

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

*April 2024 Newsletter*

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# From Your Minister

*Rev. Diana*

Dear Ones,

In April we will be exploring the value of Interdependence. The [proposed revisions to Article II](#) describe the value of Interdependence in this way:

- **Interdependence:** We honor the interdependent web of all existence. We covenant to cherish Earth and all beings by creating and nurturing relationships of care and respect. With humility and reverence, we acknowledge our place in the great web of life, and we work to repair harm and damaged relationships.

It's so appropriate that we're exploring this value during this month when we celebrate Earth Day and "[Spring for Change](#)" with the UU Ministry for Earth. After all, Interdependence has deep roots and vibrant shoots in Unitarian Universalism.

In the early 1800s, our Universalist ancestor Hosea Ballou asked, "How are we bound up together?" He answered that salvation for each person is bound up in the community as a whole: "One's lot is cast with the rest of the human race." We can start to appreciate how radical his statements were when we notice that he preached that all of us are one organic whole and all people are essential to our salvation. No one is left behind. As he wrote, "I neither expect nor desire perfect happiness while I see my fellow-man in misery."

In the 1800s, our Unitarian Transcendentalist ancestors, people like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Margaret Fuller, also helped us notice and articulate in new ways how we are intricately interconnected with all life. As Margaret Fuller wrote in her "Recollection of Mystical Experiences," "I saw there was no self; that selfishness was folly, and the result of circumstance; that it was only because I thought self real that I suffered; that I had only to live in the idea of the ALL, and all was mine. This truth came to me, and I received it unhesitatingly..."

Ballou's words connected theology, social justice, and questions of our ultimate meaning or purpose. Fuller helped us understand how out of suffering and loneliness we can make meaning. She helped form Transcendentalism. While much has changed in 200 years, our Universalist and Unitarian beliefs in our deep interdependence and interconnection hasn't. It drives our justice work and how we center love in our interpersonal connections, our congregations, and in our work with our communities and the Earth.

To that we've added deeper understanding of how our world works, of ecology, and of what our responsibilities are to Earth. During this Earth month, let's join together to Spring for Change! Will you join me as we lean into exploring and living into what our value of Interdependence means to us and where it's calling us now?

Love and Blessings,  
Rev. Diana

Post Links: <https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission/final-proposed-revision-article-ii> | <https://www.uumfe.org/spring-for-change-2024/> | <https://sidewithlove.org/climatejustice> | <https://sidewithlove.org/week-two-january-22-january-28>

# Upcoming Services

*April 2024 Sunday Services*

## April 7th: Interdependence

Join us as we continue exploring the proposed new UU values by celebrating what the value of interdependence means in our lives and faith. We'll learn about Unitarian Transcendentalists Margaret Fuller and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Rev. Diana Smith preaching.

## April 14th: Appreciation of Old Age

UUS member Mary Kathryn Wallace, who will be preaching this service, shares: "A favorite quote of mine is from Oliver Wendall Holmes: 'A mind stretched to a new idea never goes back to its original dimension.' I hope that this morning, your mind will be stretched in a good way. Old age is a great leveler in life."

## April 21st: Earth Day

Join us for an all ages worship service celebrating Earth Day! After the worship service, the Green Sanctuary Team will lead us in all ages activities. During the offering we'll be collecting food for CommUnity's baby shower. Rev. Diana Smith preaching.

## April 28th: Creativity

Join us as UUS's member musicians help us celebrate the power of creativity and interdependence during a special Music Sunday worship service. 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)*

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## April Offerings

*Table to Table*

April Sunday Offerings benefit Table to Table, an organization that bridges the gap between abundance and hunger. Table to Table's mission is to increase food equity and reduce environmental harm by collecting and redistributing surplus food through partners to people who can use it. Learn more about Table to Table on their website [www.table2table.org](http://www.table2table.org).

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

Kaytee Rairdin

### Annual Report

The deadline for our 2023/24 Annual Report is April 14th! Everyone who received an email from me in early March must get me their articles as soon as you are able.

### Photo Moments

Please keep sending in your photos from your activities, events, and gatherings! These photos are a snapshot of our beautiful moments and our history. If you have photos you'd like to share with us, please send them to Kaytee at [communications@uusic.org](mailto:communications@uusic.org); and remember to check with Nic Kaplan at [education@uusic.org](mailto:education@uusic.org) if your photos have kids in them!

