



THE UUS NEWS

February 2021

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, Passcode: 006311

Or join via phone: Find your local number: bit.ly/UUSServices [FindZoomNumber](#).

Each week the Zoom meeting will open at 9:50 am, with the service beginning at 10. A time for virtual fellowship will follow.

February 7th

“Restorative Justice”

Rev. Jessica James

February 14th

“Side With Love Sunday”

Rev. Diana Smith

What if to “side with love” meant making bold, faith-full choices? What if it were even a little bit scary? This worship service brings together worship leaders and musicians from across the country to offer hopeful, moving, challenging reminders about what we, as Unitarian Universalists, are called to do, and BE, in the world.

February 21st

“Creating Community That Celebrates Learning and Growing”

Rev. Diana Smith

February 28th

“Shifting Our View”

Rev. Diana Smith

Past Sunday Service Attendance

December 24th: ~108 Participating Zoom Accounts

December 27th: ~120 Participating Zoom Accounts

January 3rd: ~100 Participating Zoom Accounts

January 10th: ~139 Participating Zoom Accounts

January 17th: ~128 Participating Zoom Accounts

January 24th: ~133 Participating Zoom Accounts

February’s Social Justice Offerings Benefit United Action for Youth (UAY)

UAY is a non-profit organization working with youth, parents, and the local community to provide services for all teenagers 12-18 years old. It is a place for youth to have a voice and give back creatively to their community.

From two facilities in Iowa City and programs offered at area schools and agencies, UAY provides many opportunities for youth. The Teen Parent Program provides a wide array of services to young families in Johnson County. UAY’s Youth Development programs give teens an opportunity to gain self-esteem, skills, and leadership. UAY also offers counseling 365 days a year for youth, parents, & families.

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

February Birthdays

Ronald L. McCall	Jill Stephenson	If you would like your birthday listed in the newsletter (or removed), contact dcl@uusic.org .
Virginia Miller	Vanessa Taylor	
Nancy Noyer	Carly van der	
Maureen Patterson	Heide	
Gerry Pearson	Peg Voelker	
Jaia Rosenfels	Kylie Wetherell	
Paula Sanan	Nora Wittenkeller	



From Your Minister

Dear Ones,

Our theme for February is Beloved Community. Whenever we begin talking about Beloved Community, I always think of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who said, “Our goal is to create a beloved community and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives.”

Rev. Dr. King talked about his vision often throughout his life, and much of what we now think about it is based on what he had to say about his hopes and dreams of a Beloved Community, of a community defined by agape love.

But what is Beloved Community? Have you experienced it?

Would everyone remembering the same experience—people of different genders, ethnicities, races, ages, abilities, etc.—define that experience as one of Beloved Community?

We’ll be spending February exploring different ideas and experiences of what Beloved Community is. As we do, I invite you to keep reflecting on and discussing these questions.

I also invite you to reflect on the proposed 8th Principle that a growing number of Unitarian Universalist congregations have been studying and adopting. It is currently being studied by a UUA commission (you can learn more by going to www.uua.org and searching for “8th principle”). It reads:

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: 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.

What does such a principle tell us about the journey of and toward Beloved Community? What does it tell us about our hopes, dreams, and needs?

As we continue our journey together I look forward to our conversations about our experiences of Beloved Community and how we can work towards shaping one at UUS, in the community, and beyond.

Love and Blessings, Rev. Diana

“The Shared Pulpit” Sermon-Writing Course Begins February 15th

Have you ever wanted to try writing a sermon or reflection but haven’t been sure how? Have you wondered how writing can be a spiritual practice? Rev. Diana will be leading an online sermon-writing class this spring. Participants will be able to develop a sermon to propose for summer (or later) worship—or not, depending on their preference.

Classes will be online from 6:30 to 8:30 pm on February 15th, March 1st, March 15th, March 29th, April 5th, and April 19th. Maximum of 10 participants. To sign up, email Rev. Diana at minister@uusic.org.

