



# THE UUS NEWS

February 2022

**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

## From Your Minister, Rev. Diana Smith



Dear Ones,

This month our Soul Matters theme is *Widening the Circle*. Our theme asks us to delve into what our circle of concern is and who it holds, how we widen it, and what gifts and challenges come with widening the circle of concern.

Widening the Circle is about joyful change work. It's about how we can participate in transformative liberation. It's about how we understand Unitarian Universalism, what it calls us into, and how we live our faith more fully. We'll be exploring this through two major projects that Unitarian Universalism is engaged in, as well as through ways we can and are concretely widening the circle here and now.

Our theme comes from a report by the UUA Commission on Institutional Change that analyzes structural and systemic racism and white supremacy culture within Unitarian Universalism. It makes recommendations for long-term changes to help us more fully become the religious movement, the faith, that we are called to be.

The report and study guide provide framing and hints for how Unitarian Universalism as a whole and congregations like ours can actively participate in transformative liberation (see [www.uua.org/widening](http://www.uua.org/widening)). I'll be preaching about this on February 20th.

This month I'll also be introducing how the UUA is studying Unitarian Universalism's Principles and Purposes. Our Principles and Purposes (also called Article II of the UUA bylaws) are the foundation for all of the work of the UUA and its member congregations. It's the covenant that we pledge ourselves to by being part of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.

You may have heard me say that Unitarian Universalism is a covenantal rather than a creedal faith. As part of this, we agree to review our Principles and Purposes regularly to understand how they're guiding us in our current practices and how we need to change them to help guide us into the future. This may include changing our Principles, our Sources, and how we talk about covenant and accountability.

The Article II Study Commission is leading this work. They are leading events, workshops, providing materials for study, and surveying Unitarian Universalists. You can read more about this work on the [UUA website](http://www.uua.org). I will be preaching about this on February 27th. This service will also be the first in a two-month series of services to help us learn about, celebrate, and reflect on Unitarian Universalism's Sources.

I'm excited to begin engaging in this deep work with you this month as we explore what our religious movement is now and how it may change to lead us into the future.

Love and Blessings, Rev. Diana

## From Your Board President, Alan Swanson

Your Board of Trustees and the resourceful committees under its umbrella (Governance, Personnel, Finance, Right Relations, and Mission and Vision) have begun the new year with strong ambitions during a raging pandemic, determined to find ways to cultivate the deep connections UUS members long to restore.

At our January 8th Board retreat we decided to remain in UUS COVID Phase 2 (online services and other stated protocols), but form a new Safe Gatherings Task Force (including Board member Paula Miller) that will take a fresh look at the evolving COVID situation to make a recommendation for protective UUS reopening protocols to the Board at its February meeting. The task force will be smaller than the praiseworthy original group that served us well, and will contain some of its members. There is a changing health environment to reevaluate now that vaccinations are widely available and we have two years of experience.

The retreat's other main focus was on how to move forward to operationalize the Balance and Growth Initiative's (BGI) two-year plan authorized at the December 19th Congregational Meeting. The existing BGI group, led by Board VP Rochelle Honey-Arcement, will meet a few additional times to firm up recommendations for who should be involved with elements of the plan going forward. Utmost in importance is furthering our mission and vision, but underlying these are ideas to find new resources, conserve existing resources, and develop metrics to track and share our progress. Ultimately, all UUS members will be key to the plan's success—and benefactors of it.

The above subjects were revisited at the January 19th board meeting, where we also further discussed what three open questions will help form the vision of ministry for the upcoming UUS programming year, July 2022 through June 2023. Once these are in place, we'll bring them to the congregation for reaction and input.

I continue to admire the strength of this congregation in these very difficult times. There is so much to be done in the world, in our community, and within the UUS's actual and online structures. We will continue to support one another in every endeavor, and because of this we are willing to face all challenges.

Caring and acting together, Alan Swanson, President

## From Your Religious Education Coordinator, Anna Rode

Hello and Happy New Year, UUS Families!

In case we haven't met, I'm Anna Rode, UUS member and parent of 4 children (13, 10, 4 and 18 months). I returned as UUS's part-time, temporary Religious Education Coordinator to provide leadership and support for RE programming until Reverend Diana fills the Director of Lifespan Religious Education (DLRE) position. My goal is to communicate often with families while providing ways for families to safely connect within our UUS community during these strange pandemic times. We are continuing to host various online activities, in addition to some in-person meetings for small groups, and—when local covid numbers are low enough—in-person services with all-ages RE activities. I will email the *Soulful Home* packet to families toward the beginning of each month; if you did not receive the January family email, please email me. See below for updates on various upcoming RE programming.

