

**First Unitarian Church of Toledo Board of Trustees
Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes, May 16, 2021
7:00 pm, via Zoom**

Note: This detailed version of the minutes is intended for the website and for the archives. The shorter version is for publication in the printed Annual Report for FY2122.

Call to Order and Welcome -- Board President Sandra Kosek-Sills

Sandra welcomed us to the 2nd Zoom-only Annual Meeting. She said she regretted that it was necessary for us to use Zoom, but that the meeting was very successful last year, and she felt sure it could be again. She said the circumstances of the world seemed to have changed, and she hoped that we would be able to be together again soon.

Attendance was 45 to 50 people.

Opening Words -- Rev. Tim

A chalice lighting for the work of the congregation.

By [Erik Walker Wikstrom](#)

As we approach our agenda
let us remember that we are doing the work of the congregation.
When we do the work of this congregation, we touch lives.
When we touch lives, we change the world.
May this chalice flame we now kindle
remind us throughout our meeting
of our ministry and our mission.

Zoom Etiquette for This Meeting -- Secretary Tom Sheehan

Participants were asked to mute their devices when not speaking and to “raise their hands” when they have a comment or a question to make.

Annual Report Comments -- Board President Sandra Kosek-Sills

Sandra said that this has been a “heck of a year” but we have done a lot of good work in the world.

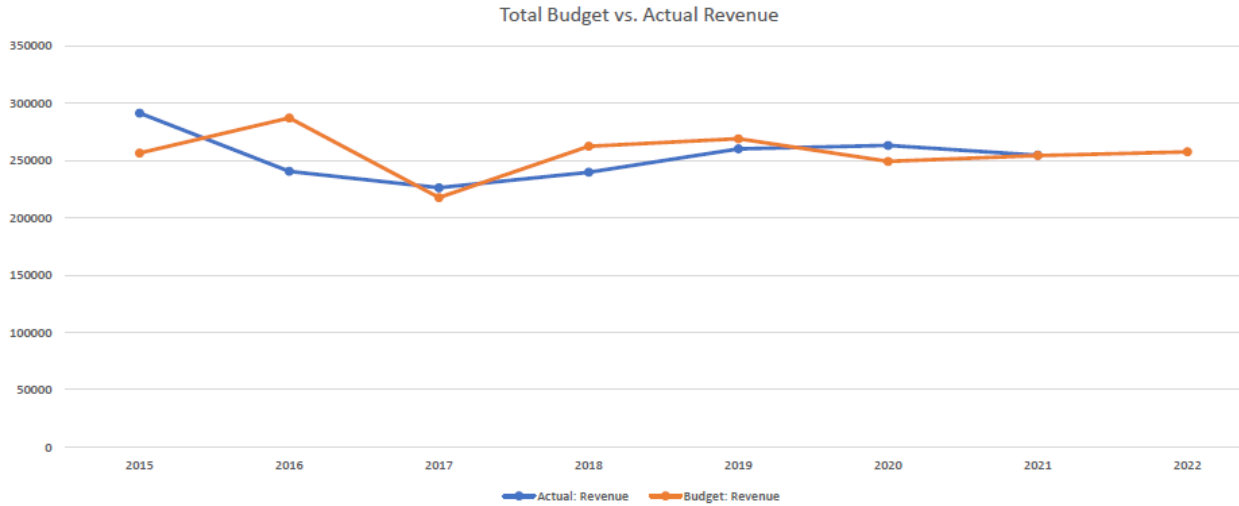
We managed to get the payroll protection loan for the prior budget year forgiven.

Sandra has been working on the compassionate action side of our church mission. She worked on UU the Vote and attended vigils -- the anti-racism vigils, and the “protest while you can” event. She attended General Assembly last year and plans to attend this year, too. She appreciates everyone’s efforts to continue in the “compassionate action” part of our mission.

Sandra did a financial overview. So far, we're doing well. Generally speaking, we have enough money to cover our budget. She acknowledged Nick Conrad for his help in preparing the presentation.

