

Unitarian Universalist Society
2355 Oakdale Road
Coralville, IA 52241
www.uusic.org

8 Principles of Unitarian Universalism

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person
2. Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part
8. Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions

The UUS News

December 2023 Newsletter

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From Your Minister

Rev. Diana

Dear Ones,

As we move into December and further into the darkness, we find ourselves confronted with a tension or a contradiction between ways of being. Society - the human world - seems to beckon and draw us to ever more busyness, being with ever more people, and ever greater commercialism. At the same time, the natural world is inviting us to come into the darkness with it. It's inviting us to times of quiet and meditation. To times where we move more deeply into our own spirits and explore our relationship with Mystery, our December theme.

Sometimes, feeling the pull of these two, we feel caught between them, not knowing which one to move towards, where to deepen, where to build relationships, where our spirits will be nourished. Sometimes we need the quiet dark, the stillness, to deepen our relationship with Mystery and with ourselves. And sometimes we need companionship and community to find new ways of experiencing Mystery and learning ourselves.

This month we'll be practicing welcoming, hospitality, and homecoming; nourishing our resilience as a community; and practicing care and compassion ([our 2023-24 vision of ministry](#)) in many ways. We'll be creating spaces for those who are having a hard time with the holidays at a special vespers service on December 6, celebrating winter Solstice on December 22, and joining together in two Christmas Eve services at 10 am and 9 pm on December 24. We'll also have a special performance from Gamelan Pawisik on December 2, some other musical community-building opportunities, be continuing our monthly Free Lunch Program meal and other social justice offerings, and be engaging in discernment about our congregation's journey at the December 17 congregational meeting.

As we move into December, into the darkness, may we hold the two poles of quiet and companionship in delicate and creative tension. May you, may we find ways of being together that help us deepen and connect even as we allow ourselves to be nourished by the quiet darkness. May we deepen in our relationship with mystery as the darkness grows. May we find in the deep stillness what our spirits need, individually and as a community.

Love and Blessings,

Rev. Diana

Upcoming Services

December 2023 Sunday Services

December 3rd: Hope at Advent

In celebration of the first Sunday of Advent, I will be sharing one of my favorite stories from the book of Luke, which is a sort of prequel to the story of Christmas. Spoiler alert: This story is about disappointment, surprise visitors, hope, and the complicated relationships we can have with all of these things. While hope can be complicated and elusive, it does not diminish when it is shared. UUS member Kezia Walker-Cecil preaching. [Watch the Livestream](#).

December 10th: The Mystery of Change

Join us as we explore the science and spirituality of taking risks and learning from our mistakes. Rev. Diana Smith preaching. [Watch the Livestream](#).

December 17th: The Wonder of Giving

Join us for this fun-filled and inspirational "unboxing" all ages service where we'll be opening presents to find out what comes next, all the while celebrating the wonder and mystery of gift giving and receiving. Rev. Diana Smith preaching. The congregational meeting will begin at 11:15 after the worship service. [Watch the Service Livestream](#) | [Watch the Congregational Meeting Livestream](#).

December 24th: Christmas Eve

10:00 AM: Join us at UUS or online for our special Christmas Eve family service with lessons, special music, and carols! Rev. Diana Smith preaching. [Watch the Christmas Eve Morning Livestream](#).

9:00 PM: Join us outdoors at UUS for a candlelight service of carols and readings. We'll be outdoors for this half hour service so dress warmly and be prepared to sing as loudly as you like as we make Christmas music together! If it is below 20-25 degrees we will be in the sanctuary. Rev. Diana Smith preaching.

December 31st: Seeds for the New Year

ONLINE ONLY - What seeds are you planting for the new year? How are you weaving your magic into your relationships with others? How are you weaving your magic into your relationships with others? How can we center beauty and goodness and love in all that's ahead? These questions are at the heart of this service, during which Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, will be preaching. [Watch the Livestream](#).

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

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

December Offering

Free Dental Clinic & Minister's Discretionary Fund

December's Offerings Benefit **The Free Dental Clinic**. Dentists, dental students, dental hygienists and dental hygiene students volunteer to provide exams, treatment plans, cleanings, fillings for cavities, and simple tooth extractions to adults and children. Limited dental hygiene appointments are available.

