

Welcome!

2025 Congregational Meeting

Sunday, October 26, 2025

The First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn is a joyful, loving, religious community that inspires and empowers people to grow spiritually, care for one another, and work for social justice and stewardship of the earth.



Let's Get Started

- Declaration of Quorum
- Call to Order
- Opening Words
- Right Relations Covenant
- 2025 GA Delegates Report
- Transition Team Report
- Facade Update
- Finance Report
- Planning for the Future



Right Relations Covenant

We are mindful that, as individuals and members of this spiritual community, we are each accountable for our words, deeds, and behavior. Therefore, whenever we worship, work together, or relate to one another, we agree to follow the following behavior covenant. I will strive to:

- Respect and cherish diversities of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual and/or affectional orientation, identity/gender expression, age, ability, beliefs and ideas.
- Assume good intentions. Trust in and speak well of one another. Give the benefit of the doubt. Examine my own intentions.
- Foster an environment of compassion, generosity, fellowship, and creativity. Smile and be welcoming. Share in the responsibilities of congregational life.
- Actively support the congregation's activities, and pledge financial support.

Right Relations Covenant

- Express appreciation and gratitude for the rich variety of gifts and talents shared among us. Empower others.
- Speak the truth as I experience it with kindness, care, and respect.
- Make decisions democratically through agreed-upon processes. Promote fairness and decency. Speak out against injustice.
- Face others directly in agreement or disagreement. Act with respect and humility when I disagree with others.
- Be mindful that words and actions may cause unintended pain.
- Seek out understanding and wisdom in the presence of conflict. Resolve conflicts through intentional compromise and collaboration and, when necessary, request mediation. Understand that sometimes it is necessary to take "no" for an answer. Be forgiving.
- Practice self-care. Be open to hope.

Congregational Meeting Rules

- People are asked to speak for themselves, not for what they believe others may think. Also, people are asked to be mindful of the feelings of others in the way that they phrase their remarks.
- So that our online participants and those with hearing loss can participate fully, you must be at a microphone before being recognized to speak.
- Comments are limited to 2 minutes per person.
- The moderator will call on people with differing points of view alternately.
- No one will be called upon to speak for a second time before everyone wishing to speak has spoken once.
- Procedural questions, questions for information, and right relations/process questions will be addressed as soon as they are made known to the moderator, before calling on other speakers or moving on to another item of business.

Congregational Meeting Rules

- No vote on a motion will be taken before 15 minutes of comments have expired or there are no more people seeking to comment.
- After 15 minutes, the question may be called. A 2/3 vote is required to end debate and proceed to a vote on the motion.
- There must be a 2/3 vote to extend discussion beyond the time allotted on the agenda.
- If a motion to adopt the budget as a whole is presented by the Board of Trustees, the budget motion is not amendable.
- All votes will be taken by a voice vote or show of hands. In the case of a contested election or close vote, the moderator may call for the use of ballots.
- Except as written above and in the congregational by-laws, the meeting will be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order

Today's Agenda

- 2025 General Assembly Delegates Report
- Board Report
- Transition Team Report
- Update on Facade Repair
- Finance Report
- Planning for the Future





General Assembly

June 2025



Opening Night Dinner



Delegates

Vicki Antonini

Ian Holmes

Lisa Pacenza

Lee Pardee

Rachel Stark

Jan Thompson

Other Attendees

Rev. Micah Ma

Rev. Meagan Henry

Dir. of Congregational Life Garnett
Losak

Intern Yvonne Garrett

Choir Assistant Sophia Miller

Former Intern Tasha Brownfield

Former member Michael DeSantis

GA Highlights

Actions of Immediate Witness

- We Declare and Affirm: Immigrants Are People Who Have Inherent Worth and Inalienable Rights
- Faithful Defiance of Authoritarianism, a Call to Action: Reaffirming Our Covenants for Democracy and Freedom
- Defending LGBTIQ Freedom Amid Funding Crisis: A Call for Global Solidarity

New UUA Co-Moderators elected:

