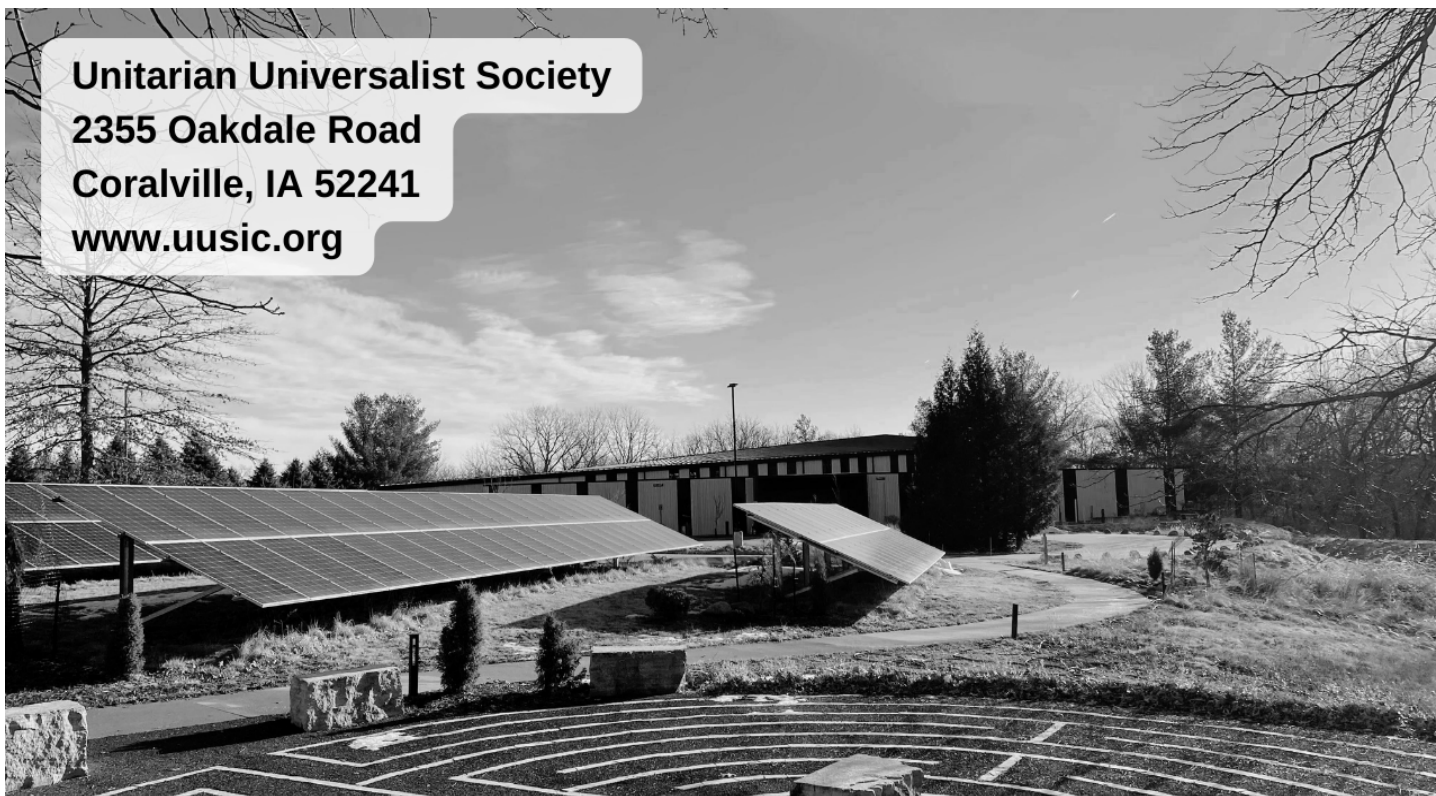


Unitarian Universalist Society
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The UUS News

November 2023 Newsletter

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CORRECTION: The Minister's Report in the printed version of the November UUS newsletter was a repeat of the October report. Please find the correct Minister's Report for November 2023 below.

From Your Minister

Rev. Diana

Dear Ones,

Ralph Ellison wrote: "Some people are your relatives, but others are your ancestors, and you choose the ones you want to have as ancestors. You create yourself out of those values."