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## Announcements

- **Diaper Drive in April**

Help CommUnity assist low income folks of Johnson County! April is the annual diaper and wipes drive for CommUnity (the Crisis Center). When it's hard to put food on the table, it's really hard to find the funds for diapers and wipes. Bring them to UUS in April please!

- **Nature Farms Summer Events**

UUS members and friends are invited to the Draco Hill Nature Farm in Cedar County to meditate, explore and enjoy prairie, timber and orchards grown naturally. Free events are held all year long in an effort to build community and educate the public. Read the full blog post [here](#).

## AV Team Seeking More Volunteers Move over

The Audio/Video team is looking for a few good volunteers! If working with sound and video equipment sounds interesting to you, you might want to have a conversation with Michael Honey-Arcement, who leads the team that streams Sunday services online. The work of the AV volunteers demands attention and skill but doesn't require a technical background. "Anyone willing to not be intimidated by a computer can learn the systems," Michael says.

**Q:** So just how much training is involved?

**Michael:** There are two stations that have different levels of training. The sound board just needs someone to press a button to mute and unmute microphones. Additionally, that person manages the volume of those microphones. The streaming station requires basic Windows and PowerPoint knowledge. There is a small amount of training on the specific software we use for streaming. This role does the most multitasking and you will be paying attention to every minute of the service. Someone with Theatre Tech skills or Game Streaming skills would be great.

**Q:** How many people are needed for each service and how often does each volunteer work?

**Michael:** We currently need two volunteers per service. The more volunteers we have, the less often any one person comes in rotation. Right now, we can have someone working 3 out of 4 Sundays. If we had 8-10 trained volunteers, that could drop to 1 Sunday a month.

Michael enjoys his work with the AV team but notes it does involve staying alert for unexpected changes during the service:



*(AV Team Article continued on page 5)*  
*(AV Team Article continued from page 4)*

“Doing items out of order; not having lyrics; or people walking out of the camera shot for example.” But these challenges have been beneficial—dealing with them has sharpened his directorial and troubleshooting skills.

Please consider lending some of your time to this important part of UUS’s efforts to reach a wider community. Email [av@uusic.org](mailto:av@uusic.org) to learn more and get involved.

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## Upcoming Events

### Interfaith Power and Light Farmers Gathering, April 3rd

UUS's Green Sanctuary Team is hosting an event for farmers with Iowa Interfaith Power and Light on Wednesday, April 3 from 6-8 PM. The conversations will form the basis of the summer and fall programming at [Iowa Interfaith Power & Light](https://www.iowaipl.org). RSVPs are required. To RSVP, refer someone, or chat further about these events, please reach out to Tim Gossett, the event organizer, at [tgossett@iowaipl.org](mailto:tgossett@iowaipl.org) or at 515-207-5044. Be sure to specify the event you plan to attend in your message.

### Lunch then Learn - Noticing in a New Way, April 7th

Join UUS's minister, Rev. Diana Smith to explore attention and awareness, which are building blocks for mindfulness and other spiritual and relationship practices. We'll learn a bit about what attention is, do an attentional practice, and learn about some ways that we can lean into curiosity and learn to notice in new ways. [Read More](#) about this series.

### Men’s Sunday Social, April 7th

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).

### Free Lunch Program, April 12th

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) or Frank Wildensee at [wildlake@gmail.com](mailto:wildlake@gmail.com) to get on the Sign Up Genius volunteer list for the monthly meal.

### Lunch then Learn, April 14th

Details to be announced. [Read More](#) about this series!

### Forte Piano Concert Series, April 14th

Fortepianist Trevor Stephenson, artistic director and founder of the Madison Bach Musicians, will play and discuss music by Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, and Schubert.

\$20 for age 12+, \$16 for UUS member and age 12+, free for age 11 and under. Tickets can be purchased online at <https://onrealm.org/uusic/give/MusicProgram> or at the door.

## **UUS Board Meeting, April 17th**

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).

## **Lunch then Learn - Tree Walk, April 21st**

Join members of the Land Ministry Team for a "tree walk" on the areas surrounding the building. We will identify the various kinds of trees, shrubs, and native grasses on our property. [Read More](#) about this series!