- Rev. Kimberly Quinn Johnson
- Bill Young

Next Year's General Assembly

June 14-21, 2026

All Virtual GA

- Lower costs
- No travel cost or time
- Everyone can participate equally

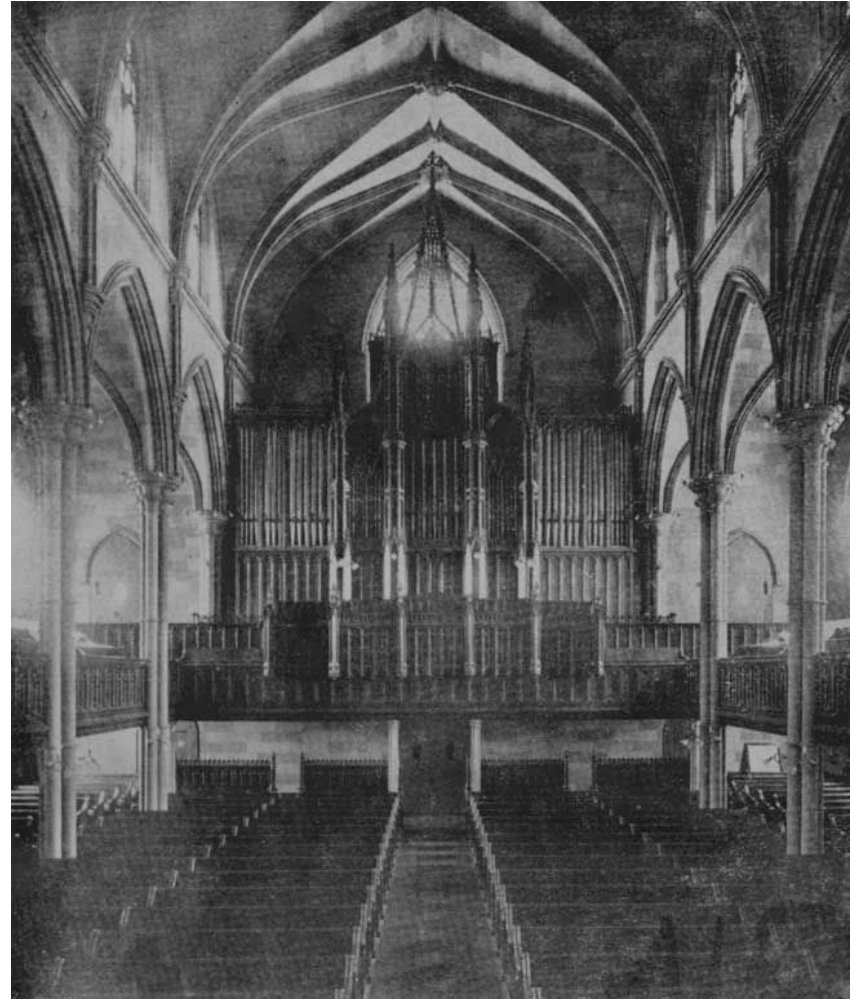
Applications will be available in December. Watch your e-news!



Board Report

Change is an Opportunity

- A lot of change in a short time can cause us anxiety or trepidation
- We have that anxiety precisely because we care
- The most powerful response is to act on the fact that you care. Participate, volunteer. Put an extra dollar in the collection. And yes, complete your pledge.
- Change is opportunity! The congregation, in a year, in two years, will not be what it is now or what it was. It will become something new and thriving through all of our participation.
- You're invited to pitch in!



Continuity Amidst Change

- We're still here
- We have a new building engineer! John McKeon
- Adam's still here
- Wendy's still here
- Bobby's still here
- Renee's still here
- Rev. Micah's still here

