



THE UUS NEWS

October 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



Celebration of Shared Ministry and Installation of Rev. Diana Smith

We hope you'll join us for a special service installing Rev. Diana Smith as our minister on Sunday, October 24th, at 3 pm. The act of installation is a joyful celebration of the covenantal relationship between a minister and the congregation that has called the minister. In the installation service, we will honor and celebrate the promises we are making to one another and the shared ministry we are creating together.

Due to the pandemic, we are planning the service to gather virtually with only service participants in the sanctuary. Depending on COVID rates, in person participation may also be possible; information about that option will be available October 12th. During the week of October 17th, each household will receive a kit with items to participate in the service from home. Register to join us at <https://bit.ly/SmithInstallation>.



From Your Minister, Rev. Diana Smith

Dear Ones,

Exciting things are happening this month at UUS as we take time to slow down and connect with ourselves, each other, and the wider community. This is our vision of ministry for the year, as well as our stewardship campaign theme—and it connects nicely with our monthly theme: Cultivating Relationship.

This October we're finding ways to cultivate relationship differently than we imagined even this past summer when we developed our vision of ministry and themes for the year. And yet, as I meet with groups, talk with you after worship services, develop programming with our wonderful staff and members, and engage one-to-one in pastoral care, I'm struck by how the core ways we engage with our needs for giving and receiving love, meaning making, and engaging with Mystery remain largely constant. At the same time, as the pandemic and our collective trauma stretch on, we're finding new needs for connection, different kinds of movement, stillness, and deepening.

Throughout this newsletter you'll read about ways we're developing multiplatform congregational life. Multiplatform is a useful way to think about how we're developing approaches to congregational life to meet different needs. It includes things like:

- Dual-platform online/in the sanctuary worship services and the opportunities and challenges these bring for developing our congregation.
- Developing innovative approaches to my installation service.

- Monthly outdoor vespers services—simple all ages evening services with interactive spiritual practices stations based on a service held that month.
- Celebrating monthly Spirited Sundays—all ages alternative services during our regular worship time to allow us to engage with spiritual practices and meaningful play.
- Continuing outdoor activities like our Halloween Haunted Trails adventure.
- Holding covenant, spiritual practices, classes, and many more groups online, outdoors, or indoors depending on group needs.
- Doing our listening campaign using various platforms depending on participants' needs.
- Engaging with technology in ways we're just beginning to explore.
- Visiting our grounds to meditate, walk, listen to birds, play, garden, and much more alone or in a group.
- Much more that we'll learn about, together, these next few months.

Connecting and engaging with ourselves (meaning making and deepening our connection with Mystery and the spirit of Love), with each other (in ways that tend our hearts, as well as finding new ways to be inclusive as the pandemic stretches on), and with the wider community (reaching out and deepening our understanding of and practices of interdependence) is one of the great gifts of this congregation. This month, let's create pauses and take time to connect and engage in new and old ways, and learn together.

Love and Blessings,
Rev. Diana

Sunday Services

Our services are designed to be multiplatform, with congregants and visitors welcome to join in person or virtually. If COVID rates push us into a more restrictive phase of our Reopening Plan, only virtual services will be offered.

Join via Zoom (bit.ly/UUSVirtualService, Meeting ID: 422 482 660, Passcode: 006311). If joining in person, everyone over the age of 2 must wear a face mask that covers your nose and mouth. The building will be open at 9:40; plan to arrive early so you can be seated by 10 am. Please stay home and care for yourself if you're not feeling well or have been exposed to someone with COVID.

Check the weekly emails and the UUS website (www.uusic.org/about-us/covid-19-info-updates/) for updates on our current Phase, and for more information about joining us in person.

October 3rd: "Giving, Receiving: UUS Member Stories"

In their own words, UUS members Mary McCann, Steve Locher, and Judy Quinn will talk about the impact UUs has had on their lives and what the Society means to them.

October 10th: "Indigenous Peoples Day"

Rev. Diana will be joined by UUS Green Sanctuary members Sally Hartman and Miriam Kashia who will share how we can support the Minnesota Water Protectors fight against the Line 3 pipeline.

October 17th: "Celebration of Commitment"

Rev. Diana Smith will lead us in celebrating the success of our 2022 Stewardship campaign and the many ways we support UUS and each other.

October 24th: "Spirited Sunday"

Join us for our first Spirited Sunday! These monthly, all-ages alternative services allow us to engage with spiritual practices and meaningful play.

You can participate in our playful spiritual practice at UUS with others, from home, or while out and about.

Before each month's Spirited Sunday we'll share instructions about how to participate in our activity and how to share what you did with the rest of the congregation. More details about October's Spirited Sunday activities will be shared soon.

