



THE UUS NEWS

April 2020

WE ARE A WELCOMING, SPIRITUALLY DIVERSE HOME. WE ACT ON OUR VALUES:

- * HONOR THE EARTH
- * ADVOCATE FOR RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
- * FOSTER DEEP CONNECTIONS
- * EMBRACE THE ONGOING QUEST FOR MEANING

Sunday Services

Join the Virtual Service via Zoom each week at bit.ly/UUSVirtualService. Meeting ID: 422-482-660

Or join via phone: Find your local number: bit.ly/UUSServices_FindZoomNumber.

The Zoom Meeting will open at 9:45 am, with the service beginning at 10. A time for virtual fellowship will follow.

April 5th: "Spring for Change: Honoring Water, Earth, & Each Generation," Deb Schoelerman & The Green Sanctuary Committee

This Earth Month service is being put on by the UUS Green Sanctuary Team, with a message from Ali Tharp, program director at the UU Ministry for Earth.

(A previously scheduled service presented by Dr. H.S. Udaykumar (Uday), "Compassion is the New Radicalism," and his accompanying forum "Deeper Solutions for a Confusing Time," will be rescheduled later this year.)

April 12th: "Rising," Rev. Diane Dowgiert

Passover and Easter coincide this year. We will gather on this Easter Sunday to tell stories of how those who came before faced hardship and death, how they made meaning and found purpose, how they rose to meet every challenge, and how they kept hope alive.

April 19th: To Be Announced

Look for details on this service on our website and weekly publications later this month.

April 26th: To Be Announced

Look for details on this service on our website and weekly publications later this month.

Sunday Service Attendance

March 1st:	143 total: 128 service, 15 RE
March 8th:	121 total: 97 service, 24 RE
March 15th:	~70 Zoom participant households
March 22nd:	~100 Zoom participant households
March 29th:	~115 Zoom participant households

April's Social Justice Offerings Benefit the Domestic Violence Intervention Program

"DVIP: Safety and Dignity. Always." Providing comprehensive support and advocacy programs to victims/survivors in Johnson and seven other southeastern Iowa counties, focusing on immediate and long-term safety, empowerment and hope. Services include shelter, counseling, housing assistance, medical and legal advocacy, and more.

A safe space within the emergency shelter is available for pets of families staying there; about 20 pets per year are housed in Coopers House. Thanks for your support.

Cash or check donations can be given [online through Realm \(online.through.Realm.org/uusic/-/give/SJOffering\)](https://online.through.Realm.org/uusic/-/give/SJOffering), or mailed to the office. (Write checks to UUS, with DVIP on the memo line.) You can also text "GivetoUUSIC Offering \$--" to 73256.

April Birthdays

Joe Barrash	Russ Lenth	Tabitha Rasmussen
John Elson	Marcela Linley	Tony Razavi
Linda Fisher	Dawn Marshall	Tom Rocklin
Nathan Gall	Mary McCann	Anna Rode
Liam Gupta	Craig Mosher	Sarah Ross
Adam Ingersoll	Samuel Myers-Verhage	Emily Uhl
Sandy Keller	Gerald Nordquist	Theresa Ullerich
David Kramer	John Raley	
Susan Kramer		

If you would like your birthday listed in the newsletter (or removed), contact dcl@uusic.org.

Congregational News and Events



From the Interim Minister's Study

Who knew life could change so quickly? Who knew that we had the capacity to adapt so quickly? When so many things are being canceled—vacation plans, weddings, memorials, concerts, conventions, school classes and events, church services—it's

important to remember that even though life has changed, life itself isn't canceled, it's just different now. Just think how many new habits you have formed since the COVID-19 crisis first started—washing your hands religiously, working from home, staying home as much as possible, staying six feet away from others when out in public, using Zoom for meetings and conversations that you would normally have in person. All of this within less than a month.

