



Annual Report

2022-2023

**Eden United Church
of Christ**
21455 Birch Street
Hayward, California 94541
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Ministers

Rev. Dr. Arlene K. Nehring
Senior Minister
Rev. Pepper Swanson
Associate Minister
Rev. Dr. Marvin Lance Wiser
Designated Term Associate Minister
Director of COVID-19 Programs
Rev. Brenda Loreman
Part-Time Associate Minister
Rev. Rob Parrish
Itinerant Minister

Music Staff

Ken Rawdon
Music Director
Dr. Jessie Wenchieh Lo
Organist/Pianist

Community Programs Leads

Yuliana Wiser-León
Director, Newcomer Navigation Center
Jonny Victorio
NNC Project Coordinator
Margarita Orea
Lead Case Manager, NNC
Angelica Canchola
Padres Unidos Organizer
Javier Orea
Director, Food Security Programs
Kimberly Victorio
Healthcare Education
& Vaccines Co-Lead
Mateo Cuéllar-Espinel
Healthcare Education
& Vaccines Co-Lead

Operations Staff

Marianne Lim
Office Manager
Evelin Oseguera
Bookkeeper
Ricardo Villasano
Sexton

Senior Minister's Report

Rev. Dr. Arlene K. Nehring

We've come this far by faith!

Those who have served in elected leadership at Eden Church these past 21 years, know that I'm a big proponent of strategic planning and implementation. Every year that I have served in ministry, I have been engaged in developing, implementing, and updating an organizational strategic plan with others.



Most people aren't as enamored with these processes as I am. Much as I value them, I empathize with those who don't. Nothing is more humbling than making a plan and watching it go up in flames. There's an old Yiddish proverb that applies here: "if you want to hear God laugh, make a plan."

The ability to make and implement a plan has never been more challenging than in the past three years. Familiar activities became suddenly difficult, and novel problems arose from the ashes of COVID. The continued dysfunction of our federal immigration system, the lack of sufficient affordable housing, and the ongoing supply chain problems and upcharges in products and services combined with a shrinking vendor pool come to mind.

As a consequence, the ability to make plans and develop strategies does not guarantee success. We must do more than cross items off our to-do lists to be successful. We must contribute to Christ's mission, and align our behavior with the example and teachings of Christ. The how and the why must cohere. Thumb through this Annual Report. Take a moment to read an article, or study our budgets, and I trust that you will see that Eden Church walks the talk, and that we have come this far by faith.

We have come this far not simply by churning out plans, but by discerning God's vision for Eden in this place and time, and sticking to our values especially when in uncharted territory. This is why I continue to be proud to serve as your senior minister and why I trust that God will continue to bless this ministry in the years ahead.

Moderator's Report

Jennifer Vetrovec, Moderator

Back in 2019, I was asked by the Service Enlistment Committee to accept the position of Vice Moderator. I had never served on a committee like this before, either in a church or professional capacity. I didn't know what to expect. I figured there'd be a lot of talk about budgets, worship services, and other church centered activities. I was right about that. What I didn't realize was that the two-year tenure as Vice Moderator is most often followed by a two-year tenure as Moderator. So, I write this not only as an annual report but as a reflection on my last four years in leadership with the Church Council.



When I joined the Church Council, Eden was already engaged in outreach programs like *Comida para Cherryland*, the ChYLI program and *Padres Unidos*. In 2019, Pastor Arlene took a sabbatical and spent her time studying about the grant writing process in hopes of expanding our outreach and contributing to the financial well-being of the Church. Fast forward to 2020 and a global health pandemic (yes, another annual report that mentions COVID-19) and you get to see what a God-loving, Jesus-worshiping congregation can do with some prayers, discernment, community respect and a lot of government and non-profit grant applications. Eden UCC leveraged its reputation and took a leap of faith, becoming a true leader in the Cherryland neighborhood. I am proud to have been a part of this broadening of our Church's mission.

The backbone of any church is its congregation. I feel blessed to be able to see so many of our members in person again. I know God lives in my heart, not at church, but there is something to be said for taking the time to arrive at a place that is devoted to the worship of God. The re-arrival to the Church, however, brought to our attention the poor state of the windows in the sanctuary. The Church Council agreed with the recommendation of the Trustees that the windows needed to be replaced. The most responsible thing to do was to preserve our Building Fund and raise the money needed for the project ahead of time. A multi-committee effort was launched to see to the successful completion of this campaign. Our Time to Shine! Window Replacement Campaign started in earnest in the Fall 2022. To date, the Campaign has collected over \$110,435 in pledges and gifts, exceeding its goal of \$100,000. So much behind-the-scenes action has taken place on this project and I'm pleased to announce that the contract for the work has been signed!