In February, we will shift our focus to the Soul Matters theme of *Widening the Circle*. Families are invited to engage with the *Soulful Home* materials in whatever ways feel most meaningful. I'll be sharing additional ways to explore this important theme throughout the month, and hopefully we'll soon be able to also offer some in-person activities during Sunday services.

### Preschool

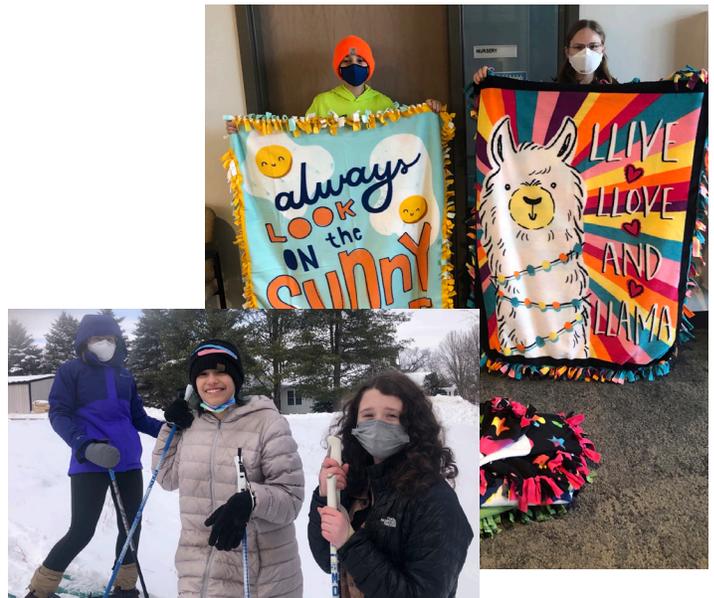
Our Parents of Preschoolers (POP!) support group continues to meet on Zoom. Alice Atkinson is co-leading POP! with me. This program is designed to help parents and caregivers understand spiritual development in our young children, create rituals to support that development, and see ourselves as spiritual teachers. Each month we work through the monthly content at our own pace, and then convene at the end of the month share what we have learned, ask questions, and get support. Our next meeting will be January 30th at 12:30 pm. I will email a Zoom link to participants no later than the Wednesday prior.

### Elementary

Our next event for elementary kids is on Sunday, February 6th, from 12:30 to 2:30 pm. Children in grades 1-6 are invited to come to the UUS Fellowship Hall for decorating cookies and creating cards to be given to loved ones and others in our local community who could use some cheer. Masks will be required at all times. If you have a child who would like to attend, please sign up at <https://bit.ly/UUSFeb6event> to let us know how many children will be coming. You can also use that link to volunteer to assist with the following tasks;

- Make cookie dough and bake cookies from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm
- Help children with making cards and/or cookies from 12:30 to 2:30 pm
- Assist with clean up from 2:30 to 3 pm

We are currently recruiting volunteers to help coordinate and run monthly service-based opportunities for our elementary kids to gather and have fun together. Please email me if you are interested.



### Youth

Our Jr./Sr. High Youth are all invited to participate in monthly service activities. Our Youth Coordinators Jim Trepka, Sally Hartman, Dave Tokuhisa, and Deb Schoelerman are doing a fantastic job planning gatherings for our youth that involve some service along with a lot of fun! If you have a chance, please thank them for their service.

This past month we first enjoyed snowshoeing on UUS's trails—it was a new and fun experience for all! We then worked together and made three fleece blankets that were delivered to Shelter House, along with hygiene supplies.

Youth will gather next on February 13th, from 1:30 to 3 pm (after OWL); we will bake and decorate Valentine cookies to be delivered to Shelter House or another local non-profit agency. Snowshoeing and sledding are on the agenda if we have snow, with a back-up plan to learn cooperative games. Please watch your email (and the weekly all-church email) for more information on upcoming events.

We are hosting Junior High OWL this year, which began in December. Participants meet every Sunday, from 12:30 to 1 pm. Information for each session is emailed to all OWL families and volunteers the Monday prior.