## **UUS Men's Sharing Circle, April 21st**

All adult UUS members and friends who identify as male are invited to join 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).

## **Rev. Diana Community Office Hours, April 24th**

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, April 24th**

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, April 25th**

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: [April 25](#)

## **Lunch then Learn - Speaker, April 28th**

Sarah Gardener, Climate Action Coordinator for Iowa City, will share with us how to take advantage of the financial incentives in the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Residents can receive an average of \$10,600 in incentives to electrify their household under the IRA. Tax credits have an annual cap (\$1,200 for home improvements and \$2,000 for some appliances)

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

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# UUS Committee and Team Reports

## COVENANT GROUPS

In March, Covenant Group members discussed the role of transformation in our lives. “Transformation” is one of those grand words suggestive of epic events or the complete makeover of a person inside and out. This can be misleading because important change often starts small—with a hesitant first step, a slight change of angle from which to view things, a familiar idea expressed in new words. However change begins, we all experience it, either sought for or beyond our control. The challenge is to understand these “transformations” not as “fixing” what is imperfect in ourselves—that’s judgmental and self-defeating. As Soul Matters points out, transformation is about “attention not improvement.” It’s about listening to yourself, learning who you are, and finding ways to embrace more fully your authentic self. What transformations have you undergone, and what different directions has your life taken because of them?

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.

Email [covenantgroupfacilitators@uusic.org](mailto:covenantgroupfacilitators@uusic.org) to connect with Covenant Groups and learn more!

## FREE LUNCH PROGRAM

Because of the rain on Friday, March 8th, the doors were opened early for the guests to dry off. The Chef’s crew, managed by Frank Wildensee and Vicki Siefers, were on-site at 9:00 AM to provide guests with a Mexican casserole and a vegan chili. Other early team

members included: David Queeg, Russ Lenth, Gene McCracken (visiting from Des Moines).

Later Bob Littlehale, Chris Smith, Carolyn Johnson, Ron Wright, Terry O’Berry, and Janet McKee arrived to help with our staples: green and fruit salads and drinks of coffee, tea, and apple juice. Carol Lyons, John Elson, and Gary Lawrensen arrived to staff the “clean the dishes” crew.

Gay Mikelson’s joyous self was on hand to construct the utensils for the delicious meal. Many folks donated the food for our guests. They include Bob Littlehale, Pete Brokaw and David Queeg.

As always, we welcome any suggestions, volunteer interests, and financial support for the efforts of our charity. Bless you all.

Contact Bob Littlehale at [freelunch@uusic.org](mailto:freelunch@uusic.org) to get involved with the Free Lunch Program!

## GREEN SANCTUARY

### March All Ages

We played Conservation Concentration! The goal was to find and match pairs of cards featuring Midwest species – Red-winged Blackbird, Common Milkweed, Spring Beauty, to name a few. Participants 12 and under got a set of species cards for each habitat set (Woodland, Grassland, Wetland) they completed. Would you like to help us plan our next All Ages activity for May? Here is how to get involved:

### April Lunch and Learn

- April 21 – The UUS Land Committee will lead a Tree Walk on the UUS Grounds

*(UUS Committee and Team Reports  
continued on page 8)*

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

- April 28 – Sarah Gardner, Iowa City Climate Action Coordinator, will explain Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Home Energy Rebates for things like heat pumps and weatherization.

### **April Better Together Challenge – Connect with Wild Things**

1. Plant wildflowers in your yard. Search for “Iowa native plant seeds” for sources. No yard? Plant wildflowers in a pot for your back stoop or windowsill. Visit <https://grownative.org/2021/05/17/native-plant-container-gardening/> for ideas. Taking care of living things is transformative
2. Search for wildflowers along a trail or in a park.  
<https://www.icgov.org/government/departments-and-divisions/parks-and-recreation/parks-and-trails> and <https://www.coralville.org/256/Parks-Facilities>. See if you can recognize new species when you see them in different places. Think about the habitats you find them in and where you could look for them in other spots.
3. Protect Wildflowers. Invasive plants can take over habitats critical to the survival of native plants.  
<https://www.iowadnr.gov/conservation/forestry/forest-health/invasive-plants>

### **How to Help Green Sanctuary’s Work (even if you don’t want to come to a meeting)**

Contribute to GS projects we are working on. You can help even if you can’t make our regular meetings. Projects include 1) ways to engage the congregation; 2) exploring battery backup for emergencies; 3) helping the Center for Worker Justice with a resilience project; 4) helping the Creekside Neighborhood with an

environmental threat, developing a water quality focus, and exploring outreach to elected representatives. To help, just email Jan Weaver at [jan.weaver57@gmail.com](mailto:jan.weaver57@gmail.com) with your interest, and she will connect you with the project leader.