Church Council supported the following in regards to worship and membership:

- All Church services were conducted in-person during the 2022-23. Worship continued to be live-streamed on Facebook and Vimeo for members who could not attend in person.
- Fellowship gatherings happened in the Labyrinth courtyard and now include coffee and light snacks.
- Music Director Ken Rawdon has enhanced the voices of our Choir by enlisting the services of semi-professional vocalists, affectionately referred to as "Friends of Eden Church Choir."
- Eden UCC celebrated its 27th Open and Affirming anniversary with guest preacher Rev. Sophia Hayes-Jackson.
- Bilingual Church School re-opened in Sept and was held weekly during services and our Nursery reopened in Mar.
- Bravo Sunday! was held on Jun 4. In this service we thanked our Church School teachers and our musicians. We also celebrated the many high school and college graduates from our Church family. This year the Eden Area Foundation, with help from generous donations, was able to award 16 scholarships to deserving college students.

Moderator's Report (cont.)

Church Council wishes to acknowledge the following regarding our ministers:

- Rev. Dr. Arlene Nehring celebrated her 35th year of ordained ministry this year. She also celebrated her 20th anniversary as the Senior Minister of Eden UCC. Pastor Arlene is the longest serving minister in the history of Eden Church.
- Rev. Pepper Swanson announced her plans for retirement to Church Council and wider congregation on Sunday, Apr 6 . While Pastor Pepper's presence will be missed, her contributions to the life of our Church are widespread and will not be forgotten.
- Rev. Dr. Marvin Lance Wiser defended his doctoral thesis in Sept and was conferred his doctoral degree in Oct. His hooding ceremony took place in May.

Outreach services that were acted upon and supported by Church Council include the following:

- Continuation of the *Comida para Cherryland* bi-weekly food pantry. Due to delays at the County level, the food pantry has been funded entirely by private donations for much of 2023. Some progress has been made and the Council is hopeful that government grants will once again cover the costs of the emergency food distribution in Jul 2023.
- COVID-19 services, including contact tracing, vaccine distribution and rent relief, were provided by specially-trained staff. As the federal emergency declaration expired, these contracts have already ended or are being phased out.
- The Newcomer Navigation Center is a well-known and respected source of services for newly arrived immigrants and refugees. The center will be launching a Spanish language financial literacy program for residents of the Eden Area, funded by Alameda County.

The community outreach programs staffed and supported by Eden UCC are funded in large part by government and non-profit contracts. Due to the size of these contracts, Eden is required to provide a single audit to the grantors. The first and second single audits (FY21 & FY22) were successfully completed in 2023. Eden UCC received a capacity building grant. With these funds, Council approved the hiring of BDO to assist in identifying the strengths and opportunities for growth within the organization.

We are blessed with a group of talented and passionate employees and ministerial staff. By training up members of the staff and bringing in financial experts, the ministers will be better able to focus on the spiritual needs of the congregation. Nobody can predict where this year will take Eden UCC. There will be uncertainty, but we will continue to use our faith to guide us. We are stronger together and even stronger when we follow in Jesus' footsteps.

It has been my pleasure to serve as Moderator of Church Council for the past two years. Please join me in welcoming our newest Moderator, Carlos Londoño.



Treasurer's Report

Rev. Rob Parrish, Treasurer

Eden's financial position remains solid despite significant swings in the stock market over the past year. This is due to the generous financial support received from members and friends, careful stewardship of the Church's assets, and the cultivation of multiple revenue sources, including nonprofit and government contracts and grants.

The Eden Area Foundation annual grant to Eden Church remained steady. Rental income has kept up with the Bay Area Consumer Price Index and member contributions have exceeded budget. Cash and investments as of May 31, 2023 are \$3,305,939, which is a \$198,337 increase over May 31, 2022.

The FY23 Operating Budget is projected to have revenues exceeding expenses by \$121,384. We anticipate ending the fiscal year with a surplus mostly resulting from contract reimbursements during the year. For FY24, the Church Council is recommending approval of a \$2,658,974 Operating Budget, which is currently projected to result in a surplus of \$105K. Council members will continue to monitor the budget to maintain a solid financial footing.

It has not been necessary to transfer funds from our Morgan Stanley investments during the past year to cover operating budget needs or negative cash flows. We anticipate that by adhering to our investment policy, the Church will continue to ride out any anticipated recession and the ups/downs of the stock market, which will allow the Church to successfully implement the updated Strategic Plan being brought before the membership at the 158th Annual Meeting.

