Naturalist Class, the Chuckwalla National Monument was similar, and both DesertStrawHouse and Milkweed for Monarchs reported they were very happy with their plant sales volume.

### Outreach/Promotion

We ran online promotion starting with an opinion piece in Uken online and peaking the week before our Dedication event with online publicity and postings in multiple “what’s happening” types of websites and event calendars. We promoted heavily in conservation groups for months, and our Invitation flyer was forward by at least three conservation groups to their mailing lists of hundreds of people each. We also spent considerable time on the phone and email with influential people in the conservation community. It was a major Outreach event. Huge kudos to Diane Carmony in particular, as well as the Sacred Grounds Steering Committee.

Our public Facebook site recorded record traffic during the Sacred Grounds Dedication promotion. We had more Reach in the 14 days between December 26 and January 9 than we did for the entire year before.

Unfortunately we do not record uucod.org website traffic. We were featuring Sacred Grounds on the home page and continually updated our Sacred Grounds web pages. I expect that our website traffic spiked at least as much as the Facebook traffic did. Anecdotally, multiple people commented at the Dedication event that they had looked at our website, and the guest who joined the Weed Pull Party saw our social media promotion, found our website, and emailed us to ask how he could help.



During the Contract to Calling process, one of the top items that people thought we should do more of was Outreach. We suggest that the Board and Communication team actively communicate to the congregation the effort and results that this Outreach campaign had, so that they can see that their desires are being heard and met.

## **Financial**

The current Sacred Grounds Reserve balance (January 10) is \$16,800.

The final costs of the Fall 2023 projects was

\$ 6,985 – Patio Extension <charged to Facilities>

\$ 8,075 – Celebration Garden

\$ 6,992 – Desert Canyon Habitats

\$ 150 – Mesquite along south wall

\$15,217 – total project expense (versus budget of \$19,300)

There were some incidental costs like printing, plus the merchandise expense that are not included. Also, some of the reimbursement for these expenses was donated back to the church, so this does not match the Reserve transactions but provides a historical accounting of the cost of the gardens.

Sacred Grounds sold merchandise (T-shirts, mugs, ...) and had a donation jar. Total receipts was \$1,253.70 to credit to the Sacred Grounds Reserve. (The cost of merchandise is charged to the Reserve.)

With the huge attendance at the January 7 service, the plate collection was \$895 (!), considerably above average for non-Share-the-Plate services and possibly a new record, all of which goes to the church.

## **Weed Pull Parties and Tuesday work parties**

The Tuesday work parties had shrunk to often only Jerry, or Jerry and Tom S. To try to engage more people, we started promoting a monthly Weed Pull Party, with fun and refreshments.

Our first Weed Pull Party was January 9 and had eight people. Six were people already involved with the grounds (Jerry, Tom S, Dave E, Sue E, Randy, Rod), plus one new guest (Octavio) and Fran. While this didn't meet the goal of bringing in lots of new people, we made good progress on the (never-ending) schismus grass and Octavio will come back on future Tuesdays. We hope to bring in more people with each successive Weed Pull Party.

## **Lifespan opportunities**

Sacred Grounds is ready to partner up with any of the other UUCOD Committees for classes or events in support of our value of the Interdependent Web of All Existence.

There are ideas percolating for Plein Air artist gatherings in the Desert Canyon Habitat and Labyrinth (John), as well as meditation and Shamanic practices (Diana).

As well, we might be able to create a Lifespan Sacred Grounds Series as three visitors to the Dedication offered to host classes: Backyard Native Gardens (Lisha Astorga), Chuckwalla National Monument (Colin Barrows), and Composting (Prema Walker and/or Jerry L'Hommedieu). Rod and Dave may also provide wildflower classes on the grounds during the March bloom.

## **Outreach/Visibility opportunities**

**Dave E may bring a proposal to the Board to create a geocache on the grounds**, as suggested by a visitor. Ann Iwata and Marg Duin made a proposal to the Sacred Grounds Steering Committee to have a geocache on the grounds. Dave E will present that idea to the Board.

Rod is working with the Desert Horticultural Society to potentially list the Desert Canyon Habitat in their Garden Tour. It would not be part of the formal tour (that is limited to southern Palm Springs) but might be listed as an adjunct.

## **Existing Projects**

We are researching possible benches for the Desert Canyon Habitat and the Celebration Garden, in tandem with several of the artistic and creative people in the congregation. Denise Stevens will lead that task team. **Per the procedures for aesthetic elements, we ask the Board to formally appoint a Task Team to prepare a proposal for the Board**. This may include Denise Stevens, Jack Fitzsimmons, Walter Gendell, John Ressler, and Mel Wilkinson.