As I write this, the winds are whipping up, carrying leaves that are quickly turning marvelous shades of yellow, orange, red, and brown past my window. This morning, walking my dog, the tumultuous fall weather granted me the sight of a faith rainbow high up in sky. And it is with all these changes that my mind turns to our November theme of Heritage and how we as Unitarian Universalists, "draw from our heritages of freedom, reason, hope, and courage, building on the foundation of love." (You can read the draft UU values, which this phrase comes from here <https://www.uua.org/files/2023-06/Article%20%20Package.pdf>).

I'm excited about our November worship services and special events, which will be helping us reflect on our heritage and how it informs our lives. After a special October 29 worship service where we'll be honoring our ancestors of body and of spirit, as well as reflecting on how we are working to be good ancestors for those who come after us, we'll spend November learning from many of our Unitarian Universalist ancestors of spirit. These will include amazing folks like Michael Servetus, Francis David, Augusta Chapin, William Ellery Channing, James Luther Adams, Theodore Parker, and some modern-day UUs I'm still deciding on. We'll also be learning about and reflecting on our local environmental heritage.

In addition, on November 12 we'll be celebrating the passage of our first grade aged children into the Age of Confidence with a special ceremony during the worship service, after which we'll celebrate our current congregation's birthdays. On November 16 we have the privilege of having Rev. Denis McCarty visiting to perform Servetus: The Radical Reformed Musical. This original musical has received rave reviews for its tuneful journey to the shadow side of the Protestant Reformation. On November 19 we are working on having the Suchona Community back to share Diwali celebrations with us. And, of course, our covenant groups and religious education classes will be exploring what Heritage means in their lives.

This month, as we explore our heritage together, I look forward to hearing what you're learning about who you're choosing as your ancestors and where that's taking you.

Love and Blessings,
Rev. Diana

Upcoming Services

November 2023 Sunday Services

November 5th: Learning from Augusta Chapin's Legacy

Augusta Chapin, our first woman minister, arrived in Iowa City in 1870. She faced difficult circumstances here. In 1873 she left what was then First Universalist Church a much stronger place than she had found it, laying the foundation (literal and figurative) for UUS as we know it today. What can we learn from her legacy, and what will ours be? UUS member Emily Johnson preaching.

November 12th: Deeds not Creeds

Join us as we continue our exploration of our Unitarian Universalist heritage. We'll be learning from Unitarians Michael Servetus, Francis David, William Ellery Channing, and others as we galavant from the Radical Reformation up through the 19th and 20th centuries, stopping to learn about how Unitarians came to center the idea of Salvation by Character (better known now as Deeds not Creeds). Appropriately for our excursion into this part of our heritage, we'll be marking the passage of our first grade aged children into the Age of Confidence with a special ceremony. Contact DLRE Nic Kaplan if your child would like to join the ceremony! And after the worship service, we'll be celebrating the present markers of our heritage with a congregational birthday party! We'll have cakes for every month and can't wait to find out which month most of us have birthdays! Rev. Diana Smith preaching.

November 19th: Shaping Our Search for Meaning

Unitarian Universalist James Luther Adams was one of the most influential theologians and philosophers of the 20th century. Join us for this all ages service as we learn about the 5 smooth stones of religious liberalism, the priesthood and prophethood of all believers, and explore where these ideas might be inviting us to go today. 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.

November 26th: Creating "Heaven" on Earth

Join us as we finish our theme of Heritage with an exploration of prophetic people and the call of modern-day Unitarian Universalist Humanists to fix what needs fixing here and now. Rev. Diana Smith preaching.

Find more information on our Sunday Services on our website: www.uusic.org/services

Join us on YouTube Livestream: www.youtube.com/@UUS_IC

November Offering

CommUnity Crisis Services and Food Bank

The Sunday offerings in November benefit **CommUnity Crisis Services and Food Bank**, formerly the Crisis Center, a volunteer-driven organization based in Iowa City that provides immediate and non-judgmental support for individuals facing emotional, food, or financial crises.

Services include a 24/7 crisis hotline, chat, and text hotlines; support groups; in-house and mobile food banks; a basic needs program that includes utility and housing assistance, a mobile mental-health crisis outreach program, and prescription and other health and work-related assistance. Find more information on their website: builtbycommunity.org.

