

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

March 2024 Newsletter

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

From Your Minister.....	2
Upcoming Services.....	3
March Offerings.....	3
From Your Congregational Administrator.....	4
From Your Director of Lifespan Religious Education.....	6
From Your Membership Coordinator.....	6
From your Communications and Outreach Coordinator.....	7
Announcements.....	8
Upcoming Events.....	8
UUS Committee and Team Reports.....	10

# From Your Minister

*Rev. Diana*

Dear Ones,

In March we will be exploring the value of Transformation. The [proposed revisions to Article II](#) of the Unitarian Universalist Association's bylaws state that the UUA "will actively engage its members in the transformation of the world through liberating Love." It also describes the value of Transformation in this way:

- **Transformation:** We adapt to the changing world. We covenant to collectively transform and grow spiritually and ethically. Openness to change is fundamental to our Unitarian and Universalist heritages, never complete and never perfect.

There are so many aspects to transformation: the metamorphosis that changes a caterpillar into a butterfly; the change of seasons that happens gradually and rapidly – sometimes all in the same day; the growth of a baby into a child, youth, and adult; the changes we go through as individuals and as communities. And so, as I've been sitting with this value, I've found myself reflecting on what it means to declare that we adapt to a changing world – the good, the bad, the beautiful, and the ugly.

As a former environmental professional, this brings to my mind and heart discussions that happened when we began to discuss adapting to climate change. When we decided that, while it was imperative to keep working to reduce future climate change, present and some future changes were inevitable and so we also had to work on adaptation. Change was coming, change was here, and in order to survive and thrive, and help the most vulnerable survive and thrive, we needed to notice that and make changes.

There are so many parallels to this in our world. There is so much we must do to resist oppressive forces, to promote justice, equity, pluralism, and interdependence. And yet we also need to practice adaptation.

And so, I'm reflecting on the importance of cultivating practices to help ourselves and our communities be open to change. To help us transform individually and collectively, grow spiritually and ethically. We do much of this already at UUS, and yet, under ever-increasing pressures from the world, it's crucial that we continue to cultivate these practices. Fortunately, nourishing resilience, practicing care and compassion, and cultivating sustainable practices are part of our vision of ministry for this year. What ways are you leaning into this work? What ways can you help this congregation broaden and deepen this work?

As we explore what this value of Transformation means to us individually and as a congregation, I'm looking forward to reflecting with you on how articulating it as part of the center of our living liberal religious tradition affects how we understand Unitarian Universalism and where we're being called today. I'm glad to be on this transformational journey together.

Love and Blessings,  
Rev. Diana

---

# Upcoming Services

*March 2024 Sunday Services*

## March 3rd: Storying a Vision for Transformation

Join us as we welcome new members, continue exploring the proposed new UU values by celebrating what the value of transformation means in our lives and faith, how the stories we tell can help us create our identities and adapt in a changing world, and learn about Universalist preacher John Murray. Rev. Diana Smith preaching.

## March 10th: TBA

March 10th Service to be announced. Please watch for more information in upcoming updates and emails.

## March 17th: Growing Possibility

As we approach Spring Equinox, join us for this special all-ages worship service. As we reflect on climate change, mitigation, and adaptation, we'll join in a seed-planting ritual of creating possibilities for the future. During the offering, we'll be collecting peanut butter and jelly for CommUnity's Spread the Love food drive. Rev. Diana Smith preaching.

## March 24th: What If?

Join us as we explore the ideas of concealment, pluralism, and transformation; revisit the biblical story of Esther; and celebrate the transformational power of joy. Rev. Diana Smith preaching.

## March 31st: Emergence Stories

Join us for a special all-ages exploration of our many different understandings of Easter. Rev. Diana Smith preaching.