We learned during the Dedication that many people will walk between the labyrinth and the Habitat, cutting over the sand and rock creek. We need to put a trail and probably a bridge to accommodate that reality. This will also need Board aesthetic approval but we are not yet ready to propose Task Team membership (unless it is taken on by the same team).

## **2024 Fall Projects (and beyond)**

We have ideas for adding two or three more native habitats, year-round bloom, a green wall to shade the sanctuary back wall, trees to screen between Key Largo and the retention pond, a mediation garden and more. The Steering Committee will review these ideas in January and February, discuss them with and get input from the congregation (after the Feb 25 service), propose 2024 priorities, seek Board approval in March, and then start developing plans. We will provide budget estimates in late January (which will basically just say we expect to spend in 2024-2025 whatever the Reserve balance is on January 31 2024).



January 2024

What a year it has been for our beloved community. A year ago, after seven years without a settled minister, we had just elected a group of members to determine if we would invite Rev. Ian W. Riddell to serve as our settled minister. After extensive meetings, we determined we would ask our members to vote on this matter and that vote resulted in an overwhelmingly positive response. Rev. Ian assumed his new role as settled minister on July 1 and we recently celebrated his formal installation on November 12. This represents a huge milestone for our congregation and a new chapter in UUCOD history.

UUCOD experienced many other significant milestones over the past year. We celebrated the induction of the largest group of new members in many years and we focused on becoming a more welcoming community to those who walk through our doors. We created a wonderful Celebration Garden to commemorate significant moments in the lives of our members and friends and we began creating beautiful desert habitats in which we can find peace and native plants and animals can be protected and thrive.

Through the generosity of our members and friends we experienced several firsts: our most successful pledge drive ever; our most successful service auction ever; and our most successful holiday giving drive ever. It has truly been an incredible year.

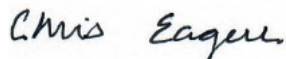
Now we look forward to our future that will unfold as we anticipate our new fiscal year. We will reimagine who we are as a community as we work toward revising our vision and mission statements and we will contemplate the impact of changes to our principles as proposed by the Unitarian Universalist Association. We also face challenges with identifying leadership for many of our committees and developing an infrastructure that will support robust spiritual and educational opportunities to grow.

Despite some very successful fundraising activities, UUCOD has encountered some financial challenges this year. Moving from an 80% to a 100% ministry increased expenses while we have, thus far, fallen short in revenues from rentals and in other areas. Our available cash reserves have decreased considerably. We also find that our 20-year-old building is beginning to show its age and we are incurring increased maintenance expenses.

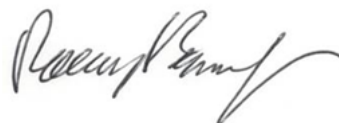
For the coming fiscal year, we hope to expand our base of members and friends who make an annual pledge commitment. We hope this includes attracting new members, and new friends, who are committed to supporting our community through an annual pledge. We ask our members and friends to be as generous as possible, as they are able. Our goal for this year's pledge drive is \$195,000\*, about 5% more than last year's goal.

Now, and in the coming year, UUCOD asks for your support in offering your time, your talents, and your treasures to help us sustain and build our community. Let us find joy in our giving, our participation, and our goal of making our community a more wonderful, welcoming, and transformative place.

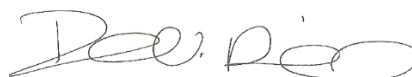
Respectfully,



Chris Eager  
Pledge Drive Chairperson



Robert Rancourt  
UUCOD Board President



Rev. Ian W. Riddell  
UUCOD Settled Minister

\*Based upon our current membership and pledge goal of \$195,000, an average annual pledge would equate to approximately \$1,450 per member. Pledge amounts vary widely. Please pledge generously, as you are able. Pledges make up less than two-thirds of UUCOD's annual budget.

# UUCOD FY 2024/2025 STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE

NEW  
 UPDATED

(Fiscal Year July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## PERSON #1

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone(s): \_\_\_\_\_

## PERSON #2

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone(s): \_\_\_\_\_

## PLEDGE AMOUNT

I/We pledge the following annual amount to help cover UUCOD's operating costs: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## PLEDGE TIMING

A ONE-TIME payment on: \_\_\_\_\_

MONTHLY amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Begin on: \_\_\_\_\_ End on: \_\_\_\_\_

QUARTERLY amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Begin on: \_\_\_\_\_ End on: \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

## PAYMENT METHOD

**BANK ACCOUNT** Please debit my/our pledge from my/our bank account:

Bank Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Routing #: \_\_\_\_\_

Checking Account #: \_\_\_\_\_ (attach a voided check)

Savings Account #: \_\_\_\_\_ (attach a deposit slip)

I authorize UUCOD to debit my/our checking or savings account. I understand this authority shall remain in effect until notice is provided terminating authorization or the stated end date, whichever is earlier.

