

2020/2021 Annual Report



MISSION STATEMENT:

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

(Virtual) Congregational Meeting Agenda, May 23rd, 2021

OPENING

Call to Order & Establishment of Quorum

Joe Rasmussen, Board President

Chalice Lighting & Opening Words

Rev. Diana Smith, Minister

ACTION ITEMS

Vote to approve the December 20th, 2020 Minutes

Joe Rasmussen

Recognition of Outgoing Committee Members

Joe Rasmussen

Presentation of Leadership Nominees

Sue Otto,
Leadership Development Committee

Vote to Elect:

Board of Trustees (3)

Leadership Development Committee (2)

Endowment Committee (2)

Reports by the Board of Trustees

Joe Rasmussen, President

Mike Pavelich, Treasurer

CLOSING

Extinguishing the Chalice, & Closing Words

Rev. Diana Smith

We extinguish this flame
but not the light of truth,
the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment.
All these we carry in our hearts and in our minds
until we are together again.

Motion for Adjournment

Joe Rasmussen

Outgoing Members of Elected Committees

The Board of Trustees, Leadership Development Committee, and the entire congregation thank the members of our elected committees and Board whose terms are ending for their service to UUS:

Board of Trustees

Amy Fretz, Past-President

Paul Pomrehn, Trustee

Colleen Higgins, Trustee

Leadership Development Committee

Dave Tokuhsa

Jean Hood

Endowment Committee

Ken Atkinson

Slate of Leadership Nominees

The Leadership Development Committee is pleased to announce this year's nominees for positions on the LDC, Endowment Committee, and Board of Trustees. We sincerely thank them for their willingness to serve:

Board of Trustees

Rochelle Honey-Arcement, Vice-President

Diana Henry, Trustee

Hazel Seaba, Trustee

Leadership Development Committee

Dave Gallaher

Ron Pile

Endowment Committee

Carmen Griggs (term ending 2024)

Bruce Alexander



(Left) Photos of UUS members fill the Sanctuary seats, giving a sense of congregation for our new minister, Rev. Diana Smith, on Sunday mornings.

From Your Board President, Joe Rasmussen

There are two words that I have used the most during this year: “unusual circumstances.” Our building closed to the congregation before my term as president started and will not re-open until my term is done. The COVID pandemic has presented us with many “unusual circumstances” and challenges. I believe we as a Society have met those challenges and learned from these circumstances.

The Board of Trustees has continually monitored and addressed the pandemic. The Board temporarily closed the church building in mid-March 2020, then extended that closure and authorized the Executive Committee to make decisions. As the crisis deepened, the Board created a task force of its members and laypersons to make recommendations on how and when we could continue church activities. That task force recommended a phased re-opening plan tied to specific COVID data that the Board considered in August, and decision-making authority shifted from the Executive Committee to the full Board. The benchmarks and phased re-opening plan were adopted by the Board in September. The Board’s task force was replaced on October 1st, 2020, by a ministry task force. The benchmarks have been updated as data reporting changed, and the Board continues to review the situation every month. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered their time and expertise to guide us through these unusual circumstances.

“The departure of interim Rev. Diane Dowgiert and the arrival of Rev. Diana Smith as our settled minister set us on a new path of shared ministry.”

The departure of interim Reverend Diane Dowgiert and the arrival of Reverend Diana Smith as our settled minister set us on a new path of shared ministry. Past Boards, with Reverend Dowgiert’s guidance, had begun the work to change our governance structure. As president, I have overseen a new board policy book established, five standing board committees made functional, and a new annual planning and goal-setting process created. The Board of Trustees has assisted Reverend Smith to establish her new settled ministry under the 2020 bylaw revision that provides her with universal authority over Society staff and programs. The Board retains its fiduciary responsibilities and now focuses on our mission and vision goals. Much of what we have done this past year was for the first time, as we worked to make this concept of shared ministry a reality. Work remains, but we have a solid start.

The pandemic affected the Society in more ways than

just the building closure. Our weekly services shifted online to Zoom, as did our business and program meetings. Our staff members and volunteers did a magnificent job of quickly making this transition and have improved the experience. The online experience is part of our new normal that will be adapted once we gather in person again but will remain available. I oversaw a new internet connection and provider for the building that significantly enhanced our signal strength, along with live-streaming equipment funded from our endowment. It will be interesting to see how this all fits together in the years ahead, and how it affects rentals and the use of the building.

“... the long-term goal is to bring our budget closer to balance. That is requiring an examination of all of our funds and practices.”

Financial stress also came with the pandemic. Closed businesses and lost work affected the Society’s receipt of pledge, rental, and fundraising income. This brought a new focus on the UUS budget. The building’s mortgage was refinanced in December and provided some relief, but the overall picture remains unbalanced between revenue and expenses. As a non-profit organization, UUS relies on its cash flow to pay expenses, and we have been able to do that. However, the long-term goal is to bring our budget closer to balance. That is requiring an examination of all our funds and practices. Fortunately, the Board approved moving our accounting in-house last July under the direction of our Congregational Administrator, Emma Barnum. That has improved financial reports and gives us the specificity necessary to address this challenge. As the national economy recovers, our Society’s finances will recover as well.

The next church year will see many changes. Physically the building and grounds may be different. The vacancies created by the departures of Gloria Corbin, Music Director, and Jessica Zimmer, Director of Lifespan Religious Education, will change UUS as new persons fill those roles. We thank them both for their outstanding service to UUS and wish them the best in the future. It will be great to actually meet Reverend Smith in person and see her settled ministry grow.

While my presidency may have an asterisk next to it as the first president never to have attended an in-person church service, I could not have done this without the support of the members of the Board and the staff, and Reverend Diana. This year has been a group effort that gives the term “community” a real definition. Thank you for your support. PEACE.

—Submitted by Joe Rasmussen

Governance Committee

Current Members: Mary McMurray, Tom Larkin, Joe Rasmussen, Alan Swanson, Rev. Diana Smith, and Amy Fretz

This year we welcomed Rev. Diana Smith and Alan Swanson to our committee! Over the past year, the Governance Committee has continued to build and organize the base of the Society's governing documents. We revised the name to really embrace the Shared Ministry concept. It is now called the *Unitarian Universalist Society of Coralville, Iowa Shared Ministry Policies and Procedures*.

The Board passed the first edition of the Board Policies in October. We have fine-tuned some of the policies in the manual, and we are building the procedures section now. The goals for the Governance Committee are to build a hub that houses all UUS's governing documents. It will be available online so anyone can view our documents.

It is a work in progress. We are hoping to finish the initial version of the book in the coming months, and then we will work to put things on a review schedule so we can keep it updated. It is exciting work, and we are thrilled to be moving it along. We will put the working draft back online so you can view our work once we get rolling with the procedures a little more.

Our committee meets the first Tuesday of the month at 2 pm for anyone who would like to come and listen in. Also, if you have any interest in serving on the Governance Committee, we are always looking for interested people. This is a great committee to be on if you have an interest in serving on the Board as well! Please reach out to Amy Fretz or any of us on the committee.

—Submitted by Amy Fretz

COVID Task Force

Members: Mary McMurray, Dan Gall, Peg Voelker, Marsha Cheyney, Peggy Garrigues, Emma Barnum, Jessica Zimmer, Kim Palmer, Rev. Diana Smith, and Amy Fretz



Wow, what a year. Sometimes time does not fly! It was a little over a year ago when UUS closed after Johnson County began to see its first cases of COVID-19. The COVID Task Force Committee was initially a Board committee. With Rev. Diana's arrival, the Task Force eventually turned into a ministry team.

The committee had developed a *Phases for Reopening* plan, which the Board approved last fall. Then, in February, the State of Iowa changed how they track COVID cases, which made our Phases obsolete. The COVID Task Force Team went back to the drawing board and revised the *Phases for Reopening* with

current metrics. The Board approved the new guidelines in March. As of this writing, we are in Phase 2, where small UUS teams and groups can meet outdoors at UUS, following our COVID guidelines.

As UUs, one of our greatest attributes is that we care for each other, and we hold ourselves to a covenant of Right Relations. In looking at our reentry into in-person gatherings, the task force has spent a lot of time looking at how we can offer a way for everyone to be included. Many people have different needs. Many cannot come to UUS in person yet for a variety of reasons, including that they or their family members are not vaccinated, they are still at risk, or they have reasons they are not comfortable sharing with us. At the same

time, some individuals who face challenges with technology are not able to engage fully when we only offer online events. Others are fully vaccinated and need interaction with others. As you begin to consider whether your group will meet at UUS in person, please try to include everyone in your considerations. There may be some people who are not able to express that they cannot come to UUS, even though they desperately want to. Others may have hearing challenges or other physical limitations that make meeting in person difficult if people are wearing masks or are distanced. Please be considerate of everyone in your group and try to anticipate needs even if they are not expressed.

As we aspire to be a more inclusive, loving, diverse congregation that welcomes all people, let us find new ways to defend and celebrate the Earth, confront racial and social injustice, and nurture deep connections. In the coming months, you will be hearing more about ways in which UUS can offer multi-platform programming and opportunities to become a "Community of Communities." The idea is that UUS should provide high-quality offerings that allow people to engage in a variety of ways so there can truly be a community of communities with deep connections.

The COVID Task Force will be holding several town hall meetings to discuss the reopening plan, other things COVID-related, and ways to move into a new era as we begin to dust ourselves off and trickle back to UUS. It is going to be different as we navigate this together. Many of the ways we have always done things will change such as food service, handshakes, and hugs.