### All Ages

During the time that we cannot host multi-platform, in-person services, I am hosting an All Ages RE zoom break-out room following our Sunday service. We read stories, play games, or do other fun activities together—watch the weekly emails for details.

When we can host multi-platform, in-person services, we will continue to offer an all-ages RE activity at UUS on Sunday mornings.

If you have any questions, or if you'd like to volunteer with the Religious Education program, please email me at [education@uusic.org](mailto:education@uusic.org). I'm working on Sundays and Wednesdays for now. I'm really happy to be back serving our UU community, which my family and I all hold so close.

—Anna Rode

## The Shared Pulpit Class

Hearing Sunday reflections from many different voices and perspectives is an important part of how we support our collective search for truth and meaning and develop our congregational life. If you've wondered about sharing your reflections and how to craft them into a meaningful message or sermon, this class, led by Rev. Diana Smith, is for you! It's also a great opportunity to learn more about writing as a spiritual practice.

To register, sign up at <https://bit.ly/2022SharedPulpit> by the end of the day February 13th. All sessions except the last one will be held via Zoom. Participants should be able to commit to attending all or almost all sessions. Our schedule will be: Tuesdays, February 15th, March 1st, 15th, and 29th from 6:30 to 9 pm on Zoom, and Tuesday, April 19th from 6:30 to 9 pm at UUS.

## UUS Endowment Committee Report 2021 4th Quarter Holdings

As members of the Society are aware, the Endowment Committee has annually reported the status of the General Endowment Fund as well as other endowment funds. Beginning this year, the Endowment Committee will be reporting the accounts to the board and the congregation on a quarterly basis. This change is in response to the Board of Trustees' request to keep all of us updated on a more frequent basis. The accompanying table is meant to show much of what you may be interested in, and if it brings up more questions, please contact any member of the Endowment Committee.

	09/30/21	12/31/21
<b>General Endowment Total Value</b>	<b>\$1,375,663</b>	<b>\$1,355,228</b>
Corpus (Total Donations Invested) <sup>1</sup>	\$663,120	\$663,120
Donations this quarter <sup>1</sup>	\$0	\$2,789
Earnings <sup>2</sup>	\$712,543	\$687,811
UUA Earnings	\$0	\$1,508
<b>Expenditures from General Endowment</b>	<b>\$16,119</b>	<b>\$16,119</b>
Annual Spending Allowance (ASA) <sup>4</sup>	\$16,119	\$16,119
Endowment-Approved Withdrawal <sup>5</sup>	\$0	\$0
<b>Other Endowment Funds Value<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>\$206,707</b>	<b>\$188,718</b>
<b>Other Endowment Funds Expenditures</b>		
Jean Reese Fund (Memorial Garden)	\$0	\$16,334
Music Fund (Equipment)	\$0	\$799
Detiger Fund (Speaker Fee)	\$0	\$150

<sup>1</sup> Can only be accessed under very special circumstances

<sup>2</sup> Can be accessed by vote of congregation

<sup>3</sup> Earmarked for specific purposes, e.g., music, outdoor projects, etc.

<sup>4</sup> Amount/quarter to Annual Budget

<sup>5</sup> Amount Approved by Congregation Above ASA

## Secular Humanists, February 15th

Secular Humanists will hold their regular third Tuesday meeting on February 15th at 7 pm on Zoom. Watch for additional information in both Secular Humanist emails and the general UUS weekly emails. We will be asking everyone who can to watch a one-hour video before the meeting. More details to come very soon.

## UUS Music Outreach Program Series: Asian Composers, February 26th

Join us on Saturday, February 26th, for an afternoon concert featuring music by Asian composers performed by guest musicians. You will hear traditional Korean tunes, mesmerizing and melancholy Japanese contemporary pieces, cheerful and loving Chinese piano duets, and fusion folk tunes from Taiwan.

The concert will be held in the UUS Sanctuary at 4 pm. This event is part of the UUS Music Outreach Program series, and is free and open to the public. A freewill donation will benefit the performers and UUS. Questions can be sent to Hsin-Hui Liu at [music.outreach@uusic.org](mailto:music.outreach@uusic.org).

## UU Free Lunch Program Report

On Friday, January 14th, our first UUS Free Lunch of 2022, our intrepid volunteers braved a winter snow storm in order to assemble and serve 89 meals to very appreciative diners. Thank you to our team leader, Bob Littlehale, and to volunteers Carolyn Johnson, Deb Galbraith, Donna Simonton, Vicki Siefers, and our newest volunteer, Anne Schons, who all deserve kudos for their willingness to come out in this Iowa winter weather. As usual, all of our volunteers followed strict pandemic protocols while on site.