From Your Board President, Joe Rasmussen

2021 Finances

The approval of the 2021 budget at the December congregational meeting launches UUS into the new year. It is always wise to take inventory of our financial status at different points in time. UUS ended 2020 with \$417,262 combined in all of our bank accounts. That includes some pre-paid 2021 pledges and carryover from other accounts. The final pledge total for 2021 was \$376,974 of our goal of \$450,000 from 190 pledge units. The Endowment funds ended on a high note gaining \$101,000 for a total year-end balance of \$1,518,900. The 2021 budget that was accepted contains expenditures of \$599,767. Our budget deficit for 2020 was approximately \$130,000. That 2020 deficit was lessened by a federal Paycheck Protection Program forgivable loan. We had hoped to receive another PPP loan in 2021, but when Congress renewed the program in December they added new rules that will prevent us from receiving this loan. That will add to our budget stress. However, the Board of Trustees instituted a non-essential spending freeze early in 2020. UUS teams and staff responded with conservative spending decisions during the year so that 2020 expenses were less than budgeted. The Board of Trustees at its January meeting has renewed its Spending Guidance for 2021. It again asks staff and teams to take a conservative approach.

Spending Guidance for 2021

2021 finds us in a difficult budget situation as income has declined while many of our expenses are not optional. Early in 2020 the Board of Trustees instituted a freeze on all nonessential spending. Later in 2020 that freeze was relaxed to allow conservative spending that would maintain programming and fulfill the basic mission and vision of UUS. Everyone was asked to delay any spending that could wait until 2021. Now the new year requires that we renew this conservative approach to spending. Spending on new materials, new equipment, and capital expenses should be kept to a minimum. Improvements to the building and grounds should be postponed until later this year, unless they are necessary to ensure the integrity of the facility or come from endowment funds when aligned with endowment fund designations and Board policy protocols. If there are ways to spend less money without causing harm to your program, please consider this. If you feel the health of your program requires you to spend budgeted money, then the Board will trust staff and team leaders to make responsible decisions without specific guidelines by the Board. Please consult with your Senior Staff member when you encounter an unforeseen or major expense. Any spending beyond your budgeted amount must gain prior Board approval. Together we will emerge from these times and into a better and more secure tomorrow.

Drive Through Valentines Event, February 13th

Join us from 1 to 2:30 pm in the UUS parking lot for a drive-through Valentine’s Day event on Saturday, February 13th. We’ll be making giant valentines to hang at UUS and collecting peanut butter and jelly for CommUnity’s Spread the Love campaign. Look for more details in upcoming weekly emails.

February Covenant Groups

As the new year began, covenant groups explored what it means to be a people of “Imagination.” Imagination has no limits—and yet is constantly limited by society’s constraints. According to Walter Brueggemann, “Imagination is a danger—thus every totalitarian regime is frightened of the artist. It is the vocation of the prophet to keep alive the ministry of imagination to keep on conjuring and proposing alternative futures to the single one the king wants to urge as the only thinkable one.” Hmm, that seems particularly relevant. But is completely unfettered imagination always a good thing? What role do you think imagination plays in the life of a people—congregation, community, society as a whole? What role does it play in your individual life?

If questions like these intrigue you, you might be ready to join a covenant group. The covenant group program offers its members the opportunity to share their views and deepen their understanding of a wide range of issues while creating closer ties with other UUs. You can learn more about the program and how to join a group by contacting Jan Locher (354- 6260, locherj@mchsi.com).

February is PB & J Month!

More than ever, kids are at home and need lunch! So let’s donate peanut butter and jelly to CommUnity (the Crisis Center) for their annual Spread the Love Campaign! Bring PB & J to UUS. There will be a container in the entryway for your contributions (please, no glass jars).

UUA New Day Rising National Conference, February 27th

Is your congregation ready to take a new step in changing white supremacy culture? Want to learn what your fellow congregations are working on, and how you might apply it at home? Join a continent of UUs as we explore next steps in creating Beloved UU Communities.