Print Name

Signature

Date

**CREDIT CARD** Please debit my/our pledge from my/our credit card:

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address if different from above: \_\_\_\_\_

Please increase my/our pledge by 3% to cover credit card processing fees.

I authorize UUCOD to process transactions against my credit card account. I understand this authority shall remain in effect until notice is provided terminating authorization or the stated end date, whichever is earlier.

Print Name

Signature

Date

Please return your pledge sheet to UUCOD, Attn: Treasurer, PO Box 2853, Rancho Mirage, CA 92270 or you may email it to [Treasurer@uucod.org](mailto:Treasurer@uucod.org). Do NOT use the street address for mailing your pledge.



# Harvey Milk Diversity Breakfast

Thursday, May 9, 2024

Coffee Welcome 8:30-9:30am. Program 9:30-11:00am  
Palm Springs Convention Center, 277 N. Avenida Caballeros  
(o) 760-416-8711 | (fax) 760-444-3270 | www.pspride.org

RETURN FORM TO [ron@pspride.org](mailto:ron@pspride.org) or  
(fax) 760-444-3270

Checks or Zelle payment only.

No services fees on orders by mail.

Zelle - [ron@pspride.org](mailto:ron@pspride.org)

Checks payable to Palm Springs Pride

329 W Mariscal Rd.

Palm Springs, CA 92262

## Sponsorship Levels

Please email a hi-res color jpg logo to [Milk@pspride.org](mailto:Milk@pspride.org)

**\$25,000 Presenting Sponsor.**

- One table of 8 with breakfast & preferred center seating at front of stage
- Logo displayed on one video wall during entry
- Opportunity to introduce Honoree or Keynote speaker from the podium or via video
- Proportional logo in printed program and welcome signage
- Logo on table sign

**\$15,000 Coffee Welcome Sponsor 8:30am - 9:30am.\***

*Includes acknowledgment from podium, in printed program, event signage, and one table of 8 to the breakfast. \*100% Charitable contribution*



**\$10,000 Platinum Sponsor.**

- One table of 8 with breakfast & preferred center seating at front of stage
- Logo displayed on one video wall during entry
- Opportunity to introduce speaker or program segment from the podium or via video
- Proportional logo in printed program and welcome signage
- Logo on table sign

Top Tier Sponsorship

**\$5,000 Gold Sponsor.**

- One table of 8 with breakfast & preferred seating in row one or two
- Proportional logo displayed on video walls during sponsor acknowledgment
- Proportional logo in printed program and welcome signage
- Logo on table sign

**Underwrite presentation of Harvey Milk sculpture (9.5" x 8") to honoree.**

**\$3,000 \***

*Includes opportunity to present award. Required top tier sponsorship sold separately.*



*\*100% Charitable contribution*

**\$2,500 Silver Sponsor.**

- One table of 8 with breakfast & preferred seating next to Gold and Platinum sponsors
- Proportional logo displayed on video walls during sponsor acknowledgment
- Proportional logo in printed program and welcome signage
- Logo on table sign

**\$1,000 Bronze Sponsor.**

- One table of 8 with breakfast & priority seating in first available row behind Silver/Gold/Platinum at time of purchase
- Proportional logo displayed on video walls during sponsor acknowledgment
- Bronze Sponsor listing or logo in printed program and on welcome signage
- Name on table sign





**Harvey Milk**  
**Diversity Breakfast**  
Thursday, May 9, 2024

RETURN FORM TO [ron@pspride.org](mailto:ron@pspride.org) or  
(fax) 760-444-3270

## Ancillary Sponsorship Levels

- \$2,000 Floral Sponsor. One Available .**
  - One table of 8. Placement will be in rows behind Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum.
  - Proportional logo in printed program and welcome signage
  - Logo on table sign
  
- \$1,500 T-shirt Sponsor. One Available. 100% Charitable contribution**
  - Underwrite the cost to provide souvenir Harvey Milk T-Shirt to students
  - Listing as a \$1,500 sponsor in printed program
  
