



THE UUS NEWS

September 2021

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

- * HONOR THE EARTH
- * ADVOCATE FOR RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
- * NUTURE 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](https://bit.ly/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.

September 5th:

“Celebration of Food, Sustainable Farming, and Farm Workers” Service & Picnic

On this Labor Day weekend, Peggy Garrigues will help to coordinate a short service of readings, reflections, and music on just and sustainable approaches to food, farming, and farm workers. After the service, there will be a break, and we then invite you to a picnic at UUS that will begin at 11:30 am on the back patio.

All are welcome to bring food and beverages to feed yourself and your family or pod, for an outdoor picnic on the patio and grounds at UUS. This will not be a potluck or buffet style of meal, so please bring your own table settings and beverages along with food only for your own family or pod. You are invited to bring some kind of food as part of your meal that is grown or produced locally, either from your own garden, or from a local farm, and be ready to tell others about what local food you brought.

Assuming we are still in Phase 2 of our reopening plan, everyone will need to be masked when not eating or drinking, and to keep a 4 to 6-foot distance between households. We have a number of chairs and tables available, but if you can easily bring chairs or a blanket or other seating for your family or pod, that will ensure room for all who may want to attend.

September 12th:

Ingathering & Water Communion

Rev. Diana Smith will lead this service and ritual. More details will be shared soon.

September 19th:

“Embracing Possibilities”

Rev. Diana Smith will lead this service. More details will be shared soon.

September 26th:

“Connecting with Ourselves, Each Other, and the Wider Community”

Rev. Diana Smith will lead this service, which will kick off our 2022 Pledge Campaign. More details will be shared soon.

2022 Stewardship Campaign

“Engaging with Ourselves, Each Other, and the Wider Community”

Save the Date! The kick-off for the 2022 Stewardship Campaign to support our operating budget will be on Sunday, September 26th, 2021. Our pledge goal is \$420,000, which will ensure that we have the financial resources needed to support our programs that reflect our mission and vision.

Watch your mail for the Stewardship Campaign materials and make your pledge through Realm or return the enclosed pledge card to the office. Contact the office with questions: admin@uus.org or 319-337-3443.

Your generosity has the potential to help us return to our pre-pandemic pledge level. Together we can heighten our connections and make a difference.

September’s Social Justice Offerings Benefit Shelter House

In the last year, Shelter House provided emergency shelter to 617 adults and 117 children in our community. It has remained open throughout the pandemic, providing temporary housing and helping people find permanent housing. In just the first six months of 2021, with grants and individual gifts for eviction prevention work, Shelter House has been able to keep 555 individuals in 236 households from experiencing homelessness. Case managers were able to help individuals and families with utility assistance, late payments, and more. Children were able to remain in their schools.

Construction has begun on a second Housing First facility next door to Shelter House. It will provide 36 chronically homeless individuals a safe home of their own with the opportunity to turn their lives around as the tenants in Cross Park have in the last two years.

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



From Your Minister, Rev. Diana Smith

Dear Ones,

This summer I got to do some of my favorite activities: camping, hiking, kayaking, and gardening. As part of these I experienced the crisp quiet of the mountain woods and eating dinner alongside a moose, basking in the presence of alpine lakes at over 10,000 feet, the sacredness of the warm, damp upper Mississippi River in summer, and growing glorious food for now and for winter.

As part of these I also experienced the misery of a warm, wet tent and a cold, wet tent, the stress of getting my family far enough down the mountain to be safely under tree cover when a thunderstorm descended while we were basking in the presence of an alpine lake, trying to sleep amidst loud people and loud music, and fending off innumerable bugs with only moderate success. Such is the reality of being fully present in these activities I love.

As the calendar turns to September, our theme is turning to “Embracing Possibility.” With the stress of the changing pandemic, in many ways this seems like an odd theme. After all, so many of us are experiencing expressions or symptoms of ongoing overwhelm and trauma ([this handout is a great guide](#) to understanding some of what you may be experiencing). And yet, our theme also offers an invitation to not minimize the overwhelm, stress, confusion, grief, and exhaustion we are feeling, but to hold the reality of them together with the possible routes that the present offers us.