Just as life itself is not canceled, the life of the Unitarian Universalist Society is not canceled. It's just different. One of the greatest joys for me as a minister is to see the deep and abiding connections that form among people who make their spiritual home in Unitarian Universalism. Where else can people from diverse backgrounds and with diverse beliefs find common ground and a place where they can be their authentic selves? That's what I mean when I say that the life of UUS is not canceled. If anything it is more vital than ever.

We are living through frightening times. Our lives have changed

and we don't know when or if they will go back to the way they were before the coronavirus struck. At a time when we need strong connections more than ever, we are being told to be physically distant from each other. A wise precaution, one that may prevent enough people from contracting the disease so that our medical system won't be overwhelmed. At the same time, it means American society cannot continue business as usual. The impact on our economy will be felt most by those who are already the most vulnerable.

In this time of disruption, I draw solace from the long and rich heritage of our living tradition of Unitarian Universalism. Throughout this long history, people just like us have weathered everything from wars to epidemics to natural disasters to living under oppressive political regimes. Their strength, their resilience, and their wisdom are all part of our DNA. Those who came before were institution builders. They laid the foundations of the Society we know today.

These lyrics by singer/songwriter Holly Near sum up how we are called to be in these uncertain times.

*"I am open and I am willing
To be hopeless would seem so strange
It dishonors those who go before us
So lift me up to the light of change"*

Stay connected, my friends—to each other and to your congregation. We need each other. Life calls us on.

Yours in the interim, Rev. Diane

From Your Director of Lifespan Religious Education

It is with mixed emotions that I write my piece for the April newsletter. Usually this time of year I am planning our Easter Egg Hunt, and I am going to miss hearing all the laughter as our children roam our building on Easter morning. But I am also grateful that we live in a time where we can still see each other and connect, even if only through a screen. As of right now, I am not planning on moving our RE content to be online, but I do want to offer opportunities for our RE kids, volunteers and families to connect with each other. At the time of writing, I am still working out all the timing of these events, but you can expect to hear more about weekly story times with show & tell, family nights, and RE meet ups online and through Zoom. Please keep an eye on the weekly email, and families, be on the lookout for more information in the RE Monthly Update and the Realm groups. Missing seeing all of you, and hope to be together soon.

Yours in faith, Jessica Zimmer

Seeking Summer Service Stories & Reflections

The UUS Worship Associates (WAs) Team seeks proposals from members, friends, and guests to share reflections, presentations, or other services this summer. Traditionally, our minister has a leave from the pulpit through much of the summer. UUS talents, as well as guests outside of our community, fill the pulpit during this time.

This summer, the service theme is *Trust*. Transitions are a time for trust. Trust in ourselves. Trust in others. Trust that things will work out. This time of transition between ministers is an especially good time to look at our relationship with trust. How did we learn to trust, and how do we discern whom and what to trust?

To learn more about this summer's theme and to access a Call for Proposals form, go to bit.ly/uus-rfp-summer. You may also ask one of UUS's Worship Associates for information. WAs are Julia Audlehelm, Valerie Bowman, Margaret Kinsman, Dan Gall, Diane Martin, Susan Salterberg, Heidi Sinderman, and Mary Kathryn Wallace.

Ministerial Search Committee Report

Your Search Committee is now preparing to select our final candidate for settled minister at UUS. We hope to make our decision in early April. This continues to be a busy and gratifying experience for all seven of us. And we are excited about the quality and gifts of these candidates.

Candidating week is set for April 19th through the 26th, barring any change due to the COVID-19 virus. We will keep you posted.

Questions may be directed to any of the Search Committee members: Dave Martin, Alison Oliver, Jerry Wetlaufer, Jodi Linley, Carol Adamson, Carolyn Johnson or John Bowman.

UUS Groups Meeting In April

Many UUS groups and teams have had to cancel their upcoming meetings and events due to the coronavirus. However, many are finding ways to meet remotely during this period.

Please check the calendar on the website (www.uusic.org/upcoming-events/calendar/) and upcoming weekly emails for updates on canceled or virtual events. (If you are a group leader and would like to set up a Zoom meeting for an upcoming meeting or event, contact the office (admin@uusic.org) or Peggy Garrigues (dcl@uusic.org).