*Find more information on our Sunday Services on our website: [www.uusic.org/services](http://www.uusic.org/services)*

*Join us on YouTube Livestream: [www.youtube.com/@UUS\\_IC](http://www.youtube.com/@UUS_IC)*

---

## March Offerings

*Free Medical Clinic*

The Iowa City Free Medical and Dental Clinic (FMC) is a non-profit organization, established in 1971. FMC believes that access to affordable health care is a basic human necessity, and they strive to provide the widest range of medical and dental services possible to people in Iowa City and the surrounding community who would not otherwise have access to care. Learn more about FMC at [www.freemedicalclinic.org](http://www.freemedicalclinic.org)

On months with five Sundays, we pick one week to spotlight a specific need to support through our extra offering. The **5th Sunday Special Offering** will benefit the Immigrant Welcome Network. Johnson County supports and empowers new immigrant and refugee families by providing

*(March Offerings continued on page 4)*

*(March Offerings continued from page 3)*

temporary housing and assistance in navigating the complexities of resettlement. This assistance includes connecting families with resources such as job opportunities, education, healthcare, and permanent housing. When the families move to permanent housing, they often need donated furniture and household goods. The Welcome Network has supported three families from Egypt, Sudan, and Saudi Arabia. Fifth Sunday donations will ensure the Welcome Network can be there for new families.

Cash and check donations are collected during the Sunday service offering. Checks should be made out to UUS and have “FMC” or “Immigrant Welcome Network” 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 Congregational Administrator**

*Emma Barnum*

I’ve been dreading writing this farewell message. As most of you hopefully know, on February 22nd I will be leaving the UUS staff team to take on a new job in finance and pledge processing at United Way of Johnson and Washington Counties. After nearly 12 years serving as your administrator, it’s hard to put into words how much you all have meant to me and how big a place UUS has in my heart. It is even more difficult to describe how hard it is to be leaving.

When I joined the staff in 2012 I was fresh out of law school, freshly married, and looking for a stable position to get some experience in the nonprofit sector during a time when nonprofit jobs were hard to come by. I didn’t know much about Unitarian Universalism, but I was excited to be able to walk to the cute little building downtown and was impressed by the collaborative and friendly nature of both the staff and congregation. I never expected to stay for more than a couple of years, and certainly didn’t expect to be here a decade later and a town over!

What started as a “simple” office administrator position quickly grew into a full career filled with professional development opportunities. Working for UUS has allowed me to learn and take on human resources administration, bookkeeping and accounting, multiplatform AV coordination, website management, graphic design, volunteer coordination, project and vendor management, and a heck of a lot of data analysis. It’s been at times overwhelming to hold so much responsibility, but I’m incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to develop and hone these skills. And it’s been wonderful to use those skills to serve the Society.

As my skillset grew, so did my family. Many of you may remember that UUS allowed me to bring both my boys to work with me for the first year of their life, for which I will forever be grateful. I have fond memories of Dean crawling down the hall of the Worthley building to visit Carol Throckmorton and the office volunteers, and of Henry falling asleep in a bouncy chair set up in the closet of the bedroom I worked out of while our new building was built in the backyard of 2355 Oakdale Road. My kids love the “new” building and are disappointed to no longer be able to hunt for mushrooms on the trails, walk the labyrinth, or visit the skull cave when they tag along with me to work. They’ve made me promise to bring them back to visit (which wasn’t hard to agree to!) and they’re both excited to join in several of the amazing camps Nic and Emily are planning for the summer.

*(From Your Congregational Administrator continued on page 5)*

*(From Your Congregational Administrator continued from page 4)*

Over the years I've witnessed an enormous amount of transition beyond just my job description. From the vote, capital campaign, and construction/move to the new building; to the interim ministry and transition to policy based governance; to the challenges of running a vibrant and engaging programming calendar safely during COVID, plus a million more growing pains and challenges for our staff, leadership, groups, and individual congregants. If you think about navigating change like exercising a muscle, UUS is ready to join a bodybuilding competition– it's been inspiring to learn to flex, pivot, and adapt alongside you as we learn new ways of working and being together.