Sometimes, reflecting on simpler, more familiar experiences, like camping, hiking, kayaking, and gardening, helps us figure out how we navigate things like stress, fear, misery, confusion, and exhaustion—how we find ways to accept the present moment for what it is and move into the possibilities it presents. So, as we explore and even embrace the possibilities of now,

- How might you tend your mind, body, and spirit to help reduce overwhelm or trauma? How might we support each other in this? ([Here is a guide](#) to techniques you can try.)
- How can you and how can we nurture gratitude right now, however small? (As a trainer recently told me, if you can’t find something that’s going well, gratitude can be something like “My child doesn’t have lice today.”)
- What experiences can you draw upon for wisdom about how to be present now and move into the possibilities of the present that is rather than the present you wanted?
- What might it mean to explore the possibility that returning to “normal” isn’t a hope for some people because the “normal” of January 2020 wasn’t healthy for them or their loved ones?

As we explore and embrace the possibilities of the present this month, I look forward to doing this with you, and so living Love more fully and fiercely into the world.

Love and Blessings,

Rev. Diana

From Your Board President, Alan Swanson

With the goal of including everyone in one good way or another, gradual reopening plans began in August. UUS is experimenting with areas of seating in the sanctuary while using our new high-resolution multiplatform audiovisual system to continue to reach those who opt to participate from home (or from wherever they may be) for health or other reasons. For those in the staged and limited return to sanctuary services, the careful new approach includes wearing colored stickers to indicate comfort levels for congregants’ interactions. Our steps toward reopening will depend on COVID levels, especially the rising threat of the Delta variant.

Outside our building, the Land Ministry Team has overseen planting, weeding, plans for new pathways and steps, and completion of repairs to one of our erosion-preventing bio-retention cells. In addition, careful steps have been explored by another team this past month to begin plans for a Memorial Garden contemplated from the time of UUS’s move from Gilbert St.

Inside, the fellowship hall now has a new wood ceiling generously provided by an anonymous donor to match the sanctuary’s ceiling.

In August we welcomed two new staff to key positions, and they’ve hit the ground running. We are delighted to now have with us Director of Music Alex Heetland and Director of Lifetime Religious Education Marsha Thrall, who already are demonstrating their talents and resourcefulness.

The board of trustees-authorized Balance and Growth Initiative (BGI) is a dedicated group working closely with the board and consulting with many others to devise a two-year plan to bring UUS out of its operating budget deficit while undergirding our UU principles. The group is making good strides seeking ways to increase individual support, reduce costs, and find new avenues of income. In November the plan should be complete, and at the December annual meeting we’ll present it to the congregation.

Finally, and of great importance, we’re approaching the launch September 26 of this year’s Stewardship Campaign, an effort that greatly and immediately impacts our operating budget--and is a critical part of our ability to carry out embracing programs of vision and mission. I encourage everyone’s generous support to help UUS further adapt in the pandemic’s wake, and to promote the congregation’s programs of connectivity, spiritual growth, and outreach.

Caring and acting together, Alan Swanson, President

From Your Director of Lifespan Religious Education, Marsha Thrall

Friends,

Three weeks have passed since my official first day at UUS—and my goodness, what a whirlwind of days they have been! In this very short time, I have been extended a loving and radical welcome by so many of you. My heart is full, and I am glad to be serving such a wonderful group of folks.

Many have asked “what is next for RE at UUS?” And this is a very valid question. My goal during my first few months with you is to do some restorative and restructuring work around Religious Education at UUS. Part of this restructuring will include “All Ages Worship” each week, including the new Religious Education Moment, which is taking the place of the Time for All Ages during worship. The goal is to create a healing, trauma-informed, and inclusive worship space for all members, including families and caregivers of children and youth. As such, when we are able to meet in person, all Sunday classroom activities for children and youth will be suspended for at least the 2021-22 church year. Regardless of whether UUS will be worshipping in person, we will also be reintroducing OWL for middle school in small groups, incorporating a multi-platform approach for Coming of Age, and work has already started in re-engaging the teens at UUS in Young Religious UU (YRUU) programming.

Another exciting shift at UUS will be the transition from monthly family events to monthly Vesper services for UUS families and members who would like to participate. These late afternoon services will provide the opportunity for families to spiritually connect with one another in a low-key worship setting. Our first Vespers service at UUS will take place outdoors, at UUS on Sunday, September 19th, 2021 from 4 to 5 pm. Participants are welcome to fellowship outdoors following the Vesper service.

Finally, I invite you to schedule a 30-minute, one on one meeting with me to discuss your hopes for the future of Religious Education at UUS. If you'd like to schedule a meeting with me, please follow my [Calendly link](#) to arrange a time for us to talk.