Thanks also to the long-time and dedicated Free Lunch volunteer whose generous donation paid for the main dish of chicken strips and to the many UUS members and friends whose donations paid for side dishes of baked beans, potato salad, bananas, and chocolate chip cookies. Free Lunch is truly a team effort!

Throughout the COVID pandemic, beginning with the meal in April, 2020, UUS volunteers, members, friends, and Covenant Groups purchased, assembled, and served 1837 meals at Free Lunch. Thank you for your extraordinary efforts made during a very challenging time. It is a contribution for which we can all be proud.

If you are interested in learning more about the ways you can contribute to the Free Lunch Program, please contact Carmen Griggs at [cgriggsiowa@gmail.com](mailto:cgriggsiowa@gmail.com).

## Regional Assembly, April 30th, 2022

Registration is now open for virtual MidAmerica Regional Assembly, which will take place on Saturday, April 30th, 2022, from 9 am to 1 pm CT). The day will feature worship, keynote presentation and conversation, lunch break, business meeting, and time for social connection. Keynote speaker, UU educator, consultant, and facilitator [CB Beal](#) will present "The Glass is Refillable: Pandemic Exhaustion, Lifelong Faith Formation, and Preemptive Radical Inclusion."

There is a sliding registration fee scale between \$25 to \$50 and scholarships are available. Please register on the [RA registration page!](#)

## Green Sanctuary Team Report

You can be more sustainable in 2022! What changes can you make?

- Have you switched out all of the incandescent light bulbs and CFLs for LEDs?
- Do you use “dryer balls” in your clothes dryer?
- Do you run your dishwasher and clothes washer at night?
- Do you take advantage of the Iowa City organic waste program? (the yellow top bin)
- Have you thought about how you can use less plastic?

What else have you thought about doing? All these are ways to be more sustainable; Remember—every action helps!

At its January meeting, members of the Green Sanctuary Team discussed ongoing and new projects for the coming months. At the top of the list is communicating with the Coralville City Council to encourage the City to take more actions toward addressing climate change. Watch for more information to see how you can help, especially if you live in Coralville.

Members of our team will do an inventory of the consumable products and cleaning supplies. We ask these questions: Do we have adequate supply of compostable or reusable plates, cups, etc.? Are we using the least toxic cleaning supplies? How can we move closer to being a near zero-waste organization?

Stay tuned for news about upcoming special events:

- An all-congregation community book-read of *All We Can Save*, edited by Ayana Elizabeth Johnson and Katharine K. Wilkinson
- Our partnership with the Johnson County Energy District to provide “energy packages” to low and middle-income families in the community.

Join us at our next zoom meeting on February 10th at 11 am! For more information, contact Deb Schoelerman at [dschoelerman@gmail.com](mailto:dschoelerman@gmail.com).

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## 2021 UUS Listening Campaign Report

### BACKGROUND

In 2017 the Johnson County Interfaith Coalition (JCIC) undertook a campaign to engage local communities of faith in grassroots organizing in the Johnson County area. The overall goal of this campaign is to actively engage congregations in allying to organize for justice in the Johnson County area. One significant means of achieving this goal was to bring “listening campaigns” to interested congregations. Through these campaigns local congregations would identify shared values and motivations for engaging in local grassroots organizing.

### PURPOSE

Under the leadership of Rev. Diana, the UUS committed to engaging in a congregational listening campaign in the Spring of 2021. At this time the UUS Congregation had been significantly impacted by COVID restrictions which had pushed all church services and gatherings to remote platforms. Additionally, members were affected by the unrest and outrage roiling the country in response to the continued killing of unarmed black people by police officers, including the killing of George Floyd in May of 2020, and held a palpable sense of needing / wanting to engage more actively in constructive responses to systemic racism.

## Social Justice Team Report: IUUWAN

The Iowa UU Witness and Advocacy Network (IUUWAN), one of about 25 UU state action networks, is involved in compelling social justice work. Together with the Iowa Justice Action Network (IJAN), our focus is on bills in the legislature that would change those with a Life Without Parole Sentence. One of our UU Society members, Simon (Nefer) Tunstall might benefit if one of those bills passed into law. You can join IJAN’s and IUUWAN’s efforts to get those bills passed. Contact your legislators to urge their support.

