

## **Worship Associates Annual Report 2025-2026**

Worship Associates: Sam Murray, Julia Firmbach, Brenna Woods, Tina Marshman, Katie Evans, Rick Weber, Ginger Hedges

The Worship Associates met monthly with Rev. Allison Palm, Director of Faith Formation Sadie Kahn-Greene, and Ministerial Intern Michael Packard to plan Sunday morning services and to share feedback about the services. Due to major church renovations, early fall services were conducted in the Grove Street parking lot. In October, we returned to our beloved sanctuary and learned to conduct services in the restyled space.

Worship services were again guided by monthly themes. A brainstorming session was held in spring 2025, then Rev. Allison and Sadie came up with the following themes for the year:

September: Honoring Arrival

October: Sharing Story

November: Harvesting Connection

December: Finding Holiness

January: Trying Our Best

February: Deepening Relationship

March: Holding the Tension

April: Nurturing Growth

May & June: Celebrating Diversity

Each month, we reflect on the services conducted since our previous meeting and discuss feedback. We begin planning services three months out, by brainstorming ideas for the worship services based on the themes. From those brainstormed suggestions, Rev. Allison writes a synopsis for the theme, summarizing what messages we hope the services will encompass that month. The following month we use the brainstorm and the synopsis to come up with specific worship services, and Worship Associates volunteer to participate, find readings and chalice lightings, and sometimes even lead the service.

We had two evening services for Christmas Eve. For Winter Solstice, there was a Sunday morning service led by Sadie with the Faith Formation children and an evening service led by Michael Packard. In February, we had a special story and song service led by visiting worship

leader Matt Meyer. The Welcoming Congregation Working Group and the Green Sanctuary Team each did a service. Spring services included a Child Dedication ceremony, a Coming of Age service, a Bridging ceremony for new high school graduates, and a New Member service.

Multiplatform services were offered for the entire church year. We continued to integrate video and audio recordings and real time Zoom presenters and sought to incorporate Zoom attendees in whatever interactive elements might be planned for that Sunday. The March 22 service, about diversity of beliefs, used technology to gather and display responses to survey questions in real time. Participants in the sanctuary and at home responded to questions using phones, tablets and computers and could watch responses being tallied as soon as they were submitted.

Average Sunday attendance for the year was 145, with an average of 17 online attendees.

Our Summer Services will begin on June 28 and will be held in the sanctuary. Rev. Allison led a Summer Worship Workshop in May for summer worship leaders, to walk them through the planning and sermon writing process.

Sam Murray, Julia Firmbach, and Rick Weber have ended their time as Worship Associates. We are grateful for their time, wisdom, and energy. We hope to welcome three or four new Worship Associates to the team next year.