

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



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970-493-5906 | hello@foothillsuu.org | foothillsuu.org | 1815 Yorktown Ave, Fort Collins, CO 80526

A Building Year

Dear Foothills Community,

When I reflect on 2022, I will remember it as a building year. Literally - because it is when we finally broke ground and began constructing our long-awaited new sanctuary. Metaphorically because we have been rebuilding our community as we emerge from the heart of the pandemic.

One year ago, we had just started to find our bearings with our return to in-person ministry when another wave of the virus sent us back to online church for the first two months of 2022. It was a tough setback, and we were grateful that by March, we could begin to gather in person again - all while continuing our online ministry on Sundays and in small groups.

The return to gathering in person has been so healing and life-giving. To sing together. To hear each other's laughter. To have the chance to sit next to someone new on a given Sunday. To remember the simple gift of being in community together. So much of 2022 was an experience of remembering, weaving anew the strands of community forever altered by the events of the last few years and yet as vital and strong as ever.

Gathering in person once again has felt so good, and still, this does not take away from the fact that it's often been hard work. We have needed to rebuild systems of ministry that were paused during the pandemic and refresh our systems to meet the needs of life in 2022. We also needed to rebuild our ministry teams, most of which were also paused (and replaced with other sorts of ministry teams) when we were all online.

Re-building our systems and teams would be challenging work any time, but it is important to recognize that we are doing this as people who have been through a global pandemic (alongside unprecedented threats to our democracy, the existential threat of climate crisis, and a national racial reckoning). Most of us hold some degree of overwhelm, fatigue, and grief - if not a lot of all of these.

Which is why, more than anything, our work this year has been to build our relationships with one another and our wider community. You will see this foundational orientation throughout the following pages. Behind all the numbers of worship attendance and the triumphant return of choir. Captured in the images of our camps and retreats. Threaded in the ministry reports from our justice teams. Central is the relationship among and between each of us. Across generations, stages of membership, relationships, and partnerships with our wider community - including with UU congregations in Wyoming and western Colorado where we are unleashing courageous love to counter the life-denying forces we face today.

This year affirmed our community's resilience and our mission's continued relevance. Through it all, this community continues to show up - with joy, kindness, and a sense of humor - because we know we are needed and we need each other. When you flip through these pages, I hope you feel proud and grateful to be a part of this incredible partnership and tradition of courage and love. I know I do.

With deep love and gratitude,

Rev. Gretchen

Building Construction

We broke ground on a building expansion on Tuesday, May 17, 2022. Over 140 members of the church and the greater community attended the milestone celebration. We heard directly from Ewers Architecture and Pinkard Construction and took the opportunity to recognize the tremendous ongoing work of our Building Expansion Team: Chris Bettlach, Jerry Hanley, Peg MacMorris, and Margaret Cottam.



Construction is well underway. We are almost finished creating the basement walls, and steel structures should be going up by the end of December. Construction is anticipated to be completed in Spring 2023.



The nearly \$8M expansion results from years of visioning, planning, and the tremendous generosity of the church's congregation. It offers an event space with capacity for over 400 people located in town, with a mountain view and beautiful architecture. The design centers sustainability, and energy efficiency, the use of sustainable materials, and the reuse and recycling of materials were primary objectives when choosing our partners, Ewers Architecture and Pinkard Construction. We also are participating in the City of Fort Collins Integrated Design Assistance program (IDAP), which provides incentives for design and construction as well as technical advice and performance incentives based on energy savings.



Worship



2022 was also a year of rebuilding regular Sunday worship following two years of pandemic disruption. We are thrilled that as of fall 2022 we are back to two regular in-person services. We are happy to share our online attendance remains strong even as increasing numbers join us in person. We dedicated significant time and resources in 2022 to improving our audiovisual equipment to ensure a high-quality experiences in person and during livestream. It was truly a year of learning and growing together, represented in our September/October worship series, Life/Changing, during which we explored how to move intentionally through life's transitions and our November worship series, In the Little Things, during which we learned how to find joy and love in the ordinary of everyday life.