IUUWAN’s Outreach Coordinator, Kirk Witzberger, and UUS member Sally Hartman are currently enrolled in an intensive Pachamama course called the Game Changer Intensive. This course educates, inspires and equips participants to affect social change. Another course will be offered in March.

The UUA all-denomination read is *Defund Fear* by Zach Norris. You are invited by Peoples Church in Cedar Rapids to discuss this book via Zoom, along with other UUs across Iowa. The first discussion already took place, but the second discussion is scheduled for Tuesday, February 22nd, at 7 pm and will focus on the second part of the book. Please RSVP to Peoples Church ([office@peoplesuu.org](mailto:office@peoplesuu.org)).

The IUUWAN board voted to adopt the 8th Principle, along with the UU congregations in Ames, Cedar Rapids, and Quad Cities. The 8th Principle states:

“We the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist, covenant to affirm and promote; journeying toward spiritual wholeness working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”

The goal of conducting a Listening Campaign at UUSIC was to support re-connection between congregation members as well as lay the groundwork for better understanding what motivates and inspires members to engage with each other and the wider community.

A listening session is intended to last 30 to 40 minutes and provides an opportunity for the speaker to share, explore and reflect on their life experience. The listener tends to the speaker with interest and open-hearted curiosity. This process supports the speaker in clarifying how their experiences have influenced and shaped their values and how their own struggles/experiences motivate them to engage with others and the larger community.

### THE CAMPAIGN

The campaign kicked off with two “listener” trainings in the summer of 2021, conducted by David Goodner, an organizer hired by JCIC and trained by the Gamaliel Network. Two UUS Listening Campaign leaders were identified, Sarah Ross and Dave Martin, and by September 2021 a team of 18 “listeners” had been assembled:

Dave Martin, Sarah Ross, Virginia Melroy, Sue Kann, Jane DeWitt, Peggy Grimmer, Dana Van Abbema, Linda Hartford,

*(Continued next page)*

(2021 UUS Listening Campaign Report, continued)

Quanda Hood, Diane Martin, Hilary Higgens, Susan Salterberg, Jim Olson, Diana Henry, Steve Locher, Miriam Kashia, Peg Bouska, Joel Gilbertson-White, Sally Hartman, and Ian Cawley. The Listening Team was commissioned by Rev. Diana during the service on August 22nd and the campaign was publicized in the weekly email and newsletters in September and October. With guidance from Rev. Diana, former JCIC organizer David Goodner, other JCIC leaders and the Listening Team set out to listen to about 160 UUS members and friends. "Listenees" were identified with the help of Peggy Garrigues, Director of Congregational and Community Engagement, and focused on these cohorts: Members who had been less engaged over the past 2-3 years; Older adults; Younger adults; Parents with kids in RE programs; and Newer members.

Each member of the Listening Team was assigned 8-10 congregation members whom they would contact and invite to participate. Of the members assigned, 160 were contacted and of those about 80 agreed to participate in a listening session.

The Listening Team wished that more people had agreed to participate. Folks were contacted by phone, email, Zoom, and person-to-person meetings. It took several tries to reach or hear back from most people.

#### THEMES AND FOLLOW-UP

Each listener submitted notes and observations from the listening sessions they held via a Google form created by Peggy Garrigues. These notes were only shared with a few leaders, with the permission of the person being listened to. The listening team met on December 15th to debrief their experiences as listeners and to reflect on and identify themes or common observations. Along with Rev. Diana, who had access to the listeners' notes, the team identified the following themes/observations:

- Fatigue from the pandemic, which underlay many of the other themes.
- Zoom services and meetings - People spoke of likes and dislikes with support for continuing it as an option.
- Feeling disconnected and expressing a desire for connections and deep conversations.
  - Loss associated with missing those connections.
  - Especially present for older members, younger families, and newer members.
- Desire for non-justice or worship service ways of being connected and growing.

- Many of the ways UUS has met these needs in the past didn't run or the online adaptations didn't get participation and were dropped.
- Desire for more adult religious education.
- Desire for more multigenerational events.
- Mental health challenges, past or current, and a desire for UUS to more explicitly address and support mental health challenges.
- General passions and interests or social justice interests, often without specifics.
  - Service projects with children/youth/as families, multigenerational
  - Community
  - Drawing on our history
  - Intersectionality
- Most didn't talk about looking for more ways to volunteer.
- Valuing UU identity.
- Contradictions—some wanting more spiritual themes, some less; some wanting more justice, some less.

