

Bridge Campaign Testimonial
By Ruth Hersh Perry
Sunday, May 17, 2026

My name is Ruth Hersh Perry. My pronouns are she/her. I'm now in the 80s club, which puts me in the older "stage of life." I became a member here in 1989 and must admit for the first 30 years with a full-time 24/7 job, juggling life, and a new marriage to another inactive UU, I wasn't very engaged at UUCF.

But as we all know, change happens and we are not built to last forever. In 2018 Charles, the love of my life, died. His memorial service was held here. I missed Charles tremendously. Navigating through a heart-wrenching period of grief was exhausting and horrible. I cried a lot, dealt with lots of busy paperwork, found great solace in cooking for the neighborhood and attending Sunday UUCF services.

The first year was grueling. When that ended, it was clear to me I didn't want to move forward with a life marinated in grief. There were choices to make. For sure, I didn't want to join the one club no one wants to join...the widows club.

With deep reflection I decided to make UUCF my compass and show up as a New Old member. UUCF friends welcomed me back and made sure I found a place to receive acceptance and support.

I attended Sunday services regularly and always returned home more centered, enlightened, and hopeful. There was a lot going on in the world that troubled me and often the sermons were spot on to my concerns. I began connecting with other members who held the same UU Values I tried to live.

The choir and music always touched my heart. I loved being in an intergenerational community, especially seeing children, and listening to Sunday's Stories for all ages. The special services put on by our youth always left me feeling hopeful for the next generation.

I met with Rev. David and asked how I might contribute to UUCF. In my new chapter I kept an open mind and signed up for any calendar event of interest. I joined yearly covenant groups which enabled me to get to know group members on a deeper level.

In time I became a member of The Worship Committee. And before Covid, after Laura assured me that I could still sing, I joined the awesome Choir team.

My emotional survival during Covid can be largely attributed to Zoomed Sunday services, choir, and my involvement with other UUCF activities. Members that I met began reaching out to encourage me to join in other activities. Hahn Michael, tapped me to co-chair the auction food committee, noticing I was a great vegetable chopper and loved to cook. I joined the Leadership and Nominations Committee. Each year I sign up to help during hypothermia week. Whenever I can I write Get Out to Vote postcards, donate auction events and help out in other ways. On Mondays I **protest** with others

against immigrant injustice. Currently I serve on the Pastoral Care Committee. And next year I signed up to be an RE teacher.

All these activities have prevented me from being isolated and helped me grow, stay actively involved, and given me both purpose and an opportunity to give back.

UUCF has become my beloved community with a team of strong supportive friends and colleagues working and acting together in ways to make this world a better place.

But this is our reality, without the financial support of members like you and I to maintain an outstanding staff, offer extensive programming for all ages, and maintain this physical plant, my journey and others to build a new life here would have been more difficult.

It is for all these reasons I am making an annual pledge to the operating campaign and a 3-year pledge to the bridge campaign. I encourage you to join me whatever your age and stage in life, for us now and for future generations.

If you have already made a pledge, thank you. If you haven't, I encourage you to join me in supporting the Bridge campaign by making a three-year pledge. You can stop by the Bridge table in the commons after the service to arrange a visit.