

Unitarian Universalist Society

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The UUS News

October 2023 Newsletter

Introducing the new UUS Newsletter print format! This is the first newsletter with our new process, and there may be errors that weren't caught before publication. Future newsletters will be monitored for issues and functionality. Find more news at <https://www.uusic.org/news/>

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From Your Minister

Rev. Diana

Dear Ones,

As the days shorten and the calendar turns toward October, my mind is turning to our Soul Matters theme of Generosity. As the draft text for the proposed new Unitarian Universalist value of Gratitude reads: "Our generosity connects us to one another in relationships of interdependence and mutuality." And our resources this month remind us, generosity is transformative, connecting, and challenging.

This connection between gratitude and generosity is important. Generosity can flow most freely and become transformative when it emerges from feelings of gratitude, and when we cultivate gratitude, hope, and a practice of freely and compassionately sharing our faith, presence, and resources.

I'm looking forward to exploring these ideas with you as we engage in programming together this month. You can read about our upcoming Equipping for Action event, a new children's choir, our religious education offerings for adults, children, and youth, vespers on second Wednesday evenings, and much more throughout this newsletter. These offerings are part of how we're Growing Our Story (our stewardship campaign theme). They're also part of ways we're living into this year's Vision of Ministry.

As you may have heard about during our September 17 worship service or in a leader email, the Vision of Ministry that the Board of Trustees adopted for 2023-24 is organized around 3 themes:

- **A year of welcoming, hospitality, and homecoming** - including sharing responsibility for welcoming and integrating visitors, making creative use of our building, encouraging more member-developed and easily-accessible programming
- **Nourishing resilience as a community** - including joyful resistance to extremism, building bonds with each other and allied groups, engaging in creative conflict, deepening and respecting diverse spiritual practices, and adapting to climate change
- **Practicing personal care and compassion for others** - including recognizing the effects of the pandemic and political realities, cultivating sustainable practices, practicing patience and setting realistic expectations, focusing on the positive, and resisting perfectionism

Alongside these themes, the Board developed two key questions for staff and members to use when developing programming and encouraged staff and leaders to use the vision of ministry themes from the last few years (connecting with ourselves, each other, and the wider community) as a framework for developing programming:

- **How can we make it easy for people to engage with programming?**
- **How can we invite UUS groups into enacting the vision of ministry?**

This month, as we practice Generosity, I hope that you'll join leaders, staff, and other members in helping developing ways that we can live into this vision.

Connecting and engaging with ourselves, with each other, and with the wider community is one of the great gifts of this congregation. This month, let's create pauses and take time to connect and engage in new and old ways, and learn together.

Love and Blessings, Rev. Diana

Upcoming Services

October 2023 Sunday Services

October 1st: Growing Our Story

Join us as UUS members Mary Kathryn Wallace, Alice Atkinson, and Peg Bouska share stories of how UUS has supported them in their journeys and how they're helping UUS grow our story.

October 8th: Love's Hands: Covenant and Community

Guest speaker CB Beal will return to us and continue the theme of being Love's Hands in the world by exploring how we respond to the Call of Love as part of a community in covenant one with another.

October 15th: Generosity

The draft text for the proposed new Unitarian Universalist value of Gratitude reads: "We cultivate a spirit of gratitude and hope. We covenant to freely and compassionately share our faith, presence, and resources. Our generosity connects us to one another in relationships of interdependence and mutuality." Join us for an all-ages worship service where we'll explore what this could mean and how it could help us grow as Unitarian Universalists. After the worship service, we will have all ages religious education. Each month on the 3rd Sunday, after our All Ages worship service, there will be at least three diverse activities to choose from that will engage participants in the theme for the month: a discussion; an art, craft, or hands-on activity; and a music, meditation, and more activity. Rev. Diana Smith preaching.

October 22nd: Cultivating Compassion, Making Space

How can each of us, whatever our circumstances, help cultivate a community where we cultivate and express care and compassion for each other in ways small and large? Join us as we celebrate cultivating compassion and care, and celebrate a new member welcome ceremony! Rev. Diana Smith preaching.