Also please note that many events listed on the calendar as still occurring in person will likely either be canceled or move to a remote method of meeting. Contact the event's group leader if you're not sure if a calendar event is correct.

Virtual Inquirer Sessions for April

We will be planning to have Virtual Inquirer Sessions as usual after the Sunday services for as long as we are doing Zoom services. Check the calendar, website, or weekly emails for details on how to join upcoming sessions. Instructions will also be announced during the service each week.

The April Inquirer Session schedule is as follows:

- April 5th: Engage with Interest & Activity Groups (can count as a step towards membership)
- April 12th: General Q&A
- April 19th: Engage with Groups to Nurture Mind and Spirit (can count as a step towards membership)
- April 26th: UU 101—Intro to UU History and Values. Let Peggy know ahead of time if you want to attend this session so that she can send you files ahead of time (this session counts as a step towards membership).

Virtual Class: Declutter for More Peace, Space, and Freedom, April 1st

We know we'd feel better if we decluttered, so what keeps us from doing it? Do you ever have these thoughts: "I have to go through these boxes;" "Someone could use that;" and "But I need it!" Another one might be, "I'm sure my kids will want this someday."

These thoughts can keep us stuck with our clutter. Instead, ask yourself, "What do I long for?" Often, it's peace, space or freedom. Martha Beck, life coach, says "Walk into any room of your home and focus on 10 random objects. As you consider each, ask yourself, "Do I truly need it?," "Do I truly adore it?," and, "Would I trade inner peace for this?" The answers can help curb your pack-rat impulses, allowing you to clear out and move on."

Join us via Zoom at 7 pm on Wednesday, April 1st, for tips from UUS member Valerie Bowman, who has been a professional organizer for 20 years. Her business is called Space for Grace.

(Link to Join: <https://zoom.us/j/764458734>, Meeting ID: 764 458 734, or join by phone: find your local number at <https://zoom.us/u/ap8Hjh2pC>).

Virtual UUS Thursday Night Hymn Sing, April 2nd

Music has the power to elevate our feelings and build community. To that end, a virtual UUS Hymn Sing will begin on Thursday evening, April 2nd, from 7 to 7:30 pm on Zoom.

(Link to Join: <https://zoom.us/j/765086866>, Meeting ID: 765 086 866, or join by phone: find your local number at <https://zoom.us/u/ap8Hjh2pC>.)

You are invited to submit your hymn request via email to Gloria at music@uusic.org. Since many do not have either the gray or teal hymnals at home to locate the hymn number, just email the title or the words that come to mind and we will find the hymn. We don't have this all worked out yet, but will invent as we go along. Aura will be at the Steinway and Gloria will be a safe distance from her leading the hymns. Looking forward to this new venture!

Preparation for Membership Class, April 21st

We have a Preparation for Membership Class scheduled for Tuesday evening, April 21st, from 6:30 to 8 pm. If the UUS building is still closed, we will be making preparations for that class to take place on Zoom. Watch your Wednesday emails for details. Contact Director of Congregational Life Peggy Garrigues with questions: dcl@uusic.org.

UU Free Lunch Report

On Friday, March 12th, 27 dedicated Free Lunch Team volunteers served 108 meals to hungry Free Lunch Program guests. Thanks to the Day Seekers Covenant Group and additional members from other Covenant Groups, diners gave a 'thumbs up' to a hearty, tasty Mexican Casserole.

Special thanks to Vicki Siefers and Phil Beck who coordinated the preparation of the main dish and to Caryl Lyons who prepared the vegetarian main dish, the ever-popular vegetarian lasagna. Other UUS volunteers helped greatly by donating ingredients for our menu (green and fruit salads, cooked vegetables, desserts, and beverages), as well as preparing and serving food, doing dishes, and cleaning up.

To learn more about the ways you can participate, please contact Carmen Griggs at csgriggsiowa@gmail.com.

