



THE UUS NEWS

September 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

Upcoming 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](#).

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

September 6th: "Threads of a Dream"

Rev. Diana Smith

This Labor Day join us to reflect on what it means to be bound by the threads of a dream to work for something we believe in.

September 13th: "Re-Sourced," Rev. Diana Smith

September 20th: "Meeting the World," Rev. Lois Cole

"You must meet the outer world with your inner world or existence will crush you," says spiritual teacher Mark Nepo. Developing practices where we can meet the world with our hearts IS all the more needed in these pandemic times. UUS Community Minister Lois Cole shares lessons in resilience from her ministry as a hospital chaplain at the UI Stead Family Children's Hospital.

September 27th: "Defending Democracy,"

Rev. Diana Smith

September's Social Justice Offerings Benefit Shelter House

Shelter House (SH) provides temporary housing for those who need it, and Cross Park Place, which opened in 2019, has filled its 24 apartments for chronically homeless singles who sign leases. Case managers offer employment support, resume writing, job training and interview skills, etc. Educational and mental health help are among other offerings.

This is the first year (in 15 or so) that UUS has not offered a buffet luncheon to benefit SH. With the help of many, we have normally raised \$1,200 to 1,600 as we opened our Fellowship Hall to the wider community. By giving extra generously now, we can partially make up this loss.

Cash or check donations can be given [online through Realm \(onrealm.org/uusic/-/give/SJOffering\)](https://onrealm.org/uusic/-/give/SJOffering), or mailed to the office. (Write checks to UUS, with *Shelter House* on the memo line.)

Past Sunday Service Attendance

- August 2nd:** ~133 Participating Zoom Accounts
- August 9th:** ~105 Participating Zoom Accounts
- August 16th:** ~99 Participating Zoom Accounts
- August 23rd:** ~127 Participating Zoom Accounts

September Birthdays

Carol Adamson
Kris Barrash
Aster Cox
Sofia Cox
Andy Douglas
Lori Enloe
Zoey Fett
Pralhad Gupta
Barbara Haring

Diana Henry
Nicholas Johnson
Haley Kamps
Melissa Lehan Mackin
Stephen Locher
Mary Losch
Kristin Lucas
Robby Marvin
Gail McLure

Otis Miller
Paula Miller
Deb Moore
Lula Palmer
Emily Peck
Erica Reschly
Virginia Stamler
Judy Tokuhisa
Dana Van Abbema

Glenn Wiltgen
Edward Wolfe
Susan Kasal Young

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

Congregational News and Events



From Your Minister

Dear Ones,

What a first month it's been as your minister! Amidst a worsening pandemic in Iowa, a natural disaster, and mostly online ministry I've been so delighted by the warm welcomes I've received and by the opportunities we've had to begin creating our shared ministry. Thank you.

As the calendar turns toward September, we enter a time when we come back together after alternative summer schedules. This year we'll be doing that in new ways.

Our Soul Matters theme in September will be Renewal, so I've been reflecting on what renewal means amidst the ongoing, chronic traumas of a pandemic, ongoing racism and rising authoritarianism, and climate chaos (to name a few).

Some of you have heard me say that I have one fundamental goal this year: that we survive as a congregation in a way that is grounded in and reflects our values, our love, and our call to live love ever more fully and fiercely into the world. This means that we make it through supporting each other with love and care along the way, that we do what we can so that no one gets sick because of us, and that we continue our internal and external justice work - it is inherent to who we are and to our faith.

This is guiding me as I think about what renewal can mean this church year. It can mean focusing on new ways to interact and connect deeply with each other online and perhaps in other ways that keep us all safe if those become possible based on the pandemic's trajectory. It can mean finding ways to attend to and build our spiritual lives. It can mean finding ways to

engage in justice work—including get out the vote work—in ways that speak to our values. What does it mean to you?

I'm looking forward to exploring this with you as we move into September. There will be a few opportunities to connect:

- I'm setting up online café-style conversations during September. Think of these as meeting with me in a small group setting in a coffee shop, so bring your tea, coffee, juice, or water and a snack for informal conversation! The Zoom link for all of these is <https://uuma.zoom.us/j/3607052243> and times are:
 - Thursday, September 3rd, 7 to 8 pm.
 - Thursday, September 10th, 4 to 5 pm.
 - Tuesday, September 15th, 8 to 9 am.
 - Thursday, Sept 24th, 5:30 to 6:30 pm.
 - Tuesday, September 29th, 8 to 9 am.
- September 13th will be our ingathering water communion service. A day or two before it we'll have a physically distanced water drop-off time where members and friends can pick up care packages to help create our at-home meditation and worship spaces. Look for an email closer to the 13th with details.
- I'm beginning to set up one-on-one meetings with congregational leaders and members to hear about your experiences at UUS and to get to know each other. These will be stretching out over the next few months and I'll be sending out individual emails about this slowly. If you'd like to be sure you're on my list, please send me an email.

