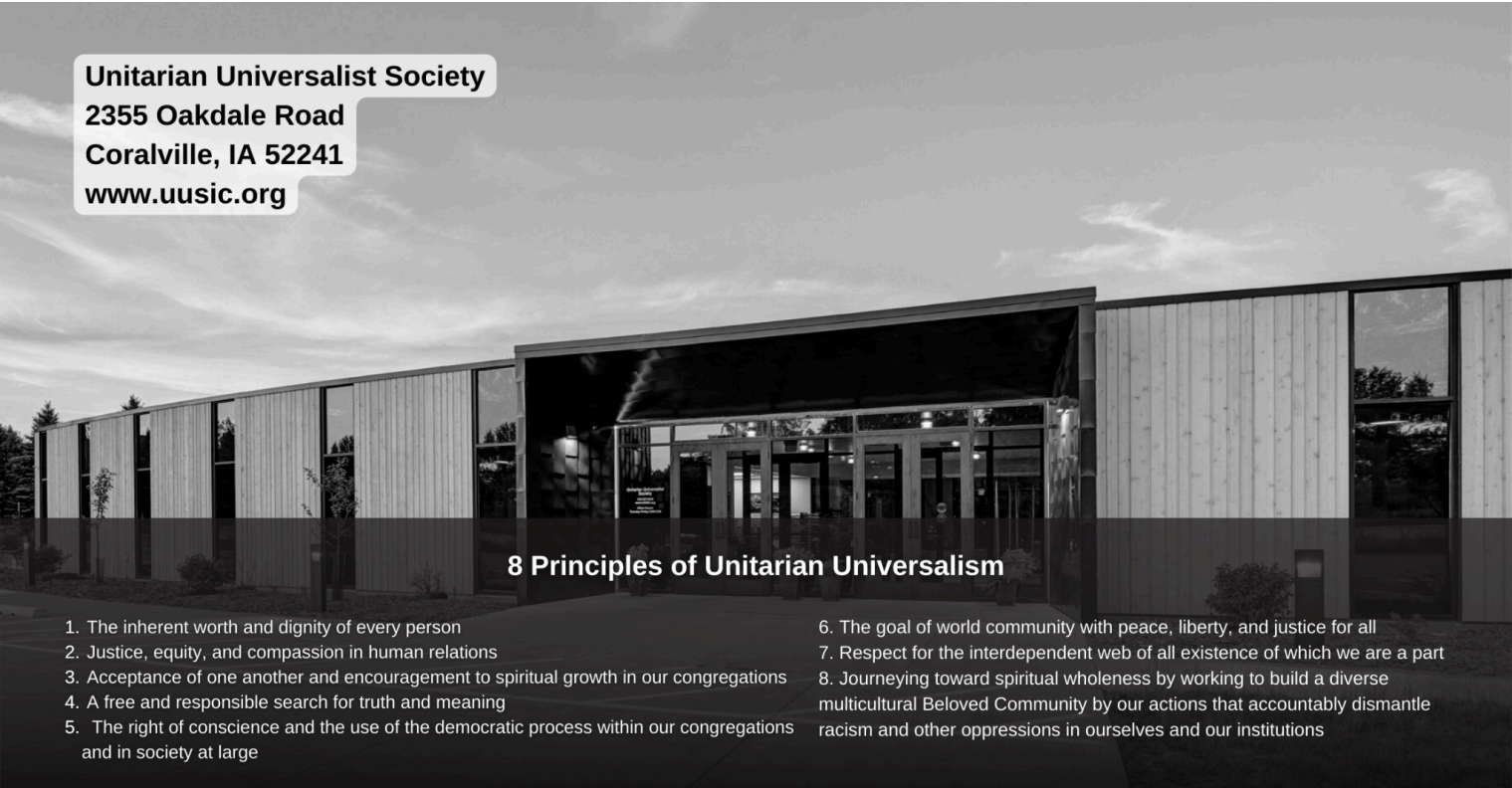


Unitarian Universalist Society
2355 Oakdale Road
Coralville, IA 52241
www.uusic.org



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

January 2025 Newsletter

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From Your Minister

Rev. Diana

Dear Ones,

Soon we will be beginning a new year! This change carries so many meanings, dreams, and stories. Many of us find ourselves wondering what this new year will bring with a complex mix of emotions, perhaps even more this year. And so, interestingly, for January we'll be leaning into a new theme: the Practice of Story.

I was recently listening to a Hidden Brain episode about [the power of family stories](#), which led me to another episode about [how we frame the stories we tell ourselves](#). And then the Soul Matters packet led me to this article from Andrea Collier about "[Why Telling Our Own Story Is So Powerful for Black Americans](#)."

All of these have me reflecting again on the stories that I learned growing up – my family stories – which give me sources of strength and resilience that stretch back millennia, far past the people whose names I know, as well as shames and hypocrisies I have had to reconcile, and questions about identity that I have needed to wrestle with throughout my life. They also have me reflecting on the story of my own life, how the way I've understood it has changed over time and given me lesser or greater feelings of resilience and connection, and how I've shaped it.

And they have me thinking about the stories we tell about our congregation – our old stories as well as our newer ones – who we have been and who we are as ourselves and as part of the wider community. They have me thinking about our national stories and our mythos, the ways my understanding it have gotten more complex over time, the ways I've needed to intentionally learn parts of our story, and how hearing our story from different perspectives has improved my life and grounded me more fully in our UU values like Pluralism, Transformation, and Justice.

