



2023/24 Edition

# ANNUAL REPORT

319-337-3443

2355 Oakdale Rd,  
Coralville, IA 52241

[www.UUSIC.org](http://www.UUSIC.org)



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## Leadership Reports

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# FROM YOUR MINISTER

Rev. Diana Smith

Dear Ones,

In many ways, this has been a year of both rediscovering and creating who we are as a congregation. As perhaps our first post-pandemic year, this has been a crucial opportunity for our congregation to learn about and create who we are in this place and time.

That last bit – in this place and time – has had particular meaning for this congregation, which was just beginning to figure out who we are called to be in this location, with our new policy-based/shared ministry governance structure, and with our new patterns of congregational life when the pandemic disrupted that exploration. What's more, the past few years have seen significant and disturbing societal and political shifts that have resulted in increasing attacks on the inherent worthiness and dignity of many members of our congregation and wider community.

Thus, in summer 2023, the Board and staff looked at what's happening in the larger community and world, our congregation's needs, and how we might use our congregation's unique gifts and resources to support our members and the wider community in our work of centering and living Love. Our vision of ministry for 2023-24 was designed to guide us in our shared ministry of transformation and liberation, in our work of living Love. Our themes have been:

- A Year of Welcoming, Hospitality, and Homecoming - sharing respon-

sibility for welcoming and engaging visitors, making creative use of our building, encouraging members to develop programming, and making programming easily accessible to people with various needs.

- Nourishing Our Resilience as a Community - within our building, as a congregation, and for the wider community, this includes things like creating joyful resistance to the growing extremism in Iowa, cultivating local culture, building bonds within this congregation and with other groups that are allies, engaging in creative conflict resolution, deepening and respecting diverse spiritual practices, and adapting to climate change.
- Practicing Personal Care and Compassion for Others - recognizing the effects of the pandemic and political realities, cultivating sustainable practices (doing things in ways that don't exhaust us or wear us down), practicing patience and setting realistic expectations, and resisting perfectionism.

I hope you'll notice how this vision of ministry has guided us in our work this year as you explore this report. Even while we have experienced so much change and encountered so many oppressive forces this year, we have so much to celebrate. We have leadership committed to health and relational process. We have vibrant and creative worship services and programming. We haven't been afraid to try new and



# Leadership Reports



(Above) Rev. Diana preaching on the first day of the 2024 Stewardship Campaign on September 24th, 2023

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innovative things, risk failing, and then try something new. We are deeply committed to supporting and nourishing the Earth and our diverse human communities, demonstrating our continued willingness to change our programming and facilities to lean into those commitments. And we have so many lay leaders and an evolving staff team who are committed to serving this congregation with generosity and compassion. I am grateful to be on this journey with you.

Here is a brief synopsis of my activities for the past year:

- Worship Services: 37
- Vespers Services: 7
- Memorial Services: 6
- Weddings: 2

Meetings as a space of ministry – meetings and groups attended:

- Board of Trustees x15
- Executive Committee x3
- Staff (group) x36
- Staff (1:1) x140
- Shared Ministry Team x12
- Pastoral Care Team x12
- Pastoral Care appointments x105
- Worship Associates x6
- Worship Planning x15
- Lectio Divina with Poetry x13
- Owning Your Religious Past x5

- Deep Dives with the Minister and Starting Point x4
- Lunch then Learn workshop x1
- Community Office Hours x16
- Oaknoll residents x6
- Learning Space x8
- Social Justice Team x4
- Green Sanctuary Team x2
- Prison Ministry Team x2
- Secular Humanists x2
- Congregational Preparedness Team x4
- Personnel Committee x7
- Mission and Vision Committee x3
- Leadership Development Committee x2
- Stewardship Team x7
- Finance Committee x5
- Budget Planning x8
- Finance Structure/Bookkeeper x8
- Long-Term Stewardship planning x4
- Fun & Fundraising x3
- Rentals x4
- Buildings and Grounds Coordination x5
- Right Relations Team x4
- Ad Hoc Committee x8
- Conflict Engagement Consultant x4
- Congregational Meeting x2
- Johnson County Interfaith Coalition (President) x19
- Johnson County Women Clergy x3
- Clergy Abortion Access Network x4
- Testimony for City Councils and



(Above) Left) Rev. Diana at Iowa City Pride in June 19th, 2023



# Leadership Reports

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- Legislature x3
- Interfaith Vigils x3
- Meetings with Area Clergy x14
- Meetings with Area Organizations x11
- Prairie Star Chapter of the UUMA (Treasurer) x2
- Iowa Cluster of the UUMA x6
- MidAmerica Region Program Size Clergy x4
- UUA Regional Staff x13
- Combatting Fascism and Right-Wing Threats training series x8
- Neurodivergence in Congregations Webinars x5
- Mentoring Training x6
- Slow Ministry and Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Coaching x11
- Peer Discernment Group x12
- Spiritual Direction x10

One-time events:

- Equipping for Action workshop series
- UUS and Interfaith Pride booths – North Liberty and Iowa City
- Emma’s Revolution concert
- JCIC Faith in Action event
- Interfaith Power and Light Faith Leaders gathering
- Installation for Rev. Carin Bringle-son at People’s Church UU
- Board July planning retreat – July and February
- Staff retreat – August and October
- Farewell for Alex Heetland as Music Director
- Farewell for Peggy Garrigues as Director of Congregational and Community Engagement
- Hiring Victoria Huitt as Membership Coordinator
- Hiring and farewell for Emily

Pritchard as Music Director

- Farewell for Emma Barnum as Congregational Administrator
- Hiring Patrick Satter as Facilities Coordinator
- Hiring and farewell Frederico Calderon as temporary Office Administrator
- Hiring process for new Congregational Administrator
- Hiring process for new Music Director
- UUMA Ministry Days and Annual Meeting
- Church of the Larger Fellowship Annual Meeting
- General Assembly
- Prairie Star UUMA Chapter Retreat

Submitted by Rev. Diana Smith, Minister

(Below) Rev. Diana preaches about Interdependence on Sunday, April 7th, 2023, Rev. Diana at Iowa City Pride June 2023







*(Above) UUS members greet each other during Sunday Service, September 2023*





## Leadership Reports

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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. Lessons learned about rentals and events helped

inform new post-pandemic ways of approaching community engagement and revenue generation. 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. 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



# Leadership Reports

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*(continued from page 6)*

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

From Your Board President

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 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.



# Leadership Reports

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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.

Jeff Walberg, President



From Your Board President



# BOARD COMMITTEES REPORTS

## Personnel Committee

Current Personnel Committee members include Monique DiCarlo (co-chair), Carmen Griggs (co-chair), Mary McMurray, Dana Van Abbema, and Jeff Walberg (board representative). Sharon Booker also served for the early part of this review period.

The committee has generally met quarterly, with additional meetings and email conversations as needed. In September the committee worked diligently to classify UUS staff positions and assess salaries in accordance with the new job level rubric and salary process guidance put out by UUA in November of 2022. The committee also consulted on adjustments to the personnel manual and to the benefits offered to staff, and worked to document the respective personnel committee responsibilities of the minister and co-chairs.

During the December meeting the committee agreed to sunset the COVID vaccination requirement, which means that staff and volunteers are no longer being asked to provide COVID booster updates. Also in December, Mary McMurray and Reverend Diana met (as is required annually) to ensure personnel files are current and complete.

In February the committee set a slate of priorities (and a timeline) for the coming year. Throughout the year committee members have assisted with the hiring process for several staff vacancies and have participated and consulted on a variety of personnel matters, including

those surrounding new initiatives (e.g., camps, learning space) and the staff reorganization and redistribution of duties following the departure of the Director of Congregational and Community Engagement.

Submitted by Dana Van Abbema

## Mission and Vision Committee

The current members are Diana Henry, Winnie Ganshaw, John Raley, and Ernie Cox.

Hazel Seaba and Kelly O'Berry previously served on the committee, and each made important contributions during their tenure. We are grateful for their dedication. Hazel Seaba resigned from the committee in the spring of 2023, and Kelly O'Berry's term ended in January 2024. Fortunately, during their service, we recruited John Raley and Ernie Cox. Each member of the committee was assigned a specific evaluation goal to work on, which included the following:

1. The Society's success in achieving the Annual Vision of Ministry (Ernie Cox)
2. An annual, mutual performance evaluation with the minister and the Board (Diana Henry)
3. The Society's effectiveness in carrying out its Mission and Vision (John Raley)
4. Triennial Evaluation of the Minister on their broader Pastoral role (Winnie Ganshaw)
5. The satisfaction of its members (Kelly O'Berry)

The initial members, Diana, Hazel, and Winnie, created evaluation tools. These



# Leadership Reports



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tools have provided valuable insights, highlighting areas of strength and areas for improvement. However, the tools also revealed a need for further understanding among some members regarding the inner workings of church organizational procedures and the role of congregations and ministries in shared ministry. This presents an opportunity for growth and learning.

After a meeting with Board President Jeff Walberg, it was decided that the UUS Mission and Vision Committee, which serves the Board, would no longer require a Board member to Chair (be a part of) it. The member's time could be better spent on other things related to the Board. This decision underscores the importance of the committee's work and its relevance to the Society. At various times, the committee would focus on specific topics of interest to the Board and report any progress. In addition, members of the Board would attend some of the committee's meetings. Jeff also felt item #2 could be conducted by the Board rather than the committee. We reviewed these goals again and decided that items one and four could be combined.

In February, Winnie conducted her assessment with a Roundtable Conversation after a Sunday service just before an online survey was sent via email to

all members. The survey revealed a need for increased awareness among some members about the pastoral care members' roles and what shared ministry means. With the guidance of Rev. Diana, the committee proactively implemented a pastoral care circle, offered twice monthly after the Sunday service. We will also administer the survey once a year to assess if there is an increase in members' understanding of the multiple ways in which pastoral care occurs with the minister, the pastoral care team, as well as among all congregants to participate in shared ministry.

Looking ahead, the UUS Mission and Vision Committee is filled with enthusiasm and a renewed sense of purpose. We have decided to streamline our focus to better serve the Board, concentrating our efforts on goals #3 and #5. This strategic shift ensures that the Society's effectiveness in carrying out its Mission and Vision and member satisfaction remain top priorities. The Board's decision in 2022 to connect budget planning to programs aligns perfectly with our new direction. John is particularly excited about this and is ready to guide/manage the endeavor. This plan demonstrates the committee's proactive approach and commitment to the Society's goals.