In my tenure at UUS I've worked with three ministers, five DLREs, three congregational staff positions, five music directors, and almost more coordinators, accompanists, and assistants than I can count. Almost without exception, every staff member I've worked alongside has been a delight to work with. This Society attracts talented and hardworking people, and it's amazing to see what can be accomplished when such a small but dedicated team works together. I hope you all realize how lucky you are and have been with your staff.

I've also worked closely with so many amazing volunteers and leaders that I hesitate to call out anyone in particular- the list of everyone who has helped me or collaborated with me would fill the directory and I am so grateful for every one of you, especially those of you who have served on the board, or a team or committee that has worked closely with me. I do think it's worth the risk to extend particular thanks to Gay Mikelson, Deb Schoelerman, and Sue Kann, all of whom have operated as long-term, unpaid staff to help run the office, facilities, and rental programs. I wouldn't have stayed in this role as long as I have without their guidance and support over the years and I hope you all know how much they do for this congregation. I also have such strong love for the people who help with all the thankless, unsexy tasks of running an organization like UUS: the building and grounds volunteers who pull weeds, build shelves, and keep the trails clear; the aesthetics and historical records volunteers who make sure our building and history are kept beautiful and documented; the stewardship and income teams who find unique and engaging ways to connect fundraising with beloved community; and the AV and tech volunteers who make sure our services and programming are accessible and welcoming to congregants and visitors near and far. I'd love to call you each out by name but will have to settle for hoping I can run into you in the future to extend my thanks in person.

A special privilege of this position that I hadn't expected was the opportunity to learn about UU values and participate in the myriad ways you embody the principles and practices of Unitarian Universalism within the congregation, community, and wider world. From helping with the Love Bus back at 10 S Gilbert, to coordinating social justice partnerships and donations, to taking photos at the Pride Parade, to working with all the justice teams on programming and outreach, it's been indescribably fulfilling to know that just by coming to work I was siding with Love.

Thank you for your compassion, your patience, and your support during the last 11 years. Thank you for welcoming me, accepting me, and letting UUS be my home. Thank you for being people I am proud to know, work with, and call friends. Thank you.

Love,  
Emma Barnum

---

## From Your Director of Lifespan Religious Education

*Nic Kaplan*

Beginning April 7th, there will be a new opportunity for religious education, faith development, and community building.

"Lunch then Learn" is a series we are testing out for the month of April and the first Sunday in May. Everyone is invited to join us in the Fellowship Hall after service for lunch each week. Lunch will be "hosted" by different groups each week and will be offered for a freewill donation. Donations exceeding the cost of the meal will be given to the various host groups. For example, when the UUS youth group serves a pizza lunch one week, all the extra donations will go to the Teen Reserve Fund.

The workshops and classes will also vary from week to week in time, topic, and format. For instance, CUUPS will be doing a kimekomi make-and-take activity and our music director, Emily Pritchard, will be leading an all ages drumming workshop. Land Ministry will be outside with us one week, teaching us about tree and plant identification and Green Sanctuary is bringing in a speaker.

If you are in the process of working on your Pathways to Membership "bingo card," these sessions can count toward the "take a class or workshop at UUS" boxes under the column "Embrace the ongoing quest for meaning."

Rev. Diana will be leading our first Lunch then Learn session on April 7th with a workshop about using our attention and awareness as a spiritual practice. She will be sharing the science with us behind attention and giving us opportunities to practice "Noticing in a New Way."

We are still in need of two groups to host a lunch. If you are interested, please contact our

Director of Lifespan Religious Education, Nic Kaplan, at [education@uusic.org](mailto:education@uusic.org)

Stay tuned to the Weekly Email for more information about all of our sessions and lunches. We look forward to learning and growing together with you.

---

## From Your Membership Coordinator

*Victoria Huitt*

We have a great group of folks who have completed our Pathways to Membership process and are joining the congregation on March 3rd at the Sunday Service. Please come to welcome and get to know them!