Unifair

Thanksgiving

Fri Open Mic Nights

Men's Group

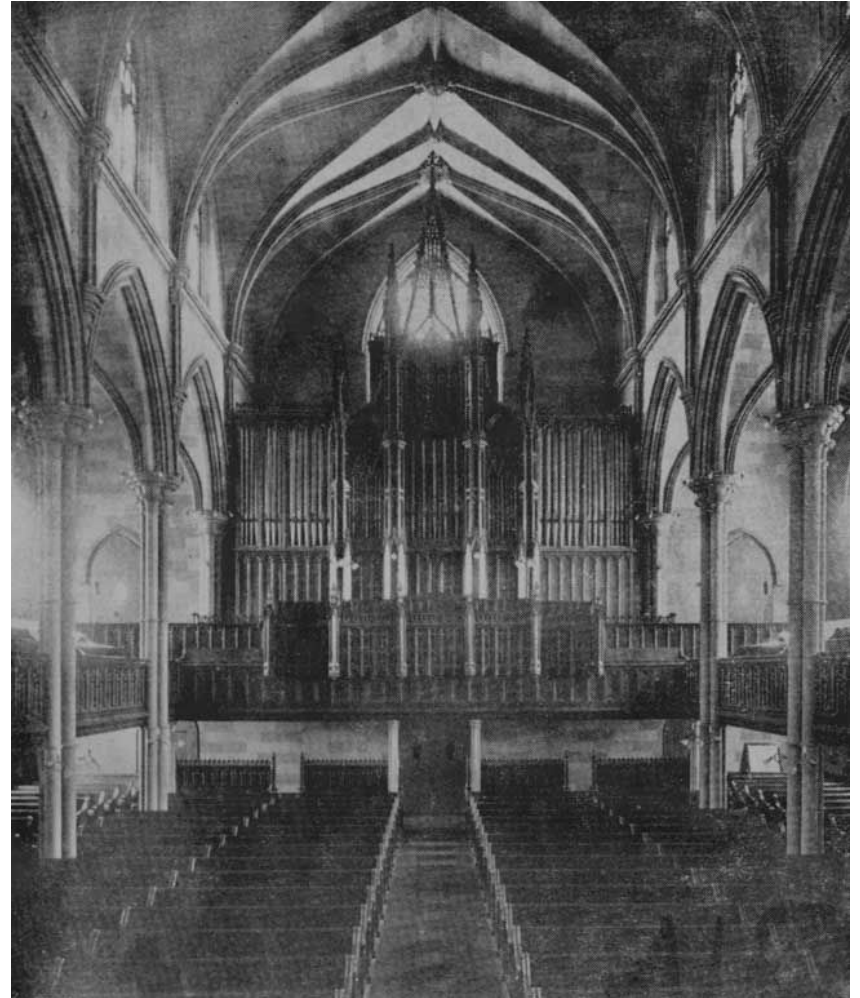
Brave Spaces

Jazz Sundays

Meditation Circles

Book Club

Shawl Ministry



Adapting to Staffing Changes

Temporarily Filling Meagan's shoes:

- More guest preachers
- Uninterrupted youth programming
 - Becky Huffman RE Coordinator
 - Sean Sellers leading teens
 - Wendy Russell continues as RE Assistant

Adding support for Rev. Micah & Administrative Staff

- Wendy Russell becoming Congregational Admin
- Adding a PT Finance Manager
 - Looking now
- Adding a PT Membership Coordinator
 - Starting search in January
- New Acting DRE in 2026





Questions?



Transition Team Report

June 2025



Transition Team Report - Data Summary

- 149 interviews
- Input from 15 congregants in Listening Circles this Fall
- Triad of 23 congregants leaders compiled results

Transition Team Report - OTO Interview Objectives

- Give members a voice during the interim process, especially as it pertains to considering a new leadership model.
- Administer interviews to help answer the following questions:
 - 1) What do people understand our current leadership model to be?
 - 2) What is the preference of a leadership model and why?
 - 3) What influence do experiences with current and past leaders Rev. Meagan and Rev. Ana have on consideration for future leadership?
 - 4) How do budget and staff influence people's thinking about future leadership?
 - 5) What else do people need to know if there were to be a vote about the spiritual leadership model?
 - 6) How else would people like to be heard?