I am so grateful to be serving as your Director of Lifespan Religious Education. Thank you so much for this opportunity, and for your willingness to work together to create a wonderful Religious Education experience for the community that is the UU Society.

Peace. Marsha

UU Free Lunch Program Report

UUS Team Leader, Robert (Bob) Ferguson Littlehale described First, we are pleased to announce that Bob Littlehale has agreed to officially become UUS's new Free Lunch Coordinator! In this volunteer role, Bob will recruit and then coordinate UUS Free Lunch volunteers on-site at 1105 S. Gilbert on the second Friday of each month. Thank you, Bob, for volunteering to take on this critically important role!

On Friday, August 13th, Bob headed up an enthusiastic group of UUS Free Lunch volunteers that included Sherry Dolash, Russ Lenth, Lori Marshall, Janet McGee and grandson A.J., Carrie Norton, Susan Salterberg, and Terri O'Berry. Together they assembled and served 89 clamshell container meals out a side door window, per COVID protocol. This month's main dish, chicken strips, was generously provided by Barb Haring, in memory of Stan. Free Lunch guests also enjoyed side dishes of baked beans, potato salad, bananas, juice, and cookies purchased with generous donations from our large group of Free Lunch volunteers as well as other UUS members and friends. Bob described the weather as perfect and the day as glorious, surpassed only by the helping hands of our many UUS volunteers!

If you would like more information on how you can support the Free Lunch Program, please contact Carmen Griggs at csgriggsiowa@gmail.com.

Past Sunday Service Attendance

August 1st: “Everything is Sacred: Lessons from the Path of Tantra,” Andy Douglas

~94 Participating Zoom Accounts

August 8th: Seeking Grace in the Changing Places,” Rev. Diana Smith

~106 Participating Zoom Accounts, 18 in person

August 15th: “Ebb & Flow,” Kim McWane Friese

~86 Participating Zoom Accounts, 14 in person

August 22nd: “Listening to Ourselves, Listening to Each Other,” Rev. Diana Smith

~103 Participating Zoom Accounts, 10 in person

September Birthdays

Carol Adamson

Kris Barrash

Aster Cox

Sofia Cox

Andy Douglas

Lori Enloe

Zoey Fett

Miguel Guerrero

Prahlad Gupta

Barbara Haring

Ethan Headings

Diana Henry

Nicholas Johnson

Haley Kamps

Stephen Locher

Mary Losch

Kristin Lucas

Gail McLure

Otis Miller

Paula Miller

Lula Palmer

Emily Peck

Erica Reschly

Virginia Stampler

Judy Tokuhisa

Dana Van Abbema

Edward Wolfe

Susan Kasal Young

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



Rev. Diana Smith welcomes leadership and COVID team members for the Sunday service on August 8th, where the worship team tested out our multi platform capabilities.

Unitarian Universalist Society Board of Trustees Meeting Highlights

August 18th, 2021 (virtual via Zoom)

Full Board meeting minutes are available [on the website](#) or can be requested from the UUS administrator.

PRESENT: Alan Swanson, Joe Rasmussen, Rochelle Honey-Arcement, Hazel Seaba, Mike Pavelich, Diana Henry, John Raley, Julia Audlehelm, Reverend Diana Smith via cell phone. **ABSENT:** Board Secretary vacancy.

President Swanson called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. Raley provided opening words.

CONSENT AGENDA: The Board received the consent agenda and voted to approve the July 14th Board minutes, August 6th Executive Committee email action minutes, Executive Committee August 11th minutes, Treasurer/finance reports, and minister/staff reports.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Governance: Rasmussen reported that the committee will meet in September. Next agenda will address a bylaw change regarding eligibility to hold elected office, Board committee appointments, and drafting a policy and procedure for the memorial garden.

Personnel: Honey-Arcement is contacting a possible committee replacement.

Finance: Raley reported that the Balance and Growth Initiative Team involves most of the Finance members, so those meetings are also serving as Finance meetings. The entire committee will meet in September.

Right Relations: Audlehelm reported that the committee has not met. The minister's installation is their current focus.

Mission & Vision Review: Seaba and Henry are developing a procedure for assessment. Paul Pomrehn, Kelly O'Berry and Winnie Ganshaw are also on the committee.