The team also discussed how to follow-up and report back to the congregation. Ideas included a report in the monthly newsletter and weekly emails, reporting to the Balance and Growth Initiative committee, reporting to the Board, holding a forum after a service to share with interested congregation members, as well as emailing a thank you to all those who participated. Dave Martin and Sarah Ross, the Listening Campaign co-leads, agreed to draft this report which can be shared internally with the congregation as well as other UUS committees.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The major value that came from this effort was that we developed a capacity for future listening campaigns within UUS and in the broader community by training more listeners as well as getting more listeners involved.

The team suggested that UUS run a second campaign focusing on the cohort of UUS members who are more actively engaged in UUS committees, leadership and ministry. And, that the listening sessions include more focused questions about how engagement in UUS supports these members and what motivates them to participate.

Most listeners agreed they would like to be involved in the next listening campaign. Several also agreed to talk more about being part of a JCIC engagement team working in the wider community.

#### February Birthdays

Audrey Adamson	Kathy Huedepohl	Vanessa Taylor
Alice Atkinson	Brigette Ingersoll	Ali Tunnicliff-Scott
Sharon Beckman	Betsy Klein	Carly van der
Susan Boyd	Jim Laughlin	Heide
Judi Clinton	Ronald L. McCall	Peg Voelker
Susan Eberly	Nancy Noyer	Kylie Wetherell
Christine Etler	Maureen Patterson	Nora Wittenkeller
Amy Fretz	Gerry Pearson	
Kurt Hamann	Jaia Rosenfels	
Virginia Hayes	Jill Stephenson	

#### Past Service Attendance

**December 24th (Christmas Eve 5 pm Family Service):**  
35 virtual, 75 in person

**December 24th (Christmas Eve 9 pm Candle Service):**  
35 in person

**December 26th (Spirited Sunday: Storytelling):** 31 virtual

**January 2nd (Making Change):** 69 virtual

**January 9th (Reviving Epiphany):** 95 virtual

**January 16th (We'll Build a Land):** 103 virtual

**January 24th (Nourishing Our Hearts):** 110 virtual

# Unitarian Universalist Society Board of Trustees Meeting Highlights

December 15th, 2021 (virtual via Zoom)

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

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

*Vice President Honey-Arcement called the meeting to order at 7:11 pm.*

**BOARD READ:** Members discussed the final chapters of *Trauma Stewardship* by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky.

**CONSENT AGENDA:** *The Board received the consent agenda and voted to approve the December 15th Board minutes, December 19th Congregational Meeting minutes, January 8th Board Retreat report, January 12th Exec. Committee minutes, Treasurer/Finance reports, and Minister/staff reports. Pavelich moved, Rasmussen seconded, to approve the consent agenda. Passed unanimously.*

## BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:

**Governance:** Rasmussen shared concerns which were brought up after the December Congregational Meeting about applying meeting rules designed for in-person meetings to multi-platform meetings. *Roberts Rules of Order* does have a new chapter on how to conduct electronic meetings. The committee is working on some new drafts of rules for multi-platform meetings and will review these at their next meeting in March. Swanson added that we also need to review the process for updating the online policies and procedures manual since that version should always be current.

**Personnel:** Honey-Arcement advised that Dana Van Abbema is the new committee co-chair. Their next quarterly meeting will be in February. They are working on updating the sabbatical policy recently reviewed by the Board.

**Finance:** Pavelich confirmed that Endowment has agreed to provide a quarterly report. Endowment would like to reconcile bank accounts with disbursements more often than once a year.

**Right Relations:** No updates.

**Mission & Vision Review:** Per Seaba, they met on December 20th and January 17th and discussed how BGI data collection can be used to determine the project's success. She discussed developing a method for assessment mapping which will track metrics such as rental income and membership changes and then make this information accessible to all groups. Honey-Arcement added that hopefully this will help UUS groups coordinate more easily. Swanson confirmed this will help integrate this committee's goals into the BGI plan. Rev Diana advised that she would like to work more closely with Seaba on developing this.

## OTHER BUSINESS:

**COVID and UUS Reopening Progress:** Johnson County is currently at 240.8 new cases/100,000 which is an increase from 159 new cases/100,000 on January 6th. At the January 8th Retreat, the Board agreed to remain in Phase 2 even though current infection rates meet the criteria for Phase 1.