This past year, Eden Church successfully completed its first two single audits. This type of audit is required for all non-federal entities engaged in work drawing on federal funds in the amount of \$750K or more per fiscal year, and involves a much higher level of scrutiny than other nonprofit organizations are subject to. Copies of the FY21 & FY22 single audits are available for review by the membership. If you have any questions about our finances, please feel free to contact me at any time.



Trustees' Report

Bob Turner & Julie Booher, Co-Chairs

This past fiscal year has seen our physical campus tested by rain and heavy winds, as well as by equipment reaching the end of its useful life. We called in Beck Roofing to repair the Sanctuary, West Wing, and Narthex roofs. (Note that the water intrusion was due to strong winds more than the rain).

Also this year, many of our fluorescent, incandescent, and high pressure sodium lights reached the end of their useful life. Due to the need for a boom lift to reach

most of these lights, a commercial lighting company was retained to replace the lights in Oliver Hall, the Sanctuary Chancel spot lights, and the parking lot lights, all with high-efficiency LED lighting. Not only are these lights bright (especially noticeable in the parking lot at night), but we expect some savings in electrical use, as the LEDs are more efficient and the bulbs last three times longer.

We also had to call out our heat and air conditioning vendor after a circuit board failed in an attic furnace. We changed alarm vendors (fire, smoke, intruders) and surveillance systems, after disappointing support from prior providers.

The Trustees performed minor repairs in Pioneer Chapel to make it suitable for our new Sunday morning tenants (San Lorenzo CC UCC).

All tenants were notified of the significant inflationary increases they would see, starting Jul to offset the high cost of living increases experienced in the Bay Area

over the past 12 months. At the same time, the Trustees will not be accepting requests for "casual rentals" from unaffiliated groups or individuals.

The Trustees have continued to perform and/or oversee health and safety regulations and inspections, maintain the AEDs on campus, etc. Alameda County recently inspected the OH kitchen and gave us a perfect score!

Finally, the Trustees recommended--and the Church Council awarded--the Sanctuary window replacement and plaster repair contract to Best Exteriors of Sacramento. We hope to have the new windows installed by the Fall.



Associate Minister's Report

Rev. Pepper Swanson

It is with gratitude and some sadness that I provide you with my last Annual Report. We've had a very busy year with the return of hybrid (in-person & livestream) worship, the re-opening of bilingual Church School and the Nursery, as well as a great variety of evangelism, fellowship, and stewardship events that re-emerged as the pandemic waned.



One highlight of this year from my perspective included the kick-off **All Church Community Potluck** on Oct 1 at Meek Estate Park. This event was particularly well attended and I think that was due in part to the enthusiasm of the ESLO planners and the application of some of the lessons the Seekers learned from Priya Parker's book *The Art of Gathering*. As the ESLO report details, what followed was a wonderful year of break-through fellowship activities sponsored by many of our ESLO volunteers and the Church School children.

A second highlight for me was the regularity and authenticity of our **weekly small group program**, which includes three groups of **Bible Study, the Crafters, and the Seekers** book discussion group. Although these groups continued on Zoom and fluctuated in their attendance over time, they met faithfully each week and provided both intellectual stimulation and fellowship for their group members. Personally, on a day when I was feeling dull or depressed, I could count on these groups to lift my spirits with their good humor, insight, and savvy commentary on their topics of discussion and current events.

A third highlight was, of course, our **Church School** program. We made significant progress toward the reality of having a bilingual Church School. With the help of Google translate and Maritza Rodriguez, we now have 25 bilingual Church School lessons. We also have three bilingual teachers and one Spanish-only teacher. When I reflect on this year, during which Church School was primarily outdoors and didn't include the video lessons that we had grown accustomed to on Zoom, I am so proud of our children and their parents for their faithfulness in attending, working with new educational materials, and finding ways to have fun with one another. As you will read in the ESLO report, our Church School kids also helped raise funds for Our Time to Shine! Window Replacement Campaign by hosting a bake sale, a pancake brunch, and a pop-up plant sale.



I am happy to report that our weekly **communications and website** are stable and function well. Behind the scenes of a typical *e-Chimes*, I work with at least seven online services and three social media channels, only one of which I had a working familiarity with when I started at Eden in 2015. Although challenging to learn and use these diverse online communication services, the in-housing of these functions has given us greater control over our identity materials and flexibility to work remotely or to transfer work between staff and pastors.

I leave Eden at the end of Jul, rejoicing in your friendship and giving thanks for all the blessings that you have given me and my family.