1,437

confirmed unique Sunday Service attendances, a 38% increase from 2021.

96

participants in Journey Groups, small groups that explore our worship themes more deeply through semistructured conversation

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newcomers welcomed, a 91% increase over 2021

13 memorial services

729

confirmed unique people joined us online

2 Vespers services were offered as part of our November series and a special Solstice Vespers service is schedule for Wednesday, December 21

22,700 YouTube views

9,400 podcast downloads in 2022, a 53.4% increase over 2021

Music 🎜

2022 was a landmark year for Foothills' Music Ministry. We hired our first full-time Music Director, Benjamin Hanson. Thank you to the Music Search Team for their dedicated work in ensuring the congregation's vision for the future of music at Foothills was integrated throughout every part of the search process: Gretchen O'Dell, Jack Morgan, Chris Hutchinson, Georgia Peeples, and Kara Shobe. 2022 also saw the return of choir, children's choir, and all of us singing together during Sunday services.

people have participated in choir since in restarted in August.

➡ 70

people attended Signing Revolution: Music and Movie Night to learn how Estonians used music to liberate themselves from Soviet occupation.



Foothills member Jack Morgan performs at the annual auction.

> 23

kids are participating in our Children's Holiday Choir.

→ 38

singers attended the fall choir retreat.



Choir restarted in summer 2022.



Choir performs at Sunday service.



Family Ministry

In 2022, Family Ministry continued to find new and creative ways to serve families, including the new Sunday morning **parent circle**, and brought back some favorite traditions that had been paused during the pandemic, including our family **Buckhorn retreat** and **children's choir**. Two new groups for parents started: **True You** for families of trans, nonbinary and gender-expansive kids and **The Gift of Different Abilities** for parents of disabled and neurodiverse youth and children. We continued to iterate on our **10 am intergenerational service**, creating space for families to be together and for parents to center and enjoy worship themselves while children enjoy faith development activities with their peers.

237 children and youth participated in our programs in 2022



108 kids attended at least one of our FIVE in-person summer and spring break camps.



Nearly 100 people gathered for our annual Pumpkin Carving night!



Kids brought their pets and stuffies to our Blessing of the Animals.



131 adults and kids attended our 2022 Buckhorn Family Retreat.



44 participants joined us for our first Drag Story Hour!



97 kids participated in our Sunday morning children's circles, and 17 high schoolers regularly participated in weekly activities and service with our YUUth GrUUp.

Welcoming Newcomers

2022 was a breath of fresh air with the return of some of our beloved newcomer events and practices, including in-person BaseCamp, a new member celebration ceremony, and Connections Dinner. We also had two welcomed innovations, **Spirit Path** and **Inquirers** (learn more about these below!). Additionally, we completed a major audit and cleanup of our membership list in November 2022. We reached out to numerous inactive members to determine their engagement intentions and desires for their membership. We also connected with very engaged folks who had not yet officially joined to invite them into membership. This cleanup means that as of December 2022, we officially have **556 engaged & active members**.

> 26

new members joined in 2022.

31

newcomers participated in BaseCamp to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and Foothills.

524

unique people joined us for an event, service or program for the first time in 2022.

week Inquirers series, where every Sunday after church, folks joined us to learn about different aspects of the church, including theology, family ministry, and our caring network.



Newcomers participate in our one-day July BaseCamp retreat.

12

participants in our pilot Spirit Path

group (half of all folks who participated in a summer BaseCamp program!). A follow-up to BaseCamp, Spirit Path offers a chance to more deeply explore what the spiritual life means, where we are being called to deepen in spiritual practice, and how Foothills can be part of that process.

28

folks joined us for our September connections dinner where newcomers have a chance to connect with longtime members over a meal.



In August, 24 new members signed the membership book and were celebrated during church and at coffee hour!



In response to a nationwide rise in anti-trans, anti-LGBT+ legislation, rhetoric, and violence, including Florida's "Don't Say Gay" bill, we launched Be More Gay, an intersectional movement of joyful visibility and community support centering LGBT+ youth and their families.

➡ 3

30

people participated in True You, our group for trans, nonbinary, genderexpansive children and their families.

