

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

February 2024 Newsletter

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From Your Minister

Rev. Diana

Dear Ones,

In February we will be exploring the values of Justice and Equity. The proposed revisions to Article II of the Unitarian Universalist Association's bylaws says this about these values:

- Justice: We work to be diverse multicultural Beloved Communities where all thrive. We covenant to dismantle racism and all forms of systemic oppression. We support the use of inclusive democratic processes to make decisions within our congregations, our Association, and society at large.
- Equity: We declare that every person has the right to flourish with inherent dignity and worthiness. We covenant to use our time, wisdom, attention, and money to build and sustain fully accessible and inclusive communities.

As we explore what these values mean to us individually and as a congregation, we'll also be reflecting on how articulating these values as part of the center of our living liberal religious tradition affects how we understand Unitarian Universalism and where we're being called today.

Due to the severe weather in mid-January, the open questions discussion that the Board of Trustees had planned for January 14 will now happen on February 4. This means that we'll be able to begin our month of exploring Justice and Equity with discussions of what it means to be in Iowa in the current climate of extremism and division, as well as how we're called to respond as a community. I hope you'll join these important discussions after the worship service on February 4. Your input will affect how we're carrying out our Vision of Ministry this congregational year and will affect the Vision of Ministry that the Board develops for the 2024-25 congregational year.

Speaking of which, as we have begun a new calendar year, the Board, staff, and I have been revisiting UUS's 2023-24 Vision of Ministry as we look at our programming for the winter and spring. As you may recall, our 3 themes for this year are:

- **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
- Read more here: <https://www.uusic.org/vision-of-ministry-for-2023-2024>

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(Minister's Report, continued from page 2)

As you may recall, back in August and September, we did some work as a congregation reflecting on how we could enact this Vision of Ministry. I'm delighted that many teams and staff have been developing programming that reflects this vision. As we move into this new calendar year, I hope you'll join us in reviewing the vision and renewing our collective work on how our shared ministry can enact it this year.

I look forward to engaging with you in this work as we celebrate what Unitarian Universalism means in our lives and community.

Love and Blessings,
Rev. Diana

Upcoming Services

February 2024 Sunday Services

February 4th: Justice and Equity: The Evidence of Our Faith

Join us as we celebrate what the values of justice and equity mean in our lives and faith and learn about Unitarian Universalists Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and Rev. Egbert Ethelred Brown. After the worship service, the Board of Trustees will be leading open questions discussions about UUS's role in responding to the current climate of extremism and division in our state. Rev. Diana Smith preaching.

February 11th: Mistakes and Miracles

Join us for a special service about what we're learning from the 2022-23 UUA Common Read. Director of Lifespan Religious Education Nic Kaplan and Worship Associate Kara Beauchamp leading.

February 18th: Caring for Ourselves and Each Other

Join us for this special all ages service as we learn about and celebrate the many ways we care for each other in community. After the worship service we will have all ages religious education and the Mission and Vision Review Committee will be leading discussions about UUS's pastoral care. Rev. Diana Smith preaching.

February 25th: TBA

February 25th Service to be announced. Please watch for more information in upcoming updates and emails.

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

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

February Offering

United Action for Youth

United Action for Youth (UAY) is a Johnson County community organization whose mission is to nurture the potential of all youth to create, grow, and lead. Services include family mediation and therapy; a Youth Center with recording studio, art studio, art gallery, performance space, counseling, and the Rotary Center for Youth Volunteers; a family support program for pregnant and parenting teens; and a Transitional Living Program for homeless youth ages 16-22. Learn more at www.unitedactionforyouth.org.

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

Emily Pritchard

MUSIC TEAM

[Sign-up](#) to be on our Music Team! Help with music outreach events, play on Sundays, and support the music staff. 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 rehearsals have begun! We welcome children ages 4-12. [Sign-up here](#). 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 UUSIC is actively searching for new members to join us in song! We have an open door policy to anyone who enjoys singing!

From Your Membership Coordinator

Victoria Huitt

New! Pathways to Members: We are excited to offer a new process for joining the UUS! Those interested can pick which activities they wish to pursue in getting to know the congregation, activities, groups, UUS history and eight principles. We will be offering a monthly orientation to the process and Pathways which can be completed on an individual preferred time frame with joining the UUS at any one of the 3 annual New Member ceremonies at a Sunday service. The next **New Member Ceremony** is scheduled for March 3.

The next Orientation for Pathways to membership will be Sunday Feb 11th at 11:30 AM at UUS in the conference room!

Reach out to **Victoria Huitt, Membership Coordinator** with questions and to sign up for one of the next monthly orientations: welcome@uusic.org. Orientations will be offered at varied times/days in person, Zoom or a combination.