October 31st: "All Souls Eve & Halloween"

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

October's Social Justice Offerings Benefit The Emma Goldman Clinic

Emma Goldman provides non-judgmental, quality reproductive health care, including abortion services, gynecology services, safer sex promotion, and active education for women and men in all life stages, and strives to increase economic, geographic, structural, and language accessibility for the clients they serve. Cash or check donations can be given [online \(onrealm.org/uusic/-/give/SJOffering\)](http://online.onrealm.org/uusic/-/give/SJOffering) or mailed to the office. (Write checks to UUS, with Emma Goldman on the memo line.)

5th Sunday Offering, October 10th: When a month has five Sundays, the offerings for one Sunday service goes to an identified need in the community or as a response to a natural disaster. This month, on October 10th, Indigenous People's Day, the offering will go to the Catholic Worker House, an organization that serves immigrant and refugee families. In addition to offering temporary lodging (they are currently expanding to a second house in Iowa City), they offer food to whoever comes to the house, rent assistance, protective accompaniment, and deportation defense. Cash or check donations can be given [online \(onrealm.org/uusic/-/give/SJOffering\)](http://online.onrealm.org/uusic/-/give/SJOffering) or mailed to the office. (Write checks to UUS, with CWH on the memo line.)

Sunday Volunteers Needed!

Moving to online/in-person dual-platform Sunday worship services is an adventure with many twists and turns. The Sunday team, which includes staff and many members, is planning to spend the next month or two getting our current systems running more solidly and better staffed before we expand our options further—and we need YOUR help. Here are some ways you can help:

If you're regularly or occasionally joining Sunday morning services in UUS's sanctuary:

- **AV:** If you would like to learn more about the collaborative and energetic team supporting our livestreaming efforts, contact AV Team Coordinator Jeff Walberg at publicity@uusic.org. These roles do not require any specialized knowledge, but it is helpful to have a general proficiency with using software and learning new technologies.
- **Hospitality:** To help create a safe and welcoming environment by greeting people and guiding them on our COVID procedures, contact Kim Palmer, kalpal2@brentopalmer.com to learn more about our Hospitality Teams.

If you're participating on Sunday mornings online from home:

- **Zoom Host:** Consider becoming a Zoom host or assisting the Zoom host. Either role can be done from home.

The Zoom host opens up the meeting around 9 am, lets people in from the waiting room, posts a few items in chat, gives the end of service instructions, and creates and coordinates the breakout rooms. Training and detailed instructions will be provided, and you can initially share Zoom hosting with someone else as you learn.

Zoom host assistants have a much smaller role to support the Zoom host by just letting people into the meeting for ten minutes before the service and whenever Peggy is speaking during the service, and/or by being available in the main room after the service to answer questions during the online breakout rooms.

Contact Peggy at dcl@uusic.org to inquire about volunteering in one of these ways.

Sign up for any of these opportunities as fits your schedule. This is a great way to support and reconnect with UUS!

From Your Board President, Alan Swanson

Just days ago the Stewardship Campaign for 2022 was launched with great confidence in the role you each will play as we look toward a strong future. The UUS congregation and staff have held dear the principles that underlie our actions now and dreams ahead. Together we've been resilient and flexible-welcoming new practices that continue to strengthen our connections while protecting one another during a prolonged pandemic. Please consider your support for our operating budget anew, to rise to the occasion of this challenging financial time.

We are blessed to have the staff, building and grounds to help inspire us, even when many cannot be on the premises. We know and love what we had before COVID, and we know and love what we will have again. In the meantime many new and stronger connections have been made through after-service Zoom chat groups, the one-on-one Listening Campaign now under way, and in many other new ways. We have come to realize the benefit of having multiplatform capability that will last far beyond the current cautious time, allowing those with issues of disability, health, and distance to be with us at UUS.

In September the UUS welcomed talented Hsin-Hui Liu as Staff Pianist and Music Outreach Coordinator to help with worship services, develop opportunities for ensembles and young people to participate more fully in our music programs, and to find ways through music to engage with the wider community.

At the end of last month, the congregation welcomed five new members to UUS, a testament to our values, demonstrating that even in these difficult times people will seek our open embrace.

The trustees greeted congregant Paula Miller, who graciously has answered the call to be board secretary, completing a term ending June 30th, 2022. We also thanked past-president Joe Rasmussen for admirably fulfilling secretarial duties while the Leadership Development Committee searched for a replacement.

As I enter my fourth month as UUS President, I realize more than ever the high quality and spirit of our minister, staff and volunteers, emblematic of this congregation as a whole—deep convictions, willing connections, and generosity of time and resources. I'm grateful to be in this loving place with you.

Caring and acting together, Alan Swanson, President

2022 Stewardship Campaign

The 2022 Stewardship Campaign to support our operating budget kicked off 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. Campaign packets with a pledge brochure, pledge card, and instructions were sent to all members and friends in September.