Diana did an initial assessment of charge #2 in July 2023. Before her term on the Board is complete in June,

she will do a final assessment in May and submit it to the Board for discussion during its June retreat.

Since both Winnie and Diana's terms are coming to a close soon, it's important for this committee to start recruiting another person to serve on it. It is desirable to have three members on the committee.

Finally, Jeff proposed that this committee consider taking the lead in revisiting the Society's Mission and Vision statement and potentially revising it in 2025. When the Society embarked on this process a few years ago, it was a truly invigorating and fellowship-filled experience. The committee looks forward to possibly shaping the Society's future direction.

Submitted by Diana Henry



# ELECTED COMMITTEES REPORTS

## Endowment Committee

The Endowment Committee: Bruce Alexander, Paul Pomrehn, Dan Cummins (joined 03/23), Dave Martin (joined 07/23), Jane DeWitt (joined 10/23), Jamie Sharp (completed term 06/23), Liz Swanson (ended term 10/23), Jerry Wetlaufer (Finance Trustee replaced by Paul Pomrehn in a dual role).

The calendar year (CY) 2023 was a better year for investments in general and specifically for our UUS endowment funds. For all UUS funds, the rate of return (ROR) for the year was 11.64 percent. This compares to the CY 2022 ROR, which was minus 16.99 percent.

- At year end the General Endowment value was \$1,067,813, compared to \$1,037,301 in CY 2022. Donations to the General Endowment Fund in 2023 totaled \$11,659 compared to a total in CY 2022 of \$20,903 The corpus amount for CY 2024 is \$838,462.
- The Reese, Detiger, Music, and Bristol funds totaled \$156,390, compared to a total in CY 2022 of \$153,800.
- Overall, for CY 2023 the endowment funds totaled \$1,224,203, compared to a CY 2022 total of \$1,191,101.

The endowment funds made significant contributions to the congregation during 2023:

- The General Endowment fund provided \$95,700 to the UUS operating

budget. This consisted of the annual spending allocation (ASA) of 5% which contributed \$51,700 to the annual budget. In addition, the 2nd year of the supplemental funding was directed to the annual budget as approved by the December 2021 congregational vote contributed \$44,000. This funding ended in December 2023.

- The Reese fund provided \$14,505 for the one-time repair of the Bio-Cells and the Detiger fund provided \$500 for Rev. Smith to support community programming.

The EC continues to monitor our investments, including the percentage invested in Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) funds. During the annual meeting with our wealth management advisors (i.e., United Iowa Financial of Iowa City) the committee voted unanimously to advance from our previous target of 80% highly rated ESG funds to 100%.

Due to on-line storage issues, UUS moved their files from a Dropbox site to a Google drive. All EC documents have been moved to this shared Google drive.

Historical reviews of the Music, Detiger and Bristol funds were undertaken. Reports are on file in the Endowment Committee Google drive. Corpus amounts were established for the Jean

Reese Fund and the Bristol Fund, which are \$57,748 and \$1,061, respectively.

A scheduled fall Sunday Endowment engagement with the congregation was postponed due a scheduling conflict with a staff member departure.

Submitted by Bruce Alexander



## Leadership Development Committee

The Leadership Development Committee (LDC) is made up of five members who are elected by the congregation. This year's members are Phil Beck, Peg Bouska, Dave Gallaher, Jodi Linley, and Ron Pile. We meet about 12-14 times per year, including a retreat. We worked with the Director of Congregational Life, the Minister, and the Board throughout the year. (Dave & Ron will be ending their terms on June 30.)

The goal of the LDC is to assist the congregation in fulfilling our mission and vision. Our main responsibility is to identify qualified candidates for elected leadership positions in our congregation. We locate and nominate candidates for the 2024 openings on our elective committees: Board of Trustees; Leadership Development Committee (LDC); and Endowment Committee (EC). The nominees are voted on at the May congregational meeting. This past year we had several early resignations from our elected committees. These openings were filled by board appointment with help from LDC recommendations. The LDC encourages members and friends to let us know your leadership development needs, including your interest in attending General Assembly. We also invite you to let our committee know if you are interested in being a nominee for a position, or if you wish to nominate a member for a position. Membership and previous team/group/committee work are requirements for elected positions. From Phil, Peg,

Dave, Jodi & Ron: Thank you for your leadership contributions—whether you are on a hospitality team or president of the Board or serving UUS in any capacity. Your contributions build our UU community.

Submitted by Dave Gallaher, LDC chair



(Right) 1. Nic leads an Earth Day activity about Interdependence on Sunday, April 21st.

2. (Below) UUS Members participate in a Burning Bowl ceremony on January 7th symbolizing letting go and new beginnings.





# TREASURER'S REPORT

Mike Pavelich

The first quarter of 2024 has been financially gentle. Our bank account's total has remained at about \$390,000. This is due to Pledge giving being steady and keeping ahead of monthly need, as well as efficient spending by ministries. In this period, RE has run a successful Spring Break Camp and rentals have occurred. The Finance Committee has moved \$200,000 of our bank funds into a 5% CD which will earn us \$10,000 per year.

Recall that our 2024 Operating Budget (OB) of \$548,000 is about \$60,000 lower than the \$610,000 budgets we decided to support from 2020 through 2023. This year, having stabilized from the pandemic, we took a big first step to corralling the systemic OB deficit problem that the pandemic revealed. In my verbal report at the May Congregational Meeting I will present an overview of our reasoning for deficit spending and its numeric results over these past years. In brief, in 2021 we spent \$125,000 more than we took in in regular annual income. In 2024, I expect this difference to be less than \$20,000. We are making good progress.

In the past months we have begun developing an overall financial plan for the years to come. The Board, Finance Committee and others have been discussing, researching and will be planning a long-term viable path. This is exciting stuff. We started with a workshop in January (run by a UUA expert) that had us look at our long-term stewardship, focusing particularly on sustaining a healthy endowment. From there, talking points, timelines and ideas have been put on the table. We welcome

participation in various aspects of this effort. Any UUS member who might like to be a part of this work is asked to communicate that to the President or Treasurer in the next few weeks.

My four year, extended, tenure as UUS Treasurer ends in late June. I want to thank all members, but especially Board and Finance committee colleagues, for their support over that time. It has been a pleasure to serve in that office. If you have questions after the Congregational meeting, please contact Mike Pavelich at [treasurer@uusic.org](mailto:treasurer@uusic.org) or phone #319-338-5168.

Submitted by Mike Pavelich





## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Stewardship Team Current members: Liz Swanson and Diana Miller (Co-chairs), Pete Brokaw, Barb Haring, and Michael Schmitz.

We were grateful to be blessed with Diana Miller's dedication for more than five years, and she has retired from the committee to be involved in other UUS endeavors. We are fortunate Lucy Gamon has agreed to join the Stewardship Committee.



UUS exceeded the 2024 Stewardship goal of \$400,000. To date, 174 pledge units have pledged \$405,516.40, which includes the match of \$21,676.00 from our match donors. We extend a gracious thank you to everyone who pledged, and to our members of the congregation who provided matching funds to assist in the campaign.

During our campaign, three members shared moving testimonials about what UUS has meant to them and our co-chairs shared dinner and conversation about Stewardship at an Oaknoll gathering. Another strategy used for this campaign was listening visits where 15 visitors (congregant members) met with 59 households. This additional strategy and others will be evaluated by the Stewardship Committee in the months to come.

As we go forward, we face a crossroad of change and commitment. Each of us is called on to share our skills, passions and resources as we support our UUS community to bring LOVE ever more fully into the world.

Submitted by Liz Swanson and Diana Miller. Reviewed by Pete Brokaw, Lucy Gamon, and Barb Haring.



(Above) Congregants gather in the Fellowship Hall after Sunday Service to enjoy cake and celebrate the 2024 Stewardship campaign. Two cakes celebrating the start of the 2024 Stewardship campaign in September 2024.



# WORSHIP AND PASTORAL CARE REPORTS

## WORSHIP ASSOCIATES

Worship Associates regularly present components of the worship services when Rev. Diana preaches. The WAs who helped present services between April 2023 and March 2024 were Kara Beauchamp, Val and John Bowman, Fanny Carver, Marsha Cheney, Quanda Hood, Emily Johnson, Margaret Kinsman, Jim Laughlin, Brenda Linley, Grey Linley, and Jenna Supp-Montgomerie. WAs also facilitated approximately one service a month when Rev. Diana was not in the pulpit, with significant support from Rev. Diana.

During July and August, WAs helped facilitate services presented by UUS members Kezia Walker-Cecil, Fanny Carver, and David Jepsen around the theme of Delight. Kara Beau-

champ served as the co-facilitator of the Worship Associates with Rev. Diana and together they organized Saturday morning retreats for the WAs, which took place in April, May, August, October, January, and March.

Submitted by Kara Beauchamp

*(Below) 1. Mary Kathryn Wallace during "Appreciation of Old Age" Sunday Service, 2. Marsha Cheney ringing the singing bowl during "Earth Day" Sunday Service, 3. Quanda Hood serves as Worship Associate on Sunday, April 14th, 2024.*





# Leadership Reports

## PASTORAL CARE TEAM

Current Pastoral Care Team Members: Rev. Diana Smith, Virginia Melroy, Fanny Carver, Paul Pomrehn, and Liz Swanson

The mission of the Pastoral Care Team is to practice compassion in human relations by providing a ministry of support, hope, and caring so that no one connected to our congregation needs to feel alone. In collaboration with our minister, Rev. Diana Smith, we further the vision of UUS to be a caring, inclusive community.

Our Team meetings are held monthly. Depending on circumstances, meetings are held either in person and on zoom or on zoom only. Rev. Diana continues to provide brief tutorials at our monthly team meetings in order to deepen our pastoral care skills.

Team membership has changed dramatically during the last year. Maureen Patterson and Carol Nordquist both resigned from the Team (Maureen in June and Carol in July). Val Bowman moved back to California, leaving us in Sept. After many, many years serving as our UniCare Team, Diane Martin and Mary McMurray decided it was time to move on from that role. Tom McMurray also resigned from the Team.