October 29th: Honoring Our Ancestors, Becoming Ancestors

We carry many ancestors with us, both those whose of blood and those of spirit. Join us to celebrate the strength, hope, and resources that our ancestors give us, even as we reflect on their struggles. What do we hope to learn from our ancestors' lives that will help us become good ancestors? Rev. Diana Smith preaching.

*Find more information on our Sunday Services [on our website](#)
[Join us in-person](#) | [Join us on YouTube Livestream](#)*

October Offerings

Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP)

October Monthly Offering

The Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP) provides comprehensive support and advocacy services to victims/survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and human trafficking, focusing on immediate and long-term safety, empowerment, dignity, and hope. Services include a 24-hour hotline, in-person advocacy, criminal justice and economic support, an emergency women and youth shelter (with kennel services), and more. Learn more at dviipiowa.org.

Iowa LEAP

5th Sunday Special Offering

On months with five Sundays, we pick one week to spotlight a specific need to support through our extra offering. On October 29th, the Social Justice Team has chosen Iowa LEAP (iowaleap.org) as our 5th Sunday community partner. Iowa LEAP provides academic tutoring and enrichment in all academic areas for students in grades K-12. Through mentorship, financial support, and volunteers with targeted areas of expertise, Iowa LEAP strives to help students become financially stable and successful in their chosen career paths.

Cash and check donations are collected during the Sunday service offering. Checks should be made out to UUS and have "DVIP" or "Iowa LEAP" on the memo line. You can also donate online at <https://bit.ly/UUSPartner>, text "GivetoUUSIC Partner" to 73256, or mail a check to the UUS office.

Board Position Nominations Request

The Leadership Development Committee will soon be starting their search for nominees to fill positions on the Board of Trustees, Endowment Committee & Leadership Development Committee starting in July 2024. If you would like to suggest someone for one of these spots please let one of the LDC members know.

From Your Director of Congregational Music

Emily Pritchard

Music Team

[Sign-up](#) to be on our Music Team! Fill out this form if you are a current musician (UUS Singers, UUS Strings, etc.) or would like to be involved with music at UUS, even as a non-musical supporting role. I would love to get to know you and what music at UUS means to you.

UUS Children's Choir

The UUS Children's Choir begins rehearsals directly after service on Oct. 1. We hope to perform our first song on Oct. 29 in honor of Halloween/All Souls Day. We welcome children ages 4-12.

Any youth (13+) interested in making music can contact Emily Pritchard directly at music@uusic.org.

UUS Singers Welcoming New Members

The adult choir at UUS is actively searching for new members to join our ranks! We have an open door policy to anyone who enjoys singing. We will be getting ready for the holidays soon, so expect a lot of fun music!

From Your Rental Coordinator

Sue Kann

About a year and a half ago I began acting as a Host to groups who rented space in our building. When Peggy left I took over as the volunteer Rental Coordinator. In this space I would like to tell you about how rentals work and why they are important to our congregation. In future posts I will write about who our renters are, what goes on behind the scenes and how you can hold an event in our building.

Let's start with: Why Rent Our Building to Outside Groups?

Technically the answer is to offset the costs of facilities acquisition, utilities, maintenance, staffing and general wear and tear (as stated in the 2020 Facilities Use Guide.) But there are some other benefits of renting our building.

Perhaps the top benefit is to become more visible and known in the wider community.

Our outreach programs attract people like ourselves which is good. A rental by an outside group brings in a diverse and, perhaps unreachable, clientele. Lots of people learn about the UUS by attending an event in our building. They may not become members, but it is a good way to get the word out that we are here and we are a possibility.

Another benefit is the hospitality we can show our partner non-profit groups. We are a generous congregation. Along with giving money we also rent to non-profit groups at a very reasonable, discounted rate. Finding spaces to hold events is hard and expensive so allowing groups like The Center for Worker's Justice and the Inside

Out Reentry Program to hold fundraising events in our building is a kind and charitable thing to do. Rental to non-profit groups fits perfectly in our mission.