The COVID Task Force thanks you for your patience. We want you to know we are committed to keeping everyone as safe as possible at UUS. In addition, we will do everything we possibly can to keep you informed and listen to your concerns. We are going to need volunteers to help with things like organization, hospitality, AV, and online programming, just to name a few. If you would like to help, please reach out to Mary McMurray or any of our staff members. Please continue to stay safe!

—Submitted by Amy Fretz



From Your Minister, Rev. Diana Smith

Dear Ones,

This has been an extraordinary year—and possibly the strangest beginning to a ministry that any of us could(n't) imagine. About a year ago you called me to be your settled minister after an online candidating time. It's strange to remember that back then we thought that perhaps we'd be joining together in person when I arrived in August. Instead, we've journeyed together through this year of online pandemic ministry. Nonetheless, it's still been a deeply fulfilling joy to be your minister and to engage in this shared ministry with you. Every day I'm grateful that I'm here with you.

“This year we—lay leaders, staff, and congregation—have stuck to ... the vision of ministry that we cast as the liturgical year began in August: to survive as a congregation in a way that is grounded in and reflects our values, our love, and our call to live love ever more fully and fiercely into the world.”

This year we—lay leaders, staff, and congregation—have stuck to the one fundamental goal, the vision of ministry that we cast as the liturgical year began in August: to survive as a congregation in a way that is grounded in and reflects our values, our love, and our call to live love ever more fully and fiercely into the world. This means that we have worked to make it through, supporting each other with love and care along the way, that we have done what we can so that no one gets sick because of us, and that we have continued our internal and external justice work—it is inherent to who we are and to our faith. We have done this with more creativity, love, and compassion than I could have imagined.

As we move toward the end of this liturgical year and look towards the summer and next year, our goals and vision are being tested. This current/next phase is challenging us perhaps even more than the earlier phases did, and it's coming at a time when we are all exhausted by over a year of living in a pandemic. Nonetheless, I have deep, abiding faith and trust in our ability to continue living our deepest mission and vision ever more fully into the world with an abiding, fierce, grateful love. After all, I have seen what we have done this year.

What follows is a brief synopsis of my activities for the past year:

- Worship Services: 30
- Drive-Through or Walk-Through Events: 10
- Weddings: 1

Meetings and groups attended:

- Board of Trustees 9x
- Executive Committee 9x
- Transition Team 8x
- Ministerial Fellowship Team 4x
- Staff 33x
- Program Staff 17x
- Pastoral Care Team 8x
- Worship Associates 5x
- Covid Team 9x
- Covid Reopening Listening Sessions 4x
- Finance Committee 8x
- Governance Committee 5x
- Personnel Committee 2x
- Stewardship Team 7x
- Social Justice Team 2x
- Leadership Development Team 2x
- Getting Acquainted One-to-Ones 65x
- Café Conversations 4x
- Vespers services 3x
- Parent Conversations 2x
- Secular Humanists Meeting 2x
- Covenant Group Leaders 1x
- Starting Point 3x
- Pathway to Membership Class 3x
- Congregational Meeting 2x
- UU the Vote Sessions 4x
- Dinner church 2x
- Hawkeye Cluster of the UUMA 3x
- MidAmerica Region Program Size Clergy 3x
- Johnson County Interfaith Coalition 5x
- Johnson County Women Clergy 5x
- Church of the Larger Fellowship Nominating Committee 8x
- Clergy Coaching 8x
- Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Coaching 6x
- Wellspring 8x

One-time events:

- Making it Through the Derecho
- Farewell for Aura Strohschein
- Hiring Dave Rowe as Online Interim Music Leader
- Hiring Process for a New DLRE
- Religious Education Revisioning Restart
- Hiring Process for a New Director of Music
- Director of Music Listening Sessions
- Staff Retreat
- Board-Minister Start-up
- Congregational Pandemic Ministry Hopes and Fears Session
- Interfaith Racial Justice Witness in Cedar Rapids
- Election Defender in WI on Election Day
- Post-Election Vigil
- Preemptive Radical Inclusion Services and Workshop
- Board Planning Retreat
- Prairie Star UUMA Chapter Retreat
- New Day Rising Conference
- Revolutionary Love Conference

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Diana Smith, Minister

From Your Board Treasurer, Mike Pavelich

Our finances through the last 16 months have remained remarkably stable. As of April 30th, 2021, we had \$389k in the bank and \$1,525k in our total endowment stocks. These numbers have not varied much since January 1st, 2020, thanks in most part to a strong stock market and the PPP loan obtained in 2020.

Highlights of the last 12 months include:

- Our accounting has been completely moved in-house with great success. This saves us a bit of money but mostly is saving us time and frustration. The new system, which combines the features of QuickBooks and Realm, has been established and is operated by Congregational Administrator Emma Barnum with help from Administrative Assistant Nik Jakob and is transparent, easily queried, and adjustable. This was a very good move.
- A PPP loan of \$72k was obtained for 2020 by Past-Treasurer Chris Rode. This helped offset revenue drops during the start of the pandemic. The loan was fully forgiven in 2021.
- Many UUS folks had to lower their 2020 pledge commitments when the pandemic hit. However, the new, lower, total pledge amounts were essentially fulfilled. Nice work, folks.
- We have refinanced the mortgage at 3.55% for another five years but have amortized it such that our mortgage payments now total \$58k per year, thus saving \$17k per year. Our endowment stock funds earned 15% over 2020 and continue to grow healthily in 2021.

“As you can see ... we are well off. But we are also not well off. The pandemic has revealed a systemic funding problem.”

Our Chronic 30% Deficit

As you can see above, we are well off. But we are also not well off. The pandemic has revealed a systemic funding problem. Our regular yearly income (pledges, fundraising, and the customary Annual Spending Allocation from our General Endowment stock, or ASA) is consistently about 30% lower than what we need to run our enterprise.

The Problem

Financially, the core spending needs of UUS are its staff, programs, and building/grounds costs. We find that this Core needs an annual allotment of \$600k to do its work. It was planned that the Core would be financed by our Regular Yearly Income (RYI) of pledges, fundraising events, rental income, and ASA from our General Endowment stocks. This is not working; for example, RYI is expected to be only \$425k in 2021.

This is a systemic problem. About a 30% underfunding of the Core has existed and persisted since 2016. Treasurers just found pots of money to fill that gap. In 2021, we are filling it with the extra funds in the bank accounts. I fully expect our bank accounts to shrink by \$200,000 by year's end.

“This feels like an exciting, rewarding endeavor, almost a Phase 2 of the New UUS opening.”

We Can Solve This Together

Prompted by a document entitled “Let Us Save The Dream: A 4-year plan,” the Board and Finance Committee members have had spirited and lengthy discussions about coming to grips with our 30% Deficit. These leaders are determined to finally solve this problem, even if it takes a few years. Ideas are already expanding beyond those in the prompting document to use this as an opportunity to review who we are and where we want to go. Discussions and planning might encompass all elements of UUS (vision of ministry, endowments, staffing, stewardship, budgets, programs) so that all act in unison. This feels like an exciting, rewarding endeavor, almost a Phase 2 of the New UUS opening.

By the Congregational Meeting in December 2021, the Board expects to have a detailed plan for how to move forward solving the 30% Deficit problem. The 2022 budget we present for approval at that meeting will reflect this plan. This 2022 budget will likely be underfunded also, needing reserve funds to fill its gap. Thus, we will most likely be asking the congregation to approve transferring funds from General Endowment stocks to cash in the bank accounts.

—Submitted by Mike Pavelich

Endowment Committee

Members: Kendall Atkinson (Chair), Carmen Griggs, Gary Lawrenson, Jamie Sharp, and Elizabeth Swanson

Our general endowment fund (GEF) remains strong; it contains over \$1,300,000 as of the beginning of April. The GEF has been used to support the Society's budget with an annual spending allocation (ASA) of 5% of the fund (approximately \$65,000). Because of COVID-19, we were unable to have our annual endowment party, but we still added \$12,180 to the general endowment fund. A bequest from the estate of Joe Brisben comprised a large portion of that income. The rate of return for the endowment funds was about 32% for 2020 according to our financial management company. (Clearly, it is unlikely to continue at this rate of growth.)

The Carr and Whitaker funds remain invested in the UUA Common Fund, but the remainder of the endowment funds (Detiger, Music, Myrl Bristol, Jean Reese, and the general endowment fund) are handled by United Iowa Financial (UIF). The tools of UIF that measure investments in 'socially responsible' or 'green' funds rate us as having around 64% in such funds.

During the past year, the Endowment Committee has worked on revising the policy and procedures for the committee, as requested by the UUS Board. We also completed a policy for the Jean Reese Fund, and this has been adopted by the Board. In addition, we handled requests for funding from some of the dedicated funds. Finally, we published a series of five articles on the Endowment Committee in the weekly UUS newsletter.

—Submitted by Ken Atkinson

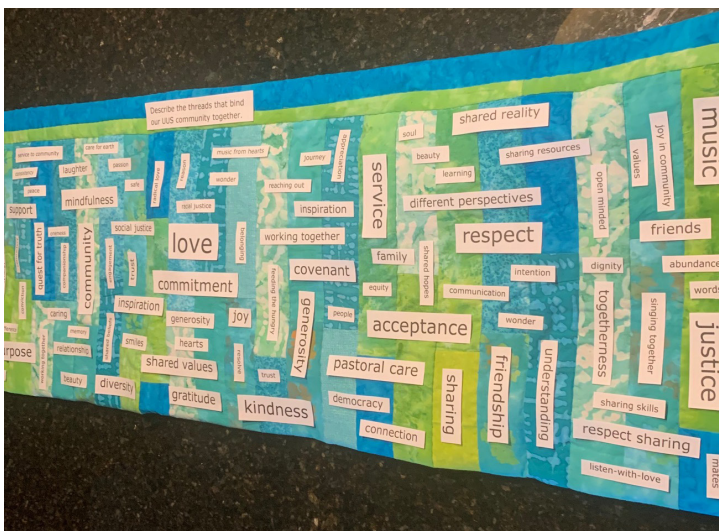
Finance Committee

The Finance Committee meets monthly. Members include Board representatives John Raley (Finance Trustee and Chair), Mike Pavelich (Treasurer), and Rev. Diana Smith; Stewardship Team representatives Diana Miller and Jeffery Ford (replaced by Liz Swanson in May 2021); Endowment Committee representative Ken Atkinson; and non-voting member Emma Barnum (Congregational Administrator). Peter Brokaw is a transitional volunteer.