We welcomed Paul Pomrehn back to the Team in July, and Fanny Carver joined us in November. Virginia Melroy continues to serve as chair. Liz Swanson has taken on the task of writing up our meeting minutes.

A major initiative of our Team this year has been the creation of “Caring Commitments Cards,” which were distributed to the congregation beginning in August. UUS members were asked



(Above) Rev. Diana and UUS members participate in Water Communion on August 20th, 2023

to sign up to do “acts of kindness” in the following categories: send a card, provide a meal, give someone a ride, call someone, visit someone, and invite someone to coffee. The response has been inspiring, and our Team now has lists of people willing to provide these services. The lists will enable us to organize the services which the UniCare Team used to provide, as well as care for individuals in other ways.

Other activities during this past year:

- Team members provided pastoral care services for approximately 41 UUS members and friends.
- During December we distributed amaryllis bulbs to 12 individuals who had experienced deaths in their immediate family during the previous calendar year (2023).
- We were able to obtain printed copies of a local community resource guide (“Tell Me Where to Turn”) created by CommUnity. The guide

is also available online.

- Val and Virginia attended the Mental Health First Aid Training held in June. The training was presented by NAMI and sponsored by Compeer Johnson County.
- In March, we began holding “Compassionate Connections” sessions after the Sunday service on the second and fourth Sundays. The sessions are intended to provide an opportunity to listen to and support those who wish to share their concerns in a more intimate setting. One or two Team members are present at each session which are designed to last approximately 45 minutes.

—Submitted by Virginia Melroy





# FROM YOUR LIFESPAN DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Nic Kaplan

What a year! The amount of growth that we have seen over the course of 2023 through now has been staggering. Thank you so much for your energy and support along the way.

## Summer RE - 2023

Children, youth, and families love our outdoor spaces, so as we approached the summer of 2023, I knew I wanted to create as many opportunities to utilize our outside spaces as possible. In discussion with the congregation and the 2022-23 RE Team, it was also apparent that not enough people could state the UUS Mission Statement. To meet these two needs, I developed an outdoor RE curriculum for the summer that would reduce the volunteer and staff time needed to run RE over the summer and would give children and teachers the opportunity to really

explore our UUS Mission and our beautiful property.

Visitors and members alike enjoyed time acting on our values for the earth, justice, connection, and the ongoing quest for meaning.

## Sunday RE Classes

After our backpack blessing in August, we reopened our classroom spaces with Soul Matters curricula, separated into two groups by age, since that worked so well for us last year. As the fall semester progressed, I was regularly receiving feedback from teachers that the curricula were not meeting our needs the same way they did last year. When December arrived and our adjustments weren't improving things, I decided it was time for a change.

In January, we began the year in our two classrooms without the age divide. One classroom began utilizing a curriculum that a colleague wrote to teach Unitarian Universalist values through the lens of the popular children's show, Bluey. Our Bluey room has been a hit and regularly has between 5 and 10 children from age 3 through 11 in it. Teachers have observed inspiring levels of cooperation, kindness, and consent culture as older children pause to support the younger students.

Our second classroom space is home to another curriculum from a colleague that I have slightly adapted to fit our space better. These lessons focus on learning UU values with LEGO. While Bluey has been the more popular of the two rooms, we regularly see the same wide age range in the LEGO room as well.



# Religious Education and Programming

(continued from page 17)

## Youth Group

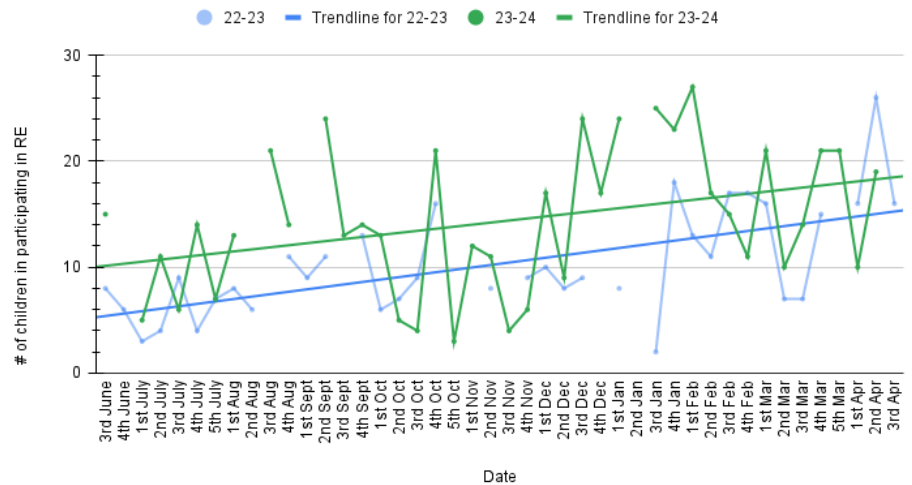
For the first part of the church year, our combined junior and senior high youth group continued to work on deepening connections to each other, the youth advisors, and our congregation. We've explored the Article II values and our individual core values, played games, crafted while chatting, and eaten count-less taquitos.

In January, a group of seven youth from 8th through 10th grade began a special Coming of Age program where they have been exploring, developing, and articulating their personal values and faith identity. This Coming of Age program, called Becoming, is a curriculum from Soul Matters and has included everything from deep conversations about the spectrum of beliefs alive in our community to adventures like roller skating and an escape room.

## Our Whole Lives

After a successful 7th-9th grade OWL class last year and the 4th-6th grade class at Willowwind last April, I received regular inquiries from congregants and

Attendance of children and youth 22-23 compared to 23-24



(Above) Children and youth attendance during 2023/24 congregational year

the community wondering when we would be offering OWL classes and which levels we would be offering.

In the Fall, we ran a 4th-6th grade OWL class and an expanded Kindergarten through 3rd grade class simultaneously. While the majority of the younger cohort were members and friends of UUS already, the majority of the upper elementary crew were previously unfamiliar with UUS and what we offer.

I continue to receive inquiries about what levels of OWL we will offer next. If you are interested in facilitating any level of OWL class, please let me know because there is a deep desire for more comprehensive sexuality education in our community.

## Summer Camp - a Look Back and Ahead

In 2023, the primary goal of both Nature Camp and Theater camp was to carve out a space for UUS in the community, become better known, and break even, while setting UUS up as a camp provider for future years. While we were only intending to break even, our four camps (over five weeks) brought in 95 children (many repeats from camp to camp) from 75 families and about \$10,000 after expenses. Many of the children signed up for additional camps after their first week of camp at UUS and, as of February, have already registered for camps for spring and summer of 2024. We have seen new families in our comprehensive sexuality education classes and at our Sunday services who were first introduced to UUS through the 2023 summer camps.



# Religious Education and Programming

*(continued from page 18)*

Despite the heat and the issues with air quality due to the fires in Canada, our three weeks of Nature camp in 2023 spent the majority of their time outside. Children climbed our pine trees, picked and ate mulberries and black raspberries, identified animal tracks, sketched birds in their nature journals, caught countless pill bugs, and so much more.

For summer of 2024, we have gone from 5 weeks of 4 different camps to 9 weeks of 7 different camps. As of April 12th, we currently have 230 camper slots filled from 80 children across 58 families. As of February 22nd, we had already surpassed our breakeven point and have filled 50 camper slots since then. In 2023, we continued to receive new registrations well into June as our campers wanted to sign up for more camps and told friends and family who subsequently signed up for later weeks.

## Spring Break Camp

Prior to Spring Break Camp beginning, we hosted a First Aid and CPR training with asthma and anaphylaxis certifications added. Eight camp staff and congregants took this training to ensure the safety of our campers and congregation.

Our Spring Break Nature Camp was set up a little differently than our summer nature camps so that families could either register for the whole week or just the day(s) they wanted. We had 18 children participate in our spring break camp over the course of the week. On more than one occasion, campers signed up for additional days soon after they left on their first day.

Campers explored how different wood reacted to files and chisels, saved a hun-

dred worm from the parking lot and sidewalk on a rainy day, painted with mud, built a tree fort, played countless games, and deepened relationships with each other and the land.

## Adult Religious Exploration

Religious Exploration for adults can look like a myriad of things in Unitarian Universalist spaces. Sometimes faith development and exploration can include group classes, private study, dedicating time and energy to service, quiet contemplation, and more. We do our best to offer a variety of these opportunities to the congregation and the community. Through UUS RE and our amazing staff, volunteers, and groups, we have offered the following as a few of the opportunities offered for adult religious exploration this year:

- Expansion of the UUS Library materials
- Youth Mental Health First Aid Training
- Trans Inclusion in Congregations
- Starting Point - New Member Class
- Owning Your Religious Past
- Mistakes and Miracles book discussion
- Lunch then Learn series
- Covenant Groups
- Mind and Spirit Groups

If you are interested in helping to develop a more expansive series of adult religious exploration experiences, please reach out to me. I am in need of a team of people who are dedicated to lifespan religious education for our 2024-25 year.

From Your Lifespan Director of Religious Education



*3rd Sunday collection for Free Little Pantry*



*Spring Break Nature Camp chalk drawing "Worm Weather."*





*Rolling skating adventure with UUS Youth during Coming of Age*



*Nature Camp kids check out a trail guide*



*Children's choir rehearses after Sunday Service*



# Religious Education and Programming

(continued from page 19)

## Soul Work Table

Our table (and briefly cart) of supplies for during services has changed repeatedly over the past year and a half and in January, it finally got a much needed upgrade. Everyone, no matter their age or ability, is invited to use our “Soul Work” resources in support of a calm body and a focused mind during worship. Scientists have learned that busying oneself with knitting, coloring, or other similar, repetitive activities can make our minds more open and receptive.

Items available at the Soul Work table include coloring pages and notepads for writing or doodling, a variety of fidgets to keep hands busy and minds calm, plastic needles with yarn, wobble cushions, headphones, and bins to make a collection of whatever supplies you might want during service.



(Left to Right) Chili Cookoff judges taste a variety of chilis in October; Family participates in “diapering a baby” during K-3 OWL; The winning trunk during the UUS Trunk or Treat event in October; First Aid and CPR training in March 2024; Lego table in UUS Fellowship Hall was a favorite with UUS youth.