Stayed tuned for more information on rentals in future posts.

Sue Kann, Rental Coordinator
rentals@uusic.org

Upcoming Events

October 2023 Events

Mens' Sunday Social, October 1st

UUS adult men are invited to gather together on the first Sunday of most months from 6 to 8 pm to socialize in a casual setting. We will meet at 2dogs Pub (1705 S 1st Ave, Iowa City). Send questions to Nik Jakob at 319-631-8126 or menssundaysocial@uusic.org.

Equipping for Action, October 6th-8th

Do you want to gain skills in creating community? Do you want to work with others on developing individual and community practices that help us bear witness to one another's lives? Are you seeking to create spaces of radical inclusion? Do you want to work with others to learn how? Or are you looking to gain skills in facilitation or communication practices that promote collective liberation?

UUS has two amazing speakers/educators coming to lead three workshops October 6 and 7 that will help us develop these skills and practices!

[Abena Imhotep](#) of the [Sankofa Literary and Empowerment Group](#) and [CB Beal](#) of Justice and Peace Consulting will be here to share the following workshops.

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You can register for just one or for all three here: <https://forms.gle/v43iktAekN3ZbiFL7>

These workshops are free for UUS members; Non-members \$20 students and seniors/\$40 all others (inclusive of all sessions and childcare)

Contact Director of Lifespan Religious Education Nic Kaplan at education@uusic.org with questions and for scholarships.

To protect the health of both of our speakers, N95, KN95, or equivalent face masks will be required in the sanctuary for all participants in this event. There will be plenty of breaks.

Participants should bring their own lunch to eat on Saturday.

Rev. Diana Community Office Hours, October 11th

Rev. Diana will be at a location in the community for members and friends to stop by and chat about whatever's on your heart or mind. You don't need to have an appointment, but you can set one up at calendly.com/revdiana if you want to be sure she's available. She hopes you'll stop by to say "Hi!"

Vespers, October 11th

Join us for a meditative evening service with singing or music, quiet reflection, and other spiritual practices.

Sound Bath Meditation, October 18th

Join us for a heart-hased sound meditation experience led by Tina McCoy. Discover a feeling of calmness and freedom from worries and stress as you rest and are held by soothing sounds and vibrations of singing bowls, gongs, chimes, and other instruments. This is a free-will offering event.

Rev. Diana Community Office Hours, October 25th

Rev. Diana will be at a location in the community for members and friends to stop by and chat about whatever's on your heart or mind. You don't need to have an appointment, but you can set one up at calendly.com/revdiana if you want to be sure she's available. She hopes you'll stop by to say "Hi!"

Faithful Grounding, October 26th

Join the Unitarian Universalist Association Side with Love Fun & Spiritual Nourishment Squad for a virtual hour of spiritual sustenance and grounding with others organizing on the side of love. Show up as you are, with whatever is in your heart, and have your camera on or off as you need.

Come drink in the music, meditation, play, and prayer. We end with a Connection Cafe for those who wish to talk together. This gathering happens monthly on the 4th Thursday of the month at 6:30 CT. Register here: [October 26](#)

Full Moon Conspiracy, October 28th

Come celebrate the full moon! We gather as individuals in a community, each of us unique, combining into a beautiful harmony. We will collaboratively create a ritual of celebration and magic. Gathering will be outside on the UUS patio when weather permits and include a fire if participants desire. When weather is bad we'll be in the Fellowship Hall.

Please bring your unique spirit, altar items, a drum if you have one, snacks and/or drinks if you like, water bottle, locally sourced firewood if you would like a fire. Altar items, a kit of ritual supplies, and activities for ritual creation will be available for use.

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People of all ages, spiritual paths, and physical abilities are welcome at this gathering. This gathering is hosted by the UU Pagans (cuups@uusic.org).