Finance Committee work this year includes:

- The Finance Committee successfully brought accounting work in-house this year, resulting in a net savings of \$16,500 a year and has proven to make reporting and tracking of finances more transparent and timelier to Board and other committees.
- A 3-month reserve on expenses was established and made policy by the Board.
- A pause on rehiring the empty Facilities Coordinator position was made, saving an additional expense and freeing up rental space for congregational use.
- A sub-committee was formed to work on an updated comprehensive UUS Financial Policy and Procedures documents for the new Board policy book at UUS (the Board plans to approve this in May 2021).
- The remaining Capital Campaign funds are being used for the mortgage payments for the next 29 months to allow for a more strategic plan in the future.
- A committee of leaders and congregation members is being formed to lay out a 4-year plan, looking at revenue and expense needs for a balanced budget to bring to the congregation in the December Meeting.

—Submitted by John Raley



(Above) On Sunday, October 25th, 2020, the congregation gathered virtually for a Celebration of Commitment to our Stewardship Campaign and to our future together at UUS. During the service, people shared the threads that bind our UUS community together, which Diana Miller displayed on our Stewardship Quilt.

Stewardship Committee

Current members of the Stewardship Committee include Diana Miller (Co-chair), Michael Schmitz, Elizabeth Swanson, and Jeffery Ford (Co-chair)

For 2020 we collectively pledged \$456,438. Due to the pandemic and its impact on the economy, some families were not able to meet their 2020 pledge. Our final pledge total was \$397,412 from 228 pledge units and 34 non-pledge donors.

The 2021 campaign was conducted virtually as a function of COVID protocols. The campaign followed a format of individual mailings, public announcements, a fine sermon by Rev. Diana, and personal follow-up with those who had not responded. Almost all pledges were acknowledged with a thank-you email. The campaign for 2021 has ended as of this writing, and the congregation pledged approximately \$380,000 toward a goal of \$450,000 from 194 pledge units. To continue our current programming and staffing, we will need to support our core budget as a priority and increase our annual giving by at least 10% for each of the next three years.

—Submitted by Diana Miller

From Your Director of Congregational Life (DCL), Peggy Garrigues

Work with Membership Associates and in the Area of Member Engagement

The Membership Associates and I work together to welcome visitors, nurture visitors to become members, celebrate new members, and help keep members engaged. The current Membership Associates are Larry Audlehelm, Paula Miller, Carol Nordquist, Jim Olson, and Jamie Sharp.

Visitors

UUS has had 116 recorded first-time visitors to our Sunday services between April 15th, 2020, and April 15th, 2021—almost 10 per month during COVID. In the previous twelve months, we had 141 recorded first-time visitors to Sunday services. Unfortunately, because our visitors come via Zoom, we do not have a way to contact them unless they fill out a visitor form with their contact information, or if someone gets that information from them in conversation. On Sundays we now have a visitor session breakout room for newer folks to learn about Unitarian Universalism and have a general Q&A with a Membership Associate. Between May of 2020 and April of 2021, we had about 20 attend Visitor Sessions.

Starting Point Classes

We began offering online Starting Point Classes to help newer folks learn more about Unitarian Universalism and UUS and for those who were interested to move towards membership. We had seven participants in the class in September 2020, another ten in the class in January 2021, and four more in the class in April 2021.

New Members

We had 11 individuals join UUS since our last annual report. All of them were celebrated in a Zoom celebration on a Sunday morning. The new members met very briefly in person with me (masked and at a distance) to sign the membership book and the Covenant of Right Relations, and to receive a yellow rose, a candle, and a cupcake:

- 11/22/2020: Fanny Carver, Meghann Foster and Nick Westergaard, Peggy Grimmer and Linda Hartford, Jason McGinnis, Mary Oba, and Edward and Joan Raley
- 3/7/2021: Jan Jacobson, and Ali Tunnicliff-Scott

In January of 2019 we reported 257 members, in January 2020 we reported 282 members to the UUA (for which we counted members eligible to vote). In February 2021 we reported 303 members. Some of those changes are due to the change in the definition of membership.

“Our way of calculating membership has changed.”

New Definition of Membership, Follow-up by Membership Associates

Our way of calculating membership has changed, as per the Bylaws changes in January 2020. The Membership Associates and I are now creating a monthly list of people who have not donated in the last 12 months and we are contacting those who need to update their giving for their membership to remain current. There are no longer separate categories of “voting members” and “members.”

(DCL Report continues on next page)



Hospitality Volunteers assisted with special events at UUS, such as the Drive Through Goodbye for Rev. Diane Dowgiert and her husband AJ in June 2020 (above).

(DCL Report, continued)

When a member is not keeping their giving current, their membership lapses. Individuals can always reinstate their membership by making a donation and letting us know that they intend to reinstate their membership with their donation.

Detailed procedures are still being finalized. In the spring of 2020, we decided (and Rev. Diane Dowgiert agreed) that we wanted to focus on COVID calls, and not contact people about giving right at the beginning of COVID.

After an initial round of COVID Care Calls in the spring of 2020, we began a second round of calls for spring 2021. There are about 25 volunteers in addition to Membership Associates who are making these calls. Thank you!

Group Engagement

- Out of our 451 listed members and friends in Realm, 283 are involved as a member or leader in at least one group in our congregation. That is an involvement level of 63% for members and friends combined.*
- Of our 303 listed members in Realm, 231 are involved as a member or leader in at least one group in our congregation, for a 76% involvement level by members. This includes committees and leadership groups, nurturing mind and spirit groups, interest and activity groups, teaching RE, volunteering groups, and social justice groups.
- Of our 303 listed members, 88 are listed as group leaders in Realm, which is a 29% rate of member involvement as leaders.
- Of the 67 people who have joined UUS since the building opened, according to my best records, three have moved away, one is inactive, some have been less active during COVID, and most remain active. Of those still active, 6 have attended Regional or General Assembly, 15 have served in leadership roles including three on one of the search committees, and 41 of them are involved as a member or leader in at least one group in our congregation, quite a few of them in several groups. That is an engagement rate of 61% for those who are still members and in the area.

*These numbers are based on numbers in Realm, which includes Hospitality Teams that were not very active this year, and not all groups keep records in the same way as to who is active at what level.

Hospitality Teams

Hospitality teams are not needed in the same way during the COVID-19 pandemic. I have been working with Kim Palmer, chair of the Hospitality Team program, to invite hospitality team volunteers for the monthly drive-through events, and Kim and I are both serving on the COVID Task Force to help with creating procedures for the various phases as we return to more events being in-person.

Printed Picture Directory

Unfortunately, the LifeTouch company, after many months of COVID, decided to drop their church directory program. So, we will not be able to get the annual updates we were expecting for our printed picture directory. Membership Associates will be exploring other options.

Sunday Services on Zoom

Initially, Congregational Administrator Emma Barnum was often serving as Zoom Host on Sundays, but I ended up taking over this role to allow her to do other tasks, with Kirk Witzberger or Emma filling in for me as needed. The Zoom host opens the meeting, lets people in from the waiting room, sets up co-host roles for all the worship leaders, posts things in the chat as needed for details on offering or visitor forms, and creates and manages the breakout rooms, as well as giving instructions at the end of the service. There was quite a lot to learn as we adjusted to being online for the long term. We also added a Sunday morning run-through at 8:45 am before the service to make sure we have all the moving parts, logistics, and technology worked out.

Once we hired Dave Rowe as our Online Music Leader, I took on the local role of helping choir members record music for choral pieces. It ended up taking a huge amount of time and effort to learn how to coach, schedule the recordings, disinfect shared equipment, and help people who were unfamiliar with the technology and with recording on their own to be part of the video choral pieces. We ended up not doing many pieces as a virtual choir, but now Kirk Witzberger is also available to help people record, and many of the choir members are more comfortable recording on their own at home.

UU Wellspring

Our UU Wellspring program is nearing the completion of its third year. The first year had a group of seven participants, along with me as the facilitator. The second year we had a group of six participants, with Jan Locher working as my co-facilitator. This year we began fully online with two groups: a second-level group with eight participants who rotated leadership, and a first-level group with six participants and myself as the facilitator.

UU Wellspring™, developed at the First Universalist Church of Minneapolis, is a heart-opening, small-group experience grounded in deep listening. Five yearlong curricula are available. Each curriculum incorporates five elements designed to balance knowledge of UU history and theology with personal spiritual growth and engagement with the world:

- Participation in a small-group community.
- A commitment to daily spiritual practice.
- Individual work with a spiritual director.
- Readings and resources for knowledge and reflection.
- Commitment to live out our values in the world.

Work with Leadership Development Committee

I have been meeting regularly with the Leadership Development Committee, to provide Realm reports, identify members with particular skills when necessary, strategize how to offer support to group leaders, and encourage people to take on new leadership opportunities through attending Regional and General Assemblies.