The **Pathways to Membership** is a new "passport" system of getting to know the congregation, UU and UUSIC history, and our members by participating in activities that interest each of them. The Pathways reflect our unique community and our mission and values. You may have met some of them in a Social Justice or Green Sanctuary meeting, serving in hospitality, or being asked to be a "Congregational Connector" to one of them.

**Congregational Connectors** meet with the interested potential members to help them through the process by having a personal connection with a member who can respond to questions, make introductions and help establish connection to our varied options for participation. I have reached out to some of you individually to be a "connector" and if you have interest, please let me know and I will add you to my list for potential new members who are requesting to be paired with someone.

Email [welcome@uusic.org](mailto:welcome@uusic.org) for more information about the Pathways to Membership and joining the Congregational Connector group.

---

# From your Communications and Outreach Coordinator

Kaytee Rairdin

Here at UUS, we have an incredible number of groups, teams, and individuals working together to better our earth, community, and each other. Creating updates on your activities is important to keep the UUS community informed about what you're doing! While the monthly UUS Newsletter is a great format for periodic updates, the UUS Blog is the best way to share your updates with the community whenever and however you'd like. No more waiting for a deadline; share away!

Let's dig into the details of a blog post's 3 most important components: Written Content, Visuals, and Content Planning and Scheduling!

## Written Content

The meat and potatoes of your blog post are your words. Whatever your writing style, utilize the stages of writing and editing to paint a picture for the audience. Structure your content to flow from one topic to the next, incorporating the feelings of the day and other personal elements. For example, if you're writing an article about an upcoming event, don't only discuss the details (time, location, etc.) Include elements of the "why?"

When you've written a statement you're happy with, take some time to make thoughtful edits so that your meaning is crystal clear and direct. This is also a great time to check for typos, misspelled names, and other small errors. UUS staff don't have time to edit blog submissions thoroughly, so checking your work is a good idea. However, mistakes happen and that's alright! We're human!

## Visuals

Now that you have your written content done, let's think about how visuals (photos, graphics, posters, etc.) will enhance your blog post.

Sometimes called a Hero Image, Banner, or Feature Image, the image at the top is what will be displayed the most prominently. This is what will display if you share the link in places like social media. Photos call for attention so pick an image that captures the essence of your post. Action shots of volunteers working, group photos with happy faces, or poignant images of a significant location are great options for that top image.

Additional photos are welcome and recommended! The photos you choose will help add context to your post and enhance the storytelling. If you have a few extra photos, include them when you're uploading your blog post content. Add them to the body of the text or keep them as a gallery at the end of your post, both options are fine. In a previous blog post called "[Let's Embrace Photo Moments in 2024](#)," we have an FAQ section addressing common questions regarding kids in photos, whether a post should be polished, and we provide some examples for you to consider.

## Content Planning/Scheduling

Maybe the most critical point of creating your post is

1. When you **CREATE** your content
2. When you **SUBMIT** your post to the UUS staff.

Capture the fresh memories, feelings, and thoughts, and don't wait too long after an event or gathering to create your post! If your post is in anticipation of your topic or event, create that content as soon as details are available so your blog post can be circulated in the UUS community and social media channels.

As a reminder, there are a lot of great things going on at UUS at any given time. It is important to remember that UUS staff will have limited time to spend on any one event

*(From Your Communications and Outreach Coordinator continued on page 8)*



*(From Your Communications and Outreach Coordinator continued from page 7)*

so bringing a complete post with all your wanted materials like graphics, posters, and written content is extremely helpful!

The great thing about the UUS blog is that it is available to you regardless of timelines, deadlines, or seasons. If you want to share something, submit it! We hope that you consider these three points of blog creation when you create your content. You can always email [communications@uusic.org](mailto:communications@uusic.org) if you ever have any questions about the blog or what to submit!

---

## Announcements

- **New to the UUS Blog:** Celebrate International Women's Day on March 7

Night of 1000 Dinners, an annual community celebration of International Women's Day, will be Thursday, March 7, at 6:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Society, 2355 Oakdale Road, Coralville. Hosted by the Johnson County Chapter of the United Nations Association, this event will feature an international buffet, entertainment, and recognition of women-led local groups advancing good health and well-being in our community. Read the full blog post [here](#).