The UUS community relies on your pledges to finalize the budget for 2022 and plan for the programming, staff, materials, and facilities that can be the catalyst for engagement, shared spirit, outreach, and education in 2022.

Submit your pledge now through Realm: <https://bit.ly/UUSPledgeForm>. You can also mail in your pledge form from the stewardship packet, or contact the office (admin@uusic.org or 319-337-3443).

If you are a first-time donor or someone who has given in the past but not in 2020, an anonymous donor is matching up to \$5,000 for pledges like yours!

Please plan to submit your pledge to UUS by Thursday, October 14th. Then join us for our Celebration of Commitment on Sunday, October 17th, where we will announce our 2022 Stewardship Campaign success.

Find out more information about the campaign, how to pledge, and how to give, on our website (www.uusic.org/2022-stewardship-campaign).

UUS Featured in Climate Week NYC

UUS and the Green Sanctuary Team are excited to share that we were one of the featured congregations in a virtual presentation given by Interfaith Power & Light on Wednesday, September 22nd, as part of Climate Week NYC.

Interfaith Power & Light (IPL) has recognized more than 1000 solar powered houses of worship, and 377 that have pledged to cut their own emissions in half by 2030 and reach climate neutrality by 2050. This event highlighted these efforts and offered virtual tours of two congregations that are already cutting emissions to zero or near-zero. One is The Church of St. Martin in Davis, California, and the other is UUS.

You can view the video presentation created by Deb Schoelerman and Jeff Walberg on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xQy_t2sfm4. Be inspired by your own efforts to create the Greenest Church in Iowa!

October Birthdays

<i>Ian Ballantyne</i>	<i>Grace Ingersoll</i>	<i>Chris Rode</i>
<i>Jeanette Corley</i>	<i>Henry Ingersoll</i>	<i>Rhonda Rowden</i>
<i>John Cunningham</i>	<i>Sasha Jakob</i>	<i>Jeff Walberg</i>
<i>Sherry Dolash</i>	<i>Emily Johnson</i>	<i>Julia Wasson</i>
<i>Irvin Emig</i>	<i>Bailey Kelley</i>	<i>Mark Yuskis</i>
<i>Emi Estudillo</i>	<i>Tom Larkin</i>	
<i>Stephanie</i>	<i>Emmie Linley</i>	
<i>Gilbertson-White</i>	<i>Grey Linley</i>	
<i>Michael Honey-</i>	<i>Sue Otto</i>	
<i>Arcement</i>	<i>Mark Penno</i>	
<i>Lois Hughes</i>	<i>Bruce Randall</i>	
<i>Charlie Ingersoll</i>	<i>Joe Rasmussen</i>	

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

From Your Director of Lifespan Religious Education, Marsha Thrall

Friends,

Autumn is almost upon us. I'm looking forward to all of the beauty and abundance that fall in the Midwest has to offer—from pumpkin patches, the beauty that precedes dormancy, and even haunted houses, autumn is truly my favorite season during each year's rotation around the sun.

As I've been working through one on one conversations with members of the UUS community, I've learned that autumn holds some special significance and meaning within this very amazing community as well. And whether time tested, or relatively new, I am looking forward to building upon the traditions that are important to all of you.

While UUS' stewardship campaign kicked off on September 26th, during the first three Sundays of October, Anna and I will be working with families and members to spread the beauty of community into as many UUS households as possible. Stay tuned for information about how you can help spread beauty, joy, and connection throughout the community that is UUS, during the upcoming weeks.

Vespers Services

Our September Vesper service was a small-scale beautiful celebration that gave community members of all ages an opportunity to participate in this year's Water Communion celebration in person, after being separated from one another for over eighteen months. The love at our first Vesper service was palpable, and I'm excited to announce that we will continue to hold All Ages Vesper services, once per month—outdoors as weather allows, with plans to continue this type of service during the winter months. Vesper services allow for more opportunity to gather in person, while at the same time mindfully and cautiously caring for the most vulnerable members of our communities. Our next Vesper service will be on October 3rd at 4:30 pm.

Story Book Haunted Trails

On October 30th, from 2:30 to 5 pm, the Haunted Trails are returning to UUS—with a story book twist! We will set up the haunted trail, as we did last year, as well as add several "stations" around the UUS building and grounds. Each station will be themed after a different Fall or Halloween children's book. We envision a team of volunteers, each choosing their favorite Fall or Halloween book and setting up their own decorated area—this could even include the trunk of your vehicle, parked in the UUS lot. We invite anyone interested to please contact Anna at re.assistant@uusic.org with your preferred book. Also, if creating a storybook station is a bit more than you're able to commit to, youth and adults who are part of the UUS community are invited to dress up as their best, spooky self and "haunt" spaces along the trail during volunteer shifts available throughout the event. If you'd like to volunteer, in any capacity during this event, please contact Marsha at education@uusic.org.