From your Communications and Outreach Coordinator

Kaytee Rairdin

This year we want to identify more opportunities to take photos and share what UUS is doing. Let's take lots of photos as our gatherings, events, and meetings begin again! There are some great ways to share what your group is doing:

- [Share a blog post](#) about your group, what you do, and what you're working on.
- Send Kaytee a **social media post authored by your group** with your favorite photos from a recent meeting or event that you'd like to share on our social channels!

Let your creativity guide your groups on what kinds of photos, social media, and blog posts to share! The more moments we can capture, the more opportunities we will have to showcase the awesome work your group is doing.

FAQs

- **What if my photo has kids in it?** It is really important to make sure that we have the proper photo permissions documented for any minors who appear in photos. Email or copy Nic Kaplan, our wonderful Director of Lifespan Religious Education, at education@uusic.org if your photo(s) contains any minors and they can check the files for photo permissions!
- **Does my post need to be "polished?"** Not at all! Just send in what you feel best represents the activities you want to show. A brief description of what's happening and what group(s) is involved is great!
- **Do you have examples to share?** You bet! Take a look at these three posts for inspiration: [Buring Bowl Sunday Service](#) | [New Soul Works Table Set-up](#) | [Happy Birthday at UUS!](#)

Please email Kaytee at communications@uusic.org if you have any questions!

From Your DLRE

Nic Kaplan

UUS SPRING AND SUMMER DAY CAMPS

Finding fun day camps for your kids that incorporate fun and inclusive activities and learning opportunities has never been easier! The Unitarian Universalist Society in Coralville, Iowa offers day camps throughout the spring and summer for kids of all ages. Families love sending their children to a day camp that fosters a creative spirit, encourages exploration, and is a great time! While honoring the earth, building deeper connections, and social justice are all part of Unitarian Universalist shared mission and principles, our camps are not religious and **we are open to everyone.**

We are expanding our day camp opportunities in 2024! This year, we will offer a brand new Spring Break Nature Camp in March, three weeks of Nature Camp in June, two separate, 2-week-long Theater Camps in July, a special Peace Camp in August, and four individually-themed day camps right before the start of the 2024-2025 school year!

How to Register: Select the camp(s) on the sign up sheet including morning and/or afternoon care as needed for each camp you would like your camper to attend. If you are registering multiple children, be sure to select that number of slots for each day and time. Be sure to include an accurate email address that is checked regularly. A limited number of partial and full scholarships will be available. If you have any questions, please contact our camp director, Nic Kaplan at education@uusic.org.

- Register for **Spring Break Nature Camp** [here](#).
- Register for **Summer Nature Camp**, Musical Theater Camp, Peace Camp, and Themed Day Camps [here](#).

Announcements

- **UUS Seeks Part-Time Facilities**

Coordinator: The Unitarian Universalist Society (UUS) seeks a part-time (5 - 7 hours per week) Facilities Coordinator. The Facilities Coordinator provides general caretaking services for UUS and its facilities, including custodial tasks (shared with a weekly custodian), light and preventative maintenance to the facilities, and setup and cleanup assistance for congregational and rental events. The Facilities Coordinator is expected to affirm the principles, values, and policies of UUS. Read more about the position [here](#).

Upcoming Events

Men's Sunday Social, February 4th

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, February 7th

Join us for a meditative evening service at 6:30 PM with singing or music, quiet reflection, and other spiritual practices.

Free Lunch Program, February 9th

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)

Pathways to Membership Orientation, February 11th

We are excited to offer a new process for joining the UUS! Those interested can pick which activities they wish to pursue in getting to know the congregation, activities, groups, UUS history and eight principles. The next Orientation for Pathways to membership will be Sunday Feb 11th at 11:30 AM at UUS in the conference room!

Rev. Diana Community Office Hours, February 14th

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!"

UUS Men's Sharing Circle, February 18th

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.

Faithful Grounding, February 22nd

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: [February 22](#)

Full Moon Conspiracy, February 23rd

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).

Rev. Diana Community Office Hours, February 28th

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, February 28th

Join Tina McCoy in the Fellowship Hall 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.

We will begin at 6:30, please plan to arrive 10 minutes early to create your comfort space for the session. Bring props (e.g., yoga mat, blanket, etc.) to support and deepen your comfort. This is a free-will offering event.

UUS Board Meeting, February 28th

The UUS Board of Trustees holds a monthly meeting, open to all members, on the third Wednesday unless otherwise specified. On the day of the meeting, look for a link to the [agenda](#) in the weekly email or on the [website](#), which includes details on the time, location, and items for discussion.