I'm beginning to meet with different committees, teams, and groups. This will also likely take a few months, but if you're interested in having me attend a meeting of your group, leaders please send me an email and we'll figure out when I can come.

I'm looking forward to connecting with you all in the coming weeks as we find new ways to engage in the renewal of this season.

Blessed be, Rev. Diana

From Your Board President, Joe Rasmussen

Trust

My article in the August newsletter dealt with risk and responsibility. How risk is something that is unavoidable and each of us has a personal responsibility to determine the amount of risk we take and the amount we expose to other people. This month I want to discuss trust as it relates to both risk and responsibility. Webster defines trust as "firm belief or confidence in the honesty, integrity, reliability, justice, etc. of another person or thing; faith; reliance." As a faith community, trust is at the center of our covenant of right relations with each other. However, trust is like respect. It is not automatically given. It has to be earned.

September marks the traditional start to our Society's "church year." The COVID pandemic has greatly altered our traditions. Our building has been closed, and debate surrounds when and how we can re-open and under what circumstances

we can meet. Some persons are very risk adverse and other persons have tolerance for some risk. This is where the issue of trust enters. Trusting that persons we come into contact with at UUS are acting responsibly is essential to regaining our community interactions. Trust is also essential in leadership decisions in regards to where we go from here.

I come from almost thirty years of union work. I trusted the union members to tell me what they wanted, and they trusted me to do my best to achieve that. That trust was built on communication. As we struggle with pandemic consequences, I believe it is essential that our Society's leaders hear from our members on what they want to see happen at UUS. The loss of one-on-one conversations before and after services and during hospitality hour has isolated us. It is a common fault of leaders to make assumptions about what people want or need. If we are to trust decisions that affect us all, then we all need to communicate. Please reach out and tell us what you think. Peace.

UUS COVID Response

Our Unitarian Universalist faith centers covenants. One of the covenants that we make with one another is to try to keep each other safe and growing in body, mind, and spirit. We don't often talk a lot about this covenant, but we trust that it's there. Centering this is part of why the Board created a COVID Task Force primarily made up of medical professionals and scientists. We've learned that congregations have a significant role to play in how COVID-19 spreads both because of large gatherings and because of how groups of people network with one another. In order to care for one another, it's imperative that we take actions that help slow the spread of COVID and protect members, staff, and friends of UUS and the wider community. We're committed to doing that as a faith community.

As UUs, we affirm our interdependence, we commit to encouraging each other's spiritual growth, and we declare that we will work for a world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all. One of the ways we live these commitments is by working to ensure accessibility, so we're conscious of the need to not create a two-tiered congregation where some people can meet in person and others can't due to health concerns and are thereby excluded from full participation in the congregation based on ability. This commitment is directly related to our faith's commitment to justice. At the same time, we recognize the importance of contact with other humans, including safe in-person contact, for emotional and mental wellbeing. As we move into the 2020-21 church year UUS's leaders are trying to hold and respond to both of these needs as best we can. Our staff team is going through ideas many of you submitted over the summer and at sessions Rev. Diana has led. The goal is to build on what we learned in the spring and summer to have services and other programming that engages us all in even fuller ways

and helps us survive and perhaps even thrive as individuals and as a congregation this year.

The COVID Task Force Committee, which includes members from the medical community, submitted their recommendations at the August Board meeting. The Board plans to further review and adopt these guidelines in September. Right now, with COVID positivity rates higher than they have been since the pandemic began, UUS does not meet the recommended requirements to begin in-person gathering.

We are currently in Phase 1 with the building closed, with the exception of staff working and a few volunteers who are doing essential functions. We're updating building signs to show more guidelines for the Phase we're in. In addition, we will have this on our website. We've also found that while we may be in one phase we may also have to pull in as circumstances warrant. We will keep you informed. Under the COVID Task Force's recommendations, in order for UUS to meet Phase II opening we must be compliant with the Phase I Guidelines and the positivity rate must be at 10% or lower for at least 8 out of 14 days. There are a few other factors we must consider as well, such as making sure we have enough supplies. Finally, the Board has drafted a policy that states that UUS functions and meeting groups are to follow UUS policies and procedures, whether meeting on the building grounds or off site. While we know how hard COVID has been on everyone our number one priority is keeping one another safe. Keep taking good care of yourselves, your families, and each other.