Chili Cookoff and Trunk or Treat, October 29th

Join us for a chili cook off after service. Anyone can compete and everyone is encouraged to stay for the meal. Judges will be a variety of UUS members and friends from diverse backgrounds. Sign up to compete [here](#). Prize to be announced soon! Sign up to judge [here](#).

If you will not be participating as a vehicle in Trunk-or-Treating, please plan to move your vehicle out of the designated spots by 12:15.

Trunk-or-Treating begins at 1 pm. If you are participating, be sure to check in at the table or by using the QR code on site for a chance to win a fabulous prize. If you would like to enter your vehicle in the Trunk-or-Treating competition, [please fill out this form](#).

Find our full list of October Events [here](#)

UUS Committee and Team Reports

COVENANT GROUPS

In August there was no scheduled meeting, but many covenant groups gathered informally to relax, share food, and enjoy each others' company. Last month, we reconvened to welcome each other back to group discussion. Our topic was just that, "Welcome," which invited us to explore the different meanings that simple word has for us. UUS is a welcoming congregation whose doors are open to everyone, but

what does it mean for each of us to be welcoming in our own lives? It's more than being quick with a friendly greeting, of course. It's the willingness to experience new things, situations, sensations, and people; to being open to making our horizons wider and expanding our spirits to take in more of what we don't know, or don't know enough about. That often includes what lies inside ourselves.

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

FREE LUNCH PROGRAM

The Volunteers of the IC UUS Free Lunch Program served 105 guests at the 1105 South Gilbert Court facility in Iowa City. It was a glorious day and the children who came laughed loudly.

This congregation knows who the volunteers are because they are mostly the same names month after month. You have read these reports for some time and may have come to the conclusion that we have a plethora of volunteers who donate time, energy, donations of money, and food.

We have gotten by, however, we want and need more help. Remember that our Society and the Iowa City FLP has been doing this for many decades. In fact, the ICFLP is celebrating its forty (40) year anniversary! We need more of you to come and help on the second Friday of each month when we do our service. There are many benefits to serving. We do enjoy the company of others and one might consider our fun as a party. Please come join us!

GREEN SANCTUARY

*We are Better Together – Green Sanctuary
Theme for the year*

At our Earth Day service last April at UUS, Rev. Diana read from Bill McKibben's newest book, *We Are Better Together*. McKibben, a well-known environmentalist and activist, reminds that we share the responsibility to address climate change and our changing planet.

It is critical that we act collectively to protect our beautiful, fragile, besieged world. The Green Sanctuary (GS) Team agreed to make it our theme for this program year. We invite UUS members and friends to participate in some or all of our "Calls to Actions."

Changing habits can be challenging but in small steps and with support, change will occur. Together at UUS, we can make a difference. As Will Grant suggests in *Drawdown*, if you have already made an ecological change, encourage a friend or family member to make the change as well.

Each month in the newsletter, look for an article on a specific topic of actions to take. At the end of each month, we will conduct a pom-pom poll to see how many of these actions we have undertaken together.

Actions for October

1. Think about your transportation. Walk, bike, take the bus (now free in Iowa City). Carpool and combine errands when possible.

Avoid idling your vehicle for more than 5 minutes. Purchase a more efficient vehicle – hybrid or electric. Drive the speed limit, or even less, on the hi-way.

2. On October 15th at 11:30 am after the service, visit UU Society's holy ground! Actually, this is a "hole" or trench, called a bio retention cell. Our three bio cells at UU

Society channel stormwater runoff through shrubs (that are also pollinators) and a soil mixture that filters the water before it enters the groundwater. Join the GS Team as we discover the intricacies and mysteries of our bio cells in a tour led by Deb Schoelerman and others from the GS Team. Children will be invited to engage in a nature scavenger hunt. Meet in the atrium. All are welcome to join!

3. Join the GS Team and UUs from across Iowa to interact in a Drawdown Eco challenge project in the month of October. To participate, join our on-line team and throughout the month report your ecological actions and learning. There are eight categories of eco actions to choose from. Here are the steps to join the UU team called the "Swine Republic UUs":

1. Go to the website: drawdown.ecochallenge.org
2. Click on teams and write in a search for Swine Republic UUs.
3. Scroll down and click on Join This Team
4. On the top of the page, click on the blue ecochallenge.org for action choices.

