

**Unitarian Universalist Society**

**2355 Oakdale Road**

**Coralville, IA 52241**

**www.uusic.org**

## 8 Principles of Unitarian Universalism

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person
2. Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part
8. Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions

# The UUS News

*May 2024 Newsletter*

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# From Your Minister

*Rev. Diana*

Dear Ones,

In May we will be exploring the value of Pluralism. The [proposed revisions to Article II](#) describes the Pluralism in this way:

- **Pluralism:** We celebrate that we are all sacred beings diverse in culture, experience, and theology. We covenant to learn from one another in our free and responsible search for truth and meaning. We embrace our differences and commonalities with Love, curiosity, and respect.

Pluralism also shows up in a lot of other places in the proposed Article II revisions, which Unitarian Universalists from around the country will be voting on adopting in June. Our values of Justice and Equity discuss creating inclusive communities and using inclusive democratic processes. Our liberal religious movement “draws from our heritages of freedom, reason, hope, and courage, building on the foundation of love.” From this we create diverse congregations that covenant to support and assist one another in our ministries. And the proposed Inspirations say that:

- As Unitarian Universalists, we use, and are inspired by, sacred and secular understandings that help us to live into our values. We respect the histories, contexts and cultures in which they were created and are currently practiced. These sources ground us and sustain us in ordinary, difficult, and joyous times. Grateful for the religious ancestries we inherit and the diversity which enriches our faith, we are called to ever deepen and expand our wisdom.

While these statements resonate for us as Unitarian Universalists, what does Pluralism mean in our lives and our congregations? How does Pluralism show up, and how do we show up to affirm it, when we are having discussions about our theological diversity? Or when we are working on LGBTQIA+ issues, especially trans issues, and how creating safer spaces changes our community? When we are working on racial justice and how to counter pernicious culture and laws, as well as inertia? Or when we work on countering ableism and ageism, and on creating a congregation that is more accepting and affirming of diverse ways of being – and being together?

Our value of Pluralism is constantly challenging us. It’s constantly asking us to lean in, to listen, to learn, to change, to love more fully, more bravely, more openly, more fiercely. And so, where will our exploration of Pluralism take you this month? Where will it take us? I hope you’ll lean into this conversation and share what it means to you with others within and beyond this congregation.

Love and Blessings,  
Rev. Diana

(P.S.: I’m updating the minister’s bookshelf in the UUS library with some books to help us explore Pluralism.)

## Upcoming Services

*May 2024 Sunday Services*

### **May 5th: The Promise and the Practice of Pluralism and Peace**

Join us as we continue exploring the proposed new UU values by celebrating what the value of Pluralism means in our lives and faith. After the worship service we will be dedicating UUS's peace poll. Rev. Diana Smith preaching.

### **May 12th: Growing Our Garden!**

Join us for our annual Flower Ceremony and to celebrate the volunteers that make UUS bloom. Rev. Diana Smith preaching. After the worship service we will be having a volunteer appreciation event and welcoming our new congregational administrator, Maya Yoder.

### **May 19th: Pluralism Within**

Join us for an all ages worship service as we explore how the pluralism within UUS shapes our congregation. Rev. Diana Smith preaching. After the worship service we will have our congregational meeting.

### **May 26th: Memorial Day**

To be announced. Worship Associate Quanda Hood leading.

*Find more information on our Sunday Services on our website: [www.uusic.org/services](http://www.uusic.org/services)*

*Join us on YouTube Livestream: [www.youtube.com/@UUS\\_IC](http://www.youtube.com/@UUS_IC)*

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## May Offerings

*Free Lunch Program*

May Sunday Offerings benefit the Iowa City Free Lunch Program. The cornerstone of the Free Lunch Program is, “an open door, a full plate and no questions asked.” A hot meal is served six days a week at 1105 S. Gilbert Court, Iowa City.

Cash and check donations are collected during the Sunday service offering. Checks should be made out to UUS and have “Iowa City Free Lunch Program” on the memo line. You can also donate online at <https://bit.ly/UUSPartner>, text “GivetoUUSIC Partner” to 73256, or mail a check to the UUS office.