▶ \$6,200

raised to support LGBT+ inclusive programming at UU Grand Valley, a congregation on the conservative western slope.



We co-sponsored Fort Collins Pride in the Park 2022.



Foothills Unitarian co-hosted a vigil in Old Town Square following the Club Q shooting and for Trans Day of Remembrance.



44 community members joined us for our first Drag Story Hour!

We all have something that makes us different, freaky, and non-conforming. Difference is the universal human truth. Discovering what makes us different and embracing our uniqueness in everyday life makes us truly free. Now is the time to shave your head, and get that tattoo, and get that extra piercing. Now is the time to be yourself in the most particular ways you can and to celebrate the ways that others are themselves in the most particular ways they are. So whatever queer you've got today, bring it all. Especially if you have the privilege to pass, choose not to. And if you aren't queer yourself, let this be an invitation to hold the sign that says *be more gay* wherever you might run into a queer person wondering if who they are is compatible with being loved. Be willing to stand out and make things a little less comfortable for yourself not just for the sake of those kids in Texas or for those families in Florida, but for us all.

- Rev. Gretchen Haley -



In 2022, Climate Justice Ministry (CJM) launched "**Green Sanctuary 2030**" – a UUA certification process, completed "Stage 1: Congregational Profile" and is currently working on "Stage 2: Opportunity Assessment". As part of the launch, we debuted a Bulletin Board to offer questionnaires and hosted **a summer film series** entitled "From Problem to Possibility." Both efforts intended to get conversations going on "regeneration and climate resilience."

CJM wrapped up our Climate Cafe offerings, hosted a Spring Community Meal, a Friday Night Film and Saturday Bird-Watching for Earth Day, an End-of-Summer Potluck Dinner, and a Fall Equinox Celebration with a harvest swap and a garden blessing co-sponsored with the Earth-Based Path group.

CJM also joined the statewide coalition Water22.org, distributing brochures (including Spanish language ones to La Familia) that promoted "water care and conservation," which led to adding this emphasis into our annual Water Communion. We also promoted and participated in the UUA-sponsored webinar series on "Climate Resilience through Disaster Response & Community Care."

In 2023, we are planning a party for New Year Regeneration Resolutions for the whole congregation and a "Next Step" gathering for the nearly 40 people signed up for Green Sanctuary Newsletter. For Earth Day weekend, a workshop is planned based on Joanna Macy's book "Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in with Unexpected Resilience & Creative Power" with an outside trainer. We will partner with the BIPOC Alliance on a book discussion before that weekend and on offering scholarships for the workshop. Finally, we plan to team up with the Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed and get a Foothills Forest Restoration Team on the ground in May.



Earth Day Birding and Bagels Event

Over 100 people participated in Climate Justice Ministry in 2022.



Preparing a "Seasonal Supper" community meal

Social & Spiritual Deepening Groups

468 people participated in a social and/or spiritual deepening group in 2022.

We are thrilled that both the **Senior Potluck** and the **Slightly Senior Sisterhood luncheon** returned in 2022 with very robust attendance! The Slightly Senior Sisterhood gathers for lunch once every other month, and 62 women attended in 2022 and 89 women are a part of a **Sisterhood Small Group**. The Senior Potluck gathers every month, and 99 folks attended throughout 2022.

This year, we also offered two sessions of **journey groups**, small intergenerational groups that explore our worship themes more deeply through loosely structured conversation. Ninety-nine people participated in a journey group in 2022!

We also offered two sessions of **Wellspring**, a long-term small group experience focused on spiritual deepening. Twenty-four people participated in Wellspring Sources, through which they deeply explored the six sources of religious knowledge and spiritual growth from which Unitarian Universalism draws. Wellspring Sources is the prerequisite for all other Wellsprings. After completing Wellspring Sources, participants can join Wellsprings that deep dive into specific topics. The other Wellspring group, in which had 22 participants, explored My Grandmother's Hands which focuses on somatic practice and racial justice.