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

The **Christmas Eve** offerings benefit the Minister's Discretionary Fund. All offerings collected during the holiday services will benefit the Minister's Discretionary Fund which provides emergency assistance and support for members of our congregation and the community.

Checks for the offering baskets should have "MDF" on the memo line. You can also donate online at <https://onrealm.org/uusic/give/MDF> or mail a check to the UUS office.

Congregational Meeting, December 17th

The members of UUS will gather after the service on Sunday, December 17th, for our Winter Congregational meeting in the Sanctuary at 11:15 am. Voting members can participate virtually via Zoom, and the meeting will also be streamed on YouTube for friends and visitors. Planned agenda items include voting on the 2024 budget and on electing some interim leadership positions

A meeting packet will be sent beforehand to all voting members. Voting will take place for 5 days after the meeting until 5 pm on the 22nd, and results will be announced on Sunday, December 24th. Contact Christine Etler (319-541-4960 or piontkofsky@gmail.com) if you would like a paper ballot, if you want to request childcare, or if you would like to volunteer to help with the meeting.

UUS Offices Closed December 25-January 1

The UUS office will be closed and staff will mostly be unavailable for the week between Christmas and New Years. There will be no weekly email or congregational programming, although individual UUS groups and teams may still meet as scheduled.

If there is an emergency, there will be a staff member on call: look in the weekly emails and announcements closer to the end of the month for the schedule and contact info for the on-call staff. They will be able to assist you or get in touch with the appropriate staff or volunteer team. You will also be able to contact the pastoral care team at pastoralcare@uusic.org.

From Your Communications and Outreach Coordinator

Kaytee Rairdin

IMPORTANT: The deadline for the January 2024 Newsletter will be **Friday, December 15th**. Email communications@uusic.org if you have any questions about this deadline.

We also have a great **volunteer opportunity** for those who want to help UUS staff maintain the website and support our digital space! We are looking to create a **brand new** volunteer team for the UUS website!

(continued on page 5)

(Communications Coord. Report, continued from page 4)

In order to be good stewards of our digital space, we need a team to help us comb through the UUS website to identify areas that need updating. Examples include but are not limited to:

1. Finding broken forms and links
2. Errors in content and outdated information e.g. mentions of former leadership and staff, incorrect team and group information, duplicated information
3. Unearthing website pages that aren't relevant or in use anymore

We welcome anyone interested in helping, and you *don't* have to have a background in website management, communications, or anything related to that. We are simply looking to see who is interested in helping with this project! Once staff have had a chance to see who is interested then we will begin to plan, with our newly formed team, how best to identify and assign various tasks.

Email admin@uusic.org and communications@uusic.org to let us know that you're interested! Please use *Website Volunteer Team* in the subject line so that we can easily identify your email in our inboxes.

From Your Volunteer Rentals Coordinator

Sue Kann

What do a life celebration, an Egyptian traditional groomsman party, and 9 Disney princesses have in common? They have all **rented** space in our building!

The 9 Disney princesses came for a Princess Meet and Greet event last spring which included 300 children (also in princess outfits) meeting their favorite princesses. The groomsman party included dancing, singing and lots of henna. And we have hosted many Life Celebrations for families near and far.

Other frequent renters are non-profit organizations for fundraising events and religious and ethnic communities that do not have a building of their own and need a space for their traditional celebrations.

The Center for Worker's Justice recently held a very successful Gala, and Inside Out Reentry held an overflowing and financially rewarding Trivia Night. The 100 Grannies hold their meetings and celebrations at the UUS. The Suchona community recently held their Fall Festival Celebration in our building for the 6th time and this February we will host the Iowa City Area Chinese Association for the **first time** which will celebrate the Chinese Lunar New Year with us.

We host many smaller groups celebrating babies, birthdays, graduations and retirements. And finally, we hope to increase wedding rentals in 2024. Please contact Sue Kann at rentals@uusic.org if you know of any potential brides, grooms, and couples getting married!

Announcements

- UUS Holiday Events and Programming are here! Read through everything that's happening during December in the "[Holiday Celebrations for December 2023](#)" on the UUS Blog! All holiday events are also listed in the Upcoming Events section.
- The Chili Cookoff on October 29th was a roaring success! Our judges took their jobs very seriously and ranked each chili on appearance, aroma, texture, and flavor. Each judge ranked each chili on each element and then the scores were tallied. John's Mama Steil's Chili came in third place and Quanda's Q's Community Chili took second. In first place was Amy Fretz and her Triumphant Comfort Chili! Thank you to all of the volunteers, contestants, and attendees! Read all about it in "[Chili Cook Off A Success!](#)" on the UUS Blog.