## From Your Membership Coordinator

Victoria Huitt

We are seeking current congregation members to be **Congregational Connectors** to our prospective members in the Pathways to Membership process. What this involves is mentoring and providing information regarding all the various groups and activities here at UUS to choose from. Each prospective member is required to meet twice at a minimum with their Connector in any format that works best for you and them; here in church, outside of church, online or even phone; you can decide what works best for you. You would only be a connector to one person at a time. If you have an interest in serving in this capacity, please email Victoria at [welcome@uusic.org](mailto:welcome@uusic.org)

We are also looking to add **Membership Associates** to our team! This group rotates greeting at the Welcome Table on Sunday mornings before services. Showing up at 9 am and setting up, putting out the sign, greeting visitors, responding to anyone with questions, and offering information on service (finding order of service, bathrooms, social hour after the service), getting name badges or filling out Connections cards for more information on membership, RE, activities. Long term congregants or new members all could serve in this function. We can offer flexibility in scheduling for snowbirds or travelers.

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## Announcements

- **Summer Services Opportunity:** The Worship Associate Team is gathering [proposals](#) for lay-led services during the summer. Members typically share something they are reflecting on, experiences, and understandings from their life. Complete the [proposal form](#) by May 3rd. The Worship Associates

Team will follow up by May 17th.

- **UUS Seeking Music Director:** UUS seeks a Music Director to join our team! Applications are due by May 3rd. All details are available on the UUS [website](#).

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## Welcome Maya Yoder, UUS's New Congregational Administrator

Dear Ones,

I'm delighted to announce that UUS has hired Maya Kehr Yoder to be our new Congregational Administrator! Maya will join us on May 12, bringing a depth and breadth of experience that we're excited to bring into our congregation.



Maya spent a decade as a high school teacher, teaching first Spanish and then English Language Arts. As a teacher, Maya honed her administrative, communication, and organizational skills, as well as implementing restorative justice circles, intercultural, and anti-racism work. And, of course, as a teacher she learned how to juggle many responsibilities, listen well, be flexible, adapt, celebrate differences, and communicate clearly and compassionately!

*(Welcome Maya! continued on page 5)*

*(Welcome Maya! continued from page 4)*

Maya is currently a prevention specialist with Community & Family Resources. She also brings leadership experience from her congregation, First Mennonite Church in Iowa City where she served as chair of the Leadership Council from 2019-2022, helping lead the congregation through the pandemic and much of their process to become an LGBTQ+ welcoming congregation, which they are now.

The Congregational Administrator Search Team, which includes Ian Cawley, Carmen Griggs, Kaytee Rairdin, Deb Scholerman, and me, is delighted to have found such a skilled, warm, thoughtful Congregational Administrator for UUS. Here's what some of the other members of the search team had to say about Maya:

"I was thoroughly impressed with Maya: With the thoughtfulness and attention she brought to the interview process, and with the credentials and skills she will bring with her to the staff and congregation. We can't wait to welcome her to UUS." – Ian Cawley  
"Maya has a great skill set and will be an excellent fit for UUS." – Carmen Griggs

"I look forward to working with Maya. She will be a wonderful addition to our staff. She is looking forward to working with us and supporting the congregation." – Deb Schoelerman

Maya is looking forward to working for a congregation whose values align with hers and supporting our congregation and staff while meaningfully connecting members to volunteer opportunities and ensuring our facilities continue to operate smoothly.

Maya will be joining us on Sunday, May 12 and we'll have a welcome for her after the service. Frederico Calderon has graciously agreed to remain in his role as temporary office administrator through May to help us have a good transition.

Please let me or the other members of the search team know if you have any questions. And please join me in extending thanks to the search team members, who gave considerable time to making this search a success. It has been a joy working with the team.

Blessed be,  
Rev. Diana

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## **From Your Board President**

*Jeff Walberg*

Before I write about the past year, let me back up in time a bit. My family re-engaged with UUS in 2015 after several years away when our son was in his teens. We started to reconnect when UUS purchased its new property and members began dreaming of its future.

I was inspired by the commitment to sustainability, the visions for welcoming diverse visitors into our space, and the aspirations for significant membership growth. My enthusiasm led me to serve for three years as Publicity Coordinator, eager to spread the word to a new generation of UUs who could find the type of meaning my family had found, while in turn helping the congregation live out our mission and vision more fully.

As you likely know, things didn't work out exactly as planned. Membership remained essentially flat, weddings and events didn't bring in as much revenue as expected, and increased staffing and unexpected building costs caused a significant gap between revenue and expenses.

But the congregation's vision and ambitions also helped us weather what was about to come. Our elevated staffing undoubtedly helped us remain stable during a period of interim ministry and the COVID shutdowns.

*(From Your Board President continued on page 6)*

*(From Your Board President continued from page 5)*

Lessons learned about rentals and events helped inform new post-pandemic ways of approaching community engagement and revenue generation. And our efforts at outreach, combined with our commitment to preemptive radical inclusion, have resulted in a steady recovery in membership and visitors, with many people seeking the type of values and opportunities for connection that UUS has long provided.