- **New to the UUS Blog:** Providing Joy, Supporting Immigrant Family

UUS members tied a very special blanket for an immigrant family who recently arrived in the United States. Thank you UUS for helping create a heart-warming gift for this family! Read the full blog post [here](#).

---

## Upcoming Events

### Men's Sunday Social, March 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](mailto:menssundaysocial@uusic.org).

### Night of 1000 Dinners, March 7th

Night of 1000 Dinners, an annual community celebration of International Women's Day, will be Thursday, March 7, at 6:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Society, 2355 Oakdale Road, Coralville. Hosted by the Johnson County Chapter of the United Nations Association, this event will feature an international buffet, entertainment, and recognition of women-led local groups advancing good health and well-being in our community. Read the blog post [here](#).

### Free Lunch Program, March 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](mailto:freelunch@uusic.org) or 419-297-7812)



## **Miss Majesty Constable Presents: Sing with Me!, March 10th**

Join Miss Majesty Constable at 2:30 PM on Sunday, March 10th, for an afternoon of singing focused on community building, strengthening musical skills, and singing a diverse array of children's music. Share this event on [Facebook](#)!

## **Spring Break Nature Camp, March 11th through March 15th**

Our Spring Break nature-based camp is designed for children in Kindergarten through 6th grade, and we will spend a significant amount of our time outside regardless of the weather. We will consider ourselves blessed with snow and ice, excited to explore in mud, and delighted by sunshine. Learn more and register [here](#).

## **Vespers, March 13th**

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

## **Men's Sharing Circle, March 17th**

All adult UUS members and friends who identify as male are invited to join us in 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](mailto:menssharingcircle@uusic.org).

## **Mistakes and Miracles, March 18th**

"The UUA Common Read for 2022-23 was [\*Mistakes and Miracles: Congregations on the Road to Multiculturalism\*](#) (Skinner House Books, 2019). In the book, co-authors Nancy Palmer Jones and Karin Lin—a white minister and a lay person of color—explored five UU congregations' journeys toward Beloved Community and share the joy, disappointment, and growth these congregations found.

Engaging with this book can help UU congregations grapple with our movement's charge to dismantle white supremacy in ourselves, our communities, and our world. Doing this Common Read together is one way for a UU faith community to engage in this important work."

Join us for a virtual discussion about our experiences with *Mistakes and Miracles* and help us create a strategy for what is next on the road to Beloved Community.

To join the video meeting, click this link:

<https://meet.google.com/esi-weho-nxa>

To join by phone instead, dial (US) +1 347-861-6253 and enter this PIN: 727 486 798#

More phone numbers:

<https://https%3A/tel.meet/esi-weho-nxa?pin=4309859157665>

## **UUS Board Meeting, March 20th**

The UUS Board of Trustees holds a meeting, open to all members, each month at 7 pm on the third Wednesday. Look for an agenda in the weekly email or [on the website](#) before the meeting. ([Link to Join](#), Meeting ID 891 3256 0297, password 228948, or join by phone).

## Deep Dive with the Minister, March 24th

Join Rev. Diana Smith to learn about covenant and congregational polity, and to ask your questions. This session is a part of our Pathways to Membership series. Please contact Membership Coordinator Victoria Huitt if you have questions about Pathways to Membership at [welcome@uusic.org](mailto:welcome@uusic.org). RSVPs for today's Deep Dive to [minister@uusic.org](mailto:minister@uusic.org) are appreciated but not necessary.

## Rev. Diana Community Office Hours, March 27th

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, March 27th

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.\*

## Faithful Grounding, March 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: [March 28](#)

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

---

## UUS Committee and Team Reports

### COVENANT GROUPS

In February, covenant groups asked themselves hard questions about working toward “Justice and Equity” in society, UUS, and our lives. What forms does this work take, how committed are we to it, and what more can we do?