Contact Sally at sallyahartman@hotmail.com if you have any questions! We have UU team members from Davenport, Des Moines and Clinton. Invite your relatives, friends, and neighbors!

Never underestimate the collective impact of small changes.

PRISON MINISTRY TEAM

The Prison Ministry Team will be holding its monthly meeting on Tuesday Oct.3 at 7:00 in the UUS Conference Room. You are invited to join us there or by clicking on the Zoom link below.

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Among the topics we'll be discussing is our October 22nd Forum in the Sanctuary beginning at 11:30. (Because of a scheduling conflict, the date has been moved from Oct.8 to Oct.22).

We'll be welcoming author and advocate for the incarcerated, Sue Hutchins, from the Iowa Justice Action Network (IJAN). She will speak about her experiences working for just and fair change in the criminal justice system and the most pressing issues facing Iowa's prison population today. She will also talk about her latest collection of writings by incarcerated individuals, *Writings from Behind the Bleak Walls of Prison*.

Please plan to attend this Forum if you are interested in learning about the many social justice issues affecting those incarcerated in Iowa's prisons.

The Prison Ministry Team also matches up volunteer pen pals with incarcerated individuals. If you are interested, please contact us at Prisonministry@uusic.org. If you know someone in prison, or are corresponding with an incarcerated individual, please come and share your experience and what you've learned. We welcome more members!

Zoom:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84808424430?pwd=c2t3MG8zRms5eXdEYWJyWHBDRC9iUT09> (Meeting ID: 848 0842 4430; Passcode: 193553).

UU MYSTICS

UUMystics gatherings on 1st Wed each month at 7pm in conference room: The Unitarian Universalist Living Tradition draws from many sources, including mystical experience, referring to it in our first Source as the "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."

As one group member said recently: *"I feel that the group is very important as an activity deeply relevant to our UU principles, especially to spiritual inclusiveness and increasing awareness and support for those members whose spiritual identities and experiences emerge from a special sensitivity to transcendent mysteries."*

Our UUMystics is a group for anyone who has an interest or personal experience with what is commonly referred to as "mystical experiences," and a desire to share in a community of support for exploring what is called "Spiritual Awakening" (Also referred to as Enlightenment, Transcendent Experience, Discovering our True Nature, and many other ancient or modern terms.). We may share our personal stories and explore the impact, meaning, and implications that these experiences can have in our lives and beyond. We may also explore historical or contemporary mystical spiritual wisdom and draw from our own UUA resources.

We may sometimes participate in spiritual practices led by members. We are a self-creating community with shared leadership. As with most groups who enjoy personal sharing, we will follow the covenant we created together to guide our gatherings.

We are considering suggestions about topics of interest for our time together (see below), and welcome more ideas. What would you like to explore under the broad heading of "Spiritual Awakening"?

- What is Spiritual Awakening? - discussion and resources;

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- What happens when we die? (touches on reincarnation & past lives, Near Death Experiences, contacts with the deceased, channeling etc)
- Share our personal spiritual journeys, & discover commonalities & differences;
- What does science say about Non-duality/Oneness?
- Explore the meaning of “ego” and the separate sense of self;
- Tap into the work of the UUA's Mystics group;

- Participate in various spiritual practices (drumming, dances of peace, sacred readings and poetry, chanting, etc);
- Your ideas here!!

We meet the first Wednesday of the month at 7pm at UUS in the conference room. Our gatherings are also open to anyone from the public who is referred by a group member and agrees to comply with our mutual covenant.