(DCL Report continues on next page)

(DCL Report, continued)

GA 2020 was to be held in Providence, Rhode Island, but the event was shifted to a completely virtual event. We had six UUS members attend virtually (not including staff), and four of them served as UUS delegates: Sally Hartman, Colleen Higgins, Dave Martin, and Elaine Waples.

GA 2021 will be fully online. Leadership Development Committee is in process of recruiting delegates and encouraging people to attend. The Board delegated scholarship decisions to the Leadership Development Committee. In 2021 UUS is allotted seven delegates.

UU Association of Membership Professionals

I continue to serve on the board of the national UU Association of Membership Professionals (UUAMP) as their treasurer. I will be working with the UUAMP board to prepare for their annual Professional Days, which will be a virtual event on June 17th and 18th this year. As treasurer, I have helped UUAMP shift to QuickBooks Online, which can interact with a DonorSnap database, and UUAMP now has a much more robust way of tracking membership and engagement.

Johnson County Interfaith Coalition

UUS is a member of the Johnson County Interfaith Coalition (JCIC), which is currently focusing on racial justice issues in the Iowa City area. Joel Gilbertson-White and I were our initial representatives on the board, and Rev. Diane Dowgiert attended several faith leader meetings. In 2020, JCIC hosted a community conversation with the Freedom Riders, had several opportunities to respond to those in need after the derecho, especially in Cedar Rapids, and produced short videos in several languages to educate about a variety of issues related to the 2020 elections. In January 2021, Rev. Diana Smith replaced me as one of UUS's representatives on the JCIC Board, since social justice falls in the area of the Minister's responsibilities.

Habitat for Humanity Interfaith Build

We had very little involvement with Habitat for Humanity since April 2020 because COVID has made it much harder to have groups of volunteers work on projects.

—Submitted by Peggy Garrigues

Celebrating a Successful Holiday Auction

On December 5th, 2020, we had our first fully online auction! The Auction Team was a little anxious since we have never hosted a fully online auction before. We had a few glitches, but overall it was a very successful event, and we raised well over \$19,000, easily surpassing our goal of \$13,000!

Bidding was available online for a couple of weeks before the Saturday evening Zoom event. At the Zoom event, Brenda Linley was our MC, Alan Swanson improvised a playful and energetic piece on the piano, and Megan Gogerty had us laughing when she offered some comedy as a break from all the challenges of this past year. Sarah Ross added energy (and crazy hat commentary) during breaks, and we all had some time for small group conversation in breakout rooms. Russ Lenth volunteered to run the slides.

The Live Auction items were all bid on in the chat section of the Zoom call, which worked surprisingly well! And the online auction ended shortly after the Zoom event was over.

Some of the live auction items included a "spiritual practices jam package," a stay at a lake house, a variety of dinners delivered to the winners, a hot tub party, and a "Bored" basket full of various "un-boring" items donated by the UUS Board (pictured right). Just a sampling of other items in the online auction included two rocking chairs, a variety of scarves and handmade items, lots of jam, several book packages, prints and cards of a lovely candlelit scene from Little Village of the 10 S. Gilbert St. building, a photo book from the old UUS building, many paintings and prints—some by members of UUS, some delicious baked goods and comfort food items, and quite a few event packages.

Most of the events offered at the auction were going to take place online, although a few were offered in-person either outdoors, or were delayed until the winners and donors felt safe to gather in person.

Thank you to Judy Tokuhisa for the HUGE amount of work that she put in ahead of time to enter all the items onto the auction website, and to help people get logged in to bid. She did the lion's share of the work! Julia Audlehelm, Monique DiCarlo, and Peggy Garrigues were all part of the Auction Team with Judy. Sarah Ross also worked with Judy afterward to get all the high bidders connected with their items and donors as needed.

In addition to all those who contributed time and energy, thank you to everyone who generously donated items and events, and congratulations and thanks to all of those who generously bid on the many wonderful auction items!

—Submitted by Peggy Garrigues



Pastoral Care

Members: Valerie Bowman, Jeffery Ford, Jean Hood, Paul Pomrehn, Rev. Diana Smith

The mission of the Pastoral Care (PC) ministry, as shaped by our UU principles, is to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person and to practice compassion in human relations by providing a ministry of support, hope, and caring, so that no one connected to this congregation needs to feel alone. This goal furthers the vision of UUS to be a caring, inclusive community. In collaboration with our newly called minister, Rev. Diana Smith, whose arrival in August was most welcome, Winnie Ganshaw chairs this ministry and, along with the Pastoral Care team, has served as primary pastoral care provider during the gap between Rev. Dowgiert's departure and Rev. Smith's arrival.

In March of 2020, the Coronavirus pandemic changed how the PC Team reached out and responded to the needs of the congregation. As members' needs came to our attention, follow-up was by phone, with the offer of continued contact by phone or email.

During this past year we furthered our mission in several ways:

- Beginning in August 2020, Winnie Ganshaw and Valerie Bowman offered a weekly Zoom gathering to encourage face-to-face contact and conversation for those seeking more connection.

- We offered pastoral care 98 times, through phone calls (primarily) and emails, providing support to 46 UUS members and friends.
- We continued with "Cards of Caring and Support," a program to send cards to people in the congregation who experienced any of life's challenges, losses, and transitions.
- During December 2020, we distributed amaryllis plants to 23 individuals who experienced a death in their immediate family during the previous year.
- The PC team worked closely with the UniCare Team to provide meals as requested by members, however, was unable to offer transportation support as in previous years.

Our goals for 2021-2022 will be to:

- Foster respect for each person's process of re-entering in-person social connection.
- Continue nurturing and encouraging a culture of pastoral care in the congregation by helping members and friends understand that every conversation or interaction offers an opportunity to minister to others, especially as we anticipate gradual reopening to in-person events.
- Deepening our pastoral care skills under the guidance of Rev. Smith.

—Submitted by Winnie Ganshaw



(Left) Staff and volunteers play music, distribute care packages and collect water during a drive-through drop-off ahead of Water Communion Sunday, September 2020.



(Right) Rev. Diana at our in-person Flower Communion in May 2021. Families were invited one by one into the Sanctuary to drop off fresh flowers and take home paper flowers. Volunteers and staff prepared the flowers and guided the flow of participants outside.

From Your Director of Religious Education, Jessica Zimmer

Children and Youth RE

This year for our UUA certification, we recorded 103 children and youth enrolled in our Religious Education (RE) program and a weekly attendance averaging 1-25 participants. The significant difference between total participants and average attendance is common across religious education-type programs.

“The significant difference between total participants and average attendance is common across religious education-type programs. ... partly due to pre-pandemic cultural shifts around attendance that we are seeing across our and all denominations.”

This is partly due to pre-pandemic cultural shifts around attendance that we are seeing across our and all denominations. Also, taking into consideration the Zoom fatigue we, including our children and youth, are feeling, we shifted our RE programming to be bi-weekly (youth group) and monthly (Elementary RE). We have also taken a multi-platform approach to RE this year, and a significant part of the RE program has been focused on at-home RE materials (ex: monthly *Soul Matters*-based RE kits) that families can do together, and which is not counted towards attendance.

Late in the fall, we were able to complete our Jr. High *Our Whole Lives* program from last year with a modified online program called “Taking Flight” that was based on guidelines put out by the UUA’s and UUC’s OWL program.

We partnered with the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Quad Cities to offer a joint Jr. and

Sr. High youth group that meets every other week. The youth have enjoyed getting to know each other and are hoping they will have a chance to meet in person soon.

Some of RE’s favorite programs this year have been our special programming, community service projects, and community-building events, such as the Halloween Haunted Trails event, an Among Us Youth Group game night, card making for Pastoral Care, Lego Day, and our Stuffie Sleepover.

Adult RE

In addition to the many wonderful adult learning opportunities offered by our justice teams, mind and spirit groups, and the UUA (*UU the Vote*), the Adult RE program offered several classes, including:

- Dr. Terry Wahls’s “Connecting Self-Care to Better Health and Better Immunity” series (September 2020)
- An ongoing Anti-Racism Study Group (partnership with Racial Justice Team)
- Labyrinth series (October 2020)
- Dante series (July 2020, November 2020)
- Winter Connections (January-March 2021)
- Skill Building for Preemptive Radical Inclusion Workshop with CB Beal (May 22nd, 2021)
- Biodiversity Day Multigenerational program (end of May/early June 2021)
- JCIC One-to-One Training (June 2021)
- Common Read: Imani Perry’s *Breathe: A Letter to My Sons* (July 2021)

Family Ministry

We added and experimented with Family Ministry programming and supports for parents and caregivers, including our Return-to-Learn Conversations, a family vesper service, family break-out rooms after the virtual services, and a monthly Parent/Caregiver Group.

(DLRE Report continues on next page)



Families were invited to take part in an Easter Egg photo scavenger hunt on the UUS grounds in April 2021.



(DLRE Report, continued)

RE Revisioning

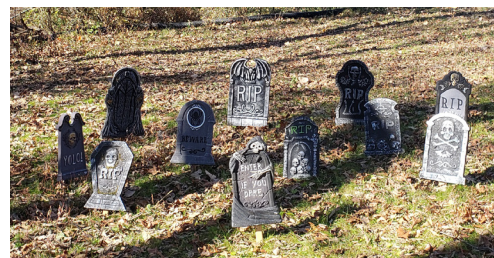
We held two workshops as part of our revisioning of the RE program. The first provided background on the generational and cultural shifts affecting the efficacy and sustainability of RE programs (at UUS, within the UUA, and across other denominations), and the second explored what it could mean to be a 21st century RE program through the questions:

1. When have you felt deeply connected in the multigenerational community at UUS?
2. How has the congregation supported faith formation at both church and home for you and your family?
3. What are your hopes and fears regarding the future of faith formation?