Upcoming Events

Rhythms of Bali Unveiled, December 2nd

UUS is excited to welcome Gamelan Pawisik for an afternoon performance and audience workshop from 2 to 3:30 pm on Saturday, December 2nd. Gamelan Pawisik is Grinnell College's Balinese Arts ensemble comprised of the Balinese Sound Ensemble and the Balinese Dance class.

They play traditional and contemporary gamelan music of Bali, Indonesia. Instrumentation includes various percussion instruments supplemented by flutes and voice. The afternoon event at UUS will include a presentation of two instrumental pieces, one dance piece, and an audience workshop. Gamelan Pawisik prides themselves on communal composition and collective learning. All of the pieces will require the participation of a creative community. Gamelan Pawisik is led by Professor Putu Hiranmayena and Professor Dewa Ayu Eka Putri.

This event is part of the UUS Music Outreach Program series, and is free and open to the public. Freewill donations are gratefully accepted to support the Music Outreach Program and UUS. Questions can be sent to Hsin-Hui Liu at music.outreach@uusic.org.

Men's Sunday Social, December 3rd

UUS adult men are invited to gather together the first Sunday of most months from 6 to 8 pm to socialize in a casual setting. Members and Friends are welcome. We define "man" as any adult who identifies as a man. Currently, our monthly gatherings take place at 2Dogs Pub (1705 First Avenue, Iowa City). Send questions to Russ Lenth and Phil Beck at menssundaysocial@uusic.org.

Vespers, December 6th

Holiday Blues Vespers: For many of us, the holiday season and ending of a year can be challenging. Join us at UUS at 6:30 PM for this evening service as we hold space for ourselves and each other, acknowledging the darkness of winter through readings and poetry, chanting, ritual, and meditation.

Free Lunch Program, December 8th

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)

Secular Humanists Holiday Potluck, December 8th

The annual Secular Humanist Holiday Potluck will take place on Friday evening, December 8, at 6 pm in the UUS Fellowship Hall. Please watch the Wednesday emails or emails from Daniel for further details. We will look forward to a casual time of good food and good conversation.

Rev. Diana Community Office Hours, December 13th

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. She hopes you'll stop by to say "Hi!"

Sound Bath Meditation, December 13th

This is the season for quieting, going within to refresh and replenish during these winter months. Join Tina McCoy for a mini-retreat from the distractions and busy-ness of life in an immersive sound meditative bath. The unique sound experience offers a peaceful respite to enjoy feelings of relaxation and serenity. This is your time to reconnect with heart and spirit, all supported by soothing vibrations and sounds from singing bowls, gongs, chimes, and other instruments.

Bring props (e.g., yoga mat, blanket, etc.) to support and deepen your comfort. This is a free-will offering event.

UUS Men's Sharing Circle, December 17th

All adult UUS members and friends who identify as male are invited to join us to our monthly sharing circle. You are invited to share your joys and sorrows, practice deep listening, and offer support when asked for, all in a confidential environment. We will meet in the Hickory & Oak Rooms at UUS on the third Sunday of each month from 6-8 pm. For questions, contact Ron Pile and Niklaus Jakob at menssharingcircle@uusic.org.

"Dreaming Through the Darkness" Solstice Overnight Vigil, December 22nd and 23rd

Come honor and celebrate the longest night, receive a blessing, banish plights, and manifest dreams into the world.

Our gathering will have three parts; it starts with an evening ritual and soup supper, then continues through the night in vigil and celebration, and concludes with a sunrise ritual to welcome the newborn Sun. You are welcome to join us for all three parts or two or one as you desire. Join us at any time:

Evening Ritual (Friday, Dec 22): gather at 6:30 PM, ritual begins promptly at 7:00. In the ritual, we will bless the community, banish paradigms, thoughts and behaviors that create strife in ourselves and the world, and manifest our dreams for our future and generations to come. We will provide the soups for dinner. Please bring bread, salad, or dessert to share. We ask that any food leftover remains at the church to sustain those staying for the vigil overnight.