# Religious Education and Programming

(continued from page 21)

## All Ages RE on 3rd Sundays

Beginning with our In-Gathering service, Water Communion, and our backpack blessing in August, we continued our consistent All Ages Services and activities to encourage community and build connections between UUS children and youth and adult members in our congregation. The Green Sanctuary Team accepted my invitation to all UUS groups to lead all ages activities and regularly provided a variety of activities for All Ages Sunday RE.

After services, all ages activities ranged from forums and spiritual practices to crafts, games, and special rituals.

Submitted by Nic Kaplan, DLRE



*UUS Youth serving a meal during April 2024 Lunch then Learn*



*Families participate in All Ages RE activity after Sunday Service in March 2024*



*New Soul Works Table for congregants to partake in during Sunday Services*





## FROM YOUR MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

Victoria Huitt

Victoria Huitt started as Membership Coordinator after Peggy Garrigues departed in June 2023. Victoria's role is more specifically focused on Membership and Hospitality/Welcoming in a part-time position.

### Membership Associates and Visitor Engagement

Current Membership Associates are: Larry Audlehelm, Bev Haas, Hilary Higgins, Paula Miller, Jim Olson, and Dave Tokuhsa. They are greeters at the Welcome table and/or Congregational Connectors. Thank you for your smiles and welcoming presence to members and visitors.

### Visitors

UUS has had 187 recorded first-time visitors to our Sunday services between April 1, 2023, and March 31, 2024. In the previous twelve months, we had 150

recorded first-time visitors to Sunday services. Unfortunately, we do not have a way to contact visitors who watch the service via YouTube unless they fill out an online visitor form with their contact information.

### Membership

We offered 1 round of multi-platform **Starting Point Classes** in the fall to help newer folks learn more about Unitarian Universalism and UUS, and move towards membership for those who were interested. Since the start of





# Congregational and Community Engagement

*(continued from page 23)*

2024 we have transitioned to a new format called **Pathways to Membership** developed by Nic Kaplan and Victoria Huitt. This offers a "passport" system of options for interested individuals to choose from in the membership process to engage more fully with the congregation in what most interests them. The options offered are a reflection of the depth and breadth of what UUS has to offer congregants, as well as teaching about the UU history, mission and values, the eight principles, and covenantal relationships.

The beauty of this Pathway to Membership process is it allows a prospective member the ability to tailor the membership process to one's own timeline and desire for learning specifics in getting to know congregants and activities. Monthly orientations to the Pathways to Membership process are offered by Victoria. A new facet to this process is asking congregants to be "Congregational Connectors" to a potential member. The requirements of being a Congregational Connector are simply to meet two times in person, online or via phone to provide mentorship and information as an individual is getting to know us. So far, the feedback has been good.

## New Members and Member Numbers

Fourteen individuals have joined the UU Society since our last annual report. All of them attended the membership



ceremony in person.

- 10/22/2024 New members are Brian and Megan Dial-Lapcewich, Natalie and V Fixmer-Oraiz, Lucy Gamon, Victoria Huitt, Emily Pritchard and John Ruppel.
- 3/3/2024 New members are Art Borreca, Suzan Erem, Deborah Gallagher, Andrew Levitt, Karin Ulery and Kylie Wetherell.

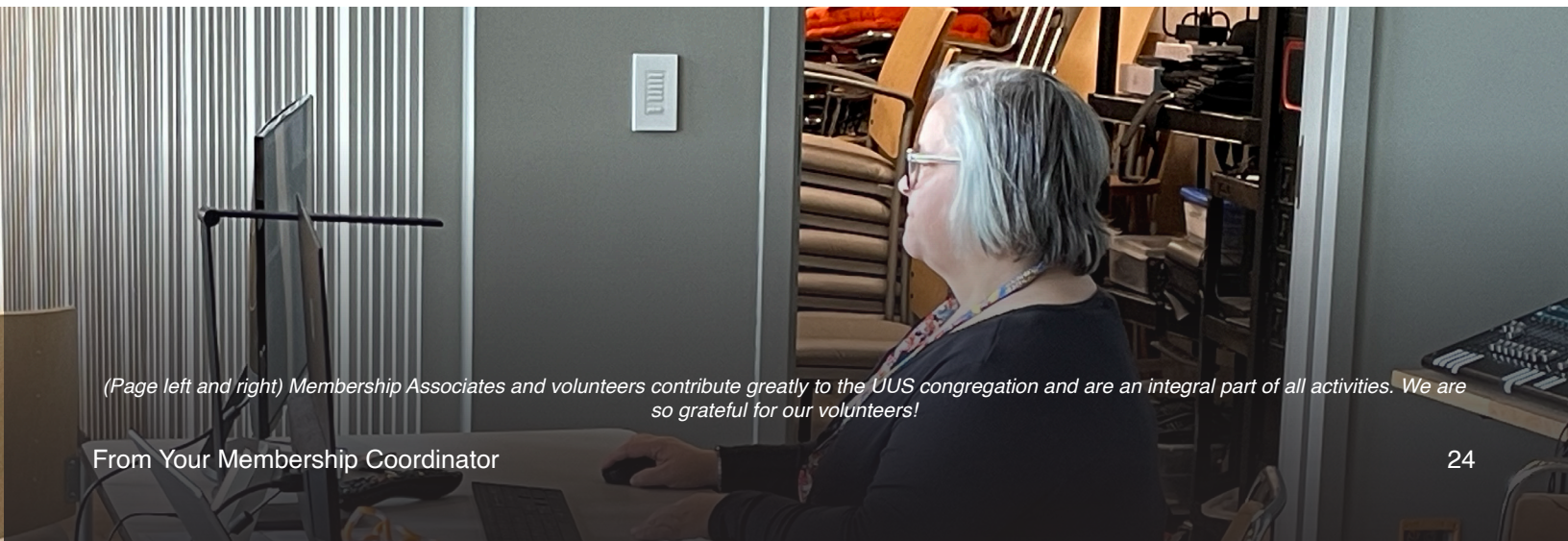
The next new member ceremony will be held on June 16th. There are currently 48 people listed in our Pathways to Membership who have expressed interest in membership.

We currently have 307 active members. Over the last year seven members have been deactivated due to death, moving or request.

## Hospitality

Currently we have eight hospitality teams who provide ushering, collections and social hour after services. Pat Pavelich is the coordinator of all the teams led by: Linda Rice, Kim Palmer, Sue Otto, Nancy Noyer, Pat Pavelich, Jim Olson, Dave Gallaher, and Carol Throckmorton. Each team has 8-12 people. Thank you to all of our hospitality volunteers for providing a welcoming presence as our Sunday members and visitors come into the service and social hour post service. We are fortunate to have your dedication and service!

Submitted by Victoria Huitt



*(Page left and right) Membership Associates and volunteers contribute greatly to the UUS congregation and are an integral part of all activities. We are so grateful for our volunteers!*

From Your Membership Coordinator



# FROM YOUR COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Kaytee Rairdin

I am quickly arriving at my first anniversary with UUS, and it is safe to say that we have experienced many changes during this congregational year! At this time last year, my position was being created from the responsibilities of individuals who came before me. Today I am grateful to be here and building with you all. I spent a lot of time in the first few months getting to know the routines and expectations of UUS. These were vital months for me as I shaped my hopes for this position with the guidance of Emma, our former Congregational Administrator.

This is my first annual report with UUS, both writing for it and designing it! I've had a year of firsts with UUS including my first UU Sunday Service. I've also been a part of many big changes from which I have learned so much.

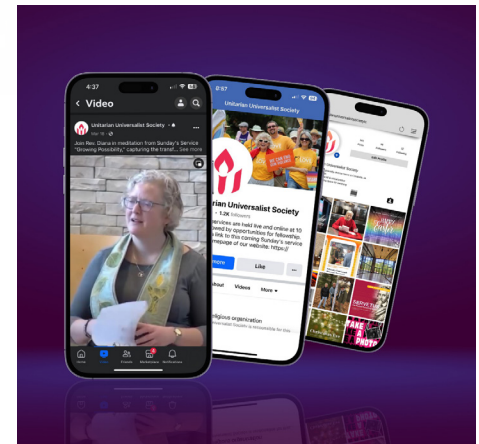
One of the big changes we made this year was to the Monthly Newsletter. We aimed to digitize the workflow and give ownership back to the teams, groups, and staff contributing newsletter content. A large part of this work was revitalizing the UUS Blog and making it accessible to anyone interested in sharing updates, events, and other news. We scaled our printed newsletter back to alleviate the workload on staff and invested energy into creating an email newsletter template.



(Above) Graphics created in a portfolio style display social media and web content aesthetically

Speaking of the UUS Blog, we have seriously increased our publications! Go team! Investing time into the blog allows curious website visitors to learn more about our groups, important cultural events, and religious traditions. Thank you for taking these changes in stride, and offering your thoughts to help shape our newsletter and blog.

UUS social media has been a fun challenge. I've tried lots of different content to engage our wide UU audience like graphics, fun captions, creating a Linktree, and editing Sunday Service content into clips for Facebook and Instagram. Photos are what get the most engagement and that's why I am always asking for more photos! My hope for this upcoming congregational year is to build up social media with more videos of Sunday Services, photos of groups, and other special updates.



Another big change for me was stepping into administrative tasks for a short period and helping to find our next Congregational Administrator. My previous hiring experience was in a retail setting so serving on the hiring committee for the new administrator was a learning opportunity. I found a new appreciation for the process! Though no transition is without growing pains, I am glad to have had the experience and grow as a professional.

The first year of any job is about growth, finding your footing, and getting to know the unique makeup of the people you work with. I believe every day is an opportunity to learn something new so I am excited to see what this next year brings and what new things we will encounter!

Submitted by Kaytee Rairdin



# FROM YOUR STAFF PIANIST AND MUSIC OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Hsin-Hui Liu

The Music Outreach Program continues to create performances featuring music across different genres and settings. The program has hosted three music events from December 2023 to April 2024 and will host another three from May to July, including performances by the Iowa City Flute Choir, UI Chamber Music, and the Ukrainian Band Kom-muna Lux.

In December, we invited the Gamelan ensemble, Gamelan Pawisik, from Grinnell College. The student musicians, along with the dancers led by their professors, created an extraordinary experience for our community, showcasing traditional percussion instruments and dances from Bali, Indonesia. The audience also participated in community music-making with the Gamelan ensemble at the end of the program.