Miller agreed to be the Board liaison for a new Safe Gathering task force which will modify the original phases. Miller proposed changing the current 5-phase plan to a 3-phase plan which anticipates a gradual return to in-person services this spring. Rev Diana confirmed that all staff are required to be vaccinated with an allowance for medical or religious exemption. She provided the names of several UUS members with the appropriate background and experience who could assist with developing the new plan before the February 16th Board meeting.

**December Congregational Meeting:** Swanson advised that Amy Fretz is in the process of documenting the online election process for future meetings, and as Rasmussen mentioned earlier we also need to make sure the rules and regulations for multi-platform elections are clear.

**BGI Discussion:** Honey-Arcement advised that communication between different groups and staff are critical to accomplishing BGI goals. Gary Lawrenson has expressed interest in organizing rentals which will bring new visitors to the building. Rev Diana confirmed that the staff strategic planning process has already been initiated and now we just need to map out the plans and put them into action. Pavelich advised that the reading from the Board Retreat discussed "experiments" which would try new ideas and processes, and maybe a few of these could be initiated with the help of a Board liaison to BGI. John Raley will also be assisting with the evaluation process discussed at recent Mission and Vision meetings. Swanson confirmed that this will also communicate to the outside world all the good things we are doing and will also open up discussion about the kinds of services families and young single people want.

**Three Open Questions:** Will need to be decided by the Board before the June congregational meeting as they will help guide the Ministry plan for the 2022-2023 church year. Ideally the questions will be finalized soon so that we can request feedback from the congregation this spring, possibly through a simple survey or Town Halls led by Board members in after-service discussions on Zoom. Rev Diana suggested finding ways to engage people other than Town Halls since families with young children usually don't stay after the services. Honey-Arcement suggested adding the questions as materials which supplement the RE packets prepared with monthly school-age activities.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

**Stewardship:** As of January 10th we had \$415,887 pledged which surpasses the original budget goal of \$410,000. This includes all matching gift money except for the \$1000 matching gift if pledges reach \$419,000.

## NEW BUSINESS:

**RE Staff Changes:** Rev Diana reported on status of the current RE program. Anna Rode started on January 2nd as a temporary part-time RE Coordinator, and she is providing support to children's programming and working with the RE Transition team. She has agreed to stay in this position through March with an extension possible.

**DLRE Hiring:** Rev Diana has a new search team for the new Director of Lifespan Religious Education, and the position should be posted next week and remain open for 1 month. The position is posted to start anywhere between April and July, and it is being offered as either a ¾ or full-time position. Offering it as a ¾ time position will open it up to a wider pool of candidates, and if the applicant chooses the ¾ time option the temporary RE assistant position may become permanent.

**Book Sale Fundraiser:** Audlehelm discussed organizing a new book sale fundraiser of rare or vintage books over a three-day weekend. It would start with a Friday evening event that could involve readings by UUS authors, and then the book sale would be open to the public on Saturday and Sunday. Seaba mentioned that the Shelter House book sale will be held in late March so we need to announce this event soon since UUS members will already be collecting books to donate for that fundraiser. Miller suggested that this might be a good fall event, especially since we will know more about COVID numbers as the year progresses. Rasmussen suggested that any first editions or signed copies be priced ahead of time to make sure book dealers don't take advantage of low prices. Swanson suggested that she put a request into the weekly email and next month's newsletter to recruit interested volunteers.

**Memorial Garden:** The Memorial Garden team needs to be formalized. Rasmussen has updated the policies and procedures, and the policy and application must be specific to avoid any potential disagreement among surviving family members. Most congregations with a memorial garden have a management team of at least three people. Rasmussen confirmed this will be more of a Ministry function than a Board function. Audlehelm confirmed that staff would need to maintain records of who is interred there, and Hilary Strayer has agreed to review the legalities. We could also have a brochure available which will be introduced at a spring service. Rev Diana confirmed that we need to commission the garden before anyone is interred there.

**Other New Business:** The annual UUS certification survey needs to be completed by Feb 4. This is an annual report and multiple choice survey.

### CLOSING

*Henry offered Process Observer comments, Seaba read closing words. Meeting adjourned at 9:55 pm.*

The next full Board meeting is Wednesday, February 16th, 2022, at 7 pm.