Cash and check donations are collected during the Sunday service offering. Checks should be made out to UUS and have “CommUnity” 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.

From Your Director of Lifespan Religious Education

Nic Kaplan

Recently, I took a little bit of time away from the office for study leave and I will have more study leave coming up this month. If you saw my “out of office reply” or my section in the weekly update the week that I

was away, you may have seen me reference “credentialing.” When I was hired at UUS, I agreed to pursue the credentialing process through the Unitarian Universalist Association.

“The Religious Education Credentialing Program is a three-level program for religious education professionals that nurtures the call to religious education as a profession, provides a comprehensive path for professional development, and articulates and upholds professional standards and guidelines in religious education leadership.”

Through this program, I am regularly taking classes and doing additional independent study to complete the requirements by February of 2025 for becoming a Credentialed Religious Educator - Advanced Level.

I have taken classes on Unitarian Universalist theology, family ministry, teacher development, and system theory. Over the winter, I am already registered for curriculum development and leading UU culture change classes. Those five classes, along with the Our Whole Lives facilitator trainings and advanced level small group facilitation classes I have taken, covers my requirements for learning modules. However, as a self-proclaimed lifelong learner, I expect that I will continue to take applicable classes as I am able.

Along with the class requirements, I have eight required competencies and one elective competency in which I need to read multiple books, explore countless resources, and provide documentation of my work and volunteer experiences, being sure to highlight five of them through an

anti-racist, anti-oppression, and multicultural lens.

I thoroughly enjoy my classes and all the books I am reading.

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(From Your Director of Lifespan Religious Education, continued from page 4)

I love how applicable many of them are to our daily lives as Unitarian Universalists and I plan to find ways to share some of them with you soon. Be on the lookout for a special book discussion to be added to the calendar soon. Educators and caregivers of minors will be especially interested in this book I will be sharing with you.

Thank You to Our Listeners

Thank you, all, for your involvement in this pilot approach to Annual Stewardship. We hope everyone benefited from the experience.

Trainer: Sarah Ross

Listeners: Larry Audlehelm, Peg Bouska, Jane DeWitt, Barb Haring, Carolyn Johnson, Jim Laughlin, Gary Lawrenson, Russ Lenth, Caryl Lyons, Tim McMurray, Dave Martin, Jim Olson, Sue Otto, Paul Pomrehn, and Vicki Siefers

—The Stewardship Committee

Upcoming Events

November 2023 Events

UU Mystics, November 1st

UUMystics will gather on Wednesday, October 1 at 7pm (the first Wednesday of each month) in the conference room to continue our deep sharing and exploration of “Spiritual Awakening” and related topics.

We are a community of seekers under the UUA & UUS umbrella, and we welcome your energy and presence and sharing. Bring your whole self and help us co-create something meaningful and perhaps mystical. Our UUMystics community is self-directed with shared leadership. If you wish to participate and cannot be present, please [join us over Zoom](#) (Meeting ID: 826 8770 0792, Passcode: 218927).

This is new territory for us at UUS, and we welcome your presence and input as we co-create this Spiritual Awakening adventure together. If you have questions, you may contact:

miriam.kashia@gmail.com.

Men's Sunday Social, November 5th

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 be meeting at 2dogs pub in Iowa City (1705 S 1st Ave). Send questions to Nik Jakob at menssundaysocial@uusic.org. or 319-631-8126.

VegCommUUnity Plantluck, November 5th

The VegCommUUnity will enjoy a festive plantluck on Sunday, November 5th, at 6 pm in Fellowship Hall. Please bring a favorite Thanksgiving-themed plant-based* dish to share that serves approximately 8 people, along with the recipe or list of ingredients and your own table service. All UUS members and friends are welcome to join in for fellowship, fun, and delicious food.

Please RSVP to Carol if you plan to attend: carolthrockmorton108@msn.com or (319) 337-3030.

*Plant-based” means vegetables, fruits, legumes, grains, nuts and seeds, plant milks and other non-dairy products, plant oils and butters, and plant-based sweeteners.

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(VegCommUnity Plantluck Event,
continued from page 5)

Excluded are all animal products, including meat/poultry/fish, dairy, and eggs, as well as honey.