Here are her slides:

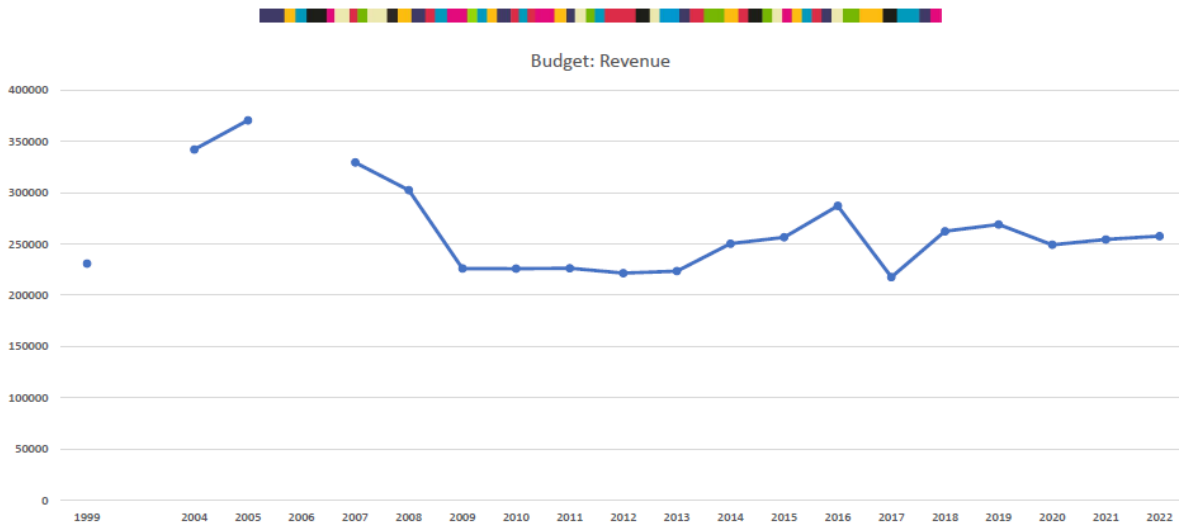
Doing well on revenue estimates



Sandra's comment: Our income has been covering our budgets in general in recent years.