Adult RE Group Read

We are beginning to dip our toes in the waters of Adult Religious Education. Beginning in October, the Green Sanctuary will be hosting a group read of *All We Can Save*, which is a compilation of sixty essays, prose, and poetry pieces written by women, addressing the crisis of climate change. Information regarding the *All We Can Save* project can be found here. If you'd like to participate in this common read project at UUS, please contact Deb Schoelerman at dschoelerman@gmail.com.

Thank you so much for your abundance of care, creativity, intelligence, and empathy. I am so grateful for the opportunity to serve as the Director of Lifespan Religious Education here, at the UU Society.

Peace and blessings,

Marsha

Past Sunday Service Attendance

August 29th: "This STILL Isn't What I Planned,"
Rev. Diana Smith

~70 Participating Zoom Accounts, 28 in person

**September 5th: "Celebration of Food,
Sustainable Farming, and Farm Workers,"**
Peggy Garrigues

~77 Participating Zoom Accounts, 8 in person

September 12th: Water Communion,
Rev. Diana Smith

~73 Participating Zoom Accounts, 33 in person

September 19th: "Love's Only Hands,"
CB Beal

~77 Participating Zoom Accounts, 26 in person

**September 26th: "Connecting with Ourselves,
Each Other, and the Wider Community,"**
Rev. Diana Smith

~65 Participating Zoom Accounts, 47 in person

Secular Humanists, October 19th

The October meeting of the UU Secular Humanists will be a special one. Together we will celebrate the outstanding work of Mark Yuskis, who has announced his "retirement" after serving as coordinator at various times covering over half of our 18-year history.

Monthly meetings, special programming for UUS and occasional Sunday services were arranged successfully by Mark, and he has given much to the life of the Society. It was Mark who brought us dinner theater with Charles Darwin; a performance of Clarence Darrow: the Search for Justice; An evening with Walt Whitman; and the important connection with the UI Secular Students at Iowa. His Sunday morning presentations have been widely praised. He has promised that he will continue to contribute his wisdom, humor and sensitivity to all our discussions, and we wish him well in his "retirement."

The rest of the meeting will be an opportunity for participants to thank Mark, to get reacquainted after the pandemic has changed the old routines and to discuss future possibilities for the Secular Humanist group.

Please join us as we gather via Zoom at 7 pm on Tuesday, October 19th, the "regular" meeting time (Zoom Meeting: [Link to Join](#), Meeting ID: 836 7640 7183, Passcode: 142580). contact Jeanette Carter for questions: montehigh55@gmail.com.

Green Sanctuary Team

According to the United Nations, when my (Sally Hartman's) five-year old granddaughter Nina is 84 years old, the earth's atmosphere will have warmed a disastrous 5 degrees if CO2 is released at the current pace. Fortunately, we will collectively move toward change so this won't happen. The Green Sanctuary Team furthers this change by identifying education, outreach, and UUA Green Sanctuary reaccreditation as three major areas of focus.

All We Can Save Congregational Read

In the area of education, expect to see monthly articles and Thursday updates about Climate Justice. You can become further involved by participating in an all-congregation read. The selected book is *All We Can Save*, edited by Ayana Elizabeth Johnson and Katharine K. Wilkinson. This inspiring volume of essays describes many facets of climate justice and addresses your potential role in mitigating the climate crisis. This fall, weekly discussions of this book will be offered. Stay tuned for further information on how to participate.

Drawdown Solutions: Getting into Action Workshop

In addition, starting Tuesday, October 19th, at 7 pm, and meeting weekly through November 16th, the Green Sanctuary Team invites you to a workshop called *Drawdown Solutions: Getting into Action*, which will delve into climate justice in depth. This workshop will be offered to all Iowans virtually, in collaboration with the Iowa UU Witness and Advocacy Network. It centers on developing a personal focus/action on climate justice. To register, contact Sally Hartman at (sallyhartman@hotmail.com).

Climate Justice

Outreach, the second Green Sanctuary focus area, is involvement in the climate justice movement. While possibilities in this area are still being explored, the Green Sanctuary Team has made steps to support the Minnesota Water Protectors fight against Line 3, a pipeline transporting ultra-toxic tar sands oil from Canada, is being constructed through delicate ecosystems and lands protected by treaties. During a rally at the Capital last month in St. Paul, several thousand, including four from UUS, gathered to protest the government's support for this destructive conveyor of fossil fuel. Next steps for the Team include sponsoring a lecture by an Indigenous Water Protector and a trip to support the water protectors near the Line 3 construction site in Northern Minnesota.