—Submitted by Paula Miller, Interim Secretary

## December Financial Report Highlights

**Operating Bank Accounts:** End-of-month totals = \$335,660.

**Income:** In December, pledge income exceeded our budgeted expectation by over \$20,000. This is almost entirely people either catching up on their 2021 pledges or prepaying for 2022.

Pledges for 2021 ended up being \$384,850 of which \$382,160 were fulfilled; a 99% giving rate. An additional \$9,290 above the pledges was also donated.

Our Holiday Treats and Talents Auction has brought in \$13,226 as of 12/31/21.

Congregants raised \$275 extra for the November agency, the Free Lunch Program, and \$1,336 for the Free Dental Clinic, the agency for December. We also raised \$902 for the Minister's Discretionary Fund at the Christmas Eve services.

We had \$525 in donations to our Memorial Fund in memory of Ruth Muir, and \$25 earmarked for the Memorial Garden and \$190 to the Free Lunch Program in memory of Bonnie Penno's sister, Laurie Hess.

The Circle of Friends Team received \$565 in donations to buy gifts and gift cards for our immigrant families. Our youth raised \$130 in December for their pie sale.

**Expenses:** We were about \$5k under budget for the month and we ended 2021 over \$34,000 under budget for expenses. Annually, almost every overall budget area was under budget. The only exception was Facilities Expenses. This section was overbudget by about \$3k, mostly due to a higher-than-expected insurance premium adjustment and unanticipated repairs/maintenance bills for the building and grounds.

**Status of our 2021 Deficit Spending:** Our Operating Budget showed a \$123,600 deficit for the year, all of which was covered from extra funds in our bank accounts. This was nicely below the \$175,000 deficit we projected (see the Treasurer's part in the 2021 Annual Report). This allows us to commit \$60,000 of extra bank funds to help cover the 2022 projected deficit.

Contributing to the \$123,600 deficit was about \$22,000 that the Board approved for an unbudgeted repair to one of our bio-cells. Thus, our ministries really only incurred about \$100,000 as a deficit. Again, compared with the \$175,000 we thought possible, this is a good result. Our ministries and teams are commended for being judicious in their use of Core Budget funds this year.

**Stewardship:** The Stewardship Team reports that to date 191 pledges have been entered for the 2022 campaign, totaling \$415,887 (including \$18,00 in matches). An additional match is being offered when pledges meet \$419,000

**Endowment:** The Endowment Committee will be providing quarterly reports on our endowments stock funds. They will be included in the monthly newsletters.

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

# The UUS News

The Unitarian Universalist Society

2355 Oakdale Road

Coralville, IA 52241

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[www.uusic.org](http://www.uusic.org)

## Join Us for Sunday Services

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### February 6th:

#### **“Justice and Community Building Through Music-Making”**

Special guest Dr. Mary Cohen will lead us in singing and reflecting on music-making as a means for building inner peace and communities of care, including the work she’s done with the Oakdale Choir.

### February 13th: “Side With Love Sunday”

As we wrap up our celebration of the 30 Days of Love campaign, we’ll be joining the UUA’s national 30 Days of Love worship service. We hope you’ll join us as we celebrate this special service and the many ways we help Love show up in the world!

### February 20th: “Widening the Circle”

Join us for a special service when we’ll welcome new members and reflect on the messages of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change’s report “Widening the Circle of Concern.”

### February 27th: “Celebrating Mystery and Wonder”

Join us as we begin our exploration of the Sources that our living tradition of Unitarian Universalism draws from. This week we’ll hear about the UUA Article II Study Commission, which is exploring updates to Unitarian Universalism’s Principles and Purposes. We’ll also celebrate and explore the Source of direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces that create and uphold life.

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**Join via Zoom:** [bit.ly/UUS\\_Virtual\\_Sunday\\_Service](https://bit.ly/UUS_Virtual_Sunday_Service), (Meeting ID: 945 6258 4740, Passcode: 927789). Please visit the website or check the weekly emails to see if in-person attendance is available. For details on attending services during the pandemic, visit [www.uusic.org/about-us/covid-19-info-updates/](http://www.uusic.org/about-us/covid-19-info-updates/)

### February’s 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. Offering donations can be given online (<http://bit.ly/UUSPartner>) or mailed to the office. (Write checks to UUS, with UAY on the memo line.)

You can also designate an offering donation to our Operating Budget (<http://bit.ly/UUSOperating>), as a general donation or towards the fulfillment of your annual pledge.