Designated Term Associate Minister's Report

Rev. Dr. Marvin Wiser

Church During COVID: Thanks to our new fiber optic internet, I continue to help make hybrid worship happen, live-streaming our services. I preached eight times this year and spoke at rallies and press conferences. Our Thursday night Bible Study, Estudio Bíblico, kept meeting online for the “Life of Christ,” study and transitioned to more in-person meetings during the Spring. In Dec, we cooked and sold more than 600 tamales to benefit the family of our late founding member, Vicente Flores. We also had potlucks when local COVID case rates allowed. I made an increasing amount of pastoral visits and accompaniments this year, and officiated Vicente Flores’ memorial service with Pastor Arlene. I assisted with two federal single audit preps, created a professional development cohort for our coordinators, and with the Clergy Renewal Committee, I submitted an application to the Lilly Endowment’s National Clergy Renewal Program to support my summer 2024 sabbatical and congregational renewal. I attended both the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and UCC regional/conference annual gatherings — in person! And, I almost forgot, I graduated from the Ph.D. program in Biblical Studies (Hebrew Bible) at Graduate Theological Union!



Community During COVID: I was able to collaborate with other Team Eden members in preparing and applying for additional grants and service contracts this year that sustain our community resilience work, some of which we received, helping to bring our total amount of outside funding to an excess of \$6 million since the start of our pandemic direct response work.

Cherryland Youth Leadership Institute (ChYLI): We had 13 participants in the ChYLI program (Jul 11 - Aug 10), which this year was offered in partnership with our VAXX Team. Our theme was #Ready2Recover. Youth members were educated around COVID and tenant protections and worked to empower their community toward recovery.

COVID-19 Direct Response (Community Resilience) Teams: For FY23, some of our Case Investigators, Contact Tracers, and Resource Navigators (CICT) joined our Outreach, Health Education, and Vaccination Team (VAXX). One previous CICT team member joined the Newcomer Navigation Center as the Accompaniment Programs Coordinator. Our Vaxx team reached 10,000 total vaccinations at the beginning of 2023. Kimberly Victorio and Mateo Cuéllar-Espinel serve as Co-Coordiators for the Vaxx Team. Javier Orea serves as the Director of our Food Security Team. Since the pandemic began we have assisted more than 11,000 households, completed 4,400 referrals, and delivered 1.2 million pounds of food, 50,000 hot meals, 45,000 face masks, 10,000 packs of diapers and wipes, and thousands of COVID tests. As we exited the pandemic emergency in May, we began to shift from emergency direct response work to partnering toward sustained community resilience.



Compañeras Ministry Report

Yuliana Wiser-León & Vicki Vivaldo, ESLO Representatives

The Back Story: Eden Church established the *Compañeras/os* Ministry in 2011. Our ministry plan is grounded in Eden's Mission, Vision, and Values and charts a course for reducing youth violence by investing in Eden Area youth; contributing to economic development in Cherryland; advocating for immigration policy reform; creating and implementing cultural integration opportunities for our congregation and community; and promoting community and public health partnerships. This ministry gave birth to *Comida para Cherryland*, the ChYLI program, the Cherryland Computer Cafe, and the Sanctuary & Accompaniment Ministry.

Intergenerational Church-Community Events and Institutional Partnerships: Our annual All Saints / *Día de los Muertos* altar and our *Nacimiento* were back inside the narthex this year. Barbara Heimowitz again coordinated a huge in-gathering of school supplies for our annual backpack drive, with more than 400 backpacks given away. Given its size and the winter COVID surge, our Tres Reyes fiesta was a gift drive-thru distribution concurrent with the first *Comida* of Jan. In Mar, the Compañeras co-sponsored the Spring Fiesta, which raised money for the Our Time to Shine! Window Replacement Campaign.



Newcomer Navigation Center Report

Yuliana Wiser-León, Director, Newcomer Navigation Center



The Newcomer Navigation Center (NNC) experienced significant growth this year. Our team grew to three full time staff members which has allowed us to continue to serve families and expand our services. We continue to provide navigation and support services for newly-arrived youth and families and have partnered with many other community-based organizations to uplift the needs of this vulnerable population.

In 2023, we were able to offer case management services to more than 40 individuals and families. We have continued our partnership with Hayward Unified School District and have signed a partnership agreement with the San Lorenzo Unified School District. Additionally, we are fortunate to maintain strong relationships with our institutional partners such as: the Alameda County HCS's Center for Healthy Schools and Communities, Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center, La Familia Counseling Services, and more. And Eden Church continues its commitment to convene on a monthly basis the South Alameda County Collaborative for Unaccompanied Minors and Children of Migrant Families, where providers find a collaborative space for inter-agency consultation, resource sharing, and problem-solving.