Green Sanctuary Congregation Re-Accreditation

The third task for the GS Team, is re-accreditation as a Green Sanctuary Congregation. It has been five years since UUS was accredited as a Green Sanctuary Congregation and it is now time for us to take steps for re-accreditation. This involves assessing accomplishments since we were first accredited in 2017. We will then create an action plan that includes new and significant work toward three environmental goals: 1) mitigation, 2) adaptation/resilience, and 3) justice, with the expectation of significant UUS activism and civic action. Key features of the process include working with an indigenous group and congregational participation in achieving these goals. Stay tuned for how you can help in this process.

Will Rogers once said, "Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there." Let's work together to not only keep on the right track but to keep moving. Nina, and all the other five year-olds deserve our diligence and action.

Covenant Groups

There were no formal meetings of covenant groups in August, though members were invited to gather socially. In September, groups reconvened to renew their covenants and to consider what it means to be a people oriented toward "Embracing Possibility." At first glance, that seems like a no-brainer. What other choice do we have except to embrace what hasn't yet happened but could? Not all people or faiths view this question as openly as Unitarian Universalism, however. We strive to look at the full spectrum of what might be, not just a narrow section based on approved beliefs and behaviors. It's the reason it's been said that UUs don't ask "Why" nearly as often as "Why not?" You might ask yourself if that's how you're oriented in your own life. Are you willing to look at the future and imagine an array of possible paths to follow or outcomes to take a risk on? This is not to argue against being focused in pursuit of a goal. But how many alternatives did you think about before choosing the one you're pursuing?

If topics like these intrigue you, you might be ready to join a covenant group. The covenant group program offers its members the opportunity to 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).



UU Free Lunch Program Report

Our UUS Free Lunch Coordinator, Bob Littlehale, reports that on Friday, September 10th, UUS volunteers ushered in the fall season at the Free Lunch Program by assembling and distributing 100 meals out the side door window at 1105 S. Gilbert Court. Our steadfast group of volunteers—Bob Littlehale, Susan Salterberg, Linda Rice, Sherry Dolash, Janet McKee, Terri O'Berry, and Vicki Seifers—were dressed in full COVID garb for the 18th straight month! Thank you, UUS volunteers, for your continued service during this challenging time!

The UUS Nighthawks Covenant group purchased the entire meal of Hy-Vee prepared chicken strips, coleslaw, baked beans, bananas, juice, and cookies. It should come as no surprise that there were no leftovers! Thank you for your great generosity, Nighthawks!

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

Unitarian Universalist Society Board of Trustees Meeting Highlights

September 15th, 2021 (virtual via Zoom)

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

PRESENT: Alan Swanson (President), Joe Rasmussen (Past-President), Rochelle Honey-Arcement (Vice-President), Mike Pavelich (Treasurer), Diana Henry (Trustee), John Raley (Financial Trustee), Julia Audlehelm (Trustee), Hazel Seaba (Trustee), Rev. Diana Smith (Minister, Ex Officio), Paula Miller (Acting Interim Secretary). **GUESTS:** Mary McMurray.

President Swanson called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm and provided opening words.

APPROVAL OF NEW INTERIM SECRETARY: Pavelich made a motion, seconded by Honey-Arcement, to confirm Paula Miller for the vacant secretary position until the end of the current term on June 30, 2022 pending congregational approval at the December Congregational Meeting. The vote was unanimous.

BOARD READ: Members will start reading *Trauma Stewardship*, by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky.

CONSENT AGENDA: The Board received the consent agenda and voted to approve the August 18th Board minutes, September 8th Executive Committee minutes, Treasurer/Admin. finance reports, and minister/staff reports.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Governance: Rasmussen reported that the LDC has proposed adding “or team” verbiage after “committee” in the bylaws. Another concern was how to select committee replacements to 3-year elected positions. Policies and procedures also need to be created for the new Memorial Garden. Audlehelm advised that they are working on the legal end of things.

Personnel: Honey-Arcement advised they would like to bring Dana Van Abbema onto the committee to replace co-chair Mary McMurray before she leaves her position in Jan 2022. Rasmussen moved to appoint her for the rest of Mary’s term, seconded by Henry, the vote was unanimous.

The committee would like to add Juneteeth as a paid holiday for all staff. Rasmussen moved to make Juneteeth a paid staff holiday, seconded by Swanson, the vote was unanimous.

A new policy was presented which requires Covid-19 vaccination for all staff and volunteers unless they qualify for a specific exception.

A report for the November board meeting will be prepared to review all job descriptions and to make sure that compensation is appropriate.

Rev Diana attended a training on important personnel policy statements and advised that for some situations we don’t have strong enough policies in place, especially concerning conflicts of interest or sexual conduct policies concerning relationships between staff and congregants.

DCL Peggy Garrigues is now eligible for a sabbatical, but we don’t have a clear policy for how this will work for the DCL or DLRE staff positions.

