



Evergreen
Unitarian
Universalist
Fellowship

2025 - 2026

Annual Report

www.evergreenuu.org

Table Of Contents

Minister's Annual Report, 3

President's Report to the Congregation, 6

Endowment, 8

Stewardship, 9

Membership, 10

Greeters, 10

Worship Committee, 11

Adult Programs, 11

Covenant Circles, 12

Book Discussion Group, 13



Minister's Annual Report

Rev. Joe Rettenmaier

As I reflect on our past year together, I feel especially grateful for the ways our ministry was able to deepen its roots among us. To me, ministry with you all seemed to find its center in nurturing faithful courage, welcome, resilience, and shared purpose through our worship, justice, pastoral care, and whole-congregation visioning efforts.

One thread in my ministry this year was continuing to revitalize Evergreen's social justice life. I've felt called to support the coordination of actions, partnerships, rallies, Sundays of Service, and charitable giving – and to generate safe spiritual sanctuary for those involved as we carried out this work. In a time when justice needs are endless and overwhelming, this year I've strived to guide our Social Justice Committee toward becoming not just a group that does actions, but a learning cohort that develops trust among one another as we mutually support one another in the work. It moves me to see this ministry regaining steadiness and vitality at Evergreen, and am glad to hand its coordination back to a new chair person. In short, I witness Evergreen becoming more clearly known in our Everett community as a congregation where social justice is a lived practice.

Another central area of faith leadership has been guiding Evergreen to deepen its identity as a welcoming and affirming congregation, especially in relation to LGBTQ+ inclusion and the realities facing trans and nonbinary people today. Through our Responding to the Anti-Trans Movement small group workshops, and through the work of our Welcoming Congregation Renewal with the UUA, several of us have strived to help us live more fully into the values we profess. This work feels deeply meaningful to me as a LGBTQ+ faith leader. I believe Evergreen is growing in its compassion, courage, and clarity and I've been heartened by the seriousness with which many people have engaged this learning. In a time when public hostility is increasing toward LGBTQ+ folks, I'm heartened that many of us are choosing to grow our welcome in tangible ways.

A third focus this year has been our explorations in intergenerational and whole-congregation life. For several years now, JW and I have been working toward a model in which children, youth, parents and elders are not moving through separate congregational worlds, but are learning, serving, worshiping,

and growing more intentionally alongside one another. This year, that vision felt more real through our Family Fellowship Sundays, Mystery Buddies, youth participation in worship leadership, Sundays of Service for All Ages with several of our community partners, after-hours No Talent Show, and more. I have a vision that our intergenerational joy, connection, and shared decisions inform our explorations as Evergreen becomes a place where people of all ages know they belong.



Worship leadership has remained one of my deepest commitments this year. I've strived to shape Sunday mornings that are pluralistic, thoughtful, collaborative, and spiritually diverse for the world we're living in. Throughout the year I shaped our calendar to hold many voices, themes, formats, and theological perspectives, while still remaining grounded in Evergreen's identity and needs. I'm especially grateful for the ways our music, volunteers, guest speakers, worship associates, AV Team, and staff collaborated so faithfully and seamlessly and consistently. It's always my north star that our Sunday services help people feel steadied, inspired, enlightened, and accompanied while giving us something meaningful to think about.

Pastoral care was another essential center of my ministry this year. Many in the congregation have been carrying illness, grief, anxiety, family transitions, conflict, and the broader emotional strain of these times. In one-on-one conversations, visits, conflict resolutions, and quieter moments of simply accompanying and listening, I love helping Evergreen remain a place of truth and trust, honesty and caring response. Much of this ministry happens out of sight of course, and I continue to believe it's the deepest way for a congregation to become itself. When our people feel accompanied through hardship and celebrated through joys, the whole community is strengthened. I remain humbled and transformed by the trust so many people place in me in these tender moments.