Free Lunch Program, November 10th

The cornerstone of the Free Lunch Program is, “an open door, a full plate and no questions asked.” A hot meal is served six days a week at 1105 S. Gilbert Court, Iowa City. Since 1986, UUS has provided the Free Lunch meal on the second Friday of every month to about 110 guests. This year we have returned from the pandemic limitations by creating the main meal using the UUS kitchen by our volunteer chefs under the guidance of Vicki Siefers. This change has reduced the costs of our offerings in the face of higher costs.

If you would like more information about how you can contribute to Free Lunch, please contact Bob Littlehale (freelunch@uusic.org or 419-297-7812)

Uncovering the Hidden Power of Women in Unitarian and Universalist Histories, November 9th

All are welcome to attend this free webinar which is the third in a series of unique international Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist collaborative programs brought to you by the Reckoning International U/UU Histories Project. We are an ad hoc group of U/UU historians and ministers committed to uncovering oppressed, marginalized, and hidden stories in our histories.

Registration is now open for the 3rd Reckoning Webinar Thursday, November 9th. The Webinar begins at 7am Pacific Standard Time; 10am Eastern (Boston). Register at <https://bit.ly/478QmRL>

Congregational Birthday Party, November 12th

Happy Birthday to UUS and to YOU!

On November 6th, 1841 UUS was organized as a Universalist congregation. Just like UUS, we each have a special day when we began and we all deserve to be celebrated.

Join us in the Fellowship Hall after service on November 12th for our Congregational Birthday Party! There will be 12 cakes provided and we encourage you to join in conversation and celebration at the table that is labeled with your birthday month, your season, or your astrology sign. Come celebrate with us!

Servetus: The Radical Reformed Musical, November 16th

Join us for Rev. Dennis McCarty's one-person musical about Unitarian Universalist icon Michael Servetus. This original musical has received rave reviews for its tuneful journey to the shadow side of the Protestant Reformation.

Diwali, November 19th

For Diwali, the Hindu festival of light, celebrants wear their finest clothes, illuminate the interior and exterior of their homes with diyas and rangoli, perform worship ceremonies of Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity and wealth (by some people), light fireworks, and participate in family feasts, where sweets and gifts are shared.

Members of the Suchona Community, Dr. Shuvendu Das and some of his Indian

friends will lead this program in a miniature form for UUS members and friends. They organize different South Asian cultural programs in this corridor.

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(Diwali Event, continued from page 6)

Dr. Das has been living in the Iowa City/Coralville area since 2003. Dr. Das works at The University of Iowa as a Research Scientist. He is also an adjunct Professor in the Department of Chemistry.

Sound Bath Meditation, November 20th

Join us for a heart-based 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.

Full Moon Conspiracy, November 27th

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.

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).

Find our full list of November Events at www.uusic.org/upcoming-events.

UUS Committee and Team Reports

COVENANT GROUPS

In our October gatherings, group members discussed different ways of understanding “generosity.” Perhaps most commonly we think of it as performing an act of kindness, doing a favor for someone, whether stranger or friend, that we didn’t have to do. But generosity can certainly mean much more than that, can go further and deeper, challenge us to truly give of ourselves—our time, our effort, our comfort.

It can call for sacrifice on our parts, taking ourselves out of our comfort zones to help others. Which can also do something important for us—even to the point of transforming us. And it has two sides as well—sometimes a great act of generosity is allowing others to do something for us, being willing to receive a gift that’s meaningful for someone to give.

What does generosity mean to you? What does it feel like, as both giver or receiver of a generous act, and how might the presence of generosity in your life have changed you?

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).

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(UUS Committee and Team Reports,
continued from page 7)

FREE LUNCH PROGRAM

The day was a reminder that Autumn was here. It was cool and had seen some downpours. The lunchroom was open early for our 97 guests who enjoyed their chile con carne and a veggie chili with cornbread. We skipped a green salad and had a fruit salad donated by: Russ Lenth, Nancy Lynch and Gay Mikelson.

There was an abundance of desserts in the form of cookies and cupcakes donated by Sally Hartman, Carrie Norton, and Judy Quinn & Ron Crawford. Janet McKee and Terri O'Berry brought apple juice. The other wonderful volunteers were: Frank Wildensee, Carol Throckmorton, Donna Simonton, Joe Rasmussen, Vicki Siefers, Chris Smith, Barb Stannard, and Caryl Lyons.