- \$1,200 Student Shuttle Sponsor. Six Available. 100% is a Charitable contribution**
  - Underwrite the cost to provide transportation so students can attend the breakfast
  - Listing as a \$1,200 sponsor in printed program
  
- \$1,000 Wireless Sponsor. One Available.**  
*100% is a Charitable contribution*
  - Underwrite the cost to provide wireless access for all attendees at the breakfast
  - Listing as a \$1,000 sponsor in printed program
  
- \$1,000 Pen Sponsor. One Available.**
  - Place your brand in front of every attendee by providing your branded ink pen to be set at each place setting. Donate fee and 1000 ink pens
  - Listing as a \$1,000 sponsor in printed program
  
- \$750 Student Team Sponsor. 100% Charitable contribution**  
8 Coachella Valley high school students will be hosted at the breakfast and your name or company name will be listed in the printed program and Online as a Student Team Sponsor. Students invited by Milk Committee.
  
- \$750 Table Sponsor**  
Includes assigned table for eight and Table Sponsor listing in printed program. Placement will be in rows behind Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum.
  
- \$500 Flag Sponsor. Three Available. 100% is a Charitable contribution**
  - Underwrite the cost to provide a Rainbow Flag Assortment Package for ten youth groups or GSA clubs.
  - Listing as a \$500 sponsor in printed program
  
- \$150 Parade Entry. Thirty Available. 100% is a Charitable contribution**
  - Underwrite the cost for a youth group or GSA to march in the annual Pride Parade.
  - Listing as a \$150 sponsor in printed program



# Harvey Milk Diversity Breakfast

Thursday, May 9, 2024

Coffee Welcome 8:30-9:30am. Program 9:30-11:00am

Palm Springs Convention Center, 277 N. Avenida Caballeros

(o) 760-416-8711 | (fax) 760-444-3270 | www.pspride.org

# Sponsorship / Tickets By Mail 2024

Checks or Zelle only.

No services fees on orders by mail.

## I'd like to honor the memory of Harvey Milk by securing the following:

- \$95 General Admission Breakfast Seating.** Enter number of Tickets \_\_\_\_\_ x \$95 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ ENTER TOTAL ENCLOSED
- \$95 Send A Student.** Enter number of Tickets \_\_\_\_\_ x \$95 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ *100% Charitable contribution*
- \$750 Student Team Sponsor.** Enter Qty \_\_\_\_ x \$750 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ *100% Charitable contribution*  
(Eight Coachella Valley high school students will be hosted at the breakfast and your name or company name will be listed in the printed program and online as a Student Team Sponsor.)
- \$750 Table Sponsor.** Enter Qty \_\_\_\_ x \$750 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(includes table & breakfast for eight and Table Sponsor listing in printed program)
- \$1,000 Bronze Sponsor.** Enter Qty \_\_\_\_ x \$1,000 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(includes table & breakfast for eight, Bronze Sponsor listing in printed program and name on table sign).
- \*\$2,500 Silver Sponsor.**  **\*\$5,000 Gold Sponsor.**
- \*\$10,000 Platinum Sponsor.**  **\*\$15,000 Coffee Welcome Sponsor.**
- \*\$25,000 Presenting Sponsor.**
- Other Sponsor Level & amount from deck** ENTER ITEM & AMOUNT HERE

*Proceeds benefit Coachella Valley LGBTQ youth related programs.*

\*(Silver and above sponsorship includes priority table placement & breakfast for eight, sponsor level listing, pro-portional logo in printed program, recognition on table sign.) *Please email a hi-res color jpg logo to Milk@pspride.org*

**My check in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ payable to Palm Springs Pride is enclosed.  
I'm sending payment by ZELLE to ron@pspride.org.**

**Return this form to MILK@pspride.org.**

Tickets are not issued for this event. Guest Names will be listed at the Registration Table as you provide below.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY, STATE, ZIP

\_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONE

\_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL *(required for charitable contribution and Zelle payment confirmation)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
COMPANY / ORGANIZATION NAME FOR TABLES & SPONSORS

**Guest Names:**

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_

6 \_\_\_\_\_

7 \_\_\_\_\_

8 \_\_\_\_\_

**Make Check payable and mail to :** Palm Springs Pride  
329 W. Mariscal Rd  
Palm Springs, CA 92262

**Send Payment via Zelle:** ron@pspride.org

*Payment may only be made via mail to the address above.*

*Please email guest names to ron@pspride.org or attach a complete list of names with your order.*

### **6.8 Jury Duty**

U.S. citizens have a civic obligation to provide jury duty service when called.