So even as we continue to work through budget challenges, I think it's also important to recognize that we have remained stable and cohesive through an extraordinarily challenging period of building transition, ministerial transition, and global pandemic. And this stability is due, at least in part, to the investments that an ambitious, vision-oriented community made to its future, even if its specific goals weren't realized exactly as planned, and its budgets weren't sustainable over the long term.

This brings us to today, which I would characterize as a period of "thoughtful right-sizing." We are in a phase of adjusting staff roles, programs, committee and team structures, and policies to better align our operations with our human, fiscal, and physical resources.

We've made significant progress in addressing our budget deficit by reorganizing staff roles after our Director of Congregational Life left a year ago. This has not been an easy or simple transition, and it is still a work in progress.

The Board is now working with the Finance and Endowment Committees to think more deeply about long-term stewardship, sparked by a recent assessment conducted by UU consultant Mark Ewert. This effort at cultivating and aligning financial resources with our near and future needs is critical because the congregation has voted to require a balanced budget for 2025, which also coincides with our mortgage renewal.

Discussions are beginning on ways we might reduce our mortgage obligation, which may potentially involve a larger rethinking of how we develop and use endowed funds. The overall hope is to find creative ways to bring our expenses in line with our revenue instead of simply making additional cuts.

Another important but less obvious area for right-sizing is in our shared ministry governance model. The congregation adopted a new policy-based model in 2020 that is more ideally suited for congregations with significantly larger membership and staffing levels. This new governance model offers many benefits, with a key element being that it shifts a significant amount of responsibility from the Board to the minister and staff, with the minister's role restructured to be more like the executive director of a non-profit.

Overall, this is a terrific direction for the congregation, as it provides a lot more focus and coordination for our programs and operations. But we're finding that the minister and staff are being stretched more than is healthy, which makes it difficult to reap the full benefits of a shared ministry approach. So the Board is working closely with Rev. Diana, staff, and ministry team leaders to adjust and clarify the shared ministry model in ways that better suit the resources of our congregation at this moment in time.

Related to these realities are noticeable changes in post-pandemic volunteerism, not just at UUS, but across all volunteer organizations. People seem generally less interested in long-term commitments and favor action-oriented ways to contribute over sitting in meetings. (Puzzling to me, as someone who loves group process.)

A year ago, the Board adjusted to this reality by reducing the size of the Board and the length of trustee terms. We are so far very happy with the results. We've continued these right-sizing efforts this year by reducing the

*(From Your Board President continued on page 7)*

*(From Your Board President continued from page 6)*

scope and size of some of our Board committees, while adjusting policies to distribute work more effectively and clearly between the Board and its committees. A large part of the goal is to free up more volunteer capacity for our ministry teams, which are the groups who are actively living out our mission and vision. Another goal is bringing more focus to important areas like how to provide care to one another, especially now that the minister has less responsibility and time to devote to pastoral care.

None of these changes are easy or without stress or disagreement, and they are happening at a time when most of us are anxious about the state of the world and the regressive policies in our own state. For our part, the Board has engaged in a significant amount of work over the past 18 months on trust-building and learning how to embrace conflict as a necessary part of being in community.

The Board's perception is that the congregation as a whole has been in a period of relatively low and generally healthy conflict, especially given all the changes we've been living through as a community. But we are also noticing a few episodes where conflict is not being approached as constructively as we'd like. We're in early stages of discerning how we might engage the congregation more broadly as we seek to develop our individual and collective capacities for working through conflicts in ways that strengthen rather than threaten or deplete the community.

In summary, this is all complex and important work with no clear instructions and many moving parts. This is what I love! I wake up nearly every day feeling immensely grateful to be serving in this role at this particular time. My first term as president has been personally meaningful and fulfilling, and I appreciate your confidence as I enter a second term and welcome four new Board members.

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## Upcoming Events

### Men's Sunday Social, May 5th

UUS adult men are invited to gather together the first Sunday of most months from 6 to 8 pm to socialize in a casual setting. Members and Friends are welcome. We define "man" as any adult who identifies as a man. Currently, our monthly gatherings take place at 2Dogs Pub (1705 First Avenue, Iowa City). Send questions to Russ Lenth and Phil Beck at [menssundaysocial@uusic.org](mailto:menssundaysocial@uusic.org).

### Rev. Diana Community Office Hours, May 8th

Rev. Diana will be at a location in the community for members and friends to stop by and chat about whatever's on your heart or mind. You don't need to have an appointment. She hopes you'll stop by to say "Hi!"