Transition Team Report - Strategy

- Capture the unique voices of as many congregants as possible using an interview process that allowed people to speak freely and candidly about their experiences and concerns
- Use educational language to inform congregants of the ministerial models being discussed to help achieve mutual understanding during the interviews

Transition Team Report - Methodology

- The “Triad” received training for a standardized interview process that assured that each voice was given equal opportunity and time to participate
- The congregation was informed of the ministry models and were interviewed
- Interview notes for each question were entered into an online form, without any identifying information
- The first round of analysis was conducted by a group of 7 from the triad who read through 12% of the responses and developed categories for response characteristics.
 - To be sure that people had a shared understanding of the categories, an additional 12% of the data were coded and checked to see if the 7 coders responses were harmonious (which they were).
- Finally, a group of 6 triad members worked together to read through all 149 anonymous responses to all questions, labelling or tagging them, using the categories developed. Table, frequencies and counts were used to generate this summary of findings

Transition Team Report - Question 1

In your own words, how would you describe the spiritual leadership model of our congregation during your time as a member?

Ministry Model Category	Frequency	Percent
Senior ministry model	128	78.53%
Did not answer the question	15	9.20%
Shared model (with other staff)	7	4.29%
Co-ministry model	6	3.68%
Unclear / Ambiguous model	4	2.45%

Summary of Findings

The majority of the congregation asserts that the spiritual leadership model they have experienced during their time here has been a senior ministry model (78.53%).

Transition Team Report - Question 2

The members of the congregation are being asked to consider spiritual leadership models for the future. Currently, are you leaning towards a particular model? If so, which one and why?

Response Category	Frequency	Percent
Senior Ministry	55	37.16%
Co-Ministry	52	35.14%
Undecided	41	27.70%

Summary of Findings

There is no clear answer as to what model of leadership would gain the entire support of the congregation.

Those leaning towards co-ministry said this was due to the positives of **multiple perspectives, shared workload and responsibility**. Those who favored senior ministry endorsed to lesser extent the desire to **avoid interpersonal conflict and “too many cooks in the kitchen” and to obtain a minister of high quality**. They also believed the model supports **shared workload and multiple perspectives**.

In sum, folks want a leadership model that allows for diverse perspectives while sharing responsibility to avoid interpersonal conflict.

Transition Team Report - Questions 3 and 4

Has consideration of Rev. Meagan influenced your thinking about a future model? If so, how?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	108	72.97%
No	28	18.92%
Maybe	12	8.11%

Does the ministry and departure of the previous senior minister, Rev. Ana, influence your thinking about how our congregation will be led in the future in any way? And if so, how?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	83	72.17%
No	23	20.00%
Unsure	9	7.83%

Transition Team Report - Questions 3 and 4 - Summary of Findings

- Overwhelmingly the consideration of Rev. Meagan (73%) and Rev. Ana (72%) were part of people's consideration of future leadership models.
- Most of the congregation responses expressed wanting to **retain Rev. Meagan for their positive interactions with her, appreciation of her spiritual style and a fear of losing her.**
- Many were **dissatisfied with Rev. Ana's departure.** Many describe her departure **as a signal to consider a new model and a desire for ministry that fosters pluralism.**

In sum, experiences with previous ministers has resulted in people wanting a space to talk about their fears and future ministry. Folks want to carefully consider how a future ministry can foster pluralism.

Transition Team Report - Question 5

There are many moving pieces involved with running a congregation of our size and scope. Is there something regarding staffing and budgeting that you would consider when planning a leadership model for the future?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	119	74.84%
No	20	12.58%
Not enough info to answer	20	12.58%

Summary of Findings

- The majority (75%) of the congregation are considering the staff and budget when it comes the future ministers.
- Responses expressed that future planning ought to take into consideration the **endowment and budget, staffing changes, fair compensation and clear responsibilities.**

Transition Team Report - Questions 6

Is there anything else that you would like to learn more about during this decision making process?

Qualitative Code	Frequency	Percent
No response / “No”	62	34.25 %
Process / timeline transparency	49	27.07 %
How does co-ministry work?	33	18.23 %
Hiring and candidate selection	29	16.04 %
Open conversations about all options	18	9.94 %
Learning from other congregations	16	8.84 %

Transition Team Report - Summary of Results

- No clear preference for ministry model!
- Desire for greater transparency in the decision-making process
- Desire for ministers and other staff to feel supported
- We picked up on two key values to be pursued, whatever the ministry model
 - Collaboration
 - Shared responsibility and authority
 - Across clergy, lay staff, and congregational volunteers
 - Equity
 - Equal distribution of labor, regardless of the model



Questions?