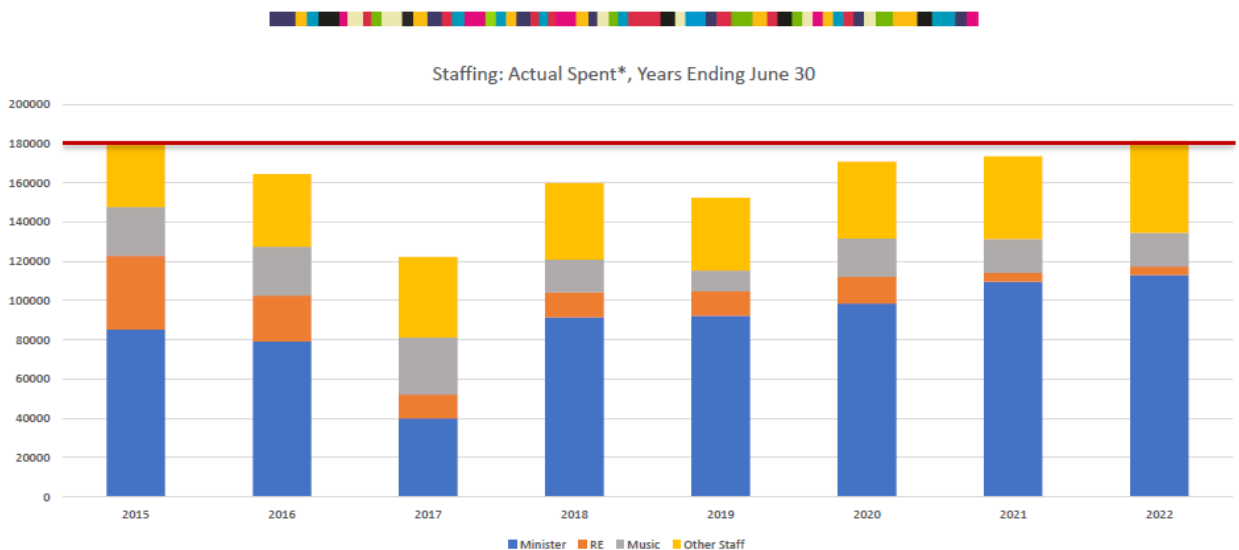
20 Year Revenue Retrospective

(not corrected for inflation)



Sandra's comments: We had higher income in the early 2000s when we had Dr. Gary Blaine as our minister. Since 2014 we have usually been at a budget of about 250K.

Recent Years Staffing Expenses



Red line indicates approx. budget
21 and 22 are budgeted (not actual)

Sandra's comments: Budget amounts allotted to the RE position have been going down, mostly to cover health care for our two positions that have health care: our minister and our administrative assistant. Turnover in the RE position has made it easy for us to balance the budget by cutting the amount for RE. This is not desirable, but it's what we have now.

Restoring RE: Accommodating rising costs



Current:

- We have 91 pledge units and revenue of \$257,000
- Staff funds of \$182,000
- Minister 62% (\$113,000)
- RE 2.5% (\$4,500)
- Music 9% (\$17,000)
- Other 26% (\$46,800)
- Building and programs at ~\$75,000

Short Term GOAL:

- We have 100 pledge units and revenue of \$267,000
- Staff funds of \$192,000
- Minister 60% (\$113,000)
- RE 7% (\$14,000)
- Music 9% (\$18,000)
- Other 25% (\$47,000)
- Building and programs at ~\$75,000
- Target: Net 9 additional pledge units at \$1000 annual pledge average
 - ((2 years at 2/\$1000 plus 5/\$500))

Sandra's comments: We had a very successful pledge campaign. Staff funds were \$182,000, of which only \$4,500 is for RE. We need more members who will pledge. To that end, in the next two years of her presidency, she hopes that we will reconstitute the Membership Committee so that we can do more mindful membership drives.

Achieving our Vision:

A vibrant spiritual community that achieves growth, visibility, and relevance



Current:

- We have 91 pledge units and revenue of \$257,000
- Staff funds of \$182,000
- Minister 62% (\$113,000)
- RE 2.5% (\$4,500)
- Music 9% (\$17,000)
- Other 26% (\$46,800)
- Building and programs at ~\$75,000

Aspirational GOAL:

- Could have the staff and programs we aspire to at about 145 pledge units and revenues of \$300,000
- Staff funds of \$215,000
- Minister 56% (\$120,000)
- RE at about 14% of staff (\$30,000)
- Music at 9% of staff (\$20,000)
- Other at 21% of staff (\$45,000)
- Add \$10,000 to building and programs (~\$85,000)
- Target: 54 additional pledge units at \$1000 annual pledge average

Sandra's comments: As an aspirational goal, we need to get another 54 pledge units to get up to the \$300,000 budget level. This would need to be done mindfully over a, say, five-year membership drive.

Sandra is also looking forward to the next capital campaign, probably over a year from now. The primary purpose is to re-imagine the sanctuary, to make it more of our own space.

Comments / Report on the Year -- Rev. Tim

Rev. Tim recognized Sandra's leadership, and is glad that he and Sandra work well together.

In memoriam: Lost to us in person, but certainly not in memory.

Kay Breyfogle, Liza Hirzell, Ruth London, Millicent Marquardt, Rita McDougle, Dawn Parsons, Rachel Volschow, Linda White, Zach Wilson and others we hold in our hearts.

Three new members: Sue Childers, Cindy Gilmore, and Robin Stone

Looking forward to starting to move past the intense part of the pandemic, as a congregation, we need a revival. We need to be intent and focused on making First Unitarian Church of Toledo known to others who might want to join us.