Blessed Be,

Rev. Diana Smith, UUS Minister

Amy Fretz, COVID Task Force Committee Chair

Phase I Building Use Guidelines

Anyone exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 or diagnosed with COVID-19 **must not** enter the building. If you were in the UUS building and later find out you have COVID-19, please notify Rev. Diana Smith or your supervisor so that others who used the building around the same time can get tested.

The UUS building remains closed. Staff are working there as their work requires, so it's crucial we all adhere to the building closure in order to protect the health of our staff, their families, and the members who have an exception to use the church building for specific, limited, essential purposes such as signing checks, essential custodial and maintenance services, building safety checks, and necessary material gathering. **No meetings or gatherings are allowed except as outlined below.**

- If you need to use the building for an essential purpose, please contact the ministry staff person for your area (Rev. Diana Smith, Peggy Garrigues, Emma Barnum, or Jessica Zimmer) about your activity in advance to get an exception to use the building and so they can track building use. Tracking who is using the building allows staff and members to manage their own health risk and allows for better contact tracing if a staff person or member who used the building is diagnosed with COVID-19.

- Sign in and out of the building on the sign-in sheet that will be near the inner door in the building entryway and at the Kitchen door.
- Masks, good hand hygiene practices, disinfecting surfaces, and volunteer sign-in and out are required throughout the building. Anyone using the building for an incidental purpose to drop off an item, sign checks, etc., must wear a mask, sign in and out, and follow all hygiene practices.
- Incidental building use by grounds volunteers should be avoided and requires wearing a mask and following hand hygiene and disinfecting practices.
- Someone may work alone in a closed office without a mask.
- If staff or staff and a member need to meet, they should minimize meeting length and maximizing ventilation. Music recording requirements are given in the full guidelines.

Complete guidelines will be posted on UUS's website. Guidelines will be updated if additional information about the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, transmission, and safety practices become known.

2021 Stewardship Campaign

Threads That Weave Us Together
SAVE THE DATES

Our actions as a community are the threads that weave our UU members together. A stewardship pledge is an action that deepens our connections to one another. Our community has a strong past to draw on. As we go forward, we will meet the challenges of these times collectively through our commitments to each other and our community.

We invite you to join us for the following services:

- October 11th: Stewardship Kickoff Sunday
- October 18th: Campaign Update
- October 25th: Celebration of Commitment



Above: the Stewardship Quilt from last year's Stewardship campaign

Immigration Action Team: Write Here, Write Now

UUS members have an opportunity to gather together with other UUs from Iowa to let our U.S. Senators know that we advocate for social justice. The UU Washington Advocates print off the letters we send via email, and gloved hands deliver them to the Senator's office. In many cases they are able to have a conversation with a staffer about the issue. The Advocates swear that this method of communication works best because policy makers value letters more than emails or phone calls. The strongest letters are those that have a story. The Advocates research what bills are coming up, and relay that information to us. The topic for September is immigration. Look for additional information about the immigration writing campaign in the September 9th Wednesday Update.

UU Free Lunch Report

Friday, August 14th, was the fifth month of the "new normal" for UUS volunteers serving at the Free Lunch Program. Due to the pandemic, volunteers Sherry Dolash, Russ Lenth, Carrie Norton, Bonnie Penno, and Vicki Siefers (all masked, gloved, and social distanced) assembled and served clamshell container lunches to 92 appreciative diners through a side door at 1105 S. Gilbert. Thanks to these dedicated volunteers! The chicken strip main dish was purchased thanks to the generosity of Barb Haring in memory of her husband, Stan (who did the original artwork for the Caring Hands logo used by the Crisis Center, now CommUnity, for many years). Cash donations from many UUS Free Lunch volunteers provided side dishes of coleslaw, baked beans, applesauce, and juice boxes. Bonnie reports that enough applesauce and chicken strips were left over to provide a partial meal to a group of latecomers, so that no one went away hungry. All in all, it was very much a team effort by UUS volunteers who were on-site and those who were not. If you are interested in finding out how you can help, please contact Carmen Griggs at csgriggsiowa@gmail.com.

Secular Humanists, September 15th

The UUS Secular Humanists will meet Tuesday, September 15th, at 7 pm via Zoom with Rev. Diana. It will be our and her opportunity to introduce each to the other. Please join us as we share our UUS history, contributions, and questions with Rev. Diana, while we get to know her better through her comments and responses to our questions. All are welcome. ([Join Zoom Meeting](#), Meeting ID: 844 1798 5486, Passcode: 260197)

UU Wellspring Program Will Have Two Groups Beginning This Fall

We are excited to announce that we will have two UU Wellspring Groups for spiritual deepening beginning this fall! The group for those who are new to Wellspring will meet on the 2nd and 4th Mondays, September through June, beginning fully online. It has a focus on looking at the six sources of our UU living tradition. It is still possible to sign up! Talk to Peggy Garrigues (dcl@uusic.org) if you have thought about this and would like to consider joining this group.