Among the challenges put to us is this provocative one: “What if the place to begin is not how do I answer these questions but who do I need to help me think them through?” No matter how much we think about solutions to poverty, unequal treatment, discrimination, etc., we might have to face the troubling thought that action based on “facts” and assumptions embedded in our positions of privilege is not as helpful as we believe. Perhaps instead we should be listening to, and engaging with, those who are most affected by these problems. Perhaps instead of telling each other what we should do for them, we should be letting them tell us and lead us.

If questions like these intrigue you, you might want to consider joining a covenant group. The Covenant Group program offers its

*(UUS Committee and Team Reports continued  
on page 11)*

*(UUS Committee and Team Reports continued from page 10)*

members the opportunity to share their views and deepen their understanding of a wide range of issues while creating closer ties with other UUs. Click [here](#) to learn more!

## FREE LUNCH PROGRAM

February 9th was simply a gorgeous and warm, Spring-like day! The service team provided 117 meals to guests. It was so busy that at one point there was not a single seat unoccupied! Vicki Seifers and Frank Wildensee, chefs supreme, whipped up lentil and ham and lentil stews on site. There was a gentleman originally from Mississippi who remarked that he hadn't had a meal as good as this since leaving his home state. We had no leftovers!

As per usual, the green and fruit salads, cookies, cupcakes, provided by Sally Hartman and Pete Brokaw, and various standard drinks were also served. Gay Mikelson did her usual fun napkin wrappings for over 150 utensil sets. Other volunteers included Bob Littlehale, Bonnie Penno, Mary Dix, Christina Randall, Barb Herring, Gary Gare, Theresa Ullerich, Joe Rasmussen, Janet McKee, Terri O'Berry, John Elson, Russ Lenth and Gary Lawrenson.

As always, we would love more volunteers to donate food, time, or funds for our March 8th service.

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

## GREEN SANCTUARY

**The compost bin has landed!** We will be tracking how much waste is diverted by using a composting service. Do your bit by using the bin for all your compostable waste! If you have questions, please contact Sue Kann

(319-471-1895) or Virginia Melroy  
(319-338-1778 or 319-330-5434.

**February All Ages: Justice and Equity.** Our theme was based on Reverend Martin Luther King's words "An inescapable Network of Mutuality". The reason Reverend King was in Memphis was to support a strike by sanitation workers, most of them Black, who were protesting the unfair and dangerous working conditions imposed by the city's mayor. This was one of the major events giving rise to the environmental justice (EJ) movement. The EJ movement recognizes that if a neighborhood or community has to be sacrificed for public goods like highways, landfills, hazardous waste sites, or pipelines, race is usually the strongest determinant of who gets sacrificed. Adults got a chance to learn about some other events, Interstate 235 going through Des Moines' Black neighborhoods, the Warren County protest against a hazardous waste landfill, the United Church of Christ report on Toxic Wastes and Race, and the Flint water crisis. Kids got a chance to plan a Fair City, where nobody had more than their fair share of things like smelly factories.

**March All Ages: Transformation.** Our theme is based on words from Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer, "Action on behalf of life transforms". Adults can join us in the Fellowship Hall after the service to learn and share about transforming a yard into a haven for wildlife. Kids can learn how to recognize signs that wildlife, especially insects, are enjoying their yards.

**We are Better Together!** Join Green Sanctuary to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, build resiliency in the neighborhood, and address environmental justice issues. Can you help? Email Sally Hartman at [sallyhartman@hotmail.com](mailto:sallyhartman@hotmail.com) or Jan Weaver at [jan.weaver57@gmail.com](mailto:jan.weaver57@gmail.com). Our next meeting is Wednesday, March 13 at 7 pm.

Join us on Zoom at  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88132264216>.  
Meeting ID: 881 3226 4216. Passcode 533092.

## PRISON MINISTRY

The Prison Ministry Team “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](mailto: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.now.org](http://worthy.now.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 March 5, 2024, either in person or via Zoom (Meeting ID: 848 0842 4430; Passcode: 193553).