In 2023, we began hosting community dinners for newcomer families. This is an effort to provide an opportunity for newcomer families to connect with each other and create new relationships that can help increase their sense of belonging, and to learn from each others' successes. This has been a great highlight of our work this year, as we have tried to create a sense of community beyond just service provision. Our hope is that our work is transforming both those we serve and ourselves, as we move from a mindset of charity to a culture of solidarity. We are proud to be a part of this opportunity to learn alongside newcomer families.

The work of the NNC would not be possible without the generosity of the Alameda County Health Care Services' Center for Healthy Schools and Communities, the Rose Fund, the East Bay Community Foundation, the Hellman Foundation and members and friends of Eden UCC. We thank you all for your continued support, for your prayers, and for your willingness to stand alongside immigrant communities as we continue to speak up for justice and dignity for all.



Comida para Cherryland + Emergency Food Deliveries

Javier Orea, Director, Food Security Programs

Comida Para Cherryland has been in operation for 12 years now and currently serves over 300 families. Key highlights from 2022-23 include the following:

- From Jul 2022 to May 2023, our Food Security Team (FST) has distributed over 450,000 pounds of food.
- Thanks to Bob Turner and Jesse Lee, we delivering groceries to our community during Cena Caliente for over two years now!
- With Barbara Heimowitz, our EUCC staff and community members helped EUCC gather supplies and backpacks to be shared during our annual backpack giveaway in Aug. Our ChYLLs and FST team members helped distribute over 450 backpacks filled with various school supplies to children in our community
- EUCC partnered up with Alameda County Firefighters to share over 500 toys to all the children who showed up for our Tres Reyes event in early Jan.
- Asian-Americans now represent roughly 43 percent of the *Comida's* clientele. In Jan 2023, thanks to a generous grant from the Eden Health District, Anthony Kan joined our FST team, allowing us to offer our services in Mandarin and Cantonese in addition to Spanish and English.
- Thanks to our community partners — First Five Alameda, 4 C's, and Help A Mother Out — we have been able to supply diapers during all of our food distributions. We have distributed over 4,200 packs of diapers in the last year!
- Over the last year we have also been able to share over 5,000 at-home COVID-19 antigen tests, 9,000 kids masks, and 17,400 adult masks.
- Discretionary funding and Measure A funding from Alameda County Board of Supervisors, and generous contributions from our members and friends helped to keep us operational while we wait for the new Social Services Agency contract to begin (Jul 2023 - Jun 2025).



Music Report

Ken Rawdon, Music Director

In-person services re-started in the Fall 2022. Music was first incorporated by asking our singers/Choir members to come together, masked, and sing the hymns every Sunday as well as sing an anthem twice a month. Those who volunteered their talents during this time were greatly appreciated for the effort and the vibrant spirit that they brought to the services.



Additional singers were engaged to support all four parts for choral singing. We usually have 10 to 12 singers performing each choral piece. When COVID numbers decreased, congregational singing was reintroduced and special musical numbers and soloists were arranged to sing from time to time.

Beginning in the Fall 2022, the Choir and friends rehearsed every Sunday from 11 am to 12 noon in the Music Room. If the Choir was slated to sing in the service on any of those Sundays, they also rehearsed from 9 am to 10 am on those Sunday mornings. In general, the Choir sang at least twice a month in our 10 am services, and during the Advent and Easter season, they sang every Sunday. From Sept 2022 to mid-Jun 2023, out of 42 worship services, the Choir sang anthems and led the congregational hymns for 26 of those services.

The pool of “ringers” were helpful in enhancing the Choir singing. We had at any given time four to six excellent singers who we paid an average of \$80 each on any given Sunday. Every detail of the anthems and hymns have required much planning in terms of time management and team work ethic to accomplish the necessary tasks needed to successfully lead through music in our worship services every Sunday. The Choir has worked cooperatively to integrate diverse and well-performed music into our worship experience every week. The consistency, dedication, and devotion that these people have shown is truly remarkable. Together they helped make 2022-2023 another strong year for music in worship at Eden, successfully tackling beautiful, varied, meaningful and sometimes complex repertoire. We have also seen a significant uptick in the number of musicians and ensembles sharing space at Eden Church. Musicians are seeking to do projects at our Church due to its beautiful appearance and great acoustics, as well as its welcome to performers. This provides a great service to our community, and builds public awareness of our Church. In the past year, we hosted four concerts performed by local and regional groups including the Mount Eden High School Choir, Chabot College Choir, Castro Valley High School Choir, and San Jose State Choraliers.