We will also have a group for those who have previously taken the UU Sources curriculum, continuing on with a new Wellspring curriculum: Faithful Actions. It looks more deeply at how we live out our UU values in our lives through relational service, service that meets the needs of others, and social and environmental justice work.

Antiracist Adult RE Class This Fall

The Racial Justice Team, plus Jessica Zimmer and Peggy Garrigues, are developing plans for an adult RE class focusing on being antiracist. It would involve monthly meetings probably over six months with readings, podcasts, articles, group activities. We anticipate beginning the class in early October. More details will be posted soon. If interested in participating or learning more, please contact Jessica, education@uusic.org.



Above: The August Free Lunch Team

Excerpts from the Treasurer's July Financial Report

This month was the first in which we relied solely on our in-house staff to handle accounts. Emma and Nik did an excellent job. Bills and donations were handled in a timely and orderly fashion, end-of-month summaries were detailed and understandable, and glitches with QuickBooks matching old accounting are being addressed.

Overall our bank accounts (cash available) remain stable. End-of-month balances equal \$392,855. These are our several operating accounts and the remainder of the Capital Campaign funds. These accounts have been steady around the 350k-400k level all this year. (Income or Expenses can spike in any given month causing fluctuations within that 50k range.) This steadiness indicates no current concerns of overspending the 2020 budget.

Endowment Funds end-of-month balances equal \$1,385,000. These several stock funds' values generally follow the stock market values. As such they have popped up by \$35,000 over last month's closing. We have been taking \$12,800 out per month for operating expenses beginning in May and ending in December. The Endowment Committee will probably approve our taking 5% out in 2021.

The Finance Committee has not been able to meet these last two months, but we have exchanged documents by email and have discussed the issue of the 2021 forecast by phone with each member. The consensus is that we should plan on a lower income for 2021, but should operate with a budget at about the same total level as 2020. Pledge giving may be going down, we will not have a PPP loan to use and we will be getting less from Endowment. However, we need to sustain the energy and activity of UUS. We will probably operate in the red in 2021. However, we have a substantial pool of reserve to count on.

—Mike Pavelich

Excerpts from the Congregational Administrator's July Financial Report

This was our first month handling our accounting "solo," having left our accounting firm at the end of June. For the most part things have gone smoothly. We have had to make some accommodations to the financial policies to ensure our safety during COVID (processing deposits and checks individually rather than together) but have been checking in often to double check each other's work and monitor the books for inaccuracies.

Pledge payments for July were only slightly under budget, although that is mostly due to several members paying their full annual pledge early. That will probably mean lower pledge income in the second half of the year, but for now we are at 47% of our pledge goal, which is right where we should be at the middle of the year.

We also had robust fundraising and donations for our various restricted funds, such as the Black Lives Matter sign sale by the Racial Justice Team, Social Justice agency giving for Inside Out, and farewell donations for Rev. Diane and Gloria, This activity doesn't count as income for UUS but is still a good indication of an active and engaged congregation.

The majority of our expense lines are under or right at budget, and many expenses posted on the profit & loss statement are offset by income.

—Emma Barnum

UUS Staff

Minister: Rev. Diana Smith (minister@uusic.org)

Congregational Administrator: Emma Barnum (admin@uusic.org)

Director of Lifespan Religious Education:

Jessica Zimmer (education@uusic.org)

Director of Congregational Life: Peggy Garrigues (dcl@uusic.org)

Accompanist: Aura Strohschein (accompanist@uusic.org)

Publicity Coordinator: Jeff Walberg (publicity@uusic.org)

Administrative Assistant: Nik Jakob (admin.assistant@uusic.org)

Religious Education Assistant: Anna Rode (re.assistant@uusic.org)

Building Steward: Ron Wright (contact the office)

Community Minister: Rev. Lois Cole (community.minister@uusic.org)

UUS Board of Trustees, 2020-2021

President: Joe Rasmussen (721-7777, uusicc.joe@gmail.com)

Vice President: Alan Swanson (321-3129, alan-swanson@mchsi.com)

Past President: Amy Fretz (720-207-4513, amymhere@gmail.com)

Secretary: Allison Bettine (630-272-6907, allison.bettine@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Mike Pavelich (338-5168, treasurer@uusic.org)

Finance Trustee: John Raley (321-5437, jralley@amfam.com)

Trustee: Colleen Higgins (646-6564, colleeniris9@gmail.com)

Trustee: Paul Pomrehn (594-2371, paulpomrehn@gmail.com)

Trustee: Kim McWane Friese (594-2506, kimberly.friese@gmail.com)

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.

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.