From these sessions, there was agreement that RE is a priority and we want to better serve children, families, and youth; that people of all ages value getting to be part of a community that knows, accepts, and sees us; and we have enjoyed and found it to be a fulfilling part of our spirituality to be part of an all-ages community/programs, especially when we are doing something focused that actively engages our passions and sense of purpose.

Like last year, much of this year's focus was on connection, support, and finding moments of shared joy during the pandemic.

—Submitted by Jessica Zimmer



A socially distanced Halloween Haunted Trail scavenger hunt was a fun and popular new program for families in late October 2020.



From Your Congregational Administrator, Emma Barnum

Although the UUS office has been closed for the entire year, there has still been plenty to keep me busy!

COVID-19

This past year I have:

- Worked with the COVID Task Force and staff to ensure that our operations run smoothly while the building remains closed.
- Updated the website and posted signage and check-in sheets as we've moved through our Phased Reopening Plan, and assembled PPE kits for groups and individuals visiting UUS. I purchased and assembled hand sanitizing stations and other supplies for use indoors as we reopen.
- Assisted the staff and Worship Team with virtual Sunday services, sending out an order of service email each week, and helping out as needed on Sunday mornings.

Administrative

I continued to work from home this past year, coming to the office for a few hours each week. It was an adjustment, but I have managed to stay on top of my regular administrative duties (and all the extra tasks that pop up due to COVID!):

- Send the weekly emails, special emails on behalf of the various staff and committees, create the monthly newsletters, and assemble the Annual Report.
- Work with Jeff Walberg and the Publicity Team to coordinate updates to our website and social media, including creating the weekly service images.
- Update our leadership lists and the uusic.org email forwards and Dropbox permissions for our various committees and teams.
- Maintain the calendar and, last fall, worked with Peggy Garrigues and the staff to update the Event Request Form and Fundraising Request Form for new or special events.
- Coordinate the annual UUA Certification process and submit the payroll audit for our annual insurance premium adjustment.
- Assist with congregational meetings and special announcements and mailings.

I have maintained my membership with the Association of UU Administrators (AUUA) and participate in their communications and meetings to best take advantage of their perspectives and knowledge.

This year, special projects that I helped with include setting up and coordinating two Faithify fundraisers and working with Joe Rasmussen to switch internet/phone providers and buy new live-streaming and recording equipment for our Sanctuary. We also accepted a very generous donation from Kirk Cheyney at the Fab Lab of an industrial letter-folding machine.

Human Resources

In addition to the normal HR administrative activities (assisting with annual reviews, updating letters of agreement and benefits information, tracking PTO, updating staff records and background checks, meeting with the Personnel Committee, etc.) there was also a lot of staff turnover in the 2020/2021 year. We said goodbye to Rev. Diane Dowgiert in June and welcomed Rev. Diana Smith in August. Gloria Corbin, our long-time Music Director, retired in June, and our accompanist and temporary Music Facilitator Aura Strohschein left the UUS staff in September. Dave Rowe took over the virtual music program as our Online Music Director.

This spring we created a new part-time position, AV Coordinator, to help run virtual services during COVID and oversee live-streaming and recording when we resume in-person services. In the end, we decided to combine the AV position with our existing Publicity Coordinator position, and Jeff Walberg has agreed to continue in this expanded role.

This summer we'll say goodbye to our long-time Director of Lifespan Religious Education Jessica Zimmer and welcome her replacement. Rev. Diana and a search team are also in the process of interviewing new Music Director candidates, who will take over for Dave Rowe later this year. I have assisted the various search teams with communications and handled the job postings and publicity. All in all, there has been a lot of onboarding and offboarding work for the office this year!

Facilities and Rentals

I communicate regularly with our building vendors, Building Steward, and Building and Grounds Teams to ensure our facilities are inspected and maintained, and to research best ventilation and hygiene practices as we reopen. Ron Wright, our Building Steward, continued to ensure that our building and equipment were cleaned and maintained correctly and on schedule during the closure and helped maintain our grounds.

We have not hired a new Facilities Coordinator position since Lesanne Fliehler left last April. This was partially due to COVID, as no rentals can take place during our closure, but is also partially due to a Board and staff decision to review and overhaul our rental program. As we begin our phased reopening, Rev. Diana and I will be working together to see what changes are necessary to make a rental program that better fits the needs and resources of our congregation.

Administrative Assistant

Nik Jakob's responsibilities as Administrative Assistant expanded this year as he took on an important role in the in-house accounting process. He also creates the Sunday service PowerPoints each week and assists the staff and members with projects as needed.

(Admin. Report continues on next page)

(Admin. Report, continued)

Finance

We officially made the switch to in-house accounting in July 2020. To prepare, I took courses in accounting and QuickBooks Online management and recreated a year's worth of past financial data in our new software to have a solid base to grow from. I rebuilt our chart of accounts to better fit our program structure and to track special projects.

I relied heavily on a CPA and a payroll consultant to complete the transition and to answer questions and check my work for the first few months and at the end of the year. So far, the in-house transition has been a success. Administrative Assistant Nik Jakob and I split the day-to-day work to ensure financial oversight. Even though the pandemic interfered with our envisioned processes, Nik and I have adapted well to coordinating our tasks online (he enters giving information and payment requests in QuickBooks and I process the weekly deposits, cut checks, and run payroll). QuickBooks Online handles our tax filings and payments: I monitor them to be sure they are accurate. Being able to have instant access to our accounting records and reporting has made it a lot easier to answer questions and track our budget and spending data.

At the beginning of each month, I reconcile our accounts for the previous month and create a detailed financial report and narrative summary of our financial activity. I also send an updated activity report to all teams and committees who control a UUS liability fund. I meet with the Treasurer to go over the monthly financials and to discuss anything out of the ordinary, and then I present it to the Finance Committee at their monthly meeting (I also send a simplified report and narrative to the Board to accompany the Treasurer's Report).

I have helped draft many sections of the new finance policies and procedures, and I created a gift acceptance letter template to use for an anonymous gift to complete the cedar ceiling in our Fellowship Hall (work to begin later this year).

I continue to handle the usual financial duties required of the Congregational Administrator:

- Assist the Stewardship Team with their annual campaign, creating the pledge forms, helping with the mailing and publicity, and entering and tracking pledging.
- Help the staff and Finance Committee build the annual budget proposal for the congregation.
- Set up online payment links for our various funds and special solicitations and helped members and friends with the Realm payments.
- Send hard copies of the end-of-year giving statements to all givers and email statements quarterly.
- Create contribution letters for stock and in-kind donations and write thank-you letters to Memorial Fund donors.

2020/21 Volunteers

Due to the building closure, the Office Volunteers were mostly inactive this year. Gay Mikelson came in regularly to water and care for the plants in the building, maintain the pianos, and assist with mailings. Linda Fisher, Wendy Brown, and Gay Mikelson continued as our excellent and reliable proofreaders.

Russ Lenth served as one of our main PowerPoint volunteers on Sunday. Kirk Witzberger and David Martin both also stepped in to help with virtual Sunday AV when needed. Kirk is also assisting with efforts to research AV needs for outdoor events this summer.

—Submitted by Emma Barnum



The wildlife enjoyed the UUS grounds even when the congregation couldn't!

Historical Records Team

Historical Records Team members remain the same: Diana Miller, Carmen Griggs, Sherry Dolash, Susan Eberly, Cheryl Tugwell, Diana Henry, Kären Mason, Emily Johnson, Bob Littlehale, and Jeanette Carter.

Our team suffered from the COVID-19 restrictions greatly. Nearly all our work involves going through records at the Society building—sorting, organizing, and searching for materials for members, staff, and those who send mail requests about the Society. When the building closed, we were effectively cut off from most of our resources, and our monthly meetings came to a halt. A planned service centered on the life of Augusta Chapin had to be postponed.

Some of our records are available through the website, and from this and other resources outside the building, we were able to answer two questions, one about a former member and one submitted by mail. We will always try to help current members and staff who are searching for UUS history.

Our goals remain the same: to maintain an archive for the future and to make it possible for current members to search our Society's rich history. We are eager to get back to our tasks.

—Submitted by Jeanette Carter

Publicity Team

The Publicity Team was chaired by Jeff Walberg, UUS Publicity Coordinator. Sally Hartman, Wendy Brown, and Mary McCann continued as volunteer members, and Peggy Garrigues participated in her role as Director of Congregational Life.

The pandemic impacted the team's work in two major ways. First, with many fewer UUS events to publicize and no PRIDE or Quire events to sponsor, the team underspent its \$2,150 budget for the year. Second, the move to online services resulted in the need to create and sustain a process for editing and publishing online service recordings.

The biggest event of the year was the beginning of Rev. Diana Smith's ministry. The team developed a press release announcing her arrival that focused on her creative responses to the pandemic. This resulted in television coverage of the drive-through water communion on KCRG, as well as quotes from Rev. Diana in a Press-Citizen article on ways that local religious organizations are dealing with the pandemic.

The team also responded to the Black Lives Matter protest movement by reselling 115 BLM yard signs purchased from a Black-owned business and using the profits to donate 25 signs to members of People's Church to replace any signs destroyed in the summer's windstorm. In addition, a new Racial Justice page was added to the website, and a large BLM logo was added to the homepage.

Additional notes:

Facebook continued to be the primary channel for promoting UUS events and activities. In the calendar year 2020, 105 new people followed UUS on Facebook, up slightly from the previous year and pushing us to 937 total followers.