Music teacher Miss Majesty Constable

returned and presented another event of singing and sign-language-learning. We didn't have much attendance at this event and will continue to explore possibilities for music events designed for all ages in the future.

On April 14th, fortepianist Trevor Stephenson performed a concert featuring the historical instrument, the fortepiano. The audience enjoyed his engaging explanations of the instrument's history, the composers, and the compositions. It is certainly rare to have the opportunity to see and listen to this instrument.

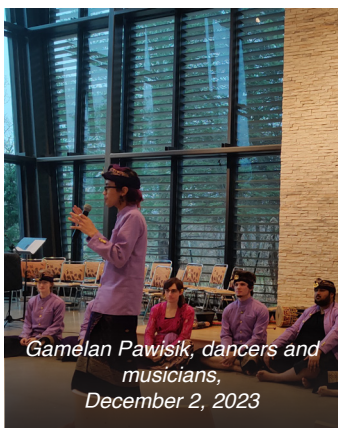
We will continue the newly established tradition of bringing a band to perform during social hour after the service on our annual Music Sunday on April 28th. This year, we invited Diane Road, a local band that performs music of a wide range of styles including jazz and blues standards, as well as pop, rock, folk,

country, and soul from the 60s through today.

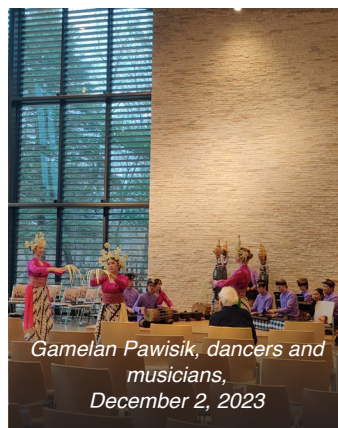
I want to express my gratitude to those who contributed to the free-will donations and those who attended the events. The music outreach program fund is dedicated to musicians' compensation, so your support will directly contribute to bringing great musicians to our community. While the program continues to grow, we would love to see more people participating. I encourage our members to explore our performances, as they are performed by outstanding musicians and take place at our beautiful UUS facilities.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the volunteers and my colleagues who have been great support of making all these events possible.

Submitted by Hsin-Hui Liu



Gamelan Pawisik, dancers and musicians, December 2, 2023



Gamelan Pawisik, dancers and musicians, December 2, 2023



UUS Members caroling at Oaknoll Main, December 11, 2023



## FROM YOUR VOLUNTEER RENTALS COORDINATOR

Sue Kann

Between May 1, 2023 and April 30, 2024 we had 24 rental events and brought in \$12,442. Our events range from piano recitals, member's family gatherings, non-profit dinners and galas to a large wedding. We have hosted several memorial services for non-members' (we do not charge for member memorials.) The numbers of guests at events range from 15 to 230. Most of our rental inquiries come from people who have been in our building for an event. We currently do not do any advertising.

We are developing very positive relationships with many non-profits in the area, which results in them coming back for more rentals. It also brings a large and diverse population into our building and fits nicely with our mission. Some of these groups are the Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County, the Johnson County United Nations Association, the League of Women Voters of Johnson County, Inside Out Reentry, the Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa, the Immigrant Welcome Network and the 100Grannies.

We have had a few commercial businesses hold events in our building. The advantage to rentals from businesses is they usually rent during the week. We held one large, beautiful wedding in March, 2023. These are two types of rentals which could be developed more in the future.

We are developing a line of compostable dinnerware which renters can buy at a very reasonable rate. (And members use for free.) We buy our products from EcoCare and mark it up slightly to cover handling expenses. This is an attempt to produce less garbage to comply with our principles. Our new composting system is greatly appreciated.

I am working as a Rental Coordinator volunteer right now, but I would like to develop this into a paid position for someone. I think with some price adjustments and increasing the rental areas mentioned above, a paid Rental Coordinator position would be financially possible. Rentals increase our visibility and help pay for building maintenance, so I think having rentals is a worthwhile endeavor. I always try to balance the needs of the members and staff with the request from rentals.

Submitted by Sue Kann





# Congregational and Community Engagement

## FUN AND FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

The Auction Committee had a rough start in 2023. The auction was planned for October with an outdoor festival for the wider community followed by an auction, dessert and wine event. However, energy was at an all-time low after a variety of community-wide activities taxed the volunteer pool. Further, the community had difficulty meeting auction donation deadlines. It appeared that that we would have to cancel the auction. With the help of Board President, Jeff Walberg, and Board Treasurer, Mike Pavelich we designed a plan for a small, treats and talents auction that could be online only and have no associated activities which required the committee to do any event planning, setup, delivery or pickup of items.

Except for the missing element of an in-person community event, this worked remarkably well and with little effort. We gathered 62 items, which was less than 1/3 of our typical event and with that we were able to net \$11,860 with only \$1,293 still to be collected. Remarkable feat!

In the following months we gathered interested parties for dinner and re-formed the long-standing Auction committee into a new Fun and Fundraising committee. Those who

gathered provided many suggestions for events and a new structure for fund raising that would manage not only the total number of events but also the timing of events. At this time this new committee has 2 co-chairs, Judy Tokuhisa and Sue Kann. It also has a very small planning committee and many helpers for events.

Members include Julia Audlehelm, Monique DiCarlo, Pat and Mike Pavelich, Mary Dix, Dave Tokuhisa, and Peg Voelker. We hope to have additional individuals to help plan events. We continue to have a long list of help for individual events as well.

The new structure and the committee's roles and responsibilities are in process. The committee has the expectation to hold no more than 4 events a year; one per quarter, with only one event in any quarter and planned such that the events do not compete with the stewardship campaign and other big events. For this year we will plan to give the auction a rest because moving the auction back to the spring, away from

stewardship and holiday events it did not make sense to squeeze 2 auctions closely together. Many UU community individuals shared their concern that Spring was too early for an auction after the Nov. one. In its place this year we will hold a Trivia event, for our members as well as the wider community. This event will be a place holder for the usual Auction Dinner in late April or early May 2025.

The trivia event will be hosted by Chris's Bar Exam organization and we will provide a dinner prior to and during the trivia event. During trivia we will sell snacks and drinks and baked goods for dessert. At the same time, we will host a bake sale and small silent auction for those in attendance.

Other activities which are being considered as one of the quarterly fundraising events include:

- Rummage Sales
- Makers Market
- Anniversary Party for members and past Love Bus adventurers
  - Plant, book or other sales
  - Carnival
  - Cooking Classes
  - And many many more.

Submitted by Judy Tokuhisa



(Left) UUS Members help with the August 2023 Rummage Sale.





## PROGRAM AND ACTIVITY GROUPS

### COVENANT GROUPS

This year, with the support of Nic Kaplan, the facilitators did a training using a video by Rev. Scott Taylor of the Soul Matters group. The training was designed to enrich our skills in deepening our sessions. People felt this was helpful. The Soul Matters materials are being used for sessions and Nic is preparing these.

The numbers of the program have stayed balanced despite one online group disbanding. We are hoping to put together another group this spring with Sarah Ross and Nic Kaplan as facilitators. There appears to be enough people to start a new group. We did not have an all program pot luck this year.

Groups are doing service projects throughout the years. Examples of this are making entrees for free lunch and

readying a garden for an older member's yard to plant this spring. We currently do not have a financial budget.

Goals for next year include adding another group and updating service projects list.

Jan Locher and Sarah Ross continue to co-facilitate the covenant group council.

Submitted by Jan Locher

### GIRLS' NIGHT OUT

Since living through COVID many of us have discovered how important simple social connections can be for our wellbeing. Girls' Night Out (GNO) is an opportunity for women to enjoy one another's company through lively conversation and the pleasure of good food in a stress-free atmosphere.

GNO dinners begin at 5:30 and continue until 7:00-ish at various restaurants in the area during the 4th week of each

month throughout the year rotating days from Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in order to accommodate varying schedules of both participants and restaurants. Restaurant choices are made by GNO attendees and the GNO coordinator adds to the growing list of possible venues and follows up by confirming menu options, restaurant hours, reservations, etc. Since UUS draws members and friends from Iowa City, Coralville, North Liberty and surrounding areas, an attempt is made to balance the location of restaurants for travel convenience and to sample the wide variety of taste options in area. Average attendance for dinner during the past 12-month has been between 12 and 15 with about 35-40 people who actively participate sometime throughout the year.

The practical aspect of not having to cook dinner is appealing in itself, but getting to know your table-mates better, meeting a new person with whom you





*(continued from page 30)*

have shared interests, or simply enjoying the laughter around the table is the larger goal of GNO.

Submitted by Marianne Mason, GNO Coordinator

## **UUMYSTICS**

The UUMystics is a “community within UUS communities” that has been gathering regularly since October 16, 2022. As a self-directed group of diverse spiritual seekers, we decide together where we wish to focus, and we share a covenant that guides our time together. Participants regularly express appreciation for this opportunity to share and learn from one another and from relevant resources. We affirm the UU’s first source statement: “Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create

and uphold life.” We also have access to the work of the UUA’s Mystics organization.

UUMystics have been gathering on the first Wednesday of each month at 7pm in the conference room to continue our deep sharing and exploration of Spiritual Awakening, mystical experiences, and related topics. Current topics come under the umbrella of “What Happens When We Die?” So far, we have examined reincarnation and near death experiences (NDEs) and plan to focus next on “visitations” from those who have passed over.

Those who wish to participate and cannot be present can join us over Zoom.

This is new territory for us at UUS, and we welcome the presence and input of anyone who is interested as we co-create this Spiritual Awakening adventure together.

Submitted by Miriam Kashia

## **MEN’S GROUP**

The Men’s Group meets twice monthly. The meetings on the first Sunday of each month take place at a local pub and are social in nature. On the third Sunday, we meet in one of the RE rooms at UUS for deeper connections about what is going on in our lives. Membership in the Men’s Group is open to any adult identifying as male. Please join the group on Realm if interested.