Overnight Vigil: The vigil will follow dinner. Overnight activities include: song, games, a mid-night bonfire, Sun crafts, spiritual activities, divination, food, drinks, storytelling, reflecting, and opportunities to nap as desired. If you are staying overnight, please consider bringing: suitable layers of clothing for the weather to wear during the bonfire, sleeping gear if you expect you might need to nap, food and drinks to share, drums and musical instruments if you have them.

Sunrise Ritual (Saturday, Dec 23): gather at 7:00 AM. We will make offerings, sing up the sun, drum in celebration.

This event is sponsored and led by the Owl Moon Covenant of UU Pagans (CUUPs). Questions? Contact Dawn Marshall and Marsha Cheyney at cuups@uusic.org.

Full Moon Conspiracy, December 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).

Faithful Grounding, December 28th

Join the Unitarian Universalist Association Side with Love Fun & Spiritual Nourishment Squad for an 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: [December 28](#).

[Find our full list of December Events at www.uusic.org/upcoming-events.](http://www.uusic.org/upcoming-events)

UUS Committee and Team Reports

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

Guatemalan Weavings Available after December Services in Fellowship Hall

Griselda, part of our Circle of Friends families, will be selling her weavings and her items she has made in the Fellowship Hall after the service on December 3rd and Dec 10th. She will have purses, table runners, tablecloths, coin purses, scarves, wall hangings, Christmas decorations, potholders, beadwork, and more. Custom orders are available.

Circle of Friends Holiday Gift Opportunities

Every year our congregation supports several immigrant and refugee families during the holidays with gifts for children and gift cards for the parents. Click on the link for the signup genius to participate:

[https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080B4FA-CAB2AA4FD0-46263997-holiday#/.](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080B4FA-CAB2AA4FD0-46263997-holiday#/)

The suggested amount of gift cards is between \$25.00 and \$50.00. Please bring gifts and cards to UUS on Sunday morning or leave them in the foyer in the designated box. Please label your gifts and gift cards with your name. Gift cards can be put in the black security box in the foyer or delivered to Deb Schoelerman. Please do so by Sunday, Dec. 17th. Thank you for your continued generosity for these families.

FREE LUNCH PROGRAM

On Friday, November 10th, 125 meals were served and consisted of a cheesy ham and potato hash brown casserole with fruit and green salads on the side. We had the usual drinks and cookies, too! Thank you to the Nighthawks Covenant Group for providing the delightful fare! There were no leftovers!

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(Free Lunch Report, continued from page 8)

It was a beautiful, unseasonably warm day in Iowa City. We had plenty of volunteers and used the 1105 kitchen to prepare the meal. Preparations began at 8:00 AM under the direction of Vicki Siefers and Frank Wildensee. Our volunteers for the day were Barb Haring, Christina Randall, Mary Dix, Carolyn Johnson, Bob Littlehale, David Quegg, Chris Smith, Terri O'Berry, Janet McKee, Joy Thompson, Russ Lenth, Joe Rasmussen, and John Elson. A good time was had by all!

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

GREEN SANCTUARY

We had a great time at November's All Ages RE talking about sustainable gift giving and making origami presents – swans, stars, and gift boxes. Green Sanctuary's theme for the December 17 All Ages RE is Food. Adults can learn about cooking with an energy efficient induction cook top. Children will learn how to cut fruit safely for their own snack.

Thanks to all who have filled out Green Sanctuary's Climate Justice Survey! We have had almost 100 responses so far. The survey is part of our reaccreditation as a UU Green Sanctuary Congregation. We will use the results to guide which activities and projects to take on over the next few years. If you didn't get a chance to fill out a survey, go to <https://bit.ly/47RZLgU>. Please submit responses by **December 15th**.

UUS members and friends joined team Swine Republic UUs in this year's Drawdown Ecochallenge. Under the leadership of Sally Hartman, 27 participants earned over 4400 points to rank 38 out of 381 teams. We scored with 184 meatless or vegan meals, 32 miles traveled by bike, over 1000 minutes spent learning, 608 minutes spent outdoors, plus saving water, planting trees, contacting officials, recycling containers, making

donations and replacing lightbulbs. Look for the challenge again in October 2024 and help beat this year's score!