Finally, much of my leadership this year took place behind the scenes in the administrative work of organizational development, staff supervision and

planning, and ongoing transitions. A few endeavors that stand out are continuing to drive our Dream BrUUnch visioning work and formation of our Home Sweet Home task force; leading transitions in our music staff; driving our website redesign, worship developments, and operational budgeting needs; planning long-range programs and quick response to facilities questions that could've impacted Evergreen's future growth. While this work is often less visible, it matters. Because our healthy ministry depends on thoughtful structures, communication, and adaptability.

I am very grateful for the staff and lay leaders with whom I share this work, and I remain hopeful about the strength and possibility I see in Evergreen as we continue becoming the congregation we are called to be.

Warmly,

Rev. Joe



President's Report to the Congregation

Sage Billings, Board of Trustees President

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as 2025-26 EUUF Board President

As I say goodbye to being “madame president” of the EUUF Board, I am reflecting on the seed that was planted that got me to EUUF. Before I moved to Washington from Alaska, online quizzes were popular on social media. I took an intriguing one entitled “what religion are you?” My answer was Unitarian! After I moved to Everett, I discovered there were two Unitarian meetings the exact same distance from my apartment, down to the tenth of a mile. I began regularly attending the one with the easier drive. In 2017 I went to my first Sunday service in Marysville on 4th. I started attending the newcomer welcome meeting there, which eventually became the Cedar Covenant Circle.

I attended for a couple years before becoming a member. For some reason I was not on the weekly email list. It turns out I was on the quarterly email list only. After my email address was added, I started reading the weekly emails, and I knew when to bring flowers to the flower ceremony.

I started volunteering and making a commitment to take on at least one position. I was asked to lead the covenant circle group temporarily. I also cleaned up after coffee hour and when coffee hour volunteers were needed, I co-volunteered. At the end of the year, I was asked to be vice president! I knew when the flower ceremony was and I brought my first flowers.

I decided I would like to be on the board because I knew some of the other board members and I felt confident I would enjoy working with them. I have been on the board for two years and I still feel the same way! I have gained a better understanding of how to run a meeting using Robert's Rules of Order, and the importance of our Bylaws.

The board of trustees has been revising and updating our communication plan. This has included how the board communicates with the congregation through email, and how the board communicates with each-other through Google Drive, email, and phone calls. The board has adapted as renters, how to best utilize rental and storage space, and getting used to booking shared rooms in advance.

We have had several BrUUnch Dreams and Visions services. As a result, these unfolded into The Home Sweet Home Planning Task Force, who will explore the fellowship needs and wants paired with reality. The task force has been charged by the board to review past vision boards, and assemble a group who will offer

informed advice on our goals.

Responding to the Anti-Trans movement gave the fellowship valuable information and was a cornerstone to this year's offerings, thus spurring conversations during several meetings and groups within the fellowship as individuals add and revise inclusion skills. Helpful information was received about how to discuss sensitive topics, and correctly addressing individuals by their preferred pronouns.

Our fellowship has had fundraising events, a Craft Fair, the No Talent Show-an RE fundraiser, the ongoing sign-up Fun Friends Fellowship Fundraiser, and the stewardship campaign. Fundraising and pledge donations keeps Sunday services going with some programs fully staffed and others in need of more support.

During my time on the board, I became RE liaison. I have had the privilege of helping out in the RE room, attending and participating in the no-talent show fundraiser and holiday events. This year at the flower ceremony I picked a flower and took my seat. I watched the flower I brought coming closer to me down the aisle during the Sunday service held by a tiny hand. A boisterous youth attendee came over to let me know I picked her flower. I let her know she picked the flower I brought.

-Sagit Billings

Endowment Committee

Chuck Taylor, Chair

Current members of the Endowment Committee are
Chuck Taylor (Elected 2024 for a 2-year term)
Leala Skwara (Elected 2023 for a 3-year term)
Ray Mutchler (Appointed 2025 to complete Laurel Nisler's term, ending in 2026)

Due to various circumstances, the terms of all three current members expire June 30, 2026. Ideally, terms should be staggered. To get back into sync, three new members need to be elected this year, one each for a 1-year, a 2-year, and a 3-year term.