### Free Lunch Program, May 10th

The May Free Lunch is being donated by Bonnie Penno in honor of Mother's Day.

The cornerstone of the Free Lunch Program is, "an open door, a full plate and no questions asked." A hot meal is served six days a week at 1105 S. Gilbert Court, Iowa City. Since 1986, UUS has provided the Free Lunch meal on the second Friday of every month to about 110 guests.

The group is lead by Bob Littlehale, Frank Wildensee, and Vicki Siefers. There are 4 shifts available for volunteers to choose from:

- A hot meal is prepared starting at 9 am in the kitchen at 1105 Gilbert Court. Frank and Vicki set the menu and shop for ingredients.

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*(Upcoming Events continued from page 7)*

- At 10:30 am volunteers come with salad and fruit ingredients and chop up the vegetables and fruit to make salads to serve.
- Serving starts at noon and another shift steps in to dish out the food to 100+ diners.
- At 12:30 the final clean up shift arrives and washes all the dishes and cleans up the kitchen.

Each shift is from one to one and a half hours long so no one has to stay all morning. To sign up to help, email or call Bob Littlehale at [freelunch@uusic.org](mailto:freelunch@uusic.org) or 419-297-7812 or Frank Wildensee at [wildlake@gmail.com](mailto:wildlake@gmail.com) to receive the Sign Up Genius email list. You can also donate to the lunch by offering to cover the cost of a main dish or sending a donation.

## **Trivia Night Event, May 11th**

The Fun and Fundraising Committee is hosting a Trivia Night on Saturday, May 11th! A meal will be served at 6:00 PM, and trivia will go from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. For the Trivia Night gather up your friends and family and form a trivia team of 6-8 members. (no special skills or knowledge required.) Individual players are welcome to form impromptu teams or go solo. There will be cash prizes, snacks, and non-alcoholic and alcoholic drinks. All for a suggested free-will donation.

And don't miss the bake sale! We know there are lots of wonderful bakers in our community. This is your opportunity to shine. It is also your opportunity to buy and enjoy fine baked goods. Please email Julia Audlehelm at [juliasdrawings11@gmail.com](mailto:juliasdrawings11@gmail.com) if you can bring a baked item. Gluten free and vegan baked goods are especially welcome.

## **Iowa City Flute Choir Concert, May 12th**

Join us at 2:00 PM at UUS for the Iowa City Flute Choir, a semi-professional community music ensemble made up of local professionals and adult amateurs in Iowa City and the surrounding areas. ICFC was formed in 2018 by four local musicians and has quickly grown to more than 25 flutists, performing several times a year at local Iowa City community locations.

Performances include repertoire ranging in emotion from lighthearted to deeply moving and often feature an informative session where players present the different types of flutes.

## **UUS Board Meeting, May 15th**

The UUS Board of Trustees holds a meeting, open to all members, each month at 7 pm on the third Wednesday. Look for an agenda in the weekly email or on the [website](#) before the meeting. ([Link to Join](#), Meeting ID 891 3256 0297, password 228948, or join by phone).

## **UUS Men's Sharing Circle, May 19th**

All adult UUS members and friends who identify as male are invited to join us to our monthly sharing circle. You are invited to share your joys and sorrows, practice deep listening, and offer support when asked for, all in a confidential environment. We will meet in the Hickory & Oak Rooms at UUS on the third Sunday of each month from 6-8 pm. For questions, contact Ron Pile and Niklaus Jakob at [menssharingcircle@uusic.org](mailto:menssharingcircle@uusic.org).

## **Rev. Diana Community Office Hours, May 22nd**

Rev. Diana will be at a location in the community for members and friends to stop

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*(Upcoming Events continued from page 8)*

by and chat about whatever's on your heart or mind. You don't need to have an appointment. She hopes you'll stop by to say "Hi!"

## **Sound Bath Meditation, May 22nd**

Join Tina McCoy in the Fellowship Hall for a mini-retreat from the distractions and busy-ness of life in an immersive sound meditative bath. The unique sound experience offers a peaceful respite to enjoy feelings of relaxation and serenity. This is your time to reconnect with heart and spirit, all supported by soothing vibrations and sounds from singing bowls, gongs, chimes, and other instruments.

\*We will begin at 6:30, please plan to arrive 10 minutes early to create your comfort space for the session. Bring props (e.g., yoga mat, blanket, etc.) to support and deepen your comfort. This is a free-will offering event.\*

## **Faithful Grounding, May 23rd**

Join the Unitarian Universalist Association Side with Love Fun & Spiritual Nourishment Squad for an hour of spiritual sustenance and grounding with others organizing on the side of love. Show up as you are, with whatever is in your heart, and have your camera on or off as you need.