By state law, employees can use vacation, personal leave, or comp time to cover time they are out for jury duty.

The employee must bring in the jury duty notice as soon as it is received so that appropriate arrangements can be made to cover his or her duties. Employees are required to call in or report for work on those days or parts of days when their presence in court is not required.

### **6.9 Voting Time**

Employees who are registered voters and who lack sufficient time outside of work to vote in any local, state, and national election may take up to two hours off work with pay at the beginning or end of the day for this purpose. Employees should provide at least two working days' notice when time off is required.

### **6.10 Military Leave**

Employees who are inducted into or enlist in the Armed Forces of the United States or called to duty as a member of a reserve unit may take an unpaid leave in accordance with applicable law. The employee must provide advance notice of his or her need for a military leave and provide the Church with a copy of the employee's orders, which will be kept on record by the Church.

Upon return from military leave, employees will be reinstated as required by law and benefits will be reinstated with no waiting periods.

- B. Official leave of absence. A regular employee may request an Official leave of absence exceeding four hundred and eighty (480) hours, but not exceeding one year (2080 hours). Official leaves of absence may be granted upon written request by or on behalf of the employee, specifying the period and the reason, upon the written recommendation of the Department Head and with the written approval of the Human Resources Director. Application must be made on a form supplied by the Human Resources department in advance of the effective date of the leave, unless circumstances make such advance request impossible. If the Human Resources Director disapproves the request, it shall be so endorsed and returned to the Agency/Department Head, who may then present it to the Board of Supervisors. The Board's action shall be final. Any Official Leave of Absence granted shall be for a specified period and appropriate conditions may be imposed, such as the employee providing sufficient medical documentation or other evidence documenting the leave as required by the Human Resources Director or designee. Such leave may be extended upon further written request containing justification therefore, such request for extension is to be processed in the same manner as the original request. In the case of a request for an extension due to illness or disability, updated information of the same kind submitted for the original request will be required.

Nothing herein shall prevent the earlier return to duty by the employee, except the Department Head may require two weeks advance notice of the employee's intention to return.

An employee on leave of absence for illness or disability reasons will be required to present a return to work statement from the attending physician releasing the employee to full duty, prior to being allowed to return to work. Any release to less than full duty will be allowed only as accommodation as required under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Employment and Housing Act, or through the County's return to work program.

The Human Resources Director shall be promptly notified of the return of any employee from an official leave of absence without pay. The Board of Supervisors shall have the right to cancel or revoke a leave of absence previously granted.

#### Section 6. Military Leave

Absences on account of military duty are governed by the law.

#### Section 7. Jury Duty

- A. Any employee who shall be summoned for attendance to any court for jury duty during normal working hours shall be deemed to be on duty and there shall be no loss of salary. Any employee who shall be called as a witness arising out of and in the course of County employment, shall be deemed to be on duty and there shall be no loss of salary, but any witness fees received shall be paid into the County Treasury, together with any mileage allowed if County transportation is used. Any

employee absent as a witness in a private matter shall not be entitled to be paid during such absence.

1. An employee who is called for jury duty shall be compensated (as though he or she was working) for those hours of absence due to the jury duty that occurs during the employee's regularly scheduled working hours.
2. If an employee is required to be absent from work to report for jury duty, the employee will notify his/her supervisor of the absence as soon as possible, including, a phone message, text message, or email the night before if the employee finds out via a phone recording or on-line that he/she must report the next day.
3. If there are less than four (4) hours left on the employee's shift, the employee will be considered to have completed his/her shift and remain on paid status for the remainder of the scheduled shift and does not need to return to work.
4. An employee who is called to jury duty on a non-working day will not receive compensation or be authorized to change his or her schedule as a result of being called to jury duty.

## ARTICLE VIII HOLIDAYS

### Section 1. Paid Holidays

- A. Only regular and probationary employees in a paid status shall be eligible for paid holidays.
- B. County Holidays.
  - January 1, New Year's Day
  - Third Monday in January, Martin Luther King, Jr.
  - February 12, Lincoln's Birthday
  - Third Monday in February, Washington's Birthday
  - Last Monday in May, Memorial Day
  - July 4, Independence Day
  - First Monday in September, Labor Day
  - Second Monday in October, Columbus Day
  - November 11, Veterans' Day
  - Fourth Thursday in November, Thanksgiving Day (unless otherwise appointed)
  - Friday following Thanksgiving Day
  - December 25, Christmas Day

### Alternate Holidays.