Submitted by Russ Lenth



## Congregational and Community Engagement



(Above) Pete Brokaw speaks at June 2023 Pride Sunday Service



(Above) Congregation enjoys bubbles during UUS Sunday Service on September 17th



(Above) Celebrating Rukhsar's birthday with Peg Bouska, Sue Otto, and Rukhsar Azizi

# JUSTICE GROUPS

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

The UUS Social Justice Team addresses issues important to UUS members, including racial justice, which is now embraced by the Social Justice Team. The Sunday morning offerings are coordinated by the Social Justice Team and benefit twelve community non-profits. They include: The South District Neighborhood Association, United Action for Youth, Free Medical and Dental Clinic, Table to Table, Free Lunch, the Emma Goldman Clinic, Inside Out Re-Entry, Center for Worker Justice, Shelter House, Domestic Violence Intervention Project, and CommUnity. Donation amounts are listed in the next column.

On months with five Sundays NPOs with specific needs receive UUS support. In 2023, that included the Iowa City School District's Healthy Kids Clinic, the Maternal Health Collective,

Summer of the Arts, and Iowa Leap. These social justice responses were shaped by both local and global events. UUS members and friends donated and volunteered to make a difference to those in need.

At monthly meetings, the SJT members provide monthly updates from our community and state activist groups and partners such as the Iowa UU Witness Advocacy Network, Coralville's Community Policing Advisory Board, the Black Voices Project, Truth Download, Better Way Forward, the Center for Worker Justice, Inside Out Reentry Community, Johnson County Inter-faith Coalition, and CommUnity Crisis Services. The UUS Immigration Action Team and the Green Sanctuary Team also provide monthly updates.

The Social Justice Team is grateful for the generosity of all UUS members and

friends. Such kindness takes care of so many people needing a helping hand. Thank you for recognizing and hearing their call.—Submitted by Sally Hartman and Kathy Hotsenpiller.

## Immigration Action Team

The Immigration Action Team coordinates UUS activities supporting immigrants and joins community nonprofits to serve this population. Collaboration occurs with the Center for Worker Justice, Immigrant Welcome Network, and the Catholic Worker House.

## Asylum Sponsorship

Since 2021, UUS has sponsored Asylum and Refugees from around the world. Ko Ko Lwin, an asylum seeker from Myanmar, arrived July 4th, 2021, and stayed with David Kramer. He



# Congregational and Community Engagement

(continued from page 31)

is employed as an Environmental Compliance Specialist at Shive-Hattery.

In June of 2022, the Azizi Family from Afghanistan arrived in Iowa City. The Azizis were matched with an Iowa City Sponsor Circle made up of four UUS members and two others. Collaboration with Faith United Church of Christ continues in 2023, with that congregation subsidizing housing, and our congregation offering tutors and family activities. Yasin, Omra and Abasin, ages 4, 5, and 6, attend Head Start and Mark Twain Elementary. The parents, Hamayoon and Rukhsar, are employed and still studying English.

At the end of 2023, the UUS Board of Trustees approved another sponsorship through the UUSC's Congregational Accompaniment Program for Asylum Seekers (CAPAS). A fall fundraiser by the Kindred Spirits Covenant Group raised funds for UUS enrollment in this program. In December, a group of 10 met to plan for the arrival of one or two asylum seekers to occur in 2024. The group is awaiting a match from CAPAS.

## Circle of Friends

Circle of Friends are UUS members who have built relation-

ships with immigrant families and support them when the need arises. For example, we provide rides to appointments, tutor English, interpret for families needing communication with schools and agencies, connect them to community

resources and at times provide financial assistance.

For Easter, the Circle of Friends created baskets of fruit, candy, and eggs for some of the families. The December Gift Giving event matches UUS members with needy immigrant children and adults. Toys games, and gift cards were purchased and baskets were filled with goodies and a small amount of cash. Volunteers delivered the baskets.

Another way that UUS members have been helpful is donating needed items to families. Specific items are occasionally listed in the Wednesday Updates, and UUS members have responded by donating furniture and household goods. The Immigrant Action Team, Circle of Friends, and sponsorship projects are not funded through the operating budget, but rely on financial and in-kind donations from friends and members of

UUS. Thank you to all who have supported these families this year. It is very much appreciated and has enhanced the lives of many!

Submitted by Deb Schoelerman and Sally Hartman

<p>.....</p> <p><b>SJT Contributions in 2023</b></p>	
2023 Total Giving:	\$ 21,920
2022 Total Giving:	\$19,686
<b>Community Partner Donations (Sunday offerings)</b>	
January— S. District Neighborhood Assoc.	\$ 1550
February— United Action for Youth	\$ 1100
March— Free Medical and Dental Clinic	\$ 1525
April— Table to Table	\$ 1650
May— Free Lunch Program	\$ 1500
June— Emma Goldman Clinic	\$ 1080
July— Inside Out ReEntry Program	\$ 1365
August— Center for Worker Justice	\$ 1300
September— Shelter House	\$ 1450
October— Domestic Violence Interv. Program	\$ 1480
November— CommUnity	\$ 1690
December— Free Medical and Dental Clinic	<u>\$ 1300</u>
	<b>\$16,990</b>
<b>Additional donations:</b>	
Common Fund— CommUnity	\$ 1500
Jan 5th Sunday— Healthy Kids Program	\$ 1000
April 5th Sunday— Black Maternal Health Coll.	\$ 1200
July 5th Sunday— Summer of the Arts	\$ 380
Oct 5th Sunday— Iowa Leap	<u>\$ 850</u>
	<b>\$4,930</b>
<b>Budget Expenses:</b>	
IUUWAN dues:	\$ 275
JCIC dues:	\$ 300
CWJ dues:	\$ 250
Iowa Peace Network:	\$ 100
BWF:	\$ 275
CCA:	\$ 250
V Siefers (Day of Service):	<u>\$ 41</u>
	<b>\$1,491</b>
<p>.....</p>	



# Congregational and Community Engagement

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## GREEN SANCTUARY

Green Sanctuary Team Members: Suzan Erem, Deb Gallagher, Sally Hartman (Liaison with Social Justice), Miriam Kashia, Virginia Melroy, Craig Mosher (Meeting Chair), Bonnie Penno, Deb Schoelerman (Liaison with Land Ministry), Jan Weaver (Secretary), Frank Wildensee

The Green Sanctuary Team is responsible for educating about and engaging our congregation in the work of the 7th Principle: Respect for the interconnected web of which we are a part.

Our principle focus this year was work on Reaccreditation as a Green Sanctuary Congregation. Sally and Deb Schoelerman completed the congregational survey last year. Sally, Jan, and Deb Gallagher worked on the Opportunity Assessment (OA). This report is organized to reflect the structure of the OA.

### **Congregational Transformation - Awareness, commitment, and spiritual and emotional grounding of our members for the work of addressing climate change**

We had several initiatives related to Congregational Transformation. The "We Are Better Together" project shared eco-actions in the monthly newsletter. We invited the congregation to participate in the Drawdown Ecochallenge and got

about a half dozen members to join. We conducted a survey of almost 100 members on their understanding of actions for the environment, and future actions they would like to take. The top choices were habitat and land protection, energy conservation, and resiliency. We participated in four All Ages RE events with activities on sustainable gift giving, induction cooktop cooking and knife skills, an environmental justice timeline challenge, and a habitat game. We participated in Lunch then Learn in April with a tree walk and an introduction energy conservation projects using the Inflation Reduction Act.

### **Mitigation - Reducing the CO2 emissions of our building, our members, and our community**

We had two major projects. The first was exploring the feasibility of installing batteries to store excess solar power to use at times when solar is not available, whether at night or in a grid emergency. The second project was setting up a contract with a composting service (composting is not available in Coralville where the church is located). This will be a one-year trial to see if additional rental income can offset the extra cost of the service.



# Congregational and Community Engagement

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*(continued from page 33)*

**Adaptation and Resilience - Reducing our vulnerability by adapting our structures and processes and increasing the resilience of our natural and human and systems by strengthening and expanding networks of care**

The battery project included in Mitigation would also help reduce our vulnerability to outages by providing standby power when the solar panels are not operating . It would likewise help expand our network of care to the surrounding neighborhood by providing a charging station in an emergency. Our other network projects included hosting the Iowa Interfaith and Power Lunch and tabling with Iowa Food and Water Watch at the Iowa City Earth Fest

**Justice - Understanding and awareness of the intersection of environmental and social issues, and collaborating with marginalized communities**

We work with the Center for Worker Justice and have begun a collaboration with the Creekside Neighborhood Association around the expansion of a local factory.

This report was prepared by Jan Weaver with assistance from Deb Schoelerman.

(Left to Right) UUS members chat on the sidewalk with Nic Kaplan; UUS members participate in composting on February 2nd, 2024, April 2024 Tree Walk after Sunday Service; UUS Youth enjoy activity after Sunday Service



# Congregational and Community Engagement



## FREE LUNCH PROGRAM

The Free Lunch Program (FLP) at Iowa City UUS is a charitable service made possible by volunteers from our congregation and the generosity of those who have donated financial support to the coffers that provide for this activity.

The Iowa City FLP (IC FLP) is an independent organization that celebrates its 40th year anniversary this current year. UUS does two things to advance that activity.

First and foremost, our UUS FLP has a budget that depends upon direct donations of money, time, food, meal preparation and the effort of volunteers by serving that food to guests at the IC FLP location. We are the “doers” at 1105 S. Gilbert Court (1105) on the second Friday of each month.

Additionally, usually once per year, offerings from our Sunday services in one month are donated directly to the IC FLP.

Most notable is that our volunteer presence at the IC FLP has, over the past year, provided 1200 meals that are attractive, healthy, well balanced and which are served with good cheer. A shout out to some significant changes in the last year are:

- The corraling of volunteers and sign-up for volunteer duties has been masterfully accomplished by

Frank Wildensee as we have transitioned to fully prepare our meals on site at 1105.

- Vicki Siefers and Frank have conspired to create those meals while monitoring costs.
- Russ Lenth has completed his tenure as Treasurer and Board member for the IC FLP. Thank you Russ!
- Bob Littlehale has been elected as the President of the Board of the IC FLP.

We welcome another year of faithful and exemplary service to our community, and all coming with the blessings of your Society here. Of course, we welcome any form of support you may wish to freely give in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted by  
Bob Littlehale

*(Above and Left) Members of the FLP team work to create and serve meals to community members in Iowa City and the surrounding area.*





## PRISON MINISTRY

### Reactivation and Mission

The UUS Prison Ministry was reactivated in March 2023 by Phil Beck, Sally Hartman, Kim Palmer, and Ron Pile. Its goal is to continue the work of the previous ministry by providing support for individuals incarcerated in the Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC) prison system. Its working mission statement is: "The UUS Prison Ministry Team endeavors to become informed advocates for justice and build relationships to decrease isolation of those confined in the Iowa justice system."