Come drink in the music, meditation, play, and prayer. We end with a Connection Cafe for those who wish to talk together. This gathering happens monthly on the 4th Thursday of the month at 6:30 CT. Register here: [May 23](#)

***Find our full list of May Events at [www.uusic.org/upcoming-events](http://www.uusic.org/upcoming-events).***

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# **UUS Committee and Team Reports**

## **COVENANT GROUPS**

In April, covenant group members grappled with the idea of interdependence. Interdependence poses a tricky question. You might ask yourself how the thought of being interdependent with others and with nature affects your sense of individual identity. Does it change it in significant ways? If so, does your identity feel threatened or enhanced? The answer is crucial because we are all interdependent whether we want to be or not. Perhaps accepting that knowledge is key. Perhaps understanding what we share, what we have in common with other creatures around us is the way our true identity is revealed, our individuality realized. Perhaps to find ourselves we have to learn there is no meaningful separation between us and the rest of the world.

If questions like these intrigue you, you might want to consider joining a covenant group. The covenant group program offers its members the opportunity to share their views and deepen their understanding of a wide range of issues while creating closer ties with other UUs.

## **FREE LUNCH PROGRAM**

On Friday, April 12, 18 UUs rotated off and on shifts preparing gourmet macaroni and cheese and chopping vegetables and fruit for salads. More volunteers showed up with donations of greens, fruit, and desserts. These are some of the volunteers (sorry if I missed you): Frank Wildensee, Virginia and John Stamler, Laurie Cubit, Gene McCracken, Joy Thompson, Carolyn Johnson, Barb Haring, Theresa Ullrich, Gare Calhoun, Joe Rasmussen, Chris Smith, Gay Mikelson, Terri O'Berry, Janet McKee, Carrie Z Norton, and John Elson.

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*(Free Lunch Program continued from page 9)*

Sharon Booker, Bonnie Penno, and Pete Brokow donated food. 113 diners were served and at least 15 carry-out containers were loaded. There was not one bite of food left! A good time was had by all in the kitchen, and many diners were thankful for the hearty and healthy meal.

The group is lead by Bob Littlehale, Frank Wildensee, and Vicki Siefers. There are 4 shifts available for volunteers to choose from:

- A hot meal is prepared starting at 9 am in the kitchen at 1105 Gilbert Court. Frank and Vicki set the menu and shop for ingredients.
- At 10:30 am volunteers come with salad and fruit ingredients and chop up the vegetables and fruit to make salads to serve.
- Serving starts at noon and another shift steps in to dish out the food to 100+ diners.
- At 12:30 the final clean up shift arrives and washes all the dishes and cleans up the kitchen.

Each shift is from one to one and a half hours long so no one has to stay all morning. To sign up to help, email or call Bob Littlehale at [freelunch@uusic.org](mailto:freelunch@uusic.org) or 419-297-7812 or Frank Wildensee at [wildlake@gmail.com](mailto:wildlake@gmail.com) to receive the Sign Up Genius email list. You can also donate to the lunch by offering to cover the cost of a main dish or sending a donation to UUS account number 4522.

The May Free Lunch is being donated by Bonnie Penno in honor of Mother's Day.

## GREEN SANCTUARY

### Opportunity Assessment for Reaccreditation

Green Sanctuary is working on Reaccreditation with the UUA Green Sanctuary Program. We have five areas to consider:

- **Mitigation** is what we do to reduce greenhouse gases.
- **Adaptation** is what we do to reduce vulnerability to climate change.
- **Resilience** is how we build capacity to maintain critical functions.
- **Justice and Equity** is how we collaborate with marginalized communities.
- **Congregational Transformation** is how the congregation as a whole, not just Green Sanctuary, is invested in and doing the work of mitigation, adaptation, building resilience, and collaboration.

We have a pretty good idea of how much of this work we have done so far. Our goal for May is to figure out the opportunities for future work. For that, we will be asking members of the congregation for their ideas and advice for the future they dream of.

### April Lunch then Learn

In April, Green Sanctuary took folks on a tree walk of the church's 8 acre campus. We are a little island of (mostly) native plants and animals in a sea of suburban lawns.

Our second Lunch then Learn was how to use funds from the Inflation Reduction Act to make your home more energy efficient.

### May All Ages: How to Clean A River

Learn about the Interdependence between common agricultural practices the state allows

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*(Green Sanctuary continued from page 10)*

and how clean our streams, rivers, and lakes are. Play a game to find out what steps we can take – as a state – to make a river clean again.