I am grateful to all of the pastors, staff, elected leaders, and the entire congregation for their continued support of the music ministry at Eden Church!



Education, Spiritual Life, and Outreach

Suzie Hasselkuss, Chair

Eden UCC offers wonderful programs for everyone in the community. With the continuation of many activities on Zoom, we can and do project our loving, open and affirming image to everyone whether they worship in the Sanctuary or as far away as Arizona.



All of our volunteers have added many hours of time and ideas to ESLO events during this past year. We have all gone through several years of change during the pandemic and 2023 was a time to rejoice in all the bright moments that have occurred and embrace the changes in our new outlook, including new ways to communicate with the outside world.

As a result of all these efforts, some of the changes in the coming year will be new windows for the Sanctuary, new members, new friends, and new opportunities to have fellowship together in a safe place where we worship in a Christian faith that is offered to all.

Deacons — Stephanie S. Spencer & Joanne Vorheis



We were blessed during the 2022-23 to be able to worship in person every Sunday! Communion was celebrated on the first Sunday of every month and at special services, which included Christmas Eve, Maundy Thursday, and Easter Sunday.

Although we were together in the Sanctuary, we continued to celebrate Communion with safety in mind. Elements of juice or wine and fresh bread were provided by Joanne Vorhies for the pastors to celebrate at the Communion Table.

The congregation and Choir were served in the pews with packaged elements distributed by the Deacons. We continued to use individual sealed cups with a tiny wafer and sip of juice, which were held until everyone was served and all could partake together.

In addition to Communion, we also provided ashes and oil

for this year's Ash Wednesday service. As part of preparing for this service (and future Ash Wednesdays), Pastor Pepper and Joanne Vorheis

burned last year's palms, a memorable experience that fortunately did not result in any personal or property damage. We also had the privilege of supporting the baptism of Khaison-Tam Semanero Vo on Jul 3.



E-Team - Athena Malloy, Chair

The fiscal year 2022-23 found a return to almost pre-COVID levels of outreach for the E-team, especially in the Spring after we passed the winter peak of illness.

Coming back into the Sanctuary for Christmas was very special and we joined all the other teams on Advent Decorating Day to help decorate to welcome those who may be looking for a church home. It was wonderful to see the Church in her festive finery again.

The rain ceased in time for a Springtime full of activities! In Mar, a huge effort towards the Our Time to Shine Sanctuary Window Campaign provided an outreach event called the Spring Fiesta for the community to visit our on-site carnival and auction, to bid on fun items, and to get to know us.

May found members of the E-team helping with the Cherryland Eggstravaganza, Cherryland Bunny Festival, the Ashland Cherryland FamFest, Eden Night Live, and the East Bay Pride Prom. We had the opportunity to introduce the Church to the wider community at all of these events, with the "spin to win a prize" wheel always a hit!

We welcomed Laura Lee Kent, Margret Felix, Lindsey Roberts, Edith Sanchez, and Ken Rawdon as new members. In addition, Tabi Aloo became a new member by Confirmation.

I personally believe that it's families who are seeking to raise their children within a spiritual foundation and folks looking for a community alternative to conservative Christianity who are the best fit for Eden. With the opening up of post-pandemic society to more activities, we hope to be able to more fully share the special, welcoming place that's Eden UCC to our East Bay neighbors.



Education & Spiritual Life - Theresa Collier, Chair

In 2022-23, we were proud to offer a variety of Christian Education opportunities for both adults and children.

Bible Study: Two English-language Bible Study groups met weekly on Zoom, one on Monday evening and one on Thursday morning. Following the same curriculum, the groups focused on: 1) the story of the Maccabees as told in 1 Maccabees, 2) Isaiah 1-12 & related passages in the Gospel of Matthew, 3) the story of Jacob and his daughter Dinah in Genesis with a reading of *The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant, 4) the story of Joseph and his Brothers in Genesis, and 5) the story of the 10 Plagues and Exodus in Exodus 1-12. Our Thursday night Spanish-language Bible Study, Estudio Bíblico, met online for the “Life of Christ,” study and transitioned to more in-person meetings during the Spring.