Before the conference you’ll be able to watch compelling video TED-talk-style testimonials from selected congregations around the continent sharing their learnings, hopes, and next steps in their quest for racial equity in their congregations.

Then, on Saturday, February 27th, from 11 am to 8 pm, we’ll gather together virtually for worship, workshops, and caucusing (with plenty of breaks!).

Cost will be a sliding scale fee of your choosing: \$20/30/40/50. Registration fees are on a sliding scale, based on your assessment of your ability to pay. Those who pay at the two highest levels are making a donation to help those in financial need for this event. Please remember that for a sliding scale to work, we need the same number of people with means to generously pay more to balance the needs of those who can afford less. (This is one way we try to build the Beloved Community!) If you are part of a congregational team of three or more, please pay the lowest fee.

[Register Here: http://bit.ly/UUANewDayRising](http://bit.ly/UUANewDayRising). This event is brought to you by the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Secular Humanists, February 16th

We’re excited to host Sue Hutchins for our next UU Secular Humanists meeting on Tuesday, February 16th, via Zoom at 7 pm. Sue, from Cedar Rapids, is a retired mental health professional and an activist for prison sentencing reform. Specifically, Sue is lobbying the Iowa State Legislature to modify the mandatory prison sentence of Life, without parole. She also is promoting a U.S. constitutional amendment to repeal the clause in the 13th Amendment that allows for “slavery” as part of a prison sentence. Sue has self-published a small volume of essays by Iowa prisoners serving life sentences (www.amazon.com/Bleak-Walls-Bright-Minds-their/dp/B08P1FC8PR). With our UUS connection to, and support of, Simon Tunstall at IMCC (Oakdale Prison), this topic is very apropos to many UUs, the Prison Ministry Team, and Social/Racial Justice Teams. All are welcome to join in. (Link to Join, Meeting ID: 851 2816 3219, Passcode: 759979)

UUS Free Lunch Program Report

As we begin 2021, unfortunately COVID-19 is still with us but it won’t stop UUS volunteers from providing a full, healthy meal to Free Lunch Program participants on the second Friday of each month. Friday, January 8th, was no exception. UUS volunteers Daniel Christian, Ellen Junk, Russ Lenth, Lori Marshall, and Bonnie Penno assembled and served 53 boxed meals at the Free Lunch kitchen door and another 26 meals were assembled and taken to the day shelter at the Robert A. Lee Center downtown. UUS volunteers were happy to see that a wind-blocker had been installed across the doorway where meals are served which will keep them much warmer during these cold and windy winter months! Many thanks to Jeanette Carter who purchased the main dish and to Bonnie Penno who purchased the compostable clamshells. Thanks also to the many UUS Free Lunch volunteers, members, and friends whose generous donations once again purchased all the side dishes and fresh fruit. One Free Lunch diner returned to the serving window and told our volunteers “This is the best meal I’ve had in weeks!” The teamwork of so many UUS members and friends made this compliment possible.

We’re now looking for UUS members and friends who would be willing to purchase a \$300 main dish in 2021. Covenant Groups might consider this option or friends might choose to go together to cover the cost. If you’re interested, please contact Diana Miller at dkmilleriowa@gmail.com.



Treasurer's December Financial Report Excerpt

Overall our bank accounts and stock accounts are up a bit. We are in a good position to meet the deficit spending anticipated for 2021. Kudos to all members and staff.

Analysis of Endowment Stocks and Bank Operating Account activity during 2020:

1. We actually have more money in these usable reserves at the end of this year than we did at the end of 2019. Bank operating accounts are higher by \$31,000 and Endowment stocks are higher by \$101,000.
2. These increases overall are due to a 15% market growth in stock values and the PPP loan obtained by Chris Rode. (The December 31st Bank Operating Accounts total does contain \$30,000 in prepaid 2021 Pledges.)
3. We overspent our normal yearly income (pledges, ASA, fundraising) by about \$130,000 in 2020. This was almost exactly covered in our bank accounts by the PPP loan of \$72,400 and a second ASA draw of \$55,300.
4. Endowment funds also gained \$10,000 from Joe Brisben's estate, and the Detiger Fund contributed \$7,500 for approved operating expenses. Considering all these pieces, I calculated a 14-15% market value growth in our endowment stocks. This matches what major indices reported for 2020. Thus our Endowment Stocks are being well managed.