The team continued to send occasional postcards to members and friends highlighting notable events, though the frequency was disrupted by the pandemic.

The most important gateway pages on the website (e.g., "Who We Are" and "Sundays at UUS") were updated to include welcome videos from Rev. Diana, as well additional details to introduce visitors to UUS and promote online services.

As in previous years, a considerable portion of the team's budget was spent in two areas: holiday advertising and website hosting expenses.



The team assisted Little Village (LV) in the development of a wonderful story on UUS history and helped steer their focus toward the congregation's long history of inclusion and activism. The team also collaborated with LV to make prints and cards of an original watercolor image of the 10 S. Gilbert building (pictured above) that appeared on the cover available to members. An additional set was offered in the annual auction, netting \$250.

—Submitted by Jeff Walberg

Aesthetics Team

The Aesthetics Team is Gay Mikelson, Deb Schoelerman, Theresa Ullerich, Connie Peterson, Julia Audelhelm, and Hilary Higgins.

Our work is to create and maintain a beautiful and welcoming environment for UUs and community members who visit.

This year of pandemic, and with the UUS building closed, our opportunities were different. While the building was still open, early in the year, we were able to continue the ongoing project of placing art and historical items in public areas of the building.

Later in the year, we were able to focus on small projects in the foyer and outside the doors. Theresa Ullerich and Deb Schoelerman brightened the entrance seasonally with fresh pots of flowers and greenery.

The new sub-group for Sanctuary art and flowers, headed by Connie Peterson and Julia Audelhelm, made sure the Zoom video of the sanctuary was attractive with simple arrangements of flowers and natural materials on the table. Member Dee Stebbins contributed several lovely arrangements.

For the winter holidays, we helped with decorating the foyer, setting up and lighting a tree and wreath. Julia Audelhelm and her family made paper ribbons for members to place on the tree along with ornaments they loaned or contributed. We are joyfully looking forward to being back in our beautiful church in 2021.

—Submitted by Theresa Ullerich



Building Team

Members include Jim Laughlin, Dave Gallagher, Rick Bradshaw, Larry Kent, Emily Peck, Joe Rasmussen, Bruce Alexander, Gary Lawrenson, Kurt Haman, Ron Wright, Steve Van Abbema, and Chair, Deb Schoelerman. Ron also serves as our building custodian.

- Budget: \$13,760 (for HVAC, facility repair, and inspections)
- Despite the fact that the building has been closed for a year, basic maintenance and inspections have continued. These include fire sprinkler and extinguisher inspections, HVAC monitoring and repairs, and kitchen appliance repair. RM Boggs continues to maintain and monitor the HVAC system. We are very pleased with the attention that Ryan Riley, our technician, continues to provide our building.
- The thermostat for the air conditioning has been raised, the instant hot water dispenser has been

unplugged, and the garbage and recycling pickup suspended. Gary Lawrenson is picking up the garbage and recycling and taking it home for proper disposal.

- An AED (Automated Electrical Defibrillator) has been purchased and installed near the front door.
- In January, heat pump number 3 needed repair, and that work was completed. In March one of the heaters in the foyer was repaired. Also in March, adjustments were needed for the heat pump connected to the radiant floor heat in the sanctuary.

Kitchen

Members include Vicki Siefers, Diane Martin, Deb Schoelerman, Jane Slaymaker, Cindy Spading, Jill Stephenson, Carol Throckmorton, and Peg Voelker.

- Since the building is closed, there have been no kitchen activities. The ice machine was unplugged and the refrigerator was cleaned out.

—Submitted by Deb Schoelerman

Grounds Team

Members include Jim Laughlin, Dave Gallaher, Lois Hughes, Joe Rasmussen, Elaine Waples, Dave Tokuhisa, Virginia Melroy, Sam Cochran, Deb Schoelerman, Bonnie Penno, and Gary Lawrenson, chair.

- Budget : \$7,900
- The Grounds Team manages maintenance on the grounds, including the outdoor storage shed and its contents. The Grounds Team coordinates with the Land Ministry Team to maintain and care for the grounds.
- Members of the Grounds Team kept the 59 new conifers and the prairie grasses watered during the drought in late summer.
- Several trees were damaged during the August derecho, but the building sustained no damage. The trees will be trimmed as necessary in the spring and summer, by both volunteers and professionals.
- In the fall, members of the Grounds Team and Land Ministry provided winter deer protection for several of the conifers with staking and plastic fencing. In the spring, the protection was removed and stored near the shed.

- Also in the fall, team members cleared the nine drains of debris on the flat roof, which is done annually.
- Sustainable Landscape Solutions mowed the grass on the sides in the bio-retention cells in the summer of 2020. We have contracted with Rock Hardscapes to do the mowing for the 2021 season.
- Turf Masters Lawn and Landscape, Inc. provided our snow removal of the parking lot and sidewalks.
- An interesting event occurred in December: Our driveway was cleared of snow by the wrong company—a mistake, indeed. Two of the bike racks were damaged but later repaired by the company that damaged them.
- Plans are underway for a privacy fence next to the shed. The work will be done by UUS volunteers.
- Other volunteers replaced the missing “slats” on the outside windows on the east side of the sanctuary.
- Thanks to Dave Gallaher for rebuilding the tractor cart! Not only serviceable and solid, but beautiful!

—Submitted by Deb Schoelerman



(Left and Right) Some of the damage on UUS property from the derecho storm in August 2020



Land Ministry Team

Team members: Mary McMurray, Tom McMurray, Virginia Melroy, Deb Schoelerman, Gary Lawrenson, Jim Laughlin, Vicki Siefers, Alice Atkinson, Julia Audlehelm, and Deb Schoelerman, chair. Staff liaison - Peggy Garrigues

During the fall and winter months, team members worked creating mission and vision statements. We are proud of our results:

Mission: The Land Ministry Team leads the congregation in nurturing our land thoughtfully and sustainably in ways that honor the site, protect its biodiversity, and build connections within the congregation and with the community.

Vision: We aspire to better understand and protect the biodiversity of our land; to celebrate our relationship with the earth and the deep connections between the natural environment, the congregation, and the community; and to create a space and structures that welcome all ages and abilities, encourage enjoyment of the land, and foster spiritual growth.

Budget for 2020: \$4,000. We did not spend any of our budgeted funds this year.

Bio-retention cell repair: The outlet area of bio-retention number 2 (the large one south of the parking lot) has eroded and needs repair. Amy Foster, Storm Water Coordinator for the City of Coralville, and Amy Bouska from the Soil Conservation District, were both consulted. Aaron Gwinnup, a water resources engineer from the EOR civil engineering company, has provided a plan for the repair work. Rock Hardscapes will be doing the work in the spring. The Board approved \$20,000 for the repair.

Community Work Days: Spring work included garlic mustard pulls in the woods and pulling weeds and clover in the bio-retention cells. The fall workday, on October 24th, included moving wood chips to the boulder scramble and around the trees and staking deer protection for trees. We are appreciative of the volunteer work neighbors Mary and Larry Wilson have provided throughout the season.

Trails/woods: During COVID-19, congregation members found solace in solitary walks in our woods, enjoying the wildflowers, birds, and deer. After the August derecho, volunteers worked to clean up the damage of downed and broken tree branches. Volunteers also helped to set up luminaries along the trails for Halloween and for the Solstice event in December.

Landscape: Tree tags created at the Fab Lab by Marsha and Kirk Cheney have been attached to the trees. Each tag includes the common name, the Latin name, and the year it was planted. No new trees were planted this year except a few junipers on the west side. The shrubs near the labyrinth that had died were replaced.

Memorial Garden: Julia Audlehelm created a design for a memorial garden. An estimate for the project and an accessible path was obtained from Rock Hardscapes. The Board of Trustees voted to fund the project (\$18,000) from the Memorial Fund and the Jean Reese Fund. A new team to oversee the memorial garden will be established. Construction will occur this summer.

(Land Ministry report continues on next page)



Volunteers worked year-round on grounds projects at UUS, including pulling garlic mustard (left), spreading mulch and caring for trees (above), and maintaining our trails and setting up luminaries for self-guided walks at Halloween and the Winter Solstice (right).

(Land Ministry Report continued)

Playscape: Alice Atkinson facilitates the planning for the play area on the south side of the building. Several volunteers built a platform/stage with the wood on site. The platform is 10 feet by 16 feet and is used for small gatherings or meetings. Plans for a pergola have been made. The Board of Trustees approved a proposal by the Land Ministry Team to create a path from the RE door to the base of the boulder scramble, also known as the active play area. The path will make it easier to access the area and to the trail. Rock Hardscapes will do the project this summer.

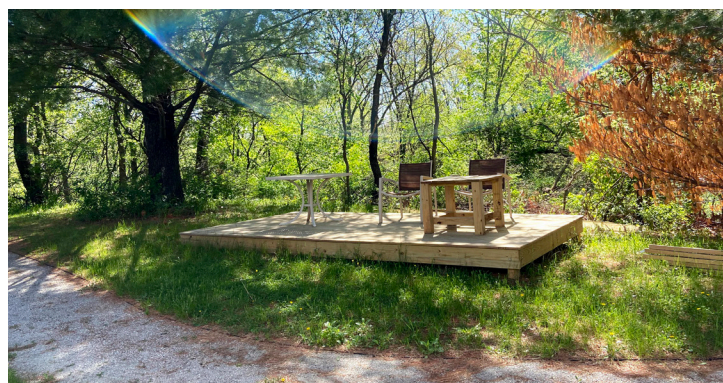
Labyrinth: This summer, Curtis of Fiddlehead Gardens installed two permanent signs containing basic information about labyrinths. The bronze signs are mounted on limestone blocks placed beside the labyrinth and next to the sidewalk on Oakdale Road. Funds for the signs and installation were provided by our anonymous donor. Virginia Melroy presented two introductory programs via Zoom, on October 6th & 20th. Participants were invited to walk the labyrinth on their own and report back on their experience.