CHURCH OF THE SAVIOUR.
FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.
BOSTON, U. S.

ERECTED 1848.
DESIGNED BY G. B. BARKER, ARCHT. CIVIL ENGINEER.

Facade Update

Cost to Repair Façade of Sanctuary

Cost Estimates

\$2.0M estimated
at 11/17/24

\$2.9M estimated
at 10/26/25

Spent/Remaining

\$1.5M spent
thru 10/26/25

\$1.4M remaining
cost

More than 80% of the cost is to ensure safety, and less than 20% is to maintain aesthetics. The permits from NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission and the Department of Buildings require adhering to Minard Lafever's original architectural design.

Principal Increases in Cost Estimate

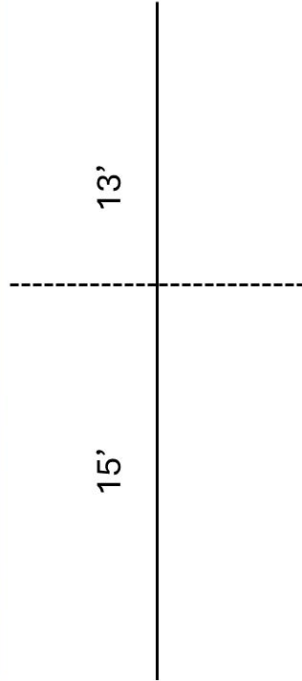
Assess Center Spires at Scaffold Levels 8-11:	\$ 240,000
Increase Cost Estimates for Fiberglass:	230,000
Discover Further Repairs at Scaffold Levels 1-7:	200,000
Repair Façade below Scaffolding:	130,000
Extend Project Duration:	<u>100,000</u>
Total:	900,000

Project Period is January 2021 to December 2026

Repair to Tall Center Spire



Before
repairs



Plan with
Fiberglass



Current State: brownstone repaired
and ready to receive fiberglass.

15'

The brownstone on all 4 spires has been repaired and is now safe. Fiberglass will restore Lafever's original design.



Questions?

Finance Report

Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Operating Budget

	Budget	Actual
Revenue	\$1,074,000	\$1,108,000
Expense	\$1,266,000	\$1,277,000
Net	(\$192,000)	(\$169,000)
Sustainable Endowment Draw	\$178,000	\$178,000
Final Net	(\$14,000)	\$ 9,000

One-time Off-Budget Expense

	Budget	Actual
Prior Minister Payment	\$175,000	\$148,000

Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Capital Budget

	Budget	Actual
Revenue	\$523,000	\$357,000*
Expense - Facade	\$460,000	\$846,000
Expense - Other	\$197,500	\$213,000
Net	(\$134,500)	(\$702,000)
Capital Fund Draw	\$134,000	\$150,000
Gen Endmt Draw	\$460,000	\$552,000

*Includes \$300,000 draw from line of credit.