Virtual Regional Assembly for the MidAmerica Region of the UUA, April 18th

This year is unlike any other, in that our MidAmerica UU Regional Assembly will be held online, on Saturday, April 18th. This is brand new in response to the COVID-19 reality, but it may also provide an opportunity for many more UUs to participate. In the past it has been an opportunity for several hundred UUs from the midwest to gather for worship, workshops, inspiring speakers, and networking.

Taquiena Boston, who is Special Advisor to the UUA President for Inclusion, Equity, and Change, will be the keynote speaker.

The cost for the virtual assembly is more affordable, and there is no need to make travel or hotel arrangements. For just \$50, anyone can attend Regional Assembly. You can find details here: www.uua.org/midamerica/ra/2020. If you do decide to register, please let Peggy know, so that we can coordinate a virtual meeting ahead of time for those “attending” the assembly.

If you would like this unique opportunity to attend the assembly virtually, but \$50 is a stretch, UUS does have scholarship money available. Contact Peggy Garrigues (dcl@uusic.org) to request consideration for a scholarship.

Because of the size of our congregation, we get six official delegates to Regional Assembly who are eligible to vote. If you are a UUS member and would like to attend this virtual assembly as one of our official delegates, you can also contact Peggy, who will pass along the names of those interested for consideration by the board.

National UU General Assembly Scheduled to Be Held in Providence, Rhode Island, June 24th - 28th

UU General Assembly is a wonderful experience of gathering together with UUs from around the US, and around the world! Usually, several thousand UUs gather together at once for amazing music and worship, workshops of all kinds, meeting UUs from many places, and learning about the many programs and social justice projects of UUs around the country and the world.

Currently, the National UU General Assembly is still scheduled to be held in person in Providence, Rhode Island. Several of us are planning to attend—Jessica Zimmer, Sally Hartman, and Peggy Garrigues are the ones we are aware of.

Because it is so far away, and hotel costs are expensive, it is challenging to be able to send very many people. If anyone else would like to consider attending, we do have some scholarship money available to help with costs. Registration is \$500; hotel rooms, when shared with someone else, are about \$100 per night per person (with some less expensive homestay lodging also available); meals are on your own, plus airfare costs—which are lower now than they have been.

Let Peggy (dcl@uusic.org) know if you want to consider attending in person and would like to explore scholarship possibilities, both through the national UUA and through UUS.

Off-site, virtual registration is \$150 per person and would not involve any transportation or lodging. Again, we could offer scholarships for those wanting to attend virtually. And it may end up that everyone will be attending virtually, depending on how long it takes for the coronavirus to reach its peak and start decreasing in the US. At General Assembly, UUS will get to have six official delegates. If you would like to consider attending either in person or virtually as an official delegate, let Peggy know, and she will pass your name along to the board. Learn more about the 2020 General Assembly at this link: www.uua.org/ga.

If it sounds interesting, but not for this year, next year General Assembly will be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin!

Immigration Action Team Updates

The service learning trip to Guatemala in June has been postponed. Our partners there, Chico Mendes Reforestation Project and the Centro Maya Project, will welcome us at a later date. While the UUS will not be sending a service learning group to Guatemala, we are still finding ways to support the good work of the Chico Mendes Reforestation Project. Recent information from the Director, Armando Lopez, indicates that their ability to carry on their mission has been curtailed. They expected eight groups, but all have canceled. This impacts their ability to hire youth to work with volunteers to plant trees. In addition, host families will not receive income they receive for home stays. There is little work in Guatemala, so there are no alternatives. Guatemala has shut its borders, closed schools and businesses, and has restricted travel.

The Center for Worker Justice has initiated a fund for families who are now out of work but are not able to qualify for unemployment. Rafael Morataya, the director of the Center for Worker Justice, relates that more than 25 families may need support from the fund. They have lost their jobs in restaurants and hotels. Many have children who are not receiving school lunches now. Any money donated will go for food and other essentials for these families.

Faithify is a UUA crowd-funding initiative that allows the fundraisers to keep all the earnings from the project. There will be opportunities to learn more about this funding project in the Wednesday emails. This is a real opportunity to make a difference and live our principles.