Finance: Raley reported that the committee has been discussing concerns from some Endowment Committee members about whether the Endowment fund balance should be included in the monthly Treasurer’s report.

Discussion followed centering on balancing transparency of the fund’s balances vs. following established policies which value long-term health and reporting accuracy. Pavelich moved that the Endowment Fund report be removed from the Treasure’s report for 1 month to allow time to discuss new reporting protocol with the Endowment Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

Right Relations: Audlehelm reported that they have been focusing on Rev Diana’s installation service on October 24th. Rev Diana advised that they are planning a virtual service at this time and only service participants, plus a few guests, will attend. The decision on whether to only have a virtual or limited in-person service should be decided by October 12th. Pavelich, Swanson, and Seaba agreed to donate some funds to the Minister’s discretionary fund to help cover the installation service cost so that Rev Diana would not need to use professional funds for her own installation ceremony.

Mission & Vision Review: Seaba reported that they will be meeting monthly on 3rd Mondays. Co-chairs Seaba and Henry will provide reports which clarify tasks, timelines, and strategies for assessing mission and vision programs and progress. Seaba advised that by the October board meeting there will be a draft report for review, and then comments and revisions should be completed by Oct 31st.

COVID TEAM UPDATE

COVID Data and Phases: Rev Diana reported that the COVID team has advised that the board: 1. Change Phase 3 from 10-25 cases/100K people to 10-50 cases/100K people, and 2. Allow any change from one phase to another to not take effect until the following week’s service. Discussion centered on whether there is sufficient evidence to loosen restrictions, or if there should be a re-assessment by COVID experts and UUS members with a scientific background to review current COVID protocols. Rev Diana and the staff feel comfortable with making an adjustment to Phase 3. Included in this proposal is allowing “watch parties” in the Fellowship Hall and no number caps on outdoor congregational events. All indoor gatherings will still require masks and social distancing guidelines. Pavelich proposed, seconded by Henry, that we change Phase 3 to 10-50 cases/100K to allow more people to attend in person and also allow 2 weeks for the UUS to make changes from one phase to another to facilitate Sunday service planning. The board voted unanimously to agree to implement these changes to the COVID policy with the understanding that we will revisit COVID policies at the Nov 17th meeting.

Volunteer Vaccination Policy Update: Audlehelm and McMurray described the new policy requiring COVID vaccines for all volunteers working with vulnerable populations, including IT volunteers. McMurray added that volunteers wouldn’t be governed by the personnel handbook change discussed earlier during the meeting. Pavelich motioned, seconded by Swanson, to require staff and volunteers to be vaccinated against COVID. The motion carried.

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COVID Policy and Building Rental Events: Rev Diana noted that people have expressed interest in renting the building and she and DCL Garrigues have been working on this. The new proposal advises that:

1. Saturday events must end by 10 pm to allow time to clean and would require the purchase of a “cleaning package” as part of the rental agreement.
2. Encourage masking and safety guidelines as are applicable per UUS COVID phase.
3. Require that the renters sign a document that they have received the UUS COVID guidelines and that UUS is not liable if attendees contract COVID during their event.
4. Refunds can be made up to 2 weeks in advance if the event needs to be cancelled.
5. Events over 50 people will require payment for the special cleaning service if there will not be another regular building cleaning scheduled before the next event.

Swanson confirmed that this will be current rules and procedures, not policy, and these may be subject to change. *The board reached a consensus to agree to these rule changes which can be edited if needed.*

The board also agreed that at this time the COVID Team may go on hiatus as any further changes to phases or COVID policy will first be reconsidered by UUS members with medical expertise on infectious disease.

BALANCE AND GROWTH INITIATIVE (BGI) UPDATE

Honey-Arcement reported they have held one recent meeting via Zoom, and the next meeting is Monday, September 20th. New DLRE Marsha Thrall was invited to attend by Chris Rode. She summarized her vision of reconnecting and rebuilding RE. There are three youth advisors who are active and engaged. She expects that the first 6 months will be an interim period to start getting a solid program in place. She emphasized that RE should really be “lifespan” and not just for youth.

Invitee Jean Hood spoke about the history of the endowment fund and past fundraising and expressed concern that if the endowment is used to supplement the operating budget then

people won't donate as much during the stewardship campaign. Discussion followed about how to widen the conversation about how donations to the operating budget benefit many programs in the congregation. Additional Endowment Committee members and the social justice-focused Teams will be invited to discussions.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Stewardship Campaign: Has a board-approved goal of \$420,000 and will launch Sunday, September 26th. The stewardship group has now recruited members to give five-minute testimonials for this year's campaign. A New Member Ceremony will also be held that day when 5 new members will join the UUS.