Community Garden: Vicki Siefers and Bonnie Penno cared for the raised beds in the garden area. Kale, lettuce, eggplant, peppers, and lots of flowers including zinnias, sunflowers, and dahlias were planted in the beds. Volunteers to help in the garden are always welcome.

—Submitted by Deb Schoelerman



*(Left and below)
Volunteers made
updates to our
playscape this year,
including building a
new platform/stage
and re-mulching and
adding stepstones at
the top of the boulder
scramble.*



*(Right) Bronze
plaques have
been installed
on our labyrinth.*



*(Left) Volunteers maintained our UUS
Community Garden in 2020.*

Program and Activity Groups

The following Program and Activity Groups were active during the 2020/2021 liturgical year.

- **Buddhist Sangha** (leader: Cindy Spading, met weekly on Mondays via Zoom)
- **Choir** (organized in 2020/21 by Peggy Garrigues and Dave Rowe, met individually as needed to record virtual pieces for worship)
- **Covenant Groups** (leader: Jan Locher and Sarah Ross; see report below)
- **Girls' Night Out** (leader: Jamie Sharp, met monthly via Zoom)
- **UU Grief Group** (leader: Gail Garwood, met monthly via Zoom)
- **Kiirtan** (leader: Andy Douglas, met the first Monday of most months via Zoom)
- **Mens' Sunday Social** (leader: Nik Jakob, met the first Sunday of most months via Zoom, began meeting in person on the UUS patio in Spring 2021)
- **Owl Moon CUUPs** (leaders: Marsha Cheyney and Paula Miller, met regularly for various events via Zoom)
- **Secular Humanists** (leader: Mark Yuskis; met several times via Zoom; see separate report below)

Did Not Meet Because of COVID:

- Board Game Club
- Book Discussion Group
- Community Meals
- Dances of Universal Peace
- Dinners for Eight
- Knitting Group
- Scrabble Group
- Vegetarian Community

Covenant Groups

Covenant groups proved to have an important role in helping our congregation stay connected during the isolation caused by the pandemic. Groups were able to meet on Zoom, and no months were missed. People who were not comfortable with Zoom were able to get help from someone in the group or sometimes share a computer.

Our numbers stayed steady during the year with a few people even joining established groups. And we even began a new covenant group this April with nine people who are newer to UUS, and two facilitators.

There was no attempt to have an all-group potluck this year.

Jan Locher and Sarah Ross continue to be the Council's co-chairs.

Peggy Garrigues did a wonderful job converting the sessions into the covenant group meeting format. This can be a confusing and time-consuming job for the facilitators in the past. Thank you, Peggy!

Everyone is looking forward to meeting in person and perhaps having warm hugs.

—Submitted by Jan Locher

Secular Humanists

Though no longer meeting in person and sharing our programming with Secular Students at Iowa (SecSI) at Old Brick on the UI campus, we still strive to welcome atheists, agnostics, freethinkers, secularists, non-theists, and the curious into our supportive/enriching community. And, with Zoom, we have expanded our reach to connect, share meetings, and support programs and initiatives with others in eastern Iowa and even nationwide.

In November 2020, we hosted Mark Stringer, Executive Director of ACLU-Iowa and former minister at the Des Moines UU congregation, and were joined by SecSI, Des Moines UUs, and the Humanist Society of Iowa.

For another meeting in March 2021, we joined the Unitarian Universalist Humanist Association's program on "Is There a Future for Humanism in Unitarian Universalism?" The main presenter was our friend the Rev. Dr. David Breeden, minister of First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis. His conclusion,

slightly paraphrased, was "Humanism will survive without Unitarian Universalism, but the opposite isn't as secure."

Other Zoom meetings focused on Prison Reform, one of which we co-hosted with the UUS Prison Ministry Team (March 2021). In another meeting in April 2021, our own Peter Nothnagle led a discussion on Richard Carrier's article "How Can Morals Be Both Invented and True?"

Lastly, in April 2021 we joined in on a presentation by Bart Worden, Executive Director of the American Ethical Union titled "Ethical Culture Possibilities for Iowa," mostly attended by Des Moines area UUs and humanists and Iowa City UUS Secular Humanists.

Regardless of COVID-19 circumstances, the UUS Secular Humanists may continue the Zoom meeting format since it opens up many possible speakers and programs across Iowa and nationally.

—Submitted by Mark Yuskis

Social Justice Team (SJT)

This year, the UUS Sunday offerings benefited twelve community non-profits. In addition, on months with a fifth Sunday, UUS contributes to a specific need. These included Uptown Bill's, Eastern Iowa Bail Bond Project, and the UU Office at the United Nations.

We responded to social justice issues shaped by local and global events. Initiating a Faithify fundraiser to support People's Church in addressing critical needs in Cedar Rapids following the derecho was one such response. Another response was increased learning and discussion about the local government response to Black Lives Matter. BLM signs were available for purchase.

In addition to donations to the Clear Creek Amana School District, support for anti-racism in that school district included attending a school board meeting to witness BIPOC individuals relaying the racist incidents that had occurred. Many team members wrote letters to district officials in support of those harmed by a culture of racism.

UUS members donated to the annual Winter Clothing Drive in October and a February "Spread the Love" peanut butter and jelly drive to benefit the CommUnity's food bank. In December, \$1,800 was raised for Project Holiday, a program providing dinners delivered by CommUnity.

Letters were written for the "Write Here, Write Now" program sponsored by the UUs for Social Justice, who generated topic suggestions for writing to members of Congress. Topics included Water Protectors, preserving Democracy, and environmental issues.

Other UUS teams that keep the SJT updated include the Racial Justice Team, Free Lunch, Green Sanctuary, the Immigration Action Team, and the new Prison Ministry Team. SJT community partners include the Johnson County Interfaith Coalition, Center for Worker Justice, CommUnity Center, InsideOut/Reentry Community, Iowa UU Witness and Advocacy Network (IUUWAN), and Death with Dignity.

—Submitted by Sally Hartman and Gay Mikelson

SJT Contributions in 2020

2020 Total Giving: \$30,341

2019 Total Giving: \$33,007

2018 Total Giving: \$35,689

Community Partner Donations (Sunday offerings)

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| January: Abbe Center | \$1,750 |
| February: UAY | \$1,750 |
| March: Center for Worker Justice | \$1,450 |
| April: DVIP | \$1,450 |
| May: Table to Table | \$1,600 |
| June: CommUnity (Crisis Center) | \$1,000 |
| July: Inside Out Reentry | \$1,450 |
| August: Free Medical Clinic | \$1,050 |
| September: Shelter House | \$1,100 |
| October: Emma Goldman Clinic | \$1,000 |
| November: Free Lunch Program | \$1,400 |
| December: Free Dental Clinic | \$1,200 |
| | \$16,200 |

Misc. Contributions & Expenses

| | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Common Fund, CommUnity | \$1,500 |
| | \$1,500 |

Other UUS Fundraising in 2020

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Uptown Bill's* | \$225 |
| E. IA Community Bail Bond Project* | \$1,350 |
| UU Office at United Nations* | \$425 |
| CROP Walk | \$200 |
| Circle of Friends (gift cards plus indiv. gifts) | \$1,305 |
| Minister's Discretionary Fund (Christmas Eve) | \$1,825 |
| CommUnity (Project Holiday meals) | \$1,800 |
| Derecho Help through Faithify | \$3,982 |
| <i>*Fifth Sunday Offerings</i> | \$11,112 |

CommUnity Food Bank Drives:

300+ rolls of toilet paper
154 lbs. of peanut butter and jelly

2020 Contributions from New Budget Line

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| CRC Dues | \$150 |
| Center for Worker Justice Dues | \$250 |
| IUUWAN Dues | \$275 |
| JCIC Dues | \$200 |
| Peace Iowa Contribution | \$100 |
| CommUnity (fans) | \$200 |
| CCA Library Assoc. (diversity books) | \$200 |
| Circle of Friends (toddler formula) | \$154 |
| | \$1,529 |



(Left) Congregation members donated diapers and baby wipes for CommUnity's Baby Shower in April 2021, organized by the Social Justice Team.

Green Sanctuary Team

Members: Virginia Melroy, Sally Hartman, Miriam Kashia, Carol Throckmorton, Marsha Cheney, Deb Schoelerman (Chair)

The Green Sanctuary Team reminds the congregation of our mission/vision of protecting and honoring the Earth and our 7th principle, “respect for the interconnected web of which we are a part.” UUS is accredited as a Green Sanctuary Congregation by the UUA, and therefore all of our members and friends are already part of Green Sanctuary. We all have a responsibility to be aware of the global climate crisis and do our part to reverse it. The Green Sanctuary Team will lead and educate the congregation in climate action in our shared congregational life and our personal lives.

The Green Sanctuary Team had several meetings via Zoom during this COVID year. We accomplished the following:

- The planning and presentation of the Earth Day Service in April of 2020. The main message was “Spring into Action” on climate change solutions.
- The planning and presentation of the United Nations (UN) Association service in November with Jim Olson from the Johnson County UN. Our speaker was Professor Uday Kumar from the University of Iowa College of Engineering. The 5th Sunday collection was sent to the UUA office at the UN.
- Providing two baskets of sustainable products for the auction in December. One focused on cleaning and household supplies, the other on personal products, including fair-trade coffee and organic coffee.
- Planning activities for Earth Week in 2021. We worked with members of the Land Ministry Team to plan and coordinate educational and outdoor activities for the week of April 17th through 24th. Included were a UU sustainable trivia quiz, a children’s “nature scavenger hunt” on the trails, a table display in the foyer on how to reduce plastic, craft projects for children, and drawings for three

reusable compost buckets filled with sustainable products.