**Unitarian Universalist Society
Board of Trustees**

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS – March 11th, 2020

Board meeting minutes are available on the website or can be requested from the UUS Administrator.

Present: Amy Fretz (President), Joe Rasmussen (Vice-President), Jane DeWitt (Past-President), Chris Rode (Treasurer), Allison Bettine (Secretary), John Raley (Finance Trustee), Michael Honey-Arcement (Trustee), Colleen Higgins (Trustee), Paul Pomrehn (Trustee), and Rev. Diane Dowgiert (Ex-officio)

Guests: Dave Martin (Ministerial Search Committee), Allison Oliver (Ministerial Search Committee)

Board President Fretz called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Rev. Dowgiert provided opening words.

Consent Agenda: Consent agenda and other items are uploaded to Dropbox for Board review prior to the meeting.

Consent Agenda items: February Board Meeting Minutes, March Executive Meeting Minutes, Minister’s Report, Treasurer’s Report and Financials

The Board received the Consent Agenda and approved the February Board Meeting Minutes, March Executive Meeting Minutes, Minister’s Report, Treasurer’s Report and Financials.

Conflict Management Policy and Procedure: A second reading of the proposed Conflict Management Policy and Procedure was facilitated by DeWitt. *The Board voted to approve the Conflict Management Policy and Procedure.*

Request for Increase in Pianist’s Salary: The request to increase the pianist’s salary was discussed as the additional funds would be fulfilled through a Board controlled account. *The Board voted to approve the pianist’s increase in salary.*

Safety Team Update: Pomrehn gave an update on the Safety Team’s plans to participate in the community’s “Stop The Bleed” and “Heart Safe Community” initiatives. An AED will be obtained through a grant from the Community Foundation of Johnson County.

Lois Cole Ministerial Formation Team Update: Pomrehn reported on the status of Cole’s preliminary fellowship and shared that her second-year packet has been submitted.

Rental Income: Raley lead a Board discussion of the pros and cons of continuing to pursue rental opportunities. *The Board voted to suspend all new rental agreements indefinitely until the Board can evaluate the financial implications and further voted to approve that the Board gives the staff full discretion to rent to previous and recurring renters.*

COVID-19 Safety Planning: A somber discussion regarding the needs of the congregation throughout the COVID-19 crisis occurred. The Board made the decision to temporarily close the building to the public and recommends that covenant/interests groups gather with caution. Ministry will not be suspended but will simply be offered through other formats.

The board voted to approve that the Executive Committee, in accordance with local, state, and/or national recommendations and in consultation with the minister, be granted the authority to make decisions for the safety of the congregation regarding pandemics.

The Board voted to suspend Sunday services for the next two Sundays (March 15th and 22th) and suspend choir practices.

The Board voted to approve that the UUS building at 2355 Oakdale be closed to the public until the Executive Committee deems it safe to reopen. Further, the Board approved that all salaried employees be allowed to work from home at their own discretion and be compensated at their usual rate and that hourly employees be compensated for the weekly budgeted amount regardless of hours worked.

Announcements: The “Stop The Bleed” and “Heart Safe Community” workshops will be suspended until the COVID-19 risk has passed.

Closing: Higgins read the closing words, DeWitt gave process observer comments, and Fretz adjourned the meeting at 9:50 pm. The next Board Meeting is Wednesday, April 8th, 2020 at 6:30 pm, UUS Conference Room.

—Submitted by Allison Bettine, Secretary

The UUS News

The Unitarian Universalist Society
2355 Oakdale Road
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Website: www.uusic.org

Office Phone: 319-337-3443

Our Seven Principles

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.

Our Mission: We are a welcoming, spiritually diverse home. We act on our values: Honor the Earth; Advocate for racial and social justice; Foster deep connections; Embrace the ongoing quest for meaning.

Our Vision: We aspire to be a more inclusive, loving, diverse congregation that welcomes all people. We will defend and celebrate the Earth, confront racial and social injustice, and nurture deep connections.

UUS Staff

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