After countless requests for a place for when to gather and connect, we are joyful to announce a new **men's group** is starting in the new year! Their opening social will take place on January 19 at 6 PM.



Ladies 50 and better gather for a Slightly Senior Sisterhood lunch in the church social hall.

Caring Ministry

The caring ministry this year stayed busy and connected with the congregation. Though people were not quarantining to the extent they had in 2020 and 2021, life's challenges remained ongoing and the team's outreach had a big impact.

We provided over 400 acts of care in 2022. 145 meals delivered by our 53 person meal train team.

We have 13 active Caring Listeners. 14 people participated in our Tangled Blessings grief group.



Memory Table set up by our Memorial Team.



We delivered 29 Caring Kits in 2022.

Twenty-three congregants currently serve on our **memorial support team** and helped support **13 memorial services** in 2022. This amazing team, led by Laurie Cullor and Jacqui Wallace, assists ministers and staff in caring for our members that have died or have lost a loved one. The team works for weeks to help plan and prepare for the memorial. On the day of the service, they create a welcoming family waiting room and prepare the reception by working with caterers and florists - or even arrange flowers themselves. They set up memory tables of items representing the deceased's life and ensure everything from photo slideshows to music is ready for this significant and meaningful event for the family and our community.

As a congregation, we are called to honor and mark the cycle of living and dying as a community. These are the name of the beloved members of our congregation who died in 2022:

Clark Atkinson-Gastelym Dorothy Baker Lacy Bearden Doris Bice Michael Culbertson Eleanor Dwight Edith Held Jeanne Kennedy Bob Molison

Helen Oxley Laura Spooner Barbara Wade Pat Walsh Frances Wilcox David Woolhiser

Serving Teams

The call for community-fueled justice work may never have been louder than it is now. Our world needs a movement of people standing together in progressive values and taking tangible action for change. All of these actions and teams are made possible in the following ways in our congregation.



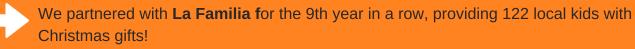
Through **Faith Family Hospitality**, we continue to host, feed and support families experiencing homelessness for four weeks every year. As our building is currently under construction, another church is physically hosting the families during our four weeks, but we continue to provide volunteers and meals.



Through our partnership with **The Food Bank for Larimer County**, we host twice-monthly mobile food bank, we seek to increase food security in Fort Collins. 184 people are currently in our Food Bank volunteer group! The youth group also volunteers with the food bank throughout the year.



Through our partnership with **Habitat for Humanity**, we participate in the interfaith build. We also help sponsor the build, delivering on our commitment to provide \$5,000 toward the build in 2022.



The **BIPOC** Alliance Update

The BIPOC Alliance continues to be one of our closest partners in justice work. We remain their fiscal sponsor and continue to share our building with them for their office space and events.

The BIPOC Alliance is now led by two staff members, Rahshida Perez and Jamie Rasmussen. Because The BIPOC Alliance is a community-driven organization, Jamie and Rahshida have convened an advisory council of community members to support this transitional time. The Advisory Board is primarily made up of BIPOC leaders in northern Colorado. Because of The BIPOC Alliance's close ties to Foothills, **Foothills' member and former board president Sue Sullivan is also serving on the advisory board.**

We are excited about our continuing work in 2023. As part of our Be More Gay campaign, we are working with The BIPOC Alliance to resource safe spaces of belonging and connection for the Fort Collins LGBT+/queer/two-spirit BIPOC community.

We resourced local organizations with \$38,000 through Share the Plate.

Racial Justice, Sanctuary Everywhere & Intersections

Racial Justice Ministry Update

In 2022, the Racial Justice and Healing Ministry began strategizing ways to infuse racial justice efforts across Foothills, decentering the team and encouraging others to pick up the work. To this end, the team created a racial justice resource library accessible through the church website, made abbreviated versions of our three book studies to date (White Fragility, The New Jim Crow, and Caste) available to small groups for self-facilitation, and partnered with Wellspring to offer a 15-session deep dive into My Grandmother's Hands, focused on somatic practice and racial justice. Our efforts in 2023 will focus on implementing the 8th principle, adopted by Foothills in 2021, and partnering with the Climate Justice Ministry to work towards Green Sanctuary certification.

