

## Lead Developmental Minister Report

Rev. Tim Temerson

Submitted May 2026

What a year we have experienced at the UU Congregation of Charlottesville since I wrote my last annual report. Our congregation is growing rapidly both in terms of members and programs. The 2025-26 church year included some extraordinary achievements, including another record-breaking pledge drive, welcoming 37 new members, witnessing significant increases in Sunday morning attendance, holding very successful fundraisers and social events like the annual yard sale and fall auction, building new community partnerships, and so much more. We are truly a congregation that is, as our UU values remind us, putting love at the center!

One of the great joys of serving the UU Congregation of Charlottesville is the opportunity it affords me to work with a talented and dedicated staff. Last month we received exciting news that Rev. Leia Durland-Jones, who has served our congregation for over thirty years, is receiving the Angus MacLean award for excellence in religious education from the Unitarian Universalist Association. The award is very richly deserved and UUCville is blessed to have one of the leading UU religious educators in the country. I cannot stress enough what a tremendous ministerial partner and colleague Rev. Leia is and I am better able to serve UUCville because of her presence. Scott DeVeaux had a strong year as our Director of Music and Scott has taken on a leadership role in the community by helping to lead and organize “resistance choirs” which are playing an important role at protests and other public witness events. A word of thanks to Accompanist, John Mayhood, for his beautiful piano music. Sandra Schartz continues to do an amazing job as our Operations Manager and Sandra has dramatically improved our financial management and her expertise enables the church to save considerable money by eliminating unnecessary support services. Sandra has also worked on upgrading our digital platforms and IT support. Our Building Manager, Steve Rogers, has brought organization and accountability to the contracted services that maintain our building and he has also been heavily involved in building projects, including the replacement of the social hall floors and doors. Bryn Malone concluded their time as our Religious Education Assistant and recently left us to pursue pre-med studies. Sunny Manato (formerly Nash Ford) has assumed the role of RE assistant, transitioned away from being our AV Tech, and continues to serve as our office assistant. Sunny brings considerable skill to their positions and played a critical role in this year’s pledge drive.

I can't possibly name all the fabulous lay leaders who give so much of their time and talent to the UU Congregation of Charlottesville. I have been blessed to work alongside a very healthy and dedicated Board of Trustees, led by Board President, Carol Gardner, who is concluding her first year of service. Carol's wise leadership, attention to policies and procedures, and ability to get things done have been a wonderful gift. The other members of the executive team are equally effective and visionary, and I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Bev Ryan (who is concluding her service as vice president), Tammy Wilt, and Jimmy Gorham. I also want to thank the at-large board members, including John Griffith, Ellie Syverud, Achsah Carrier, Kim Grover, and Ashley Cooley. Achsah is concluding her service on the board and we are so grateful for all she and Bev have done.

Below are some important developments/accomplishments during the 2025-26 church year.

- **Conclusion of the Glenn Short Trust** – thanks to the very generous bequest made by the late Glenn Short in 2019 and the hard work of the committee designated to oversee the bequest (Sally Taylor, Dick Somer, Don Landis, and Bev Ryan), we celebrated the conclusion of Glenn's bequest and the many improvements it brought to our building. There are too many to list but suffice it to say that our space is more energy efficient, more inclusive, and more welcoming thanks to Glenn and the committee.
- **Food and Housing** - UUCville continued to offer life-sustaining support with the Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen programs as well as our annual hosting of unhoused guests from Pacem. Many thanks to Elizabeth Breeden and Bonnie Hansen for their leadership and to the many volunteers who make these programs possible.
- **Fair Trade Olive Oil** – As part of its effort to work for justice in Palestine, the UUCville Palestine/Israel Action Group (PIAG) sold fair trade olive oil from the organization Canaan Palestine between mid-November and mid-December. Much to the groups' surprise, the congregation purchased over \$5,000 of olive oil and raised almost \$1,200 thanks to a nonprofit program from Canaan Palestine. The PIAG decided to use those funds to make a donation to the Palestine American Medical Association (PAMA) to help support health care in Gaza.
- **Community Partnerships** – We continued our work with Sin Barreras, hosting and teaching a Pre-K English readiness class for 3- and 4-year-olds. Many volunteers, including teachers, door watchers, and drivers, made the program possible. UUCville volunteers continued to offer support to a family we met through our partnership with City of Promise. We also worked with PHAR (Public

Housing Association of Residents) and played an active role in the 2025 Westhaven Community Day. Most recently, we have partnered with the Uhuru Foundation, a reentry program for those coming out of incarceration. To this point, volunteers have helped with gardening at one of Uhuru's locations.

- **UUCville/Sojourners UCC Shared Worship** – Thanks to a request from our friends at Sojourners UCC to share our worship space while they hosted guests from Pacem, we welcomed Sojourners to UUCville in early November 2025. Pastor Karen Mann from Sojourners led a memorable service and members of Sojourners joined our choir for several songs.
- **Cville Pride** – UUCville was once again a very visible presence at Charlottesville Pride. Numerous volunteers of all ages staffed our booth and we met many wonderful people.
- **Guest Ministers and Pulpit Exchanges** – In addition to Pastor Karen, UUCville heard from a number of important voices on Sunday morning, including Pastor Lehman Bates from Ebenezer Baptist Church, Rev. Paul Oakley from the UU Fellowship of Waynesboro, Rev. Adam Dyer from UVA, UU ministerial candidate, Kirstin Fritz, and retired UU minister Rev. Annie Forester.
- **Congregational Survey and Volunteer Coordinators** – In August of 2025, David Mellor and Cathy Sanders agreed to serve as our volunteer coordinators. Cathy and David organized a very successful Service Fair in September, attended newcomer circles and new member classes, and organized and distributed a gifts and interests survey. Over 90 members and friends completed the survey and we are looking forward to helping folks make connections.
- **“Help Each Other” Signs and Rededicating the Peace Pole** – In late September of 2025 UUCville rededicated the peace pole near the Edgewood Lane entrance and kicked off a wonderful initiative in which members of the congregation and the community were invited to take signs that simply said “Help Each Other” and place them in their yards or around Charlottesville. The initiative was very successful and the peace pole rededication appeared on the local TV news.
- **The Mosaic Squad and Resistance** – With the support of the UUCville Mosaic Squad, many UUCville members and friends have been participating in local protests held in Charlottesville, including No Kings protests. We have also been donating meeting space to organizations like Indivisible and the Legal Observers.
- **Rites of Passage** – I officiated at four memorial services this church year, for Dave Dawson, John Pfaltz, Zulaima Weinschenk, and Thom Lewis.

Let me conclude by simply saying that in these difficult times, the mission and ministries of UUCville, both within and beyond our walls, are more important than ever. Every day it feels as if the world is moving in the wrong direction. I believe that our congregation can and must be a beacon of love and hope. I am so proud of all that we are doing and am excited for our future. Together, we are putting love into action!

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Tim Temerson