For your convenience, the Green Sanctuary Team has a box in the entrance to dispose of used and recyclable Christmas and other holiday lights. The collection box will be available until January 1, 2024.

Green Sanctuary's next meeting is Wednesday, December 13 at 7 pm. [Join us on Zoom](#) (Meeting ID: 881 3226 4216, Passcode 533092). On the agenda: Climate Justice Survey results, 3rd Sunday All Ages RE planning, battery back-up for a Resiliency Center, choosing a composting service, and communications.

If you'd like to learn more about Green Sanctuary, email Sally Hartman at sallyhartman@hotmail.com or Jan Weaver at jan.weaver57@gmail.com.

SOCIAL JUSTICE TEAM

State Action Network

It is a long name, but the Iowa UU Witness and Action Network (IUUWAN) supports social justice action by UUs in Iowa. A recent project was raising funds to address LGBTQ projects and then creating grant opportunities for all Iowa UU congregations. One such grant was \$1,000 to First Unitarian Church of Des Moines to support their spring Trans Conference. Other programming includes Queer Your Faith, a monthly Sunday service for LGBTQ+ folks and an environmental justice group that meets monthly to share information and collaborate on projects.

In the future, IUUWAN plans to hold a conference on water and land issues. Check out the IUUWAN website: <https://iuuwan.com/>.

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(Social Justice Report, continued from page 9)

Immigrant Justice Team's Sponsorship Project

The goal of the UU Society Sponsorship Project is first to release an asylum seeker from detention, and then to offer that person a home and supportive community. The home will be with hosts Fanny and Tom Carver, and the supportive community will be members of the UU Society. Almost finished with the fundraising phase, our next step will be meeting with UU Service Committee's Congregational Accompaniment Project staff.

A Holiday Open House is scheduled for Sunday, December 3rd, from 4 pm to 6 pm at the home of Fanny and Tom Carver. All are invited for refreshments and the opportunity to meet the Sponsorship Support Team and of course, Fanny and Tom.

Those interested in this project should contact Sally Hartman (sallyahartman@hotmail.com).

We are near our goal, but please consider donating by sending a check to UUS with Asylum in the memo line, or on Realm, you can go to giving and scroll to Immigrant Action.

SECULAR HUMANISTS

Secular Humanists Potluck

The annual Secular Humanist Holiday Potluck will take place on Friday evening, December 8th, at **6:00 PM** in the UUS Fellowship Hall. We will look forward to a casual time of good food and good conversation. Please watch for more details to come!

UU MYSTICS

UUMystics gather on 1st Wed each month at 7pm in the 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."*

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.

Our Mystics group has chosen to engage together in the exploration and experiences relating to: What happens when we die? (touches on reincarnation & past lives, Near Death Experiences, contacts with the deceased, channeling, etc) Please join us if this is of interest to you, and stay tuned for notices of future topics.

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month at 7pm at UUS in the conference room and on Zoom. 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, and put "UUMystics" in the subject line).

UUS Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Highlights

6:30 pm, November 15th, 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), Ian Cawley (Trustee), Rev. Diana Smith (Ex-officio). **Absent:** none. Quorum met. **Guest:** Paul Pomrehn

Meeting Opened at 6:33pm with check-in. Chalice Lighting-Opening Words by Pavelich

Consent Agenda

Reports	Decisions
P1 Board Meeting Minutes – Oct. 18	Set retreat: Saturday, Feb. 3, 9-4 at UUS
P2 Minister's Report – Oct	P7 Stewardship for Us Consultation
P3 Treasurer's Report – Oct	
P4 Cong. Prep. Committee Minutes - Nov. 7	
P5 Homeland Security Grant Summary	
P6 Personnel Committee Minutes - Oct. 30	

Board Meeting Minutes – Oct. 18 (was P1 of consent agenda)

Etler moved to amend the minutes by adding an addendum and approve the minutes; Pavelich seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes with the amendment.

Fundraising Requests

DiCarlo moved to approve the fundraising requests pending Finance committees review (Circle of Friends holiday gift giving & Griselda's Guatemalan weavings); Pavelich seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion. Pavelich will communicate the approval once Finance decides.

Open Questions Update

Kelly O'Berry will work on scheduling the meeting at Oaknoll once she has time in early December. Christine will have a review of the Open Questions answers prepared by the February retreat.