Updates from the Finance Council

- Deficit Spending Discussion: The Finance Council extensively discussed the decision to not pay down principle when the mortgage was renewed. We also talked deeply about the larger problem of the yearly income not matching desired budgets. Both discussions were productive with each member giving their concerns and process ideas. There is a strong commitment by the group to work with Board to find answers to the deficit spending problem in the coming months.
- Mortgage: We made our first monthly payment on our new mortgage of \$4,862.78 on January 1st, 2021. Compared with the old mortgage, we are saving \$1,400/month or \$17,000/year on mortgage payments. We are paying about \$500/month more in interest given the higher rate 3.55% and are paying down the principle at a slower pace than with the old loan. We can pay down more principle occasionally if we wish.
- PPP loan 2020: The 2020 loan final papers were prepared by Chris Rode and have been submitted by CSB to the government. We await it being officially forgiven and anticipate no problem there.
- PPP loan 2021: Unfortunately UUS does not meet the Federal benchmark for application for PPP funds in 2021. The mark is "at least one quarter in 2020 whose gross income was at least 25% lower than it was in the same quarter in 2019." Our CSB banker, Emma, and I have gone through the financials for the quarters since COVID hit and could not hit that threshold (our results: 2nd quarter (-)20%, 3rd quarter (-)13%, and 4th quarter (-)11%).

—Mike Pavelich

Congregational Administrator's December Financial Report Excerpt

December's pledge payments were up compared to last month (114% of budgeted monthly income was received in December compared to 78% in November). This was expected due to the number of people who pay their full pledge in December or prepay part or all of their upcoming pledge. We ended 2020 at 84% of our pledge goal, or about \$73k behind budget. Our four bank accounts combined total \$417,262.88 (in November the month-end total was \$389,973.06).

Our Endowment Accounts rose in December. The only account reporting a loss was the Detiger Fund, due to the withdrawal of \$7.5k for board approved spending on an AED package and for livestreaming services (we only spent 1/10th of the livestreaming funds in 2020—the remainder will be added to the 2021 budget). Our combined Endowment accounts total \$1,518,900.37 (\$1,485,245.40 in November).

In December UUs raised \$2,041.30 for our various social justice agencies, including \$1,066.30 for December's agency, the Free Dental Clinic, \$20 extra for the Free Lunch Program (November's agency), \$350 for the 5th Sunday donation to the UUA office at the UN, and \$600 extra for the Project Holiday initiative. The Christmas Eve service offering brought in \$1,845 for the Minister's Discretionary Fund. We have also received over \$18,000 for the 2020 UUS Treats & Talents Auction.

Expenses for 2020 remained down compared to budget.

Our pledge total for 2021 as of the very beginning of January 2021 is \$376,974.04 of our \$450,000 goal with 190 pledge units.

—Emma Barnum



Unitarian Universalist Society Board of Trustees Meeting Highlights

January 20th, 2020 (virtual via Zoom)

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

PRESENT: Joe Rasmussen (President), Alan Swanson (Vice-President), Amy Fretz (Past-President), Mike Pavelich (Treasurer), Carol Adamson (Secretary), John Raley (Financial Trustee), Colleen Higgins (Trustee), Paul Pomrehn (Trustee), Julia Audlehelm (Trustee), and Rev. Diana Smith (Minister, Ex-Officio).