An organizational meeting on May 2, 2023, identified several initial steps for volunteers to take, which include 1) providing pen-pal support: through e-mails, letters, and video visits; 2) initiating writing campaigns to legislators about legislation affecting the incarcerated, Iowa Dept. of Corrections reforms, and other issues; 3) exploring the possibility of establishing a prison ministry inside the Iowa Medical Classification Center (IMCC) in Coralville and Anamosa State Penitentiary.

### Budget

At the end of the year, the Ministry had a budget of \$100 left over from the previous ministry. We were given \$100 as part of the 2024 budget. We have

discussed, but not yet implemented, reviving the collection of donations so that we can offer financial support to incarcerated individuals in need, purchase books on prison issues for the UUS library, and fund other efforts.

### Ministry

Ron Pile made initial contact with James, an incarcerated individual at Newton Correctional Facility who had become a UU through the Church of the Larger Fellowship. He offered to help set up a ministry at Newton for other incarcerated individuals interested in UUism. Ron was later joined in this effort by Kim and Lula Palmer, who became pen pals with James near the end of 2023. In Spring 2024, James was released on parole, but another incarcerated individual enthusiastic about a UU presence at Newton has agreed to work toward establishing the ministry there.

### Education

In order to make the congregation aware of prison justice issues, we organized a Sunday forum after the service on Oct. 22, 2023, with prison rights activist Sue Hutchins, the editor of several collections of writings by incarcerated individuals in Iowa. Sue spoke about her years of experience

fighting for the rights of inmates, specific pieces of reform legislation she's supported, and her views on the justice system in Iowa and the current administration's and legislature's unsympathetic attitude toward reform. She was joined by the sister of Michael Blackwell, who is incarcerated at Ft. Dodge and is pen pals with several Prison Ministry Team (PMT) members.

We intend to organize more informational programs like this in the future. Toward that end, Kim Palmer worked with FilmScene to schedule a showing of *Beyond Walls*, a series of five short documentaries on prison life, how families are affected, and life after incarceration. The films will be shown as part of FilmScene's Community Collaborations series on June 11. The occasion will also be a fundraiser for PMT.

Submitted by Phil Beck



# ADMINISTRATION AND FACILITIES GROUPS



## AESTHETICS TEAM

Members: Theresa Ullerich, Julia Audelhelm, Deb Schoelerman, Gay Mikelson, Sue Kann, and Dee Stebbins

The Aesthetics Team works to create and maintain a beautiful and welcoming environment for UUs, friends and visitors by decorating the Sanctuary and other spaces, assisting with furnishings, art and other aesthetic projects and decisions indoors and out.

Four containers outside the front entrance are filled with seasonal flowers and greenery, led by Theresa Ullerich and Deb Schoelerman, with assistance from other team members as they are available.

We design and create arrangements for the sanctuary seasonally and for celebrations and holidays. We bring in fresh flowers and greenery from the UU community garden beds

for the sanctuary table and the welcome table a few times in the summer and early fall.

When Historical Records Team found a handwritten list of earliest signers of the membership book of the Unitarian Church, they framed it and we found a space for it on the wall in the meeting room with other historical pictures.

We especially enjoy decorating for winter holidays with a tree in the foyer, poinsettias, and glittering lights around the public spaces. The outdoor pots are decorated for the winter with greenery and flowers of the season.

We look forward to spending more time together in our beautiful building and welcome new volunteers for the team.

Submitted by Theresa Ullerich

*(Above) Multiple floral displays created by the Aesthetics Team that helped create a beautiful and welcoming environment.*



# Administration and Facilities

## BUILDING TEAM

Active Members include Jim Laughlin, Dave Gallagher, Emily Peck, Bruce Alexander, Gary Lawrenson, and Chair, Deb Schoelerman. Staff Liaison, Emma Barnum.

- Our custodian, George Volk from the Cleaning Crew, continues to clean our building weekly. Jeremy Galvan worked as Facilities Coordinator from October 23 until December of 2023. In February we welcomed Patrick Satter as our new Facilities Coordinator. We thank Jeremy Galvan and Ron Wright for their service and commitment to UUS, and to Ron who trained Patrick.
  - RM Boggs continues to maintain and monitor the HVAC system. We are very pleased with the attention that Ryan Riley, the technician, continues to provide our building.
  - Other basic maintenance and inspections include fire sprinkler and extinguisher inspections, HVAC monitoring and repairs, and on occasion kitchen appliance repair
- There have been four major and necessary repairs this year.
  - The first was the replacement of the water heater in June of 23. Pipes were corroded and leaking. The installation of the new water heater was done by RM Boggs. The second was in October when the fire sprinkler backflow system needed to be repaired. That work was done by Johnson Controls. And in March of 2024, the coolers were not maintaining a cold enough temperature to store food safely and needed repair. The unit was taken to the RM Boggs' shop for repair.
  - The fourth was in March a leak in one of the water pipes in the SVR (Sprinkler Valve Room) that was discovered during routine maintenance. It was repaired in April.
  - In August UUS changed insurance provider from American Family to Hastings Mutual. After a building "walk through," we were required to move all of the flammable mate-

rial at least 4 feet from the electrical panels in Storage-Mechanical Room C. The paint was moved to Storage Room A, and the shelves were re-mounted on the south wall, further away from the electrical panels. Thanks to Pete Brokaw and Gary Lawrenson for their efforts on this project.

- In January, we sold 50 of our extra and unneeded white chairs in the Fellowship Hall. These funds were be used to help to pay for interior and exterior washing of our windows, which had never been washed. The window washing occurred in April by Fish Window Cleaning.

### Kitchen:

In August of 2023 we did an inventory of the kitchen utensils and serving dishes and placed many items in the rummage sale. We seem to accumulate items from caterers and members. We now have a full inventory of compostable dinnerware which Carol Throckmorton has organized in the pantry. The orders come in large quantities so it is a challenge. Sue Kann keeps an eye on the inventory and reorders when necessary.

Ron Wright and Patrick Satter performed deep cleaning of the oven hood, drain pipes and dishwasher in the Spring of 2024. In the Spring of 2024 we held a couple of training sessions for the Hospitality Team Leaders and UUS Group Leaders on how to clean and reset the Fellowship Hall after use.

Submitted by Deb Schoelerman



(Left) Deb Schoelerman and Dave Tokuhisa demonstrate using induction heating to cook



# Administration and Facilities

## GROUNDS TEAM

Members include Jim Laughlin, Dave Gallaher, Lois Hughes, Joe Rasmussen, Dave Tokuhisa, Virginia Melroy, Deb Schoelerman, Bonnie Penno, and Gary Lawrenson, chair. Many volunteers help on the spring and fall work days. Staff Liaison, Emma Barnum

The Grounds Team manages maintenance on the grounds, including the outdoor storage shed and its contents. The Grounds Team coordinates with the Land Ministry Team to maintain and care for the grounds.

- Members of the both teams kept the new conifers, shrubs, and the prairie grasses watered during the drought in late summer and fall.
- Trees were trimmed or removed as necessary by volunteers in the spring and summer. The trails were also kept clear of fallen branches.
- In the fall, members of the Grounds Team and Land Ministry provided winter deer protection for several of the conifers with staking and plastic fencing. In the spring, the protection was removed and stored near the shed.
- In the fall, Pete Brokaw and Gary Lawrenson cleared the nine drains of debris on the flat roof. This is done annually.
- We contracted with Landmark (formerly Rock Hardscapes) to mow the sides of the bio retention cells and the sloped areas on our site.
- Landmark also provided our snow removal of the parking lot and sidewalks.
- Several wood pecker holes have been filled on the several sides of



the building by Gary Lawrenson and Dave Gallaher. Woodpecker holes continues to be a challenge. Our outdoor wood cladding is inviting to them.

- Our lawn mowing team continues to mow the grounds (with the exception of the steep slopes). Thanks to Dave Gallaher, Dave Tokuhisa, Jim Laughlin, and Gary Lawrenson.

Submitted by Deb Schoelerman and Gary Lawrenson



*(Top to Bottom) Volunteers work on the biocell on the UUS campus, Gary Lawrenson and Pete Brokaw worked on the flat roof, Pine tree limbs are trimmed and removed.*



# Administration and Facilities

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## LITTLE FREE FOOD PANTRY AND BOOK LIBRARY

Sadly, you don't have to look far to find hunger in the Iowa City/Coralville/North Liberty area. All three communities provide resources to address hunger but one very important issue is access. A person's schedule might not line up with the food bank's or transportation may be hard to find.

A committee (including Deb Schoelerman, Mary Dix, and Pete Brokaw) was formed to consider creating our own mini food pantry. After research and discussions, we decided to move ahead. We received a \$350 grant from No Child Goes Hungry, based in Virginia, and we recruited Dave Gallagher and Gary Lawrenson to build our library. The library is located next to the sidewalk by the labyrinth. On June 26, 2022, the UUS Little Free Food Pantry & Book Library officially opened and it has been very popular in its first two years.

We accept food and book donations in the bins located in the church foyer. Recently, Nic Kaplan and the RE program have organized a food donation project on the third Sunday of every month! You can find baskets just outside the sanctuary for your donations. Look for the bright green sheets in the foyer if you're looking for ideas on what to bring in. A few of the most popular items that you can donate are dried pasta, canned veggies and soup.

We supplement food donations with trips to Costco using money donated by congregants and the Social Justice Action Fund. We were very pleased to find that our neighbors in the Sturbridge Square Condominiums have been making regular donations to the pantry, making the pantry a true community project! If you would like to donate money to the pantry fund, use Realm or write a check with "Little Free Pantry" in the memo line.

Our group has grown to include Suzan Erem, Mary McMurray, and Carolyn Johnson, who help keep the pantry stocked. We try to restock the pantry on Sundays and Wednesdays. If you're interested in helping out, reach out to any of us on the committee!