Congregational Meeting

Main motion: DiCarlo moved to approve the Congregational Meeting Agenda (P8); Pavelich seconded. Discussion followed and Etler moved to amend the agenda document; DiCarlo seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the amendment. The Board then voted unanimously to approve the main motion.

Ministry Teams discussion

We first discussed the dominant narrative document prepared by Walberg which summarizes our discussion at our last meeting. The Board feels that it accurately portrays our general shared understanding of that discussion, although the presentation may benefit from a more positive tone in some sections. We agreed on the next steps that are included in the document.

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(Board Meeting Highlights, continued from page 11)

Congregational Preparedness Ad Hoc Committee

DiCarlo moved to establish the Congregational Preparedness Committee as an ad hoc committee of the board with the charge noted in the packet; Pavelich seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

December Board meeting

We discussed moving our Board meeting completely online. We decided we will have a hybrid meeting in December and then reassess for January.

Mission-based budgeting

In the last couple of years, we have been considering new budget categorization formats. For the meantime, we will stick mostly to a program-based budget that also is annotated with mission based allocations. Ian Cawley and John Raley will work to apply program-based categories and explore mission based categories.

Christmas holiday

In the last few years, staff have been offered additional PTO during the week between Christmas and New Year's. We will defer the question of possibly making this an ongoing policy to the Personnel Committee. We directly addressed staffing for this year.

Pavelich moved to offer 3 additional paid days off (or the part-time equivalent) in order for the staff to have the week off between 12/25 through 1/1*; DiCarlo seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

**It is expected that the staff will also use existing holiday days in order to use PTO for the entire week.*

2024 budget

Pavelich presented the finalized income items for discussion.

Cawley moved to move into closed session for further discussion on staff salary and benefits; DiCarlo seconded.

Etlar moved to approve the budget presented by Pavelich (with amendments provided by Rev. Diana) for inclusion on the ballot of the December Congregational meeting; Henry seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion. (The budget document will remain confidential for the time being. It will become included in the Congregational meeting packet released no later than 12/10/23 and will likely be available up to a week prior to that date.)

End of meeting

No Guest Comments were made. Process Observer Comments were provided by Henry. Closing words were provided by Pavelich. The Chair adjourned the meeting at the conclusion of the agenda.

Highlights submitted by Christine Etlar, Board Secretary

UUS Endowment Quarterly Update

UUS Endowment Holdings Quarter Ending 09/30/2023

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

	12/31/2022	03/31/2023	06/30/2023	09/30/2023
General Endowment Total Value	\$1,037,301	\$1,055,139	\$1,051,616	\$1,003,497
Corpus ¹	\$712,327	\$799,986	\$799,986	\$799,986
Donations this quarter	\$2,859	\$2,320	0	\$300
Non-Corpus Total ²	\$327,833	\$257,473	\$251,630	\$203,511
UUA Contribution	0	0	\$368	\$451
Expenditures from General Endowment³	\$18,414	\$29,260	\$24,945	\$16,630
Annual Spending Allowance (ASA) ⁴	\$10,914	\$17,260	\$12,945	\$8,630
Endowment-Approved Withdrawal ⁵	\$7,500	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$8,000
Other Endowment Funds Value⁶	\$153,800	\$160,675	\$161,333	\$153,176
Other Endowment Funds Expenditures				
Jean Reese Fund	0	0	\$2,647	\$2,647
Music Fund	0	0	0	
Detiger Fund	\$2114	0	0	\$500
Bristol Fund	0	0	0	

¹Can only be accessed under very special circumstances

²Can be accessed by vote of the congregation

³Total amounts will vary by quarter depending on when business days appear in the month, i.e., sometimes two bills will appear in the same

month, 1st and 30th.

⁴Amount/quarter to Annual Budget

⁵Amount Approved by Congregation Above ASA

⁶Earmarked for specific purposes, e.g., music, outdoor projects, etc.

Introducing Our New Members!

We welcomed new members on October 22nd! Please take a moment to learn more about them and introduce yourself when you see them at UUS!



Megan and Brian Dial Lapcewich

Megan is from southwest Iowa and came to Iowa City in 2008 for her undergraduate degree. After moving around a little in the following years, Megan says always ended up coming back home to IC. In addition to a BA in English and Journalism, she also earned a master's degrees in Higher Education and Student Affairs and Library and Information Sciences from Iowa. After so much time here, she and her husband decided they wanted to stay and raise our family in the IC area.