Seekers: Our Seekers group continued to meet on Wednesday mornings on Zoom and discussed several books including: *The Art of Gathering* by Priya Parker, *The End of Bias: A Beginning* by Jessica Nordell, *The Sentence* by Louise Erdrich, *Peach Blossom Spring* by Melissa Fu, *Russell City* by Maria Ochoa, and *They Were Christians* by Cristóbal Krusen. In Jun, Seekers began a transition to hybrid meetings with in-person gathering in Fireside with Zoom call-in available.

Children & Youth: In Sept, Church School reopened with a new format and new curriculum. The new format was an outdoor classroom in the Courtyard, using small picnic tables and sun umbrellas and the Labyrinth as a play area. The new curriculum included weekly adaptation and translation of the Sparkhouse Spark curriculum to provide art and activity-based lessons in English and Spanish. In addition to weekly lessons focused on a Bible story, the Church School children participated in an in-person Christmas pageant as well as held three pop-up events: a bake sale in Oct and a Mardi Gras-themed pancake brunch in Feb, and a Lenten Garden Event with pop-up Nursery sale of flowers and tea cakes, all three of which were fundraisers for the Our Time to Shine! Window Replacement Campaign.



Fellowship - Pat Payne, Chair

During most of the pandemic, our Church members celebrated Fellowship virtually, sharing friendship and deepening connections online via Zoom. We missed the potlucks and food celebrations of the pre-pandemic time.

Since early Spring, thanks to Fellowship volunteers, we are bringing back Fellowship Coffee Hour after worship on a regular basis, meeting outdoors in the Courtyard for coffee and treats.

In addition, we had several special Fellowship events in FY23. We had fun and enjoyed getting together at these very special events:

- All Church Community Potluck Picnic in early Oct,
- All Saints Day Coffee & Conversation in early Nov,
- Advent Decorating Day Refreshments in late Nov
- Hot Cocoa & Cookies after Worship during Advent,
- Happy Birthday Jesus! Lunch in mid-Dec after the Christmas Pageant,
- Christmas Eve Cookies and Sparkling Cider
- Mardi Gras Pancakes (thanks to the Church School children),
- Spring Fiesta on Mar 18,
- Calla Lily Arranging with Tea and Spiritual Meditation on Holy Saturday,
- Easter Coffee and Cookies,
- Pledge Campaign Salad Potluck in early May, &
- Bravo Sunday! Celebration with Coffee and Cake in early Jun.



Stewardship - Keith Smith, Chair

Stewardship activities this fiscal year included two special UCC offering (Neighbors in Need and One Great Hour of Sharing), two Crafters' auctions, our Annual Pledge Campaign, and co-sponsorship with *Estudio Biblico/Compañeros* of the Spring Fiesta, which was a fun community event designed to be a fundraiser for the Our Time to Shine! Window Replacement Campaign. In addition, we raised funds for the Eden Area Scholarship program so all 16 applicants could receive a \$2,000 scholarship. For the third year in a row, our Crafters group held two auctions of handmade items, raising a total of \$1,500 to benefit Comida para Cherryland.

The Annual Pledge Campaign unfolded in late Apr and early May, using a theme from the Book of Esther, "Love in Action in such a Time as This." Each Sunday, we were treated to testimony from our witnessing stewards, including Charles Johnson, Edith Sanchez, Suzie Hasselkuss, Athena Malloy, and Miles & Liam Vetrovec. On the final Sunday of the Campaign, we dedicated our pledges to God and celebrated with a Salad Potluck, the first all-Church potluck on the Church campus since Fall 2019.



Spring Fiesta — Stewardship, Compañeras, & Estudio Biblico

A new event for Eden UCC — the Spring Fiesta — was on Mar 18 and included a carnival of games for children, delicious food for sale, two Baile Folklorico dance performances, community organization booths, and a silent auction. We were blessed by event coordination by Pat Payne, donations from many local businesses and Church and community members, as well as hard-working volunteers from the Church members, our Compañeros Ministry, and community groups such as the Boy Scouts. We raised just over \$8,000 and received many reports that attendees enjoyed the food, games, and dance performances.



Planned Giving

Rev. Rob Parrish, Chair

The Planned Giving Committee was chartered by Eden Church and the Eden Area Foundation in 2011 for the purpose of developing and maintaining a program of stewardship that invites and coordinates financial contributions from members and friends for the long-term financial health and future ministry of the Church and the Foundation.



The Oliver bequest, an example of planned giving through estate planning, provided \$210,000 of proceeds in support of Eden Church in FY23. The Church has been the beneficiary of other gifts and bequests from families and estates of descendants of our Church family. What we own and treasure is not ours alone, but ours as a gift from God to be stewarded for the benefit of future generations.