As always, we welcome any form of donation to feed the hungry. Contact Bob Littlehale, 419-297-7812, rflsal@yahoo.com

GREEN SANCTUARY

The Green Sanctuary's theme for the year is We Are Better Together, taken from Bill McKibben's book of the same name. In that spirit, we invite UUS members and friends to join us in our November call to action - Sustainable Gift Giving.

If you google sustainable gifts, you will find hundreds of sites willing to sell you green items crafted by indigenous artisans or sourced from ecologically managed resources. That is one way to approach

sustainable gift giving. Just be sure to check the legitimacy of the companies and organizations marketing these products.

Here are two other ways to make your gift giving more sustainable. Give cash. Seriously. The person can get exactly what they want. It minimizes the wasted time, materials, and energy inherent in an unused gift. Just be sure and write a nice note in the card. The other thing you have to give is your time. Make something - cookies, a family recipe book, or a holiday ornament. Sign up to help with a chore - cleaning a basement, watching children, or fixing something that is broken. Give an experience - teach a skill, share a meal at a new restaurant, propose a movie night.

To learn more about sustainable gift giving, and to share your own ideas, join Green Sanctuary on Sunday November 19 at the All Ages RE Activity following the service. We will have a discussion group and an all ages craft activity.

While this call to action is for individuals, Green Sanctuary also needs your feedback about what projects and programs we should take on collectively as a church. Look for opportunities to fill out a survey and help us move forward with our 7th Principle.

IMMIGRATION ACTION TEAM

Kindred Spirits Covenant Group

You are invited to a Tapas/Sangria Gathering on November 3rd to raise funds to sponsor an asylum seeker. Gather from 5-7 pm at Kim Frieze's home for delicious small plate tapas, sangria and good conversations. This is a freewill donation gathering. You can find Kim's address in Realm or by contacting the Kindred Spirits Covenant Group at socialjustice@uusic.org.

The sponsorship will enable an asylum seeker to be released from detention while waiting for their asylum case to be processed. A member of our congregation, Fanny Carver,

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(Immigrant Action Team Report, continued from page 8)

has offered her home so there will not be housing expenses, but there will be other expenses, including legal fees. The Kindred Spirits want to support this asylum seeker, and we hope you would be interested as well. Come join us for this festive event!

State-wide UU News

The glue that holds Iowa UUs together is the Iowa UU Witness Advocacy Network, one of 24 State Action Networks in the US. This organization and its board support UU congregations and collaborate with them in social justice endeavors.

For example, the Environmental Justice Team shared postcards for congregations to send messages to the Iowa Utilities Board to not approve Carbon Capture Pipelines. Decorah Fellowship mailed in 50! The Environmental Justice Team shares resources, such as educational kits for children, announces climate justice events, works to promote partnerships, and provides support for members and their congregations.

The Team's latest project is Drawdown Ecochallenge, an internet group project providing structure to complete environmental actions. This team, called the Swine Republic UUs, is comprised of 5 UUS members and 21 other UUs across Iowa. Completed actions include planting trees, eating meatless meals, riding bikes, making donations, writing public officials, and recycling. We all can do more to address climate justice!

Last June IUUWAN used Faithify, the UU crowd funding platform, to raise funds to bolster congregations efforts to support LGBTQ+ individuals in their communities. Such support includes give-aways at Pride events, signs supporting trans and LGBTQ+ people, and an honorarium for speakers. UU congregations can apply to IUUWAN for funds from the Faithify fundraiser. Should you be interested in the work done by Iowa state-wide, contact Sally (sallyahartman@hotmail.com)

PRISON MINISTRY TEAM

UUS's nascent Prison Ministry Team (PMT) "endeavors to become informed advocates for justice and build relationships to decrease isolation of those confined in the Iowa Justice System." We are exploring several possible ways to accomplish our mission, and are excited about our progress.

One of the main ways we are currently active is in our Pen Pal program. We have several members who are writing to incarcerated individuals, either by "snail mail" or through the Iowa Department of Corrections' email system, CorrLinks. We are always looking for volunteers who would like to write to someone currently incarcerated. We can set you up with contacts, instructions for using CorrLinks, how to use postal mail, and even a sample introductory letter to use or modify as you see fit. If you think you might be interested, feel free to email prisonministry@uusic.org, and one of us will get back to you.