The Evergreen Endowment fund is invested in the Unitarian Universalist Common Endowment Fund (UUCEF). There is a lag in the determination of the value of the UUCEF because the value of the aggregate depends on the value of its many holdings, the values of many of which are not available promptly at the end of each month. As of this writing, the latest available official valuation is for April 30, 2026.

Fund values:	
June 30, 2024	\$1,918,487.42
June 30, 2025	\$2,129,182.30
April 30, 2026	\$2,306,055.28

The majority of the funds in the Endowment Fund came from the sale of our Marysville building. In addition, \$500,000 of the sale proceeds were invested locally in Certificates of Deposit and/or short-term bonds. Those funds are monitored by the Treasurer and the Finance Committee.

During the course of the year the members of the Endowment Committee monitor the performance of the Endowment Fund through participation in quarterly Zoom calls with the UUCEF managers.

Past performance is not a guarantee of future performance, particularly in the current political atmosphere.

For the Endowment Committee,
Chuck Taylor

Stewardship Committee

Tom Gaskin, Chair

The Stewardship Committee (Kathy and Ray Henderickson, Kirsti Dodrill, Cherie Noble, and myself) commenced meeting monthly in September 2025. During this time we decided on a theme for the campaign, “Together for Tomorrow,” the campaign dates, how to visually demonstrate the progress of the pledge drive, and the opening and closing celebrations of the campaign (soup and salad and an ice cream social).

The committee agreed to lobby the Board of Trustees to have a realistic pledge goal rather than a “stretch goal.” The Board agreed to this approach. Once the campaign started the committee met weekly, each member of the committee gave pulpit announcements, Cherie and Kirsti wrote blurbs for the weekly fellowship newsletter, and testimonials were arranged from church members.

The pledge drive raised \$148,987.24, 96% of the goal with 57 pledge units and a total of 74 individuals. Two major contributors from last year had deaths in their families and when they do eventually pledge, the committee is confident that the pledge goal will be met for 2026-27. The pledge total exceeded last year’s pledge amount by almost \$8,000. The committee would like to thank Alli for her tireless efforts in creating materials and support in making the pledge drive a success.

Tom Gaskin
Stewardship Committee Chair.

Membership

Alonna Chatburn, Chair

The Membership Committee has been blessed with some new team members. Chris Martinez, Skyler Malan and Elaine Clark have participated in the Membership Classes and added an interesting flair. Chris presented UUism History, Skyler sought out what people were hoping to get from being a member and Elaine testified to the RE program and its goals for all ages.

We joyfully welcomed nine new members this year. They received a handmade chalice from Chuck Taylor and a UU book from the congregation. Their talents and dedication will be a wonderful addition to our fellowship.

Alonna Chatburn, Membership Chair

Greeter Team

A big THANK YOU! to those who helped with one or more of the assorted greeter tiny tasks this past church year. Whether you are a regular, almost always there Greeter, one who steps up when requested, or you are giving it a try because you decided to find out what's going on or are helping out a friend, your smiles and responsiveness to the tasks at hand are always appreciated!!

Greeters are always in need. Tasks are divided into small tasks so they are easy to learn and won't feel overwhelming but in combination they do not take a lot of expertise or time. If you've been to Evergreen more than a few times and have given an attentive look to what happens, you're most of the way to being able to sign up on your own and give it a go. Written instructions and other Greeters can help you learn. Being a Greeter is a great way to get to know others and also feel appreciated for your time and efforts. Give it a try!

Worship Committee

The Worship Committee was composed of Rev. Joe, Marijo Duprey and Desmond Smith. Rev. Joe, Marijo and Desmond were Worship Associates over the course of the year, assisting the worship process by developing programming that supported the worship topic, selecting readings, leading worship elements like Joys and Sorrows and the Offertory, and working with our music leaders to select hymns and relevant music for the service. This group is also responsible for finding speakers for weeks when Rev. Joe is not in the pulpit, with Rev. Joe leading that search effort for most of the year. We didn't miss a Sunday, so things seemed to have worked pretty well.