- Publishing periodic messages in the monthly UUS Newsletter informing the congregation about steps we can each take in our lives to increase our level of sustainable living.
- Providing *Introduction to Drawdown* workshops via Zoom to nearly every UU congregation in Iowa and one in Silver City, New Mexico. Presentations were also done through the Iowa City Senior Center and for IC Earth Fest. Team members Sally Hartman, Virginia Melroy, Deb Schoelerman, and Paul Pomrehn did close to 20 presentations in all.
- Sponsoring the award-winning documentary, “The Race to Save the World,” which was released globally on April 22nd. Miriam Kashia is one of the environmental activists featured in the film. Viewings of the film, which were sponsored by UUS among others, were held online, and a portion of the ticket sales went to UUS. A discussion of the film was held online on Sunday, May 2nd.

UUS received its accreditation as a Green Sanctuary in 2017. Every five years congregations need to renew the accreditation. UUS will need to renew in 2021.

The Green Sanctuary Team invites all members and friends to continue to be informed about global warming and do their part. Katherine Wilkinson (Vice president of Communications and Engagement of Drawdown) reminds us to use our super power “whether as messenger, educator, activist, healer, campaigner, creator, farmer (gardener)—we must link arms and work together” to save our planet.

—Submitted by Deb Schoelerman



(Above) Earth Week 2021 activities included plastic reduction displays, nature scavenger hunts, giveaways, DIY projects, and the annual UU Pagan Beltane ritual and May Day celebration.



Racial Justice Team

Co-chairs: Dave Martin and Peg Bouska

The Racial Justice Team held meetings approximately twice monthly over Zoom, with an average attendance of 12 persons. Here are some of our activities for the year:

- Brought to the attention of the congregation the disparities related to COVID's effects on BIPOC folks.
- Responded to the murder of George Floyd and subsequent reckoning: a Sunday service that week, attended vigils/protests/listening sessions, statements of support, and distribution of Black Lives Matter yard signs and posting them at UUS.
- Provided information in each Wednesday email to the congregation on various opportunities for anti-racist education (through multi-media options and events) and action that week.
- Increased our social media presence to broaden the reach and allow interaction.
- Hosted local artist Caleb Rainey for a book reading/discussion on his book of poetry, *Black Boy*, via Zoom. 28 people attended.
- Members participated, with two separate groups, in a study group on *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Saad.
- Worked with JCIC Voter Engagement group and UU the Vote in a number of ways including coordinating and assisting in voter registration events in communities with less access, reaching out to returning citizens who were previously incarcerated to alert them to their ability to vote.
- Members accompanied individuals to ICE immigration appointments to advocate for fair treatment.
- Launched an Anti-Racism Study Group through the Adult RE Program with 20 participants over eight months.
- Hosted guest speakers at our meetings including Quanda Hood with Better Way Forward (Clear Creek Amana Schools), Kevin Saunders with local NAACP, and Zach Wahls, Democrat Minority Leader in the Iowa Senate (and UUS member).
- Followed closely the activities of local groups including the IC Police Review Board, IC Truth and Reconciliation Commission, IC Council, and Coralville City Council. Members contributed in various ways to effect change regarding racial equity in city and county actions.
- Supported efforts to improve BIPOC students' experiences at CCA Schools through financial support to the libraries to purchase materials related to diversity. Helped sponsor the work of Better Way Forward and Truth Download, advocacy efforts for BIPOC students and families in that school district in particular.
- Donated to the Meskwaki Nation Derecho recovery effort near Tama, IA, where the storm hit very heavily.
- Held three worship services specifically themed on racial equity issues: May 30th, immediately after George Floyd's murder in Minneapolis, July 12th: "3 White Guys Talk About Privilege," and April 11th, with guest Pamela Ayo Yetunde (Buddhist teacher and Black activist).
- Encouraged the congregation to donate their stimulus checks to local agencies, such as the Center for Worker Justice, that serve folks who would not receive a stimulus due to their immigration status.
- Encouraged support of Black-owned businesses, local and beyond.
- Members were supported in their work with various organizations related to disproportionate minority contact with police, local governing bodies, law enforcement, and review boards, prison ministry, support to previously incarcerated/returning citizens, addressing white supremacy at UUS, support of immigrants, fair wages and housing.

—Submitted by Peg Bouska

Immigration Action Team

The Immigration Action Team coordinates UUS activities to support immigrants and connects with other community agencies serving immigrants, such as the Center for Worker Justice. Immigration justice actions included witnessing at the ICE Office to support four immigrants seeking asylum and involvement in a protest supporting derecho construction workers who had their wages stolen.

Due to the COVID pandemic, volunteer groups to the Chico Mendes Reforestation Project in Guatemala canceled their trips. As a result, the Project suffered financially and was unable to hire community members to plant trees. Many in the community suffered food shortages. We created a Faithify campaign to raise funds, and thanks to the generosity of many, we raised \$3,774. Armando Lopez, the director, was able to hire workers to plant trees so they could purchase food for their families.

Other activities included follow-up support for agencies (Angry Tías, Team Brownsville, and GRM) serving the refugee camp in Matamoros, Mexico.

The Team is currently exploring the sponsorship of an immigrant in detention who is seeking asylum.

Circle of Friends

Circle of Friends provides food for needy immigrant families in our community. We provide rides to appointments, tutoring in English, and interpreting for families needing communication with schools and agencies. Through the Circle of Friends, we are connected with five families and have supported them when emergencies develop, such as illness (including Covid), tech support for homeschooling, help with filing taxes, and replacing a broken sewing machine. We also were able to provide donated bicycles for several of the children; we then purchased helmets for them.

Three of these families are looking for other housing due to significant rent increases. When schools closed in March, two UUs picked up and delivered the “grab and go” lunch bags from the school district to two of the families. Again this year, in December, UUS members purchased toys for children and gift cards for adults and teenagers. We also brought Easter baskets to the children in April.

Neither of these teams has a budget line and are funded by donations of friends and members of UUS.

—Submitted by Deb Schoelerman and Sally Hartman



(Left) UUS volunteers deliver donated bikes to one of our Circle of Friends families.



(Above) The UUS Free Lunch Program Team adapted their practices so they never missed a shift due to COVID.

Free Lunch Program

Since 1985, UUS members and friends have come together once a month to prepare and serve a meal to guests at Iowa City's Free Lunch Program. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the manner in which we provided our UUS Free Lunch meal, by necessity, changed this past year.

For safety reasons, The Free Lunch Program was forced to close their large dining room at 1105 S. Gilbert Court. Therefore, on the second Friday of each month, instead of 30 UUS volunteers preparing food in the Free Lunch kitchen, five intrepid UUS volunteers donned gloves, masks, face shields, and socially distanced as much as possible to assemble and serve box lunches via a side door. Each meal consisted of a main dish, two side dishes, fresh fruit, and on special occasions, a cookie, all purchased from Hy-Vee. After meals were served, our volunteers would often pack up leftovers

which were then taken to the day shelter at the Robert A. Lee Center downtown.

Over the course of the year, 1043 meals were served, averaging 87 meals each month. The cost of each meal was paid for by generous UUS members and friends, Covenant Groups, and our larger group of UUS Free Lunch volunteers. In addition to the UUS volunteers on-site, three other volunteers took on tasks of Secretary/Record-keeping, ordering food, and writing reports. Even during this challenging year, UUS found creative ways to continue our service to Iowa City's Free Lunch Program. Teamwork was everything!

As the year closes, we celebrate the generosity of our UUS community, the dedication of UUS volunteers, and the creativity of the Free Lunch Program staff in continuing to provide meals to community members six days a week.

—Submitted by Carmen Griggs



(Left) A weaving made by Rev. Diana Smith for the May 3rd, 2020 service where she was called as UUS's new settled minister. The week prior, members of the congregation were invited to submit their answers to the question "What thread of UUS's past do you want or need to bring into the future, and what is your hope for UUS's future?" The answers were written on ribbons woven into the piece.

(Below) The UUS Virtual Choir performs "Blessed Be," a choral benediction created by Online Music Leader Dave Rowe



VISION:

Our vision is to be a loving, inclusive, and growing spiritual community. We celebrate life and a liberal tradition that leads social justice work, heals the earth, and nurtures the lifelong journey of mind and spirit.

2020/2021 Board of Trustees

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 Carmen Griggs (replaced Kris Canfield 3/21)
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2020/2021 Staff

Rev. Diane Dowgiert, Interim Minister (left 7/20)
Rev. Diana Smith, Minister (began 8/20)
Rev. Lois Cole, Community Minister
Peggy Garrigues, Director of Congregational Life
Jessica Zimmer, Director of Lifespan Religious Education
Emma Barnum, Congregational Administrator
Gloria Corbin, Music Director (retired 7/20)
Jeff Walberg, Publicity Coordinator (became Publicity and AV Coordinator 5/21)
Nik Jakob, Administrative Assistant
Anna Rode, RE Assistant
Ron Wright, Building Steward
Aura Strohschein, Accompanist (left 9/20)
Dave Rowe, Online Music Leader (began 9/20)

2020/2021 Childcare Workers

Kaylee Lopez and Abigail Patterson