Our next meeting is Wednesday, April 10 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.” Here are some of our latest endeavors:

- In March we planned a screening and fundraiser at FilmScene in June as part of their Community Collaborations series. Beyond Walls is a program of five short documentaries about prison life, its effects on families of the incarcerated, and life after incarceration.
- We also made arrangements to transport people to see The Inside Singers, a new 30-minute documentary about the Oakdale Choir which will be shown at the Cedar Rapids Independent Film Festival on April 5 and 6. The choir, under the direction of UI’s Dr. Mary L. Cohen, included several members of our congregation.
- Finally, we arranged to transport participants to a [Reentry Simulation](#) at Coe College on April 10. The simulation attempts to educate outsiders on the challenges facing those returning after incarceration.

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continued on page 9)*

*(UUS Committee and Team Reports  
continued from page 8)*

If you would like to participate in either of these activities, email [prisonministry@uusic.org](mailto:prisonministry@uusic.org).

### **UUS and the PenPal Program**

The Prison Ministry Team continues to be active through the 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.org](http://worthy.org).

### **Join the Prison Ministry Team**

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 April 2, 2024, either in person or via Zoom (Meeting ID: 848 0842 4430; Passcode: 193553).

Post Content URL:

<https://www.uusic.org/connect/#justice>  
(under Social Justice Groups & Community Service Teams)



## Introducing Our New Members!

We welcomed new members in March 2024! Please take a moment to learn more about them and introduce yourself when you see them at UUS!



**Art Borreca** is not new to Unitarian Universalism but is new to this congregation. He was drawn to UUS because of its liberal traditions, inclusion and diversity, as well as progressive social values. He looks forward to continuing to sing in the choir and is interested in social justice, pastoral care and religious education. Art lives in Iowa City with his wife and 1 of his 2 children.

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**Suzan Erem** came to UUS to find “like-minded progressives” and connection. She has had some brief experience with UU in the past and values the progressive secular humanist values of UUS. Suzan especially has interest in social justice, green sanctuary. With her years of land and farming experience, has in interest the land the UUS sits on, as well as the choir. Suzan has a long history of working for social and economic justice, and currently devotes her time to her farm in Cedar County where Suzan lives with her husband Paul.

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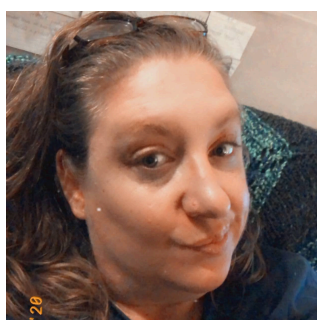
**Deborah Gallagher** is a recent transplant from Cedar Falls after retiring from teaching at the University of Northern Iowa. She is drawn to the values of inclusion and social justice of UUS, and feels it is a good match for her philosophically and spiritually. She looks forward to getting involved in the community and has already done so with hospitality and Green Sanctuary. Deborah lives in Iowa City with her husband John.

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*(Introducing Our New Members continued from page 10)*



**Andrew Levitt** has been an Iowa City resident for some time after growing up in Massachusetts and going to college in the Midwest. He is hoping to find community and like-minded people here at the UUS and values the principles of inclusivity and spirituality. Andrew lives in Iowa City with his wife.



**Karin Ulery** discovered UUS while looking for a church and exploring the learning center for her and her 3 children, Ari, Dara and Christine. She values the inclusivity and diversity support of UUS and all of them have become involved in religious education classes and camps. Karin is a student at the U of I studying public policy. She and the children live in Iowa City.



**Kylie Wetherill** grew up in the UU in Iowa City and has returned to the area since college in another part of the state. She values the UU traditions of acceptance and inclusion, and religious education for her children that she grew up with having attended at Gilbert Street from 4th grade to high school. Kylie loves running and reading and lives in Coralville with her husband Bailey and son Noah.