The Worship Comm. is also supported by Alli Curtis and Tara DuNair who play critical roles in preparing and completing the worship script and slide show which contain all the presentation content for the service based on information they receive from the presenter, and the Worship Associate.

Adult Program Committee

Evergreen offers a wide variety of programs intended to provide spaces and places for adults to meet and discuss topics of mutual interest. The programs are run by individual members or small groups, and they meet once or twice a month, for the most part. These include a Women's Group called W.I.S.E., a Men's Circle, several Covenant Circles, a book discussion group, and a philosophy discussion group called the Big Questions. Many of these groups have been active for years and found a way to survive the virtual world imposed on all of us by COVID restrictions. Most now meet in person, or use a hybrid approach with some in-person contact with virtual access for those that prefer it.

As a reminder to everyone, there are many classes and study topics that can be used as the basis of an Adult Program available from the UUA. You never learn so much as when you lead a discussion group, so don't be afraid to raise your hand and choose to lead.

Covenant Circles

Susan C. S. Gaskin

As we end our third EUUF church year at the Carl Gibson Center in Everett, we are five Covenant Circles strong. Our group leaders are: Sandie Biggerstaff, Wes Caine, Alonna Chatburn, Sarah Taylor/ Nancy Miller and Suzanna McCarthy who will join Sarah as a co-leader after a Covenant Circle Leader Training in August. Nancy will happily remain in the group as a CC member., Sue and Tom Gaskin.

September brought us together at my house to celebrate our Covenant Circle successes and plan for an even more robust year ahead.

We meet monthly as leaders to discuss how our groups are doing and ponder questions that might support and strengthen our groups and create stronger bonds of trust and friendship with one another.

At our November Committee Faire the CC Leaders shared testimonials with the congregation on the merits of joining a Covenant Circle as well as

setting up a table with CC brochures, leaders to speak with and sign up sheets for groups with openings and opportunities for members to find out information on leading a Covenant Circle. We were happy to add some new folks to our groups.

In late November I offered a CC Leader training to Wes Caine and Kate Mallahan. They were excited to begin recruiting members and friends to start their Covenant Circles. Wes held his first Covenant Circle meeting in February at his home in Stanwood. They began with six and have grown to 10. Kate started her group in March in the Silver Lake area of south Everett with six members. They met together for two months and found their numbers down to three members. Kate and the group decided to discontinue meeting for now. They will keep in touch, go on walks together, and hopefully their numbers will increase in the fall and they can start up again.

Our Covenant Circle groups have offered support to the Fellowship by providing coffee hour and cleanup on several Sundays. One group is offering an auction dinner to help support the Stewardship Campaign. Groups have also provided warm clothes in the winter to Cocoon House and the InterFaith Community, the food bank, and wrapped presents at Christmas time for

children and families of the Marysville Sunny Side Elementary School. Covenant Circle Leaders are eagerly thinking of new community projects to share with their groups and to support in the fall.

We all look forward to a summer of renewal, and a time to play so we will be ready to work on expanding our Covenant Circle numbers in the fall and year to come.

Warm UU Regards,

Sue

Book Discussion Group

Our Evergreen UU Book Discussion Group with 38 emails of members joining on our ZOOM monthly discussions is a lively group of from 4 to 10 members at any single discussion. Meeting the last Wednesday of the month from 7:15-8:45 PM we have discussed book topics ranging from octopuses, giraffes, deepest sea trenches, death and dying, being mortal, cozy mysteries, humorous travel, Vietnam War nurses, transgender biographies, to solar/wind/hydro power for now. Both the last two titles support our application for being a Supportive Congregation, too! Reading the book is not required, but it certainly makes for a more lively discussion! Sometimes it even makes the listener go ahead and read the book, knowing the ending! New readers are always welcome; just email Michelle to get on the ZOOM link for the meetings.

Michelle Valentine, Scheduler