COVID TEAM UPDATE

The COVID Team met on August 12th. The Team has two competing objectives: keeping everyone safe and re-opening the church. They submitted an updated Benchmarks & Phases Reopening Plan using benchmarks from the COVID ACT NOW database for the phases. This database is more accurate than the state data and more liberal in its benchmarks. The majority of the Team proposes the Board adopt this system, although there is sentiment from some members of the team that these phases are still too restrictive, especially in regard to in-person services. Alternatively, others in the congregation have expressed concern that we are reopening too quickly. *Pavelich moved to adopt the updated UUS Benchmarks and Phases. Second by Henry. The motion passed unanimously.*

BALANCE AND GROWTH INITIATIVE (BGI) UPDATE

Chair Honey-Arcement reported on recent meetings. Dave Martin joined a meeting to explain how the Listening Campaign will interact with BGI's goals. Endowment funds have also been discussed and how reporting/communicating with the members will happen. BGI has met with various groups and individuals and is next interested in meeting with the new DLRE, who first needs to get fully onboard at UUS. Persons who have served on the Endowment Committee in the past also will be asked to visit with BGI.

BGI requested the Board propose a two-year funding plan. The deficit problem did not arise in one year but evolved over

a period of years, so a two-year plan is not unreasonable. The Board proposed that the Endowment may have to provide some deficit funding for 2022 and a greater amount in 2023 from earnings/income, with the total for the two years not exceeding \$400,000, and none to come from the corpus. The two-year period would contain goals to meet, and if those goals are not met then additional budget cuts would replace the Endowment funding in 2024.

The Board also proposed that staff reduce the budget by about \$20,000 for 2022 (to \$580,000 total). This would give UUS staff and teams a target to work with for budget requests in 2022. It is hoped UUS groups can work to raise some of the funds for their work, outside the operational budget.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Fellowship Hall: Work that began July 12th on the Fellowship Hall's new wood ceiling is finished.

Listening Campaign: This effort for closer connections will be announced on August 22nd at the Sunday service and the campaign volunteers commissioned.

Stewardship Campaign: Starts September 26th with a target of \$420,000 to fund our operating budget.

Minister Installation: Now scheduled for October 24th. Due to COVID concerns this may be planned as an online event with the possibility of attending in person.

Memorial Garden: Four meetings are being held in August. Ground was broken this week. Rasmussen raised some questions concerning Governance Committee drafting a policy and procedure for the Garden and cremains interments so the Board would be aware of this need.

NEW BUSINESS

Reverend Diana's Fellowship Status: Our minister is due for her third and final renewal for preliminary fellowship. This requires a report from the Board to UUA by November 1st.

Congregational Meeting Dates: Swanson proposed December 19th, 2021 and May 22nd, 2022. There were no objections.

Bio-Retention Cell Repair: The Executive Committee voted by email on August 6th to approve an out-of-budget expenditure of \$1,650 to complete work on the bio-retention cell following concerns expressed by the Z&Z Condo Homeowners Association next door. Rasmussen reported that he has walked the construction site with Land Ministry Team members and the extra work was warranted to correct unforeseen problems and to keep good relations with UUS's neighbors.

Treats & Talents Auction: It was very successful last year, but a person to lead the effort needs to be found. Audlehelm will speak to Judy Tokuhisa about this.

CLOSING

Process observer comments provided by Audlehelm. Honey-Arcement provided closing words, and the chalice was extinguished. *Swanson adjourned the meeting at 9:05 pm.* The next full Board meeting is Wednesday, September 15th, 2021, at 7 pm.

—Submitted by Joe Rasmussen, Past President

July Financial Report Excerpts

Operating Bank Accounts end-of-month totals = \$400,300.

The bank accounts are steady this month partly due to higher than normal pledge donations these last two months. Thank you all for keeping up with your pledge support. The bank accounts still contain the \$50k donation to complete the ceiling in the Fellowship Hall. This work is underway.

Endowment Funds end-of-month totals = \$1,559,000. The Endowment Stocks rose again this month despite our \$5k ASA monthly withdrawal. Again, we thank all those who have contributed to these funds over the years. These donations were significant and UUS continues to accrue earnings from them given the strong stock market.

Income: In July, pledge income was over budget by \$3,684.70. We also had a donation of \$2,500 to cover additional expenses needed for the AV upgrade in the

Sanctuary and a \$12,000 grant from the UU Service Committee for our sponsorship of asylum seeker Ko Ko Lwin. In July, UUs raised \$992 for our various social justice agencies, including \$692 for Inside Out, \$200 for Table to Table, and \$100 for the Center for Worker Justice.

Expenses: July expenses were under budget by over \$10,000.