### **May Better Together Challenge – Interdependent Systems**

Each month we have actions that members of the congregation can take to address mitigation, adaptation, resilience, and justice. Our focus for the spring months is Resilience. For May, look for ways to learn about and preserve diverse natural, social, and economic systems. Here are some ideas....

1. Natural: Explore a Johnson County Conservation Volunteer activity – be a host at Kent Park’s Conservation Education Center (summer), clean up the Iowa River (fall), harvest prairie seeds (fall)  
<https://www.johnsoncountyiowa.gov/conservation/volunteer-information>
2. Social: Learn about the different cultures in your community – Coralville Asian Fest, May 18, noon to 7 pm at ST Morrison Park  
<https://thinkiowacity.com/events/month/2024-05/>
3. Economic: Shop local produce at Iowa Farmer’s Market Saturdays May 4- Oct 26, 7:30 – Noon, 400 Washington Street (Chauncey Garage)  
<https://www.icgov.org/government/departments-and-divisions/parks-and-recreation/farmers-market> or Coralville Farmer’s Market Saturdays May 22 – Oct 2, 4:30 – 6:30 pm, Iowa River Landing (south of Staybridge Hotel)  
<https://iowariverlanding.com/coralville-farmers-market/>

**How to Help Green Sanctuary’s Work** (even if you don’t want to come to a meeting)

Join GS projects we are working on. You can help even if you can’t make our regular meetings. Projects include:

- Ways to engage the congregation
- Exploring battery backup for emergencies
- Helping the Center for Worker Justice with a resilience project
- Helping the Creekside Neighborhood with an environmental threat
- Developing a water quality focus
- Exploring outreach to elected representatives.

To help, just email Jan Weaver at [jan.weaver57@gmail.com](mailto:jan.weaver57@gmail.com) with your interest, and she will connect you with the project leader. Our next meeting is **Wednesday, May 8 at 7 pm**. Join us on Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88132264216>. Meeting ID: 881 3226 4216. Passcode 533092.

## **PRISON MINISTRY**

The Prison Ministry Team “endeavors to become informed advocates for justice and build relationships to decrease isolation of those confined in the Iowa Justice System.” Here are some of our latest endeavors:

- In April plans continued for a June 11 screening and fundraiser at FilmScene as part of their Community Collaborations series. Beyond Walls is a program of five short documentaries about prison life, its effects on families of the incarcerated, and life after incarceration. Kim Palmer and new member Zach Palmer are working with FilmScene on this important part of our mission to educate the public.
- Kim and Zach also attended the screening of “The Inside Singers,” a new documentary about the Oakdale Choir, at the Cedar Rapids Independent Film Festival on April 6.

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- Ron Pile continued to correspond with an incarcerated individual at Newton Correctional Facility about establishing a prison ministry there.
- Phil Beck attended a Reentry Simulation at Coe College in Cedar Rapids on April 10. Simulations such as this one aim to educate the public on the numerous challenges faced by those returning to the outside world after incarceration. The event was organized by Coe College's Prison Justice Initiative.
- We now have a presence on the bulletin board in the church lobby thanks to Sally Hartman and Bonnie Penno, who created a space for Prison Ministry Team and posted information about the pen pal program and resources concerning prison justice issues. We will post bulletins about upcoming events in this space.
- The Prison Ministry Team continues to be active through the Pen Pal program. Members regularly correspond with incarcerated individuals either by "snail mail" or through the Iowa Department of Corrections' o-mail system, CorrLinks. We are always looking for volunteers to write to inmates. Incarcerated persons tell us over and over how important it is for them to hear from those of us outside. Just knowing that there are caring people who haven't forgotten them and are willing to spend time writing to them is a deeply meaningful, positive experience for them. And it is very rewarding for volunteers, too. We can set you up with contacts, instructions for using CorrLinks and postal mail, and a sample introductory letter to use or modify as you see fit. If you think you might be interested, please email [prisonministry@uusic.org](mailto:prisonministry@uusic.org) and one of us

will get back to you. You can also check out our page on this website at <https://www.uusic.org/connect/#justice>

- The UUA has a prison ministry through the Church of the Larger Fellowship, the Worthy Now Prison Ministry Network. They're also looking for people to become pen pals to incarcerated individuals nationwide. For more information, go to [worthynow.org](http://worthynow.org).
- The UUS Prison Ministry Team meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm in the UUS Conference Room. You are welcome to join us at our next meeting on May 7, 2024, either in person or via Zoom (Meeting ID: 848 0842 4430; Passcode: 193553).