GUESTS: Deb Schoelerman

Board President Joe Rasmussen called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

CONSENT AGENDA: *The Board voted and received the consent agenda and approved the December Board minutes, January Executive Committee minutes, staff report, Treasurer report and financial summary, and Sponsorship of Iowa City's 18th annual Night of 1000 Dinners.*

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- **Spending Guidance for 2021:** At the December Board meeting a decision was made to re-authorize the guidelines to staff and team leaders regarding budget spending during 2021. Rasmussen presented the final draft of Spending Guidance for 2021. There was extensive discussion about how major expenditures can be brought to the attention of the Board. *Pavelich made a motion, seconded by Swanson, to approve the Spending Guidance for 2021 statement, as amended. The motion carried.*
- **Approve Vacancy for a New Part-Time AV Coordinator:** Rev. Smith shared the job description for this new position and asked the Board to approve funding in the amount of \$4,200.00 for the position's compensation. This amount is based on an average of five hours of work per week. *Pomrehn made a motion, seconded by Higgins, to approve \$4,200.00 for the hiring of a new part-time AV Coordinator. The motion carried.*

NEW BUSINESS

- **Staff Vacancies Update:** With the resignation of Jessica Zimmer-Saltzman as DLRE, Rev. Smith requested formal authorization to begin the search process for a new Director of Lifespan Religious Education. *Raley made a motion, seconded by Pavelich, to authorize Rev. Smith to create a search committee and commence with the filling of the DLRE position. The motion carried.* Rev. Smith reported that the Music Director search is underway, and she is currently forming the search committee.
- **Midwest Leadership School Scholarships and GA/Midwest Regional Expenses:** The Board's 2021 budget line item #5610 has \$2,000 designated for Scholarships. The Leadership Development Committee (LDC) has proposed that we shift that amount to the LDC. Historically, the LDC has been responsible for decisions regarding scholarship requests for Leadership School and expenses to be reimbursed for GA and the Midwest Regional Conference. *Swanson made a motion, seconded by Fretz, to authorize deleting the 2021 budget line item #5610 and creating a budget line item in an equal amount for the Leadership Development Committee. The motion carried.*
- **2021 Paycheck Protection Program Loan Application:** Pavelich reported that UUS does not qualify for the Payroll Protection Program as defined in the COVID-19 Relief Act for 2021.
- **Approval of Bio-Cell Repair Contract:** The Grounds Team is recommending that the bio-cell/water retention basin west of the church and south of the parking lot be repaired as soon as possible. The contract for the repair was submitted for review by the Board. The Grounds Team is asking this non-budgeted expense to be approved by the Board. *Fretz made a motion, seconded by Audlehelm, to authorize the contract and estimate for the repair of the Bio-Cell up to \$20,000.00. The motion carried.*
- **Appointment(s) to the Johnson County Inter-Faith Coalition (JCIC):** Director of Congregational Life Peggy Garrigues has been the UUS interim representative on the JCIC and has proposed that she be replaced by Rev. Smith. *Fretz made a motion, seconded by Pavelich, to appoint Reverend Diana Smith to the Johnson County Inter-Faith Coalition. The motion carried.*

GUEST COMMENTS: None

CLOSING

Rasmussen gave process observer comments, Raley provided closing words, and the chalice was extinguished. *Pavelich moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Fretz. Rasmussen adjourned the meeting at 9:38 pm.* The next meeting is Wednesday, February 17th, 2021 at 7 pm.

—Carol Adamson, Secretary

The UUS News

The Unitarian Universalist Society
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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)
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)
Online Music Leader: Dave Rowe (info@daverowemusic.com)
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: Carol Adamson (855-8625, cadamson2@zoho.com)
Treasurer: Mike Pavelich (338-5168, treasurer@uusic.org)
Finance Trustee: John Raley (321-5437, jraley@amfam.com)
Trustee: Colleen Higgins (646-6564, colleeniris9@gmail.com)
Trustee: Paul Pomrehn (594-2371, paulpomrehn@gmail.com)
Trustee: Julia Audlehelm (530-4471, juliasdrawings11@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.