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

UUS Committee and Team Reports

COVENANT GROUPS

To issue in the new year, January covenant groups talked about "Liberating Love." "Love," of course, is not always the easiest thing to define. It takes many forms, speaks numerous languages, appears in an infinite number of

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(Covenant Group Report, continued from page 7)

ways. But we weren't just talking about love as a feeling. We were examining it as an action, as the process of setting it free, letting it out of our hearts and into the world, expressing it and ourselves through it, but also reaching out to others and "liberating" them through our love.

What form is love currently taking in your life? And how are you expressing it, making use of it, helping others with it? How are you "transforming the world" with the love that you've set free?

If questions like these intrigue you, you might want to consider joining 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.

FREE LUNCH PROGRAM

The stellar Free Lunch Program volunteer team conquered the winter blizzard on Friday, January 12th. The team arrived at 8:30 AM through swirling snow and an Arctic atmosphere. Frank Wildensee and Vicki Siefers, with help from Bonnie Penno (having arrived the night before from a month-long trip to SE Asia) and Kezia Walker-Cecil, cooked up batches con carne and veggie chilis complete with cornbread and several sides to compliment the chilis.

As others including Bob Littlehale, Dick Siefers, Gary Lawrensen, and John Elson arrived, the usual setup began with fruit and veggie salads, drinks, and multiple cookies. We served 83 guests who enjoyed the warmth and full stomachs!

A very lovely volunteer from Solon joined the team on Friday. Braving the weather, Sterling Blasen-Hoerner had her dad drive her to and from their home. Sterling is a junior at UI and is

majoring in philosophy with a law track. In addition, the following folks donated food and drink: Laurie Cubit, Karen Fox, Winnie Ganshaw, Mary Dix, Russ Lenth, Pete Brokaw, Janet McKee and Terri O'Berry. We hope to see her and our other volunteers on February 9th. As always, we welcome new and former volunteers to our marvelous team of fun lovers.

A special shout-out must go out to Frank Wildensee for the new, improved signup sheet for this endeavor!

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)

GREEN SANCTUARY

Compost Ninja has arrived at the UUS! On January 1st we started the contract with this service. Look for the green Compost Ninja Collection Buckets. Training and educational opportunities are being arranged so the program can be fully utilized and benefit UUS and Mother Earth.

February 18 Green Sanctuary All Ages: "An inescapable network of mutuality" Rev. Martin Luther King

We will have an Environmental Justice Timeline where adults can test their knowledge of major EJ events. We will also have a game called "The Fair City" where kids can figure out how to make sure everyone has the same access to a clean, healthy environment.

We are Better Together! Change can happen when we work as individuals but working together can result in even bigger changes. Green Sanctuary is the space in our congregation where we work together to protect our shared planet. To learn more, email Sally Hartman at sallyhartman@hotmail.com or Jan Weaver at jan.weaver57@gmail.com.

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(Green Sanctuary Report, continued from page 8)

Our next meeting is **Wednesday, February 14 at 7 pm**. Join us on Zoom at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88132264216>.

Meeting ID: 881 3226 4216. Passcode 533092.

On the agenda: becoming a resiliency center, a composting update, plan for All Ages RE, and explore collaborating with other groups in the region.

PRISON MINISTRY

UUS's 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."

One of the main ways we're active is through our Pen Pal program. Members regularly correspond with incarcerated individuals either by "snail mail" or through the Iowa Department of Corrections' o-mail system, CorrLinks.

We are always looking for volunteers to write to inmates. Incarcerated persons tell us over and over how important it is for them to hear from those of us outside. Just knowing that there are caring people who haven't forgotten them and are willing to spend time writing to them is a deeply meaningful, positive experience for them. And it is very rewarding for volunteers, too. We can set you up with contacts, instructions for using CorrLinks and postal mail, and a sample introductory letter to use or modify as you see fit.

If you think you might be interested, please email prisonministry@uusic.org and one of us

will get back to you. You can also check out our page on this website at <https://www.uusic.org/connect/#justice>.

The UUA has a prison ministry through the Church of the Larger Fellowship, the Worthy Now Prison Ministry Network. They're also looking for people to become pen pals to incarcerated individuals nationwide. For more information, go to worthy.org.

The UUS Prison Ministry Team meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm in the UUS Conference Room. You are welcome to join us at our next meeting on February 6, 2024, either in person or via Zoom (Meeting ID: 848 0842 4430; Passcode: 193553).

UU MYSTICS

Our Mystics community has currently chosen to engage together in the exploration and experiences relating to the general heading: ***What happens when we die?*** Our topic for Feb delves into Near Death Experiences (NDEs). We are pleased to announce that renowned Iowa musician, **Dan Knight will be our guest** and will share his NDE and related discussion with us.