Post Content URL:

<https://www.uusic.org/connect/#justice>  
(under Social Justice Groups & Community Service Teams)

## UU Mystics

UUMystics gather monthly on the **first Wednesday of each month at 7 pm** in the conference room, and on Zoom, to continue our deep sharing and exploration of "Spiritual Awakening" and related topics. We are a community of spiritual seekers under the UUA & UUS umbrella, and we welcome your energy, presence and sharing. Our UUMystics community is self-directed with shared leadership.

If you wish to participate and cannot be present, please join us over Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82687700792?pwd=ZEJ1akZJbW1tUWwzOHNEVHNIUFE1QT09>  
Meeting ID: 826 8770 0792 Passcode: 218927

Our Mystics community has currently chosen to engage together in the exploration and

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*(UU Mystics continued from page 12)*

experiences relating to the umbrella topic of:

**What happens when we die?** On

Wednesday, May 3 we will investigate “visitations” from those who have transitioned from their bodies. We can be thinking about our own experiences, those we’ve heard or read about, or questions to be explored together.

Reminders: If you have a favorite object that is sacred to you, please bring it for our altar (you take it back home) and a favorite, brief quote if

you have one you’d like to share during check-in.

Our gatherings are also open to anyone from the public who is referred by a group member and agrees to comply with our mutual covenant. Please contact [miriam.kashia@gmail.com](mailto:miriam.kashia@gmail.com) if you have any questions or wish to be added or removed from our mailing list. Please put “UUMystics” in the subject line.

We welcome your presence and input as we co-create this Spiritual Awakening adventure together.

# Endowment Committee Quarterly Report

1<sup>st</sup> Qtr Fiscal Year 2024

The Endowment Committee (EC) annually reports the status of all endowment funds. The EC is now reporting the accounts to the board and the congregation on a quarterly basis. This change is in response to the Board of Trustee's request to keep all of us updated on a more frequent basis. The accompanying table is meant to show much of what you may be interested in, and if it brings up more questions, please contact any member of the Endowment Committee.

	12/31/2023	03/31/2024
<b>General Endowment Total Value</b>	\$1,067,813	\$1,094,878
Corpus <sup>1</sup>	\$799,986	\$838,462
Donations this quarter	\$7850	\$0
UUA Contribution	\$370	\$370
Non-Corpus Total <sup>2</sup>	\$276,047	\$256,786
<b>Expenditures from General Endowment<sup>3</sup></b>	\$24,945	\$13,350
Annual Spending Allowance (ASA) <sup>4</sup>	\$12,945	\$13,350
<b>Other Endowment Funds Value<sup>5</sup></b>	\$156,390	\$162,117
<b>Other Endowment Funds Expenditures</b>		
Jean Reese Fund <sup>6</sup>	\$9,211	\$0
Music Fund <sup>7</sup>	\$0	\$0
Detiger Fund <sup>8</sup>	\$0	\$0
Bristol Fund <sup>9</sup>	\$0	\$0

1. Can be accessed by vote of the congregation under very special circumstances
2. Can be accessed by vote of the congregation
3. Total amounts will vary by quarter depending when business days appear in the month, i.e., sometimes two bills will appear in the same month, 1st and 30th
4. Amount/quarter added to the annual budget
5. Total amount of designated (restricted) funds
6. For landscaping/property management
7. For UUS/community music-related programming
8. For community programming
9. No criteria

# UUS Board Meeting Minutes Highlights

6:30 pm, Apr. 17, 2024

**Present:** Jeff Walberg (President), Rochelle Honey-Arcement (Vice President), Christine Etlar (Secretary), Mike Pavelich (Treasurer), Monique DiCarlo (Trustee), Diana Henry (Trustee), Ian Cawley (Trustee), Rev. Diana Smith (Ex-officio). **Absent:** none. Quorum met. **Guests:** Victoria Huitt and Nic Kaplan

**Meeting Opened** at 6:37 with check-in. Chalice and Opening Words by Etlar.

## Consent agenda:

<b>Reports</b> <b>P1</b> Board Meeting Minutes – Feb. 28 <b>P2</b> Board Meeting Minutes – Mar. 20 <b>P3</b> Minister's Report – Feb <b>P4</b> Treasurer's Report – Feb <b>P5</b> Governance Committee Minutes - Apr. 2 <b>P6</b> Guidance on Closed Sessions <b>P7</b> Mission & Vision Review Minutes - Apr. 10 <b>P8</b> Endowment Report Q1 2024 <b>P9</b> Personnel Committee Minutes - Apr. 15	<b>Annual Reports</b> <b>P10</b> Annual Report FY 23 - President <b>P11</b> Annual Report FY 23 - Treasurer <b>P12</b> Annual Report FY 23 - Endowment  <b>Decisions</b> <b>P13</b> Policy updates: 1.3 <b>P14</b> Reese Fund Request for Playscape
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Item P13 (Policy updates) was removed from the consent agenda for further discussion. The chair reviewed the rest of the consent agenda items and hearing no objections, announced the consent agenda has been adopted.