Brian grew up in the Chicago suburbs and went to Iowa State University (Ames) for undergraduate in Mechanical Engineering and ended up staying in Iowa (Des Moines) after graduating with his first full position working in the wind industry. After falling in love with Megan, she was able to convince this previous Cyclone to relocate to Hawkeye territory to support her education and eventually put down roots for the family. Both Megan and Brian value the openness and acceptance of inclusion and differing beliefs, the values of justice and truth seeking and sense of community in the UU church and look forward to raising their boys Jamie and Eddie in the UU community as well as becoming more involved in RE and other activities at the church.



Natalie and V Fixmer-Oraiz

Natalie Fixmer-Oraiz is excited to join this beloved community. She was raised in the social justice Catholic tradition, including the Sisters of Loretto, and after years of religious disengagement, was brought into the UUS by her grandparents-in-law, John and Val Bowman, in 2017. After crying through most of the service, she decided to attend more regularly.

Natalie is a faculty member at the University of Iowa, an enthusiastic knitter, and an advocate for reproductive justice. She loves spending time with her family, playing guitar and singing in a garage band, and playing in the woods.

V Fixmer-Oraiz is humbled to officially join the UUS after dating it for several years. As a queer/trans human, religious spaces have always felt harmful and the UUS offers a welcome change to their understanding of religious fellowship. They are a local elected official who cares deeply about our communities. V spends most of their time enjoying family life, writing, reading, and unraveling/restitching life.

(continued on page 15)

(New Member Bios, continued from page 14)



Lucy Gamon

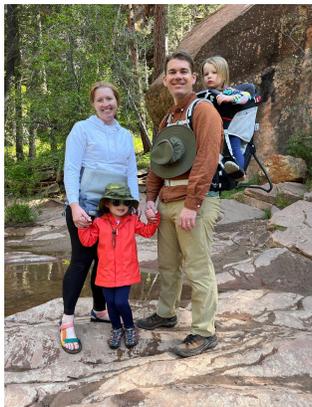
Lucy grew up on a family farm near Washington, Iowa. Her first connection with the Unitarian Church came at the age of five, when she joined "The Church of the Larger Fellowship." She became pen-pals with an adult member, and they exchanged letters for over fifty years. Lucy met her husband Mark Schmidt at the Unitarian Church in Des Moines, Iowa. They were married in the Unitarian Church in Ames, Iowa, where her parents attended.

Lucy is a retired district court judge and her husband is a retired research chemist. She and her husband recently moved from Ottumwa to Coralville, where they are enjoying retirement condo living. They have three adult children, one of whom lives in Coralville. Lucy has an "encore career" as a substitute teacher, while Mark does tax preparation. In her free time, Lucy enjoys volunteering at the Coralville Public Library, swimming laps, the University Club, and multiple book clubs. She also loves cultural events, and is a season ticket holder at the Des Moines symphony. In fact, she has a tuxedo cat named "Maestro!"



Victoria Huitt

Victoria is a recent transplant from Minnesota, moving to Iowa City to join the Prairie Hill Cohousing group. Having been a long-term member of the First Universalist Church in Minneapolis, she looked forward to joining up with UU's here in Iowa City and while watching online for almost a year, responded to the Membership Coordinator position posting and now works PT at the UUS. Victoria grew up in Omaha, moving to MN in the mid 80's for grad school, and after living there for 35 years, Iowa City, Prairie Hill and the UUS are a welcome respite from "big city" living. Victoria enjoys nature, gardening and all things music and arts. After almost 30 years as an acupuncturist and TCM teacher, Victoria is enjoying PT work as she settles into Iowa City and Prairie Hill Cohousing community.



Emily Pritchard and John Ruppel

Emily Pritchard and John Ruppel moved to Coralville from Peoria, IL in January of 2020. Emily serves as the UUS Director of Congregational Music and directs the Nolte Madrigal Dinner and co-directs Iowa City Youth Choir, and John is the Chief Accounting Officer at MidwestOne Bank. Emily loves throwing pottery and making music. John likes rowing on the Iowa River and hanging out with his amazing daughters. Vivian (4) and Belle (3), love attending UUS, dancing, traveling, and helping their mom practice music.