Memorial Garden: Audelhelm advised that the UUS Memorial Garden construction is beginning. Three meetings were held in August, and on September 14th and 21st meetings will be held with UUS member Hilary Strayer about legal issues surrounding the project. Ultimately the Governance Committee must assist in documenting related policies and procedures. Audlehelm confirmed that per the original discussion no pets would be interred in the memorial garden. Per the legal discussion all cremains have a letter of authenticity that they are actual human remains.

NEW BUSINESS

Treats & Talents Auction: The annual operating budget fundraiser was successfully held online last year. Honey-Arcement advised that we need to look for someone who can lead this again, and she confirmed that this has worked very well in the past when kids were involved. Audlehelm added that a book sale might also be a great fundraiser. Swanson suggested an “auction” of books.

CLOSING

Process observer comments provided by Seaba. Swanson provided closing words, and the chalice was extinguished. *Swanson adjourned the meeting at 9:38 pm.* The next full Board meeting is Wednesday, October 20th, 2021, at 7 pm.

—Submitted by Paula Miller, Acting Interim Secretary

August Financial Report Excerpts

Operating Bank Accounts end-of-month totals = \$336,400.

Endowment Funds end-of-month totals = \$1,582,000.

Income: In August, pledge income exceeded our budgeted expectation by nearly \$8,000. We had \$1,500 in deposits for interments in our Memorial Garden, as well as several general donations to the Memorial Fund in honor of John Jennewein, Virginia Stephens McGrellis, and Don DeWitt.

Congregants raised \$200 to support the March community partner, the Center for Worker Justice; \$120 for the July partner, Inside Out, \$902.09 for the August partner the Free Medical Clinic, \$325 for the August 5th Sunday collection to support relief efforts in Haiti, and \$19.99 towards the September partner, Shelter House.

Members continue to support our various special justice funds, making regular donations to support the UUS Free Lunch Program Team, the Board's Social Justice Action Fund,

and the Prison Ministry Team's support of Simon Tunstall. \$600 was also raised in response to a call by the Circle of Friends Team to purchase school supplies for our supported families.

Expenses: August Expenses were over budget by over \$30,000. This is almost entirely due to a few big projects being completed: the Fellowship Hall ceiling and the Sanctuary AV upgrade. These were anticipated expenses and we would have been under budget for the month otherwise.

We do have some areas of staff spending which are over budget for the month (music, facilities, land ministry) but that are under budget when looking at the full year's allocations. Overall, we are almost \$15,000 under budget for the year, with a YTD operating loss of \$32,918.88 (but we expected to be at a loss of almost double that amount, so that's not the bad news it appears to be).

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

Welcome to Our New UUS Members!

Who were inducted into the membership records in a New Member Ceremony on Sunday, September 26th.



Jeanne Bancroft: Jeanne came to the Iowa City area in 1965 to attend college and has lived here ever since. She and her husband, Craig, began attending our UU Society in November 2017. Craig wanted to join UUS and loved coming to the building for services before COVID. Craig died on May 20 of this year, so Jeanne is joining on her own.

Jeanne has been active as an educator all of her professional life. She retired last year from the University of Iowa where she was a professor of science education. She values the seven principles, is hoping to find a deeper sense of community here, and is still clarifying how she wants to share her skills, interests, and energy at UUS. Jeanne has a son, a daughter, and 6 grandchildren. She enjoys travel, hiking, and biking.



Beverly Haas: Bev was born in Michigan and grew up in Ohio in a Unitarian family as the youngest of four children. She lived in San Diego after graduate school, then moved back to the Midwest after she married her husband Randy. In 1992 they moved to Solon for Randy's job as a park ranger. Bev is a retired medical and psychiatric social worker. She also taught pottery at the Iowa City Recreation Center and is active with the Ceramics Center in Cedar Rapids. She also enjoys gardening and landscaping, music, canoeing, snowshoeing, walking, photography, art, puzzles, and her granddoggies.

Bev brought her son to UUS in Iowa City as a child. She and her mother also attended services here. Bev values that UUs celebrate diversity, respect the environment, and are open to new ideas. She is part of Wellspring, in a covenant group, weeds around the labyrinth here, and hopes to join human rights causes and advocate for vulnerable populations. She is UU through and through and is happy to be home here at UUS.



Robert Harris and Nicole Johnson: Robert was raised in the Dayton, Ohio, area but has lived most of his life in Indianapolis, Indiana. He and his wife, Nicole Johnson, and their son, Elon (now 4), moved to Iowa City just over a year ago. Robert is a serial entrepreneur who started as a software engineer with a passion for building great products. He currently works as CEO of a small tech startup that helps businesses to partner with each other and to get work done. He appreciates the chance to explore his own spiritual beliefs and values, including the ideas of Mahayana Buddhism, in a community setting. Robert hopes to share his enthusiasm for Buddhist practices, and his vision and talent for breaking large problems into achievable goals to achieve success. He also looks forward to making and strengthening friendships.