Please contact (miriam.kashia@gmail.com) if you have any questions

UUS Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Highlights

7:00pm, Sept. 20, 2023, UUS Conference Room & Zoom

Present: Jeff Walberg (President), Rochelle Honey-Arcement (Vice President), Christine Etler (Secretary), Mike Pavelich (Treasurer), Monique DiCarlo (Trustee), Diana Henry (Trustee), Rev. Diana Smith (Ex-officio). **Absent:** none. Quorum met. **Guest:** none

Meeting Opened at 7:00 pm with check-in. Chalice Lighting-Opening Words by Rochelle Honey-Arcement

Consent Agenda

<p>P1 Board Meeting Minutes – Aug</p> <p>P2 Minister's Report - Aug</p> <p>P3 Treasurer's Report - Aug</p> <p>P4 Mortgage Campaign Committee Report</p> <p>P5 President's Report to Governance 9-4-23</p>	<p>P6 MidAmerica President's Call Notes 9-11-23</p> <p>P7 Policy & Procedures Typos</p> <p>P8 Personnel Committee Nomination</p> <p>P9 Record of Email Votes 2022-2023</p>
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Motion by Pavelich: Approve the consent agenda; seconded by DiCarlo. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Open Question Next Steps

Jeff Walberg will work on digitizing the notes from the Open Questions session. An Open Questions session will be held at Oaknoll. Kelly O'Berry and Kristin Wildensee will schedule this and facilitate. Christine Etler will create a Google form in order to solicit more feedback. Future engagement with the congregation on the open questions will be discussed after review of the feedback received in September and October.

Staff & Ministry Teams Discussion

- How is staff reorganization working?

The process is ongoing for the staff settling into their new staffing structure and refining their roles and responsibilities. In recent weeks, the open staff positions have been filled and we have had a few weeks in the new congregational year. There are still some gaps related to the role Peggy Garrigues held – particularly liaising with volunteer congregational leaders to assist with their events and programming needs. We discussed the annual auction and how to move forward with preserving this event or creating multiple fundraising alternate events.

- Challenges with shared ministry, revenue expectations, etc

Revenue expectations – The summer camps were successful and we will plan to run them again. The launching of a nature preschool is a question mark. We will discuss more once we feel our staffing structure is more solid. Alternately, we may want to find a building use partner from the community.

Shared ministry: we discussed in the gaps in support for ministry activities. Work will continue on forming a Program Council. A Program Council examine the gaps present in our existing shared ministry and support the ministry team so that the Board does not have to work on the details in this area.

Change to Board Meeting Time

Motion by Etlar: Change the monthly meeting time to 6:30pm; seconded by DiCarlo. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

2024 Budget Discussion

Including planning process & Guidance for budget planners

Pavelich reviewed the process document prepared for the meeting that was compiled with the Finance committee. It outlines the budget process that has been used in recent years. “The Board of Trustees, with input from Finance Committee, will establish guidelines early in the process, in the September and October regular meeting.” This guidance establishes a target number for the congregational administrator, the minister and the treasurer as they do the initial work of formulating a budget for 2024. The treasurer and Finance Committee have proposed that the guidance budget be set at \$535,000.

Financial considerations were further discussed. Particularly the Stewardship campaign. The results of the campaign will not be available until December and the work on planning the budget cannot be delayed. The goal of the Stewardship campaign is \$400,000.

Motion by Pavelich: The Board instructs the CA, Minister and Treasurer to use a \$535,000 as a target for initial budget planning for the 2024 fiscal year; Henry seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Mortgage Discussion

We briefly discussed a report from the Mortgage Campaign committee. The report presents options for actions to take when the remainder of the UUS building mortgage debt of approximately \$680,000 comes due on December 1, 2025. This topic will be added to a future meeting agenda for further discussion. We will investigate the possibility of using a financial consultant to assist with this matter.

Closed Session

Motion by DiCarlo to move into closed session; Henry seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Pavelich motioned to move out of Closed Session; Etler seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Closing

There were no guest comments; process observer comments were not presented; DiCarlo provided closing words, and the chalice was extinguished.

Pavelich moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by DiCarlo and it was approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:15 pm (exact time was not recorded).

Meeting Minutes submitted by Christine Etler, Board Secretary

Finalized minutes will be available after the 10/18/23 Board meeting