Submitted by Pete Brokaw





# Administration and Facilities

## LAND MINISTRY

Team members: Mary McMurray, Tom McMurray, Virginia Melroy, Gary Lawrenson, Jim Laughlin, Sam Cochran, Vicki Siefers, Jim Cubit, Laurie Cubit, Alice Atkinson, Julia Audlehelm, Dhyana Kaufman, Suzan Erem, Theresa Ullrich, and Deb Schoelerman, chair. Staff liaison – Emma Barnum

**Mission:** The Land Ministry Team leads the congregation in nurturing our land thoughtfully and sustainably in ways that honor the site, protect its biodiversity, and build connections within the congregation and with the community.

**Vision:** We aspire to better understand and protect the biodiversity of our land; to celebrate our relationship with the earth and the deep connections between the natural environment, the congregation, and the community; and to create a space and structures that welcome all ages and abilities, encourage enjoyment of the land, and foster spiritual growth.

### Bio-retention replanting

In 2022 we were unable to do a controlled burn in bio cell # 2 and were required by the City of Coralville and Johnson County Soil and Conservation District to “clean out” and replant as part of our maintenance agreements. In August the weeds were removed and

new top soil and mulch were brought in to prepare for replanting. On September 23 over 40 volunteers under the direction of David Selmer planted approximately 175 pollinator shrubs. Varieties included elderberry, serviceberry, sage leaf willow, and viburnum. Funds for this project came from the Jean Reese endowment fund.

### Community Work Days

Spring work in 2023 included garlic mustard pulls in the woods, trimming the native grasses, and pulling weeds and crown vetch in the bioretention cells. The fall workdays were September 23rd, which focused on the replanting the bio cell, and Saturday, October 15th. Volunteers also prepared the grounds for winter by installing fence posts and fencing around several of the conifers. We are appreciative of the volunteer work neighbors Mary and Larry Wilson have provided throughout the season.

The first spring work-clean-up day in 2024 was held on April 6th.

### Trails/woods

LM members periodically checked the trails for fallen branches and limbs and poison ivy, of which there is very little.



(Above) Volunteers work on the UUS grounds during the Spring 2023 work day



(Above) David Selmer plants pollinator shrub in the UUS bio cell





# Administration and Facilities

(continued from page 41)

## Wildflower Garden

Alice Atkinson and her daughter, Kathryn, have worked to keep the Canada thistle population under control and cared for the wildflower garden in the SW corner of the property. In May, the old wire fence was removed from around the garden and an attractive metal fence was installed by members of the LM team.

## Landscape

In the spring big bluestem and prairie drop seed grasses were planted on the west side of the building. A row of low scape aronia chokeberry shrub was also planted next to the sidewalk.

## Memorial Garden

Virginia Melroy, and Joe Rasmussen oversee the Memorial Garden. A brochure has been developed to promote the MG. Maryanne Mason has been caring for the plantings in the MG. Plans are underway for signage.

## Playscape

The area south of the building was enjoyed by the children participating in the several nature camps organized by

Nic Kaplan, DLRE. Plans are underway to add enhancements such as the slide, more boulders, picnic tables, and climbing structures.

## Labyrinth

The labyrinth continues to be enjoyed by members of UUS and the wider community.

## Community Garden

In the spring of 2023, a load of compost/mulch was delivered by Dick and Vicki Siefers for adding to the garden beds. In the summer the raised beds were planted with flowers by members of the LM team. In addition to the annuals, more perennials were added this year.

## Peace Pole

The Peace Pole donated by the Veterans for Peace local chapter 161 was installed on the grounds in the fall. The words “May Peace Prevail on Earth” in eight languages, as well as braille, are printed on the pole. The languages are Spanish, Hebrew, Arabic, Swahili, French, Mandarin, English, and the language used by the Meskwaki people. A dedication was held on May 5th.

Submitted by  
Deb Schoelerman



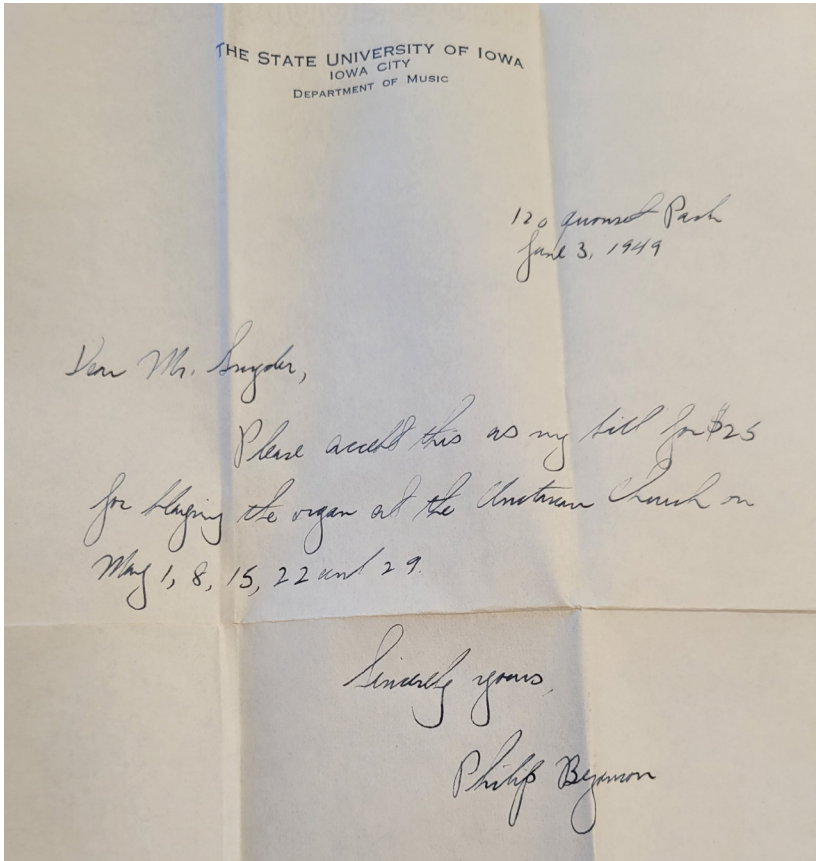
(Above) The Peace Pole after being installed on the UUS grounds



(Above) Volunteers distribute the mulch around the UUS grounds



# Administration and Facilities



## HISTORICAL RECORDS TEAM

2023-24 Members: Diana Miller, Chair, Emily Johnson, Secretary, Phil Beck, Jeanette Carter, Jane DeWitt, Sherry Dolash, Sue Eberly, Carmen Griggs, Paula Miller, Cheryl Tugwell, Kristin Wildensee

The Historical Records Committee (HRC) enjoyed another year in which we were able to assist other UUS committees with historical information, including the Endowment and Finance committees and the Memorial Garden team. Diana Miller also represents HRC on the Memorial Garden

Team to assist with recordkeeping. This year the committee used its budget to purchase a four-drawer filing cabinet for its expanding collection of sorted documents. The committee also framed pictures of UUS buildings and the handwritten names of the church's founding members, both of which have been hung in the Fellowship Hall. Members and friends may recall hearing the founding members' names read during the Sunday service the committee hosted on Nov. 5, 2023: Learning From Augusta Chapin's Legacy. HRC member Jeanette Carter also worked with DLRE Nic Kaplan to record a history of UUS buildings that is now available on the

YouTube channel. The majority of the committee's work during its monthly meetings continues to be sorting, culling, and reorganizing records (followed by a tasty potluck lunch), and the 2023-24 year brought a variety of documents for review. New members are always welcome!

Submitted by Emily Johnson

(Above) Historical Records Team works together on sorting and reorganizing records, An organist's invoice for May 1949 services.



# Administration and Facilities

## HOSPITALITY TEAMS

Pat Pavelich serves as Coordinator of Hospitality Teams. We currently have eight teams with between eight and ten people on each team. Our current team leaders are Dave Gallaher, Nancy Noyer, Jim Olson, Sue Otto, Kim and Lula Palmer, Linda Rice, Carol Throckmorton and Pat Pavelich.

The hospitality teams are responsible for serving snacks after Sunday services, including vegan and gluten free choices. Thank you to all our hospitality leaders and volunteers!

Submitted by Pat Pavelich



*(Above) A meal prepared by the Hospitality Team*

## MEMORIAL TEAM

Members: Joe Rasmussen, Virginia Melroy, and Julia Audlehelm

The Memorial Team supervises the memorial garden, managing applications and interments. We have had one interment since the last annual meeting which brings us to a total of four interments since the garden opened in 2022.

A portable public address amplifier has been purchased for interment ceremonies. The Memorial Team is responsible for the memorial fund in conjunction with the Board's Finance Committee. Projects that are being considered for fund expenditures include improved signage of the memorial garden and identification of those interments there, as well as the purchase of new library shelves for the atrium.

The memorial team has worked with the historical records team on record keeping for the interments and a public memorial book to display on the new shelves. The memorial book would be open to any UUS associated person to place an obituary/photo/remembrance.

The Memorial Team is responsible for updating the donation recognition in the conference room and acknowledging donors. There is now a Memorial Team mailbox in the atrium that has interment applications and can be used to exchange documents with the team.

Submitted by Joe Rasmussen



*The Memorial Garden on UUS grounds*



# Mission Statement

We are a welcoming, spiritually diverse home. We act on our values:

- Honor the Earth
- Advocate for racial and social justice
- Nurture deep connections
- Embrace the ongoing quest for meaning

# Vision

Our vision is to be a loving, inclusive, and growing spiritual community. We celebrate life and a liberal tradition that leads social justice work, heals the earth, and nurtures the lifelong journey of mind and spirit.

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## 2023/24 Board of Trustees

Jeff Walberg, President

Christine Etler, Secretary

Mike Pavelich, Treasurer

Rochelle Honey-Arcement, Past President

Diana Henry, Trustee

Monique DiCarlo, Trustee

Ian Cawley, Trustee

## 2023/24 UUS Staff

Rev. Diana Smith, Minister

Nic Kaplan, Director of Lifespan Religious Education

Hsin-Hui Liu, Staff Pianist and Music Outreach Coordinator

Victoria Huitt, Membership Coordinator (started June 2023)

Kaytee Rairdin, Communications and Outreach Coordinator (started June 2023)

Leah Kaminsky, RE Coordinator (started July 2023)

Patrick Satter, Facilities Coordinator (February 2024)

Sue Kann, Volunteer Rentals Coordinator



# What We Believe

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.



**2355 Oakdale Road, Coralville, IA 52241, 319-337-3443**

[WWW.UUSIC.ORG](http://WWW.UUSIC.ORG)