This is partly because we had several staff vacancies this month, and because we have not paid any bills yet for the Fellowship Hall ceiling project yet, which is now nearing completion. Year to date we are \$30k under budget for expenses, and we are operating at a ~\$10,300 profit when comparing income to expenses for the year so far (we budgeted for a loss of ~\$88,550 at this point in the year). As fall programming begins, new staff start, and we implement new hybrid services and other special projects, spending will likely be closer to budget moving forward.

—Mike Pavelich (Treasurer) and Emma Barnum (Congregational Administrator)

COVID Update

(This congregational email was sent on 8/20/21. [Read the full email here.](#))

On Wednesday, August 18th, the Board of Trustees approved updates to the phases of the UUS Reopening Plan. The phases will now correspond with the risk levels provided by [COVID Act Now for Johnson County](#). The data on this site is updated weekly, reflecting the state of Iowa's reporting schedule.

These updates loosen our previous restrictions. Congregational leaders based this decision on updated numbers of vaccinations in our county, better information about safety precautions, and facility improvements at UUS. We have held this information together with our covenantal concern for all members of our congregation and our responsibility to the larger community, both vaccinated and unvaccinated.

The full reopening plan can be found on our website (www.uusic.org/about-us/covid-19-info-updates/), but the basics of the plan are:

• **Phase 1:** Severe Risk/Dark Red (over 75 daily new cases per 100,000). The building and grounds are closed and services are online only. Masks required for all.

• **Phase 2:** Very High Risk/Red (25-75 daily new cases per 100,000). Scheduled groups may meet outside, and groups of up to 15 may meet inside. Services are online but service participants may lead from the Sanctuary. Masks required inside when in a shared space. Masks required outside unless working alone or in a small/medium group that comes to a covenantal agreement.

• **Phase 3:** High Risk/Orange (10 to 25 daily new cases per 100,000). Scheduled groups allowed inside and outside. Services are multi platform (both in person and Zoom), with the Sanctuary divided into sections based on the Traffic Light Gathering Guide. (Red: Need distance; Yellow: Use caution; give some space, ask; Green: I don't need space).

RE Commons and Fellowship Hall are extra red light seating areas. Masks required inside when in a shared space, and outside for congregation-wide or public gatherings. Masks are not required outside when working alone or in a small/medium group that has come to a covenantal agreement.

• **Phase 4:** Medium Risk/Yellow (1-10 daily new cases per 100,000). Scheduled groups allowed inside and outside. Services are multi platform with the Sanctuary divided into sections. RE Commons and Fellowship Hall are extra red light seating areas. Masks required inside when in a shared space, and outside for congregation-wide or public gatherings. Masks are not required when working outside alone or in a small/medium group (inside or outside) that has come to a covenantal agreement.

• **Phase 5:** Low Risk-New Normal/Green (less than 1 daily new case per 100,000). The building and grounds are open. Services are multi platform (both in person and Zoom). Mask guidelines based on current science.

The UUS COVID Team and Board of Trustees are continuously reviewing the risks of COVID to our congregation and community, and will continue to implement updates to our Reopening Plan. Finding ways for us to meet in person safely is a high priority, balanced against our concern and compassion for those in our congregation who are unable to do so, which includes all children under the age of 12 and their families.

Questions or comments about the Reopening Plan can be directed to the COVID Team: Rev. Diana Smith (chair), Dan Gall, Marsha Cheyney, Peg Voelker, Peggy Garrigues, Emma Barnum, Mary McMurray, and Amy Fretz.

In Community,

Rev. Diana Smith, UUS Minister

and

Alan Swanson, President, UUS Board of Trustees

The UUS News

The Unitarian Universalist Society

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UUS Staff

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

Director of Lifespan Religious Education: Marsha Thrall
(education@uusic.org)

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

Director of Congregational Music: Alex Heetland (music@uusic.org)

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

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

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

Staff Pianist & Music Outreach Coordinator: Hsin-Hui Liu
(accompanist@uusic.org)

Building Steward: Ron Wright (contact the office)

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

UUS Board of Trustees, 2021-2021

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

Vice President: Rochelle Honey Arcement (331-1045,
rochelle.r.honey@gmail.com)

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

Secretary: Open

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

Finance Trustee: John Raley (321-9209, jralley@amfam.com)

Trustee: Julia Audlehelm (530-4471, juliasdrawings11@gmail.com)

Trustee: Diana Henry (354-7224, savekemet@gmail.com)

Trustee: Hazel Seaba (936-6520, hazel-seaba@uiowa.edu)

Our Mission: 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.

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.