Line of Credit

\$300,000 borrowed in fall of 2024

Repayment: \$5,000 per month on principal, plus interest

Payments through 9/30/25

\$50,000	Principal
----------	-----------

\$18,000	Interest
----------	----------

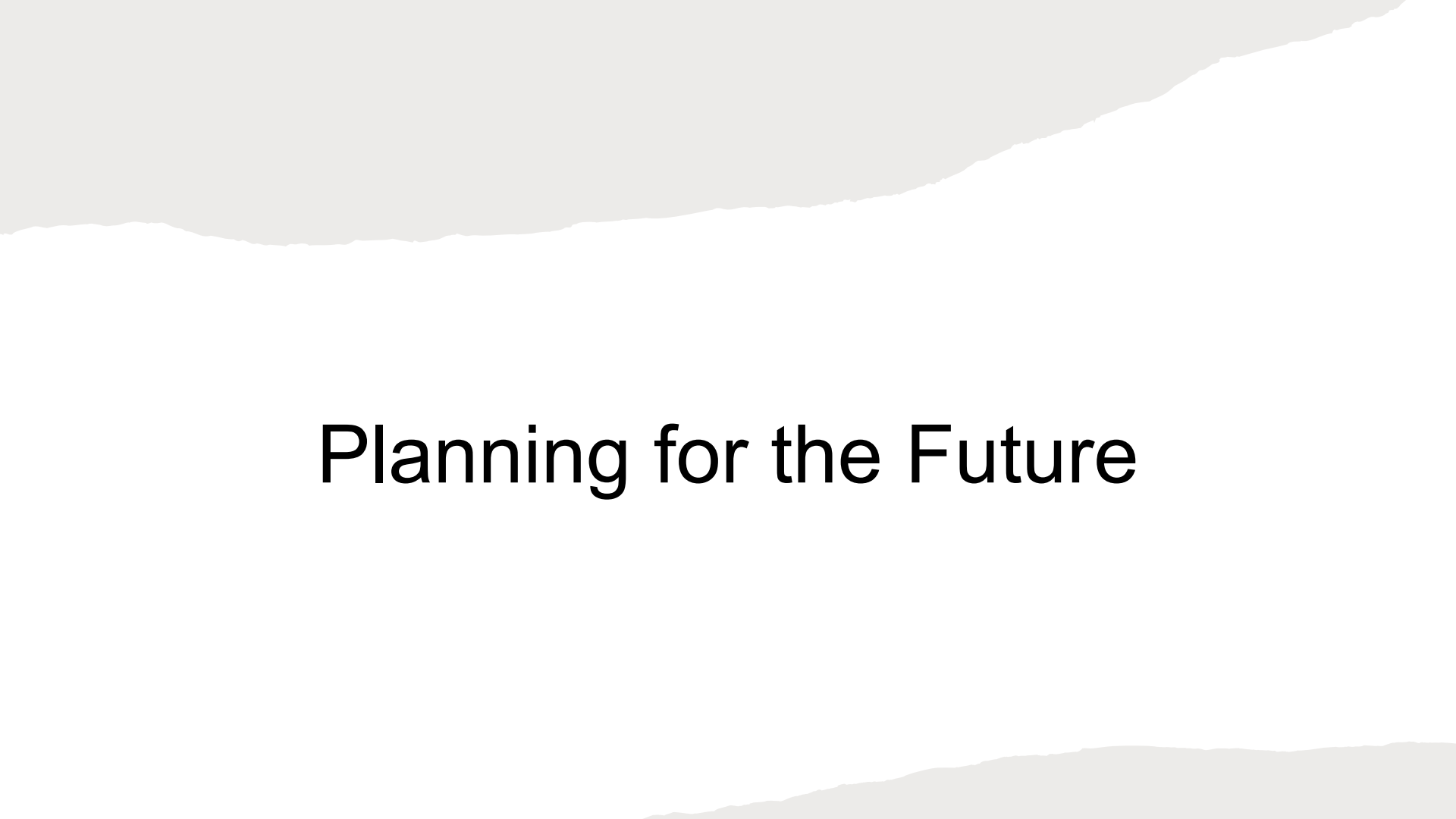
FY 2025-2026

Q1 Operating Budget

	Budget	Actual
Revenue	\$274,000	\$233,000
Expense	\$326,000	\$295,000
Deficit	(\$52,000)	(\$62,000)
Sustainable Endowment Draw	\$43,000	\$43,000
Net	(\$9000)	(\$19,000)



Questions?



Planning for the Future

Facing Financial Realities

- Facade costs are paid from the endowment
- Facade work is not optional
 - Safety
 - Building rentals fund 65% of our budget
- Operating Budget includes a 4% sustainable draw from endowment
- Smaller endowment → Less money for operations → Need to trim costs
- Your help and ideas for rebuilding the endowment after this investment are welcome. You're invited to pitch in!

Projected Timeline

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May
Search for New Minister	Cong. Meeting	Cottage Meetings	Cottage Meetings	Cottage Meetings	Vote on Leadership Model Special Nominating begins search for Search Committee			Annual Meeting Vote on Search Committee nominees
Staffing	Started process of hiring Finance Manager	⇒	⇒	End date for hiring Finance Manager (or sooner)	Create DRE Hiring Committee and start hiring process	Search for DRE	⇒	Goal of hiring DRE by end of program year



Questions?