Please join us if this is of interest to you, and stay tuned for notices of future topics.

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 or wish to be added or removed from our mailing list. Please put "UUMystics" in the subject line

Treasurer's Report for December 2023

FINANCIAL CONDITION AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2023

Operating Bank Accounts end-of-month totals = \$ 382,522

2023 was a financially impressive year. However, we went into it with concerns. We had a traditional \$610,000 budget, but expected normal yearly revenues to be much below that. A maximum \$100,000 deficit was projected. We were to cover the deficits with extra monies in the bank account and a \$44,000 extra draw from General Endowment Earnings. Happily, we ended the year with only a \$30,000 deficit which was easily covered with the extra endowment draw. This result was primarily caused by our retiring one full time staff position when Peggy moved on at mid-year. It was clear that we needed to reduce our staffing to get anywhere near balancing the budget. Duties were reshuffled and part time positions hired. There have been some frustrations as we all adjust to this new model, but we are getting there. As to community support, we did reach our \$400,000 2023 Pledge goal and it was met with \$398,000 in pledge filling; a 99.5% filling rate.

The 2024 budget is \$547,700, down \$60,000 from 2023. We again set a 2024 Pledge goal of \$400,000 and it was met before the new year. We do still project a deficit, this time as \$43,000. However, we do have about \$130,000 in "extra" money left in the bank account to cover this deficit and any that carry into 2025. This is calculated from (bank total - \$200,000 emergency floor - 2024 pledge donations already made). We will be working over the next two years to get us to a comfortable balanced budget by January, 2026.

From Your Endowment Committee

UUS ENDOWMENT HOLDINGS: QUARTER ENDING 12/31/2023

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 Trustees request to keep all of us updated on a more frequent basis. The accompanying table is meant to show much of what you may be interested in, and if it brings up more questions, please contact any member of the Endowment Committee.

	12/31/2022	03/31/2023	06/30/2023	09/30/2023	12/31/2023
General Endowment Total Value	\$1,037,301	\$1,055,139	\$1,051,616	\$1,003,497	\$1,067,813
Corpus ¹	\$712,327	\$799,986	\$799,986	\$799,986	\$799,986
Donations this quarter	\$2,859	\$2,320	0	\$300	\$7850
UUA Contribution	0	0	\$368	\$451	\$370
Non-Corpus Total ²	\$327,833	\$257,473	\$251,630	\$203,511	\$276,047
Expenditures from General Endowment³	\$18,414	\$29,260	\$24,945	\$16,630	\$24,945
Annual Spending Allowance (ASA) ⁴	\$10,914	\$17,260	\$12,945	\$8,630	\$12,945
Endowment-Approved Withdrawal ⁵	\$7,500	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$8,000	\$12,000
Other Endowment Funds Value⁶	\$153,800	\$160,675	\$161,333	\$153,176	\$156,390
Other Endowment Funds Expenditures					
Jean Reese Fund	0	0	\$2,647	\$2,647	\$9,211
Music Fund	0	0	0		0
Detiger Fund	\$2114	0	0	\$500	0
Bristol Fund	0	0	0		0

¹ Can be accessed under very special circumstances

² May be accessed by vote of the congregation

³ This amount will vary by quarter depending on the last business day of the month

⁴ Amount per quarter contributed to the annual budget

⁵ Amount approved by the congregation above the ASA

⁶ Earmarked for special purposes, e.g., music, outdoor projects.

UUS ENDOWMENT HOLDINGS: FISCAL YEAR 2023

We are pleased to present this annual summary report of UUS Endowment holdings. 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	12/31/2023
General Endowment Total Value	\$1,037,301	\$1,067,813
Corpus ¹	\$712,327	\$799,986
Donations	\$19,087	\$10,470
UUA Contribution	\$745	\$1,189
Non-Corpus Total ²	\$344,806	\$279,486
Expenditures from General Endowment³	\$114,234	\$95,780
Annual Spending Allowance (ASA) ⁴	\$65,484	\$51,780
Endowment-Approved Withdrawal ⁵	\$48,750	\$44,000
Other Endowment Funds Value⁶	\$153,800	\$156,390
Other Endowment Funds Expenditures		
Jean Reese Fund	0	\$14,501
Music Fund	0	0
Detiger Fund	\$2114	\$500
Bristol Fund	0	0

¹ Can be accessed under very special circumstances

² May be accessed by vote of the congregation

³ This amount will vary depending on the last business day of the month

⁴ Amount contributed to the annual budget

⁵ Amount approved by the congregation above the ASA

⁶ Earmarked for special purposes, e.g., music, outdoor projects.