Sanctuary Everywhere Update

Just as Covid disrupted so many areas of our lives, it also forced the Sanctuary Everywhere Core team to explore and redefine how we accompany immigrants as they arrive and learn to navigate various systems in their new country. Rather than accompanying an individual asylum seeker living in the home of a local volunteer host, Sanctuary Everywhere's Village 4 accompanied an extended family of 13 from Central America who already had access to housing in Fort Collins. This large family group presented us with our first experience accompanying children and teens ("unaccompanied minors") and working with our local schools. The kids were a great addition! By the end of our 9-12 months of accompaniment time, many of the immigrants we accompanied understood and could share what they have learned with others who are immigrating, thus multiplying the benefits.

We have continued to expand our network of local resources to meet the needs of the immigrants we accompany. While we began partnering with La Cocina in 2018, we have expanded to collaborate with Fuerza Latina, Alianza NORCO, and Homeward Alliance, as well as many other organizations that provide medical and dental care steeply discounted (or free), tutoring, English classes, legal services, and more.

Sanctuary Everywhere's fourth Village of volunteers and asylum seekers drew to a close last summer, and we currently have our fifth Village ready to go! We are working with our partner organizations to identify the immigrant(s) who would benefit from our accompaniment, and we expect Village 5 to be fully active in December 2022.

Intersections Update

Intersections is a group of Foothills justice leaders/representatives from each Justice group within the church. Because the many social justice and equity issues are not experienced in isolation, Foothills focuses on the numerous ways in which they overlap. In Intersections, leaders share what is being discussed and planned in their individual groups and, most importantly, look for ways for the groups to collaborate on projects. The importance of this group is not simply in sharing projects (although that is a definite positive) but in seeing and understanding the connections between and among the various social justice arenas. Our impact can be much greater as we begin to realize the interconnectedness of all social ills and inequities and look for intersectional and collaborative approaches to impact these societal wrongs.

Other Notable Achievements

General Assembly Leadership

Rev. Gretchen Haley was honored with delivering the Sunday morning sermon at General Assembly 2022, the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists. She preached to thousands of Unitarian Universalists worldwide alongside Rev. Sean Neil-Barron. In her sermon, she called on us to remember the power of people, of local churches, and of our promises to each other. She invited us to remember that it is because of us - the people that make up the church, that form the ministries and the small groups and show up on Sundays - that Unitarian Universalism exists. And most of all, to remember that we are big enough to not only survive but to impact the world.



Grand Canyon Retreat

45 Foothills folk attended our first-ever week-long spiritual retreat at the Grand Canyon. It was a week full of singing at the rim, intention-setting, hiking, eclipse-gazing, meaningful conversations, building friendships, and spiritual deepening.

2022 Annual Auction: Foothills in Wonderland

The Annual Auction **raised \$25,962 for Foothills Unitarian** and **\$6,202 to support LGBT+ inclusive programming at Grand Valley UU on the conservative Western Slope**. Thank you to the Auction Team: Kay Williams, Patti Cochran, Heidi Schaub, and Lindsay Tearman





This year, Rev. Sean Neil-Barron, Associate Minister, and Eleanor VanDeusen, Director of Family Ministry, both took sabbaticals awarded to them by the Board of Trustees in honor of their service to Foothills.

History Project

Over the last 3 years, a small group of dedicated Foothills members extensively researched, interviewed and investigated to create and articulate the full history of our congregation. Beginning with the protocongregational gatherings of liberal religionists in the 1870s, this history spans more than 125 years and provides an in-depth look at both the history of liberal religion in Northern Colorado, the development of Fort Collins, and the broader developments of Unitarian Universalism throughout the last century.



History Project Team: Bob Bacon, Jennifer Crane, Bonnie Inscho, Ben Manvel, Ed Meek, Bill Miles, and Lynn Young

Not only did the team seek to articulate this sweeping narrative; they also did the work to turn it into a fully edited and published book. Titled <u>Seeking the Truth in Love</u>, this book includes personal narratives from people involved at various points in our history, compelling photos to bring the story to life, and timelines of major events to help our shared sense of our congregational life cycle.