Nicole was born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She moved to Indiana for graduate school and work. Nicole has doctoral training in health communication and works as a health services researcher at the Iowa City VA Health Care System. She and Robert enjoyed being involved in the UU Church in Indianapolis, so they were glad to find our UU Society here. She values the non-judgmental approach of Unitarian Universalism—meeting each individual where they are spiritually, socially, and financially while encouraging self-exploration and growth. Nicole hopes to find a supportive community that reflects her core values, and she wants to volunteer for social justice efforts such as racial equality and food stability.

Anne Schons: Anne grew up in Swisher, Iowa. She attended the UU Peoples Church in Cedar Rapids until she went off to college. She has lived in Fort Myers, Florida; San Antonio, TX; Seoul, Korea; Watertown, New York; and Richmond, Virginia, before moving back to Iowa in 2020. She currently works as a systems and data analyst. In the past, she has worked in a variety of fields: family support, organizational development and training, human resources, military music, and education, including early childhood education.

Anne values the community, people, social mission, and principles of Unitarian Universalism. She is looking for support in her own spiritual journey. She is happy to find a community of people who also value UU principles. She considers herself a techy person and is happy to help in that area at UUS. She is interested in the humanist group and also hopes to participate in music from time to time.

Anne lives with her husband, Anthony, and two daughters: Hazel (6), and Etta (4). In her free time she enjoys 3D printing, handiwork, music, birdwatching, houseplants, crafting, and maker projects.

COVID Update

(This congregational email was sent on 9/16/21. [Read the full email](#) here, or find the link to this and other email communications at the bottom of the COVID page on our website: www.uusic.org/about-us/covid-19-info-updates).

Dear Members and Friends,

The past couple of months, staff and volunteers have been working on our transition to multiplatform congregational life. We've begun broadcasting worship services from the sanctuary with the full worship service team present, held worship services with congregation members seated in the sanctuary for the first time in 18 months, developed outdoor worship service components for water communion and our new monthly all ages vespers service, held outdoor watch parties, tried out in-person/zoom combo meetings from the conference room, and begun having more in-person meetings and gatherings. All of this has included developing many new systems, including for tech/AV, greeting, and how people interact and gather. The Covid Team, staff, and volunteers have done a monumental amount of work to accomplish this, and have figured out many new processes.

Along the way there have been some unexpected challenges and unforeseen bumps. **Accordingly, on Wednesday, September 15th, the Board of Trustees approved updates to the phases of the UUS Reopening Plan.** One of the major changes is that instead of strictly corresponding with the risk levels provided by COVID Act Now for Johnson County, **Phase 3 is now expanded to be in effect from 10-50 daily cases per 100,000 rather than Covid Act Now's 10-25 cases.** Phase 2, which we reach when there are much higher levels of community spread, will now include opportunities to participate in services from UUS's fellowship hall and RE commons.

The data on Covid Act Now continues to be updated weekly, reflecting the state of Iowa's reporting schedule. **To avoid bouncing between phases and having to change the Sunday service and volunteer staffing plans mid-day on Thursdays, we will be waiting for two weeks of data indicating that we need to change phases before we switch.** We will also be waiting till the following Sunday to change phases when applicable.

These updates loosen our previous restrictions. Congregational leaders based this decision on updated numbers of vaccinations in our county, better information about safety precautions, facility improvements at UUS, and experiences with multi-platform congregational life. 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 is closed and services are online only. Masks required for all.

• **Phase 2:** Very High Risk/Red (50 to 75 daily new cases per 100,000). Scheduled groups may meet outside or inside. Only worship service participants lead from the Sanctuary with gatherings in the Fellowship Hall and RE Commons to watch services. 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 50 daily new cases per 100,000). Scheduled groups may meet inside and outside. Services are multiplatform (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 may meet inside and outside. Services are multiplatform (both in person and Zoom), with the Sanctuary divided into sections based on the Traffic Light Gathering Guide. RE Commons and Fellowship Hall are extra red light seating areas. Masks required inside when in a shared space. 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 multiplatform (both in person and Zoom). Mask guidelines based on current science.

As of today, we are in Phase 3, which means that our services this Sunday will be both online and in-person.

The UUS Board of Trustees and COVID Team will continue reviewing the risks of COVID to our congregation and community. **However, barring substantial changes to what we know about COVID or our community's situation, we will not be making further changes to our Reopening Plan until at least the November 17th board meeting.** Questions or comments about the Reopening Plan phases can be directed to the Board of Trustees and questions or comments about how UUS is implementing the phases can be addressed to the COVID Team.

In Community,

Alan Swanson, President, UUS Board of Trustees
and

Rev. Diana Smith, UUS Minister

The UUS News

The Unitarian Universalist Society

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Trustee: Hazel Seaba (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.