For various reasons, during the past two years, the Foundation elected to shift its previous practice of exclusively funding nonprofit organizations to also funding scholarships for Eden Area students pursuing higher education. This past year the Foundation and individual donors from the congregation collectively funded sixteen \$2,000 scholarships totalling \$32,000, bringing the total number of scholarships for the past three years to 51 for a total dollar value of \$102,000.

Through careful stewardship over the past twenty year history of the Eden Area Foundation, the Directors have been able to share more than \$5 million in proceeds to benefit our community. This amount is more than the total funds initially granted by the Congregation to establish the foundation in 2002.

Whether larger or smaller, designated for specific ministries or for the general fund, planned giving is a meaningful way to provide a legacy of support that will continue the important work and mission of Eden Church for generations to come. More information about planned giving can be obtained by reading the Planned Giving Ministry program statement adopted by the Eden Area Foundation Board of Directors, and the Eden Church Council, which is available at the Church Office or by contacting a Planned Giving Committee member or our Senior Minister.



Memorial Committee Report

Jan Bass, Associate Treasurer

The Memorial Funds are managed by the Church Council, recorded by the Church bookkeeper, and acknowledged by the Associate Treasurer. During the past year, financial contributions were received in memory of the following members and friends: Stephanie Cartwright and Jan Schumann to the Memorial Fund, and contributions were made in memory of Eugene & Marin Tucker to the Sanctuary Windows Campaign Fund. No Memorial Funds were expended during this year.

Persons wishing to make a gift to the Church in memory of a loved one are invited to write "Memorial Fund" in the memo section of the check or in a note enclosed with the gift. Donors are welcome to contact the Associate Treasurer or Senior Minister to discuss giving opportunities.



MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Rev. Dr. Arlene K. Nehring & Rev. Pepper Swanson

Necrology

- Jan Schumann, 9/4/22
- Vicente Flores, 11/29/22
- Charlotte Lusschen, 5/5/23
- Herb Graw, 6/6/23

Baptisms

- Khaison-Tam Semanero Vo, 7/3/22

Members Received

Confession of Faith

- Tabitha Aloo, 8/7/22

Letter of Transfer

- Margret Felix, 4/2/23

Reaffirmation of Faith

- Laura Lee Kent, 9/18/22
- Lindsey Roberts, 4/2/23
- Edith Sanchez, 4/2/23
- Ken Rawdon, 6/25/23

Transferred to Associate Membership

- Bill Adam

Transferred to Full Membership

- Michael Foster, 6/30/23
- Rev. Brenda Loreman, 6/30/23

Transferred to Inactive

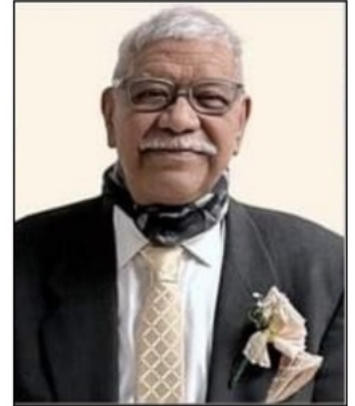
- T.J. Wilkinson

Jubilee Members

- Lucille Lorge, 2/6/1949
- Anne Duey, 5/12/1957
- Jim Schumann, 5/12/1957
- Jacque Blake, 10/4/1964
- Fred Timm, 12/3/1967
- Mary Graw, 2/2/1969
- Jim Phillips, 4/3/1969



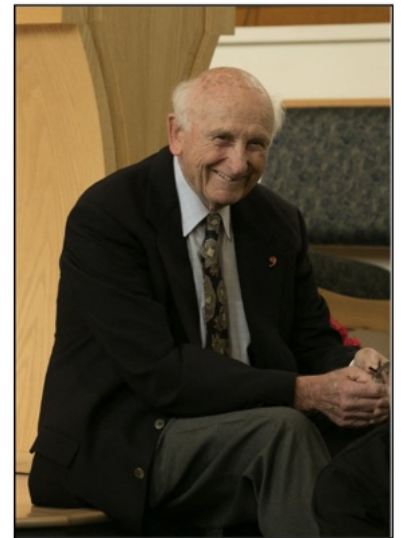
Jan Schumann



Vicente Flores



Charlotte Lusschen



Herb Graw

Total Members & Affiliates

- Members - 125 (8.5%)
- Associate Members - 48 (3.3 %)
- Family of Members - 155 (10.6%)
- Compañeras - 712 (48.6%)
- Friends - 82 (5.6%)
- Visitors - 150 (10.2%)
- Others - 193 (13.1%)

Total - 1,466 (100%)