Did you know that the UUA also has a prison ministry? It's through the Church of the Larger Fellowship, and it's called Worthy Now Prison Ministry Network. They also are looking for people to become pen pals to incarcerated individuals nationwide. For more information, go to worthynow.org.

The UUS Prison Ministry Team meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm in the UUS Conference Room. We would

love to see you on November 7th either in person or [via Zoom](#). (Meeting ID: 848 0842 4430; Passcode: 193553)

UUS Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Highlights

6:30 pm, October 18th, 2023, UUS Conference Room & Zoom

Present: Jeff Walberg (President), Rochelle Honey-Arcement (Vice President), Christine Etler (Secretary), Mike Pavelich (Treasurer), Monique DiCarlo (Trustee), Ian Cawley (Trustee), Rev. Diana Smith (Ex-officio). Absent: Diana Henry (Trustee). Quorum met. Guests: Mary Dix, Dave Gallagher, Winnie G.

Meeting Opened at 6:31pm with check-in. Chalice Lighting-Opening Words by Etler

Consent Agenda

P1 Board Meeting Minutes – Sept	P5 Servetus Musical Fundraising Request
P2 Minister's Report – Sept	P6 2024 Budget Draft – 10-13-2023
P3 Treasurer's Report – Sept	P7 Open Question Results – 9-17-2023
P4 Personnel Committee Report – 9-25-2023	P8 Chili Cook Off Fundraising Request
	P9 Mission & Vision Review Committee Minutes – 10-16-2023
	P10 Mutual Performance Review – 2023

Main Motion by DiCarlo: Approve the reports & approve the fundraising requests pending any final action by the finance committee (with amendment below); seconded by Pavelich. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Amendment: Etler moves to amend the main motion by removing the Draft Budget from the consent agenda; Honey-Arcement seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Ministry Teams Discussion

The board is continuing to develop our understanding of the Governance changes that were made in 2019. We discussed the structure of Ministry Teams within the generative work framework in order to develop a “dominant narrative”.

Before 2019, there was no distinction between groups in the sense that Hotchkiss defines – where Committees create work product for the Board, and Teams assist with ministry to the congregation. Although, we reorganized our teams to work with the minister and staff, there is still confusion about leadership and authority. Currently, some teams are working well and others have challenges. A large problem is lack of engagement of lay volunteers. And a lack of

shared understanding of the roles and coordinated responsibilities of teams and staff as a whole.

The discussion has led to a shared understanding among the Board about what our concerns are and how and why we should take action. We will be revisiting the discussion at our retreat in the new year.

Open Question - Next Steps

Oaknoll session – Kelly O'Berry & Kristin Wildensee have volunteered to hold a meeting but this has not yet occurred. The Board agrees that we should hear more from the Oaknoll residents. Liz Swanson and Diana Miller received some feedback during their recent visit that would be good to have more insight on. We can also open the Oaknoll meeting up to any UUS members. Etler and Cawley will participate in the Oaknoll session.

Etler will do further work on the responses we have received so far by organizing responses into themes and also sharing with DiCarlo for more insight.

2024 Budget Discussion

Pavelich presented the 2024 draft budget. Currently, for 2023, our financials look good. We may end up under our budget this year. This is a positive starting place for moving into the 2024 budget year. The goal when starting the budget process was to see if we could reduce last year's budget by \$75k. While the staff expenses are down \$64k, the presented budget will require approximately \$40k of non-income support (down from previous years' budgets).

Although there was some discussion on details of the budget, there were no major objections to the budget. The Board will vote on the official proposed budget to be presented to the congregational meeting at our November Trustees meeting. Refinements will continue to be made.

The draft budget contains support for a ministerial intern. Although we discussed this option at a previous meeting, we did not make a final decision. After some further discussion tonight, we decided to support this.

Motion by Etler: Offer a ministerial internship and apply for supporting funds from UUA; Honey-Arcement seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Closed Session

A closed session was held.

Closing

There were no guest comments; DiCarlo provided process observer comments; Etler provided closing words, and the chalice was extinguished.

Guest comment: Ganshaw thanked the Board for our work.

With the agenda completed and no new business from the floor, the chair adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:00pm (exact time not recorded).

Meeting Highlights submitted by Christine Etler, Board Secretary