Tim has made efforts over the past year to try to be more present in different ways so that more members of the congregation can be aware of him. This includes Sunday services, and Tim is glad that we have been present every week, in spite of the learning curve we have experienced with new technologies. Tim has been writing a weekly column in the FYI, and a new blog, "The Index". This covers aspects of liberal religion and church history. Several new issues are in the works.

Tim asked that congregants continue to reach out to him, to have a conversation, whether pastoral care or just a friendly connection.

All office staff have been vaccinated, and he encouraged all to consider getting vaccinated. He offered to talk with any congregants who have concerns about. He emphasized that we are a religion that believes in science and that we can trust the particular science regarding COVID-19.

Mail-In Ballot Explanation -- Secretary Tom Sheehan

Members who qualify to vote will receive their ballots for all decisions to be made this coming week. There will be a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Ballots received at the church no later than Friday, June 11 will be counted very shortly thereafter.

Sandra added that the purpose of the Zoom annual meeting is to give members a chance to participate, and people will have the chance to suggest changes in the issues to be voted on.

Presentation of Nominees to the Board -- Carol Keierleber of the Nominating Committee

Carol said that she was pleased that Sandra had agreed to continue as Board President, which is very important for continuity. The following slate was presented for election to the Board of Trustees:

Officers for a two year term ending June 30, 2023:

- Sandra Kosek-Sills, President; Eva Slawson, Secretary
- Members-at-Large for a two year term ending June 30, 2023: Judy Murray, Robin Stone, Phil Zepp

Mike Davisson was presented for a two-year term on the Nominating Committee ending June 30, 2023.

The following people remain on the Board: Krista Schneider, Hydie Ralston, Teresa Betts-Cobau, Mary Souther.

The following people will remain as members of the nominating committee: Elliot Adams & Dominic Wilson

Presentation of non-Budget Voting Items -- Board President Sandra Kosek-Sills

Item 3 – Bylaws Amendment (Article V. Membership)

During the stewardship campaign, it was noted that we have a few very long time members who have challenges with active engagement as they reach their late senior years. The board is proposing two new membership categories to be added to the Bylaws as follows (the existing items will be renumbered accordingly):

“B. Legacy Member. The board may by a simple majority vote designate as a legacy member any member (Paragraph A above) who has been actively engaged in the congregation over many years and who, because of a change in life circumstances, can no longer keep up that active engagement. Legacy members will maintain the privileges of active membership, including voting. No financial contribution may be required of legacy members. Legacy members shall not be included in the annual member certification numbers provided to the UUA, nor shall they be considered in the calculation for establishing a quorum at any congregational meeting. Prospective Legacy Members, members of their families and members of the congregation and staff may submit suggestions for legacy membership to the board at any time.

C. Honorary Member. The congregation may choose to designate any person who has rendered valuable contributions to this church as an honorary member. The board shall present the name

of the person being considered for honorary membership to the congregation at a congregational meeting, and a majority of those present shall determine the election of the honorary member. Honorary members will maintain all the privileges of active membership, except voting. Honorary members do not need to sign the membership book. Honorary members shall not be included in the annual member certification numbers provided to the UUA, nor shall they be considered in the calculation for establishing a quorum at any congregational meeting. No financial contribution may be required of honorary members. Members of the congregation and staff may submit suggestions for honorary membership to the board no later than sixty (60) days before a congregational meeting.”

(Note that the reference in B is to the Paragraph A in the Bylaws which is not shown here.)

One member strongly objected to the Legacy Membership. She felt that this harkened back to the “white male land-owner” as being the only viable participant in the democracy. She felt that this membership category was not just or equitable in any sense. She feels that anyone who has been an active member in the past and wants to participate can certainly make a minimal pledge of, say, \$10.

Another member was concerned that a person could have put in 50 or 60 years of active membership, contributing greatly, and then because of a change in circumstances would not be able to participate. In answer to Chirs’s question, Sandra explained that they would still be able to vote by whatever ways are available to any other members (proxy, for example).