This book is now available for us to read and, by suggested donation of \$25 each, hold in our hands. - just a few weeks before we officially mark the 125th anniversary of our charter as a congregation in January 1898. Order your copy at foothillsuu.org/booklaunch.



Seeking the Truth in Love

The First 125 Years at Foothills Unitarian Church Written and compiled by the Foothills History Project



Looking Ahead to 2023

While the new year will certainly continue to be a building year, it is also a year of celebration as we mark a couple of major milestones. We will celebrate our 125 years as a congregation in Fort Collins, as well as the grand opening of our new sanctuary! After spending the summer moving into the new space, we plan for a wonderful celebration on a Sunday in September.

Both of these milestones are in some ways, an endpoint, but they are also a great new beginning. Because this anniversary gives us a chance to both look back and ahead with a very long view. To imagine a Foothills congregation 125 years into the future - to the year 2147 - and to continue to cast a vision where we are boldly living into the promises of our mission, into our covenant with one another, and with the spirit of life and courageous love, which calls us ever on.

Vision Statement	Shared Ministry Focus 2023
1. Foothills is a vital part of the lives of its people, providing abundant opportunities for relationships across differences that provide joy, care, and belonging for all.	 Support and equip groups and their leaders across the congregation. Grow alignment and connection. Re-establish multi-generational groups. Grow music ministry in ways aligned with the vision we established in hiring our new music director.
2. We are actively engaged in a process of lifelong spiritual deepening that allows us to live lives of meaning and purpose in a world that needs our Unitarian Universalism.	 Establish and communicate a routine annual all-ages Faith Formation calendar for all stages and ages. Provide excellent worship series with content that is accessible both on Sundays and beyond.
3. We understand that being a part of Foothills requires us to give abundantly of our time, and this deepening involvement helps us to identify and grow our individual gifts.	 Recognize and support our lay leaders. Grow our newcomer ministry, focused on mentorship and connection.
4. We each give generously and gratefully of our financial resources in ways that foster a deep ownership of the impactful work we support.	 Grow our financial foundation by re-establishing our stewardship team and expanding our partnerships and funding sources.
5. We recognize and dismantle prejudice and oppression in all their forms, including within ourselves, allowing us to be more effective and trusted partners to marginalized communities in Northern Colorado and beyond.	 Fully establish our reproductive justice team and deepen our ministries for LGBTQ welcome, global peace and justice, racial justice, and sanctuary everywhere.
6. Foothills is a leader in Northern Colorado in developing sustainable, innovative, intersectional approaches to caring for our earth and its people to ensure a greater flourishing of all life.	 Move forward with the Green Sanctuary process, and continue to grow our intersectional approach in our justice ministries.
7. We do the work to make Unitarian Universalism accessible to all in Northern Colorado.	 Complete the building and move in! Discover what our long-term model is for online ministry, what resources are needed, and launch.

A Look Back Through Photos 🙆



Fire Communion January 2022



First indoor in-person Sunday of the year February 2022



Spring Break Creative Dance Camp March 2022



Building Expansion Groundbreaking May 2022



The Rocky Mountain Raptor Program visit summer camp! August 2022



New Member Book Signing & Celebration August 2022



Auction September 2022



Buckhorn Family Retreat September 2022



Tanner Linden sets up cameras for improved live-streaming services September 2022



There are no "them" in our church. Our church is 100% "us." From our justice work to our community service, from offering transformative programs for adults to cultivating the next generation of children to embrace progressive values, everything we do is supported by your generosity of partnership in service and in financial giving. You are the reason that together, we can realize our bold vision and live our mission of unleashing Courageous Love in Northern Colorado and beyond. We are so grateful.

With love and in partnership,

The 2022 Foothills Unitarian Team

If you have yet to make your 2023 pledge, please visit foothillsuu.org/pledge.

If you feel called to support our work with an end-of-year gift, please visit foothillsuu.org/donate.