## Membership Coordinator Presentation – Victoria Huitt

Victoria Huitt spoke about her work as Membership Coordinator and the work of the Membership team. The Board will consider support requests. Otherwise, no further action

## Closed Session - Discuss Personnel Issues

Motion: Pavelich moved to go into closed session (with Nic Kaplan as guest) to discuss personnel matters; seconded by DiCarlo. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Motion: DiCarlo moved to come out of Closed Session; Henry seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

## Consider JCIC staff Memorandum of Understanding P15

Johnson County Interfaith Coalition has accepted our offer to administratively house their new staff person. MOU was discussed. Some clarification is needed. Pastor Fred from JCIC will be consulted. The final document will be distributed and voted on over email. Otherwise, the Board is supportive.

## Policy Update 1.3 (P13)

Wording changes to this policy were discussed in consideration of the guidance found in items P5 and P6. The Policy will be edited and reviewed at an upcoming meeting.

## Brief Updates

- Congregational Admin Search  
Rev Diana consulted with the Board before completing the process of hiring a senior staff person. She provided an update on the hiring process for the CAS so far. The Hiring Committee expects the process to be completed and have someone in the position by mid-May.

## Consider Personnel Committee Recommendation(s) P16

Motion: Henry moved to accept the Personnel committee's recommended definition of a Full-time and Part-time employee<sup>1</sup>. Cawley seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Motion: Etlar moved to accept the Personnel committee's recommended employer contribution tiers for health insurance<sup>2</sup>; Henry seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.



**Motion:** Cawley moved to accept the Personnel committee's recommended employer contribution tiers for dental insurance<sup>3</sup>; DiCarlo seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Discussion: Due to feedback from staff and congregants, the Board plans to continue to discuss employer contribution tiers for both health insurance and dental insurance during preparation for the 2025 budget. These motions do not preclude the adoption of further changes.

Approved changes to policies will be forwarded to the Governance committee for review.

### **Plan Congregational Meeting P18**

- Approve agenda

**Motion:** Pavelich moved to approve the congregational meeting agenda (as written but with minor edits pending); Cawley seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

- Discuss roles, logistics, quorum, etc
- Prep for possible questions, motions

Planning was discussed. The President, Secretary, LDC, and staff will continue to prepare for the meeting.

### **Closed Session - Discuss Rev. Sam Wilson Assessment P19**

Closed session was not held. A short discussion was held in open session on when and how we should have a deeper discussion on the contents of the assessment. Rev. Diana recommends that we should consult with Rev. Sam again following our discussion.

**The following agenda items were deferred:** *Open Questions Analysis & Discuss Pastoral Care Survey*

### **Closing**

Guest Comments by Nic Kaplan. Process Observer Comments by DiCarlo. Closing words provided by Etler. With the agenda completed and no new business from the floor, the chair adjourned the meeting at 9:23pm.

*Meeting highlights by Christine Etler, Board Secretary*

*Email the Secretary at [piontkofsky@gmail.com](mailto:piontkofsky@gmail.com) with requests for documents reviewed at the meeting. Full minutes will be available after the May Board meeting.*

#### <sup>1</sup>Definition of a full-time and part-time employee

An employee who regularly works the congregational year or 12 months of continuous service at an average of 30 hours or more per week is considered a full-time (FT) employee.

An employee who regularly works for the congregational year or 12 months of continuous service for fewer than an average of 30 hours per week is considered a part-time (PT) employee. Part-time employees scheduled to work at least 15 hours per week are eligible for benefits according to the benefit plan descriptions in the Personnel Manual.

#### <sup>2</sup>Employer contribution tiers for health insurance

40-30 hrs/wk = 80% employer contribution, 50% employer contribution for family toward bronze plan  
20-29 hrs/wk = 50% employer contribution, 40% employer contribution for family toward bronze plan  
14.4 – 19 hrs/wk = Eligible but must pay full cost

#### <sup>3</sup>Employer contribution tiers for dental insurance

Align coverage tier with health plan recommendation.

40-30 hrs/wk = 80% employer contribution to plan, 50% employer contribution for family  
20-29 hrs/wk = 50% employer contribution to plan, 40% employer contribution for family  
14.4-19 hr/wk = Eligible but must pay full cost