Item 4 – Change to Vision Statement

During the Strategic Planning process, it was proposed to add the word “inclusive” to our Vision statement. If approved, the vision statement will say that we are striving to become:

A vibrant, inclusive spiritual community that achieves growth, visibility, and relevance.

The Board recommends that the congregation vote to approve this change.

Item 5 – Land Acknowledgment

The Board proposes the congregation adopt the following land acknowledgment to give thanks and recognition for the indigenous people on whose land our church is located:

Long Version (for posting in the building, printing in reports, etc.):

“We give thanks for the earth we are on at First Unitarian Church of Toledo, and to the people who were here before us. We are thankful to the Miami, Peoria, and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy which includes the Mohawk, to the Wyandot and the Council of Three Fires—Ojibwe, Potawatomie, and Ottawa—as well as the Delaware, Mingo, and Shawnee people for our presence on what was known to some as the Great Black Swamp. The Kickapoo and Fox people also have ties to this area. We know that the swamp, which includes where Toledo is now, became United States territory and was settled by white people in large part because of the Battle of Fallen Timbers here in 1794, which enabled U.S. occupation of the Northwest Territory. A year after that battle, Native Americans were sent to live here as part of a treaty with the young United States, when the U.S. wanted to take better land where the Native

Americans had lived. In 1794 there were not 5,000 people in what would become Ohio. But 25 years later, there were about 500,000, and the U.S. had taken over the Great Black Swamp and exiled the Native Americans, sending them west. So unwanted land that was said to be too wet to support good community or farming, the Great Black Swamp, was developed and became our home. We are grateful that now greater Toledo is a compassionate region where people of multiple backgrounds and origins live largely in harmony today.”

Short Version (potentially for letterhead, social media, etc.):

We give thanks for the earth we are on at First Unitarian Church of Toledo, and to the people who were here before us. We are thankful to the people of the Miami, Peoria, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and others for our presence here.

Discussion of non-Budget Voting Items -- Board President Sandra Kosek-Sills

One member voiced support for the Land Acknowledgment. Another member asked if this statement would be communicated to any indigenous people. Sandra said that the shorter version of the statement could be used on letterhead and Facebook and the like, but that there were no current plans to communicate the statement directly to any Native American groups.

Presentation of the Proposed Annual Operating Budget -- Arun Nadarajah, board member

Arun presented this summary of the Board's budget proposal. Two more detailed informational presentations were given earlier in the week.

	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22
Income	254,315	249,435
Supplemental Transfer from Reserve		9,200
Total Income	254,315	258,635
Expenses		
Personnel	175,618	179,710
Social Media Person		3,360
		183,070
Operating Expenses	62,927	61,975
Program Expenses	15,785	13,590
Total Expense	254,330	258,635

In his presentation, Arun reiterated that health care costs were going up, and that that was out of our control. Also, we are creating a social media position, a modest amount, but the Board feels it is very important to have a social media coordinator in our efforts to recruit more young people.

The Board is proposing to cover the shortfall next year with a supplemental draw from the Operating Reserve (aka "the Endowment") IF we need it. If revenues are higher than expected, we can reduce or eliminate this supplemental draw. He asked that anyone with detailed questions see the Annual Report -- the proposed budget is included there in full.

Discussion of the Proposed Annual Operating Budget

One congregant felt that Spiritual Adventures needed more money. Arun said that he believed that Spiritual Adventures was getting the same as last year. Arun said that if Spiritual Adventures overspent next year, it could probably be accommodated.

Mail-In Ballot Explanation (reprise) and Questions -- Secretary Tom Sheehan

Closing Words -- Rev. Tim

May the love that is the doctrine...

By [Kenneth R Warren](#)

May the love that is the doctrine of this church be also the strength and the spirit of this congregation and of our individual lives.

Early Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Sheehan, Secretary