During this month, which is so abundant with stories – old and new – that can both lift us up and break us down, connect us and divide us, strengthen us and weaken us, I'm looking forward to reflecting on the practice of story with you. It will be good to share how our stories and our storytelling practices help keep us connected to multiple truths, each other, and our values – especially justice and love.

Finally, if you're looking for inspiration and connection as we approach Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and the Inauguration, I hope you'll join me for our *What It Takes to Heal* read along group. We'll be reflecting on Prentis Hemphill's book of that name in late December and January. Please see the calendar or weekly email for more information. If you need to catch up on the book over the holiday break and can't join until January, I look forward to seeing you then!

I'm looking forward to engaging with you in these discussions as we begin this year and continue to shape our stories. May this transition into the new year bring you joy, love, and renewal.

Love and Blessings,
Rev. Diana

Rev. Diana Smith's Sabbatical

Rev. Diana Smith will be taking a three-month sabbatical from January 27 – April 26, 2025. Sabbatical leave is a tradition for Unitarian Universalist clergy. It offers an extended time for study, reflection, rest, and renewal—all ingredients for effective ministry. Rev. Diana will spend the first part of her sabbatical traveling to Peru where she will study Spanish and travel. Once she returns to the US in late March, she'll be spending the remainder of her sabbatical visiting colleagues, catching up on reading, resting, and reflecting.

Since September, a Sabbatical Committee has been working with volunteers, staff, committees, and teams to prepare for this time to ensure that our congregation runs as smoothly as possible during her absence. The Sabbatical Committee is composed of Sarah Ross (Vice-President), Rev. Diana Smith (Minister), Rev. Lois Cole (Community Minister), Bridget Laflin (Ministerial Intern), Kara Beauchamp (Worship Associates Team), Carmen Griggs (Personnel Committee), and Virginia Melroy (Pastoral Care Team). We'll be publishing a sabbatical guide by January 13. You'll be able to read it at www.uusic.org/2025-sabbatical-guide/. We'll also be sending it out by email and paper copies will be available.

Upcoming Services

January 2025 Sunday Services

January 5: The Power of Poetry: A Journey Through the Soul

Join us for a Unitarian Universalist service celebrating the transformative power of poetry. Together, we will explore how poetry becomes a sacred space to experience the full spectrum of human emotions and connections. Through verse, we will delve into the joy that lifts our spirits, the sorrow that deepens our empathy, and the hope that carries us forward. We will reflect on anger as a call to justice, love as a source of healing, and peace as an aspiration for the world.

January 12: Storying a Vision for Transformation

Join us as we explore 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.

January 19: The Fire of Commitment

We feel a strong commitment to live out our values in the world. What stories spark that commitment? And which stories fan those flames when it seems like the fire is waning? Ministerial Intern Bridget Laflin preaching.

January 26: Joy as Resistance

Join us as we welcome new members, learn about positive empathy, and catching joy, and celebrate how we can cultivate stories of joy that help us resist oppression and authoritarianism. This will be Rev. Diana Smith's last day in the pulpit before her three-month sabbatical begins on January 27.

*Find more information on our Sunday Services on our website: www.uusic.org/services
Join us on YouTube Livestream: www.youtube.com/@UUS_IC*

January Offerings

Details to be announced. Cash and check donations are collected during the Sunday service offering. Checks should be made out to UUS and have “monthly offering” on the memo line. You can also donate online at bit.ly/UUSPartner and select “monthly offering,” text “GivetoUUSIC Partner” to 73256, or mail a check to the UUS office.

US Surgeon General Warns Us About Parental Well-Being

Nic Kaplan, DLRE

Last night, I had the privilege of attending a webinar put on by the North East Region of the UUA (Unitarian Universalist Association) and I wish every single one of you could have been there.

The focus of the conversation was the US Surgeon General’s recent advisory report that outlines how parents and caregivers of children are at a higher risk of adverse mental health conditions and we need to do more to support families. You can read more and see some mind-blowing statistics about how stressful parenting *in today’s world* can be on the [US Department of Health and Human Services’s page](#).

Some people will read that and say, “parenting has always been stressful” and others will read that and respond “I could have told you that” and I encourage both types of people to continue reading.

The report tells us: **“We must do more to better support parents and caregivers.”**

“The work of parenting is essential not only for the health of children but also for the health of society. Amid a youth mental health crisis, the work of raising a child is just as valuable as the work performed in a paid job and critically important when it comes to the impact on the future of society.”

So what can we do?

Provide “Third Spaces.” More parents and caregivers are working more hours than ever and they desperately need places that aren’t home and work to gather with other parents.

UUS will begin offering two special occurrences of these Third Spaces in 2025 on a regular basis: no agenda, no expectations, no cost.

If you’re a parent or a caregiver interested in utilizing this space or another individual interested in helping to make it happen, [please fill out this short survey](#)

Understand that families can’t necessarily commit to participating in advance and even if they want to show up on Sundays (or any other time), things don’t always go according to plan. Be supportive, overjoyed even, when parents and caregivers are able to attend service, join in at a function, participate in your meeting, or anything else that takes the very little “free” time that they have.

Volunteer in Our Classrooms. You may have noticed that I don’t require parents and caregivers to volunteer in our classroom spaces. We can not say we support families and then force volunteer time on them when they come to Sunday service to try and put a few drops into their own spiritual cup. This means I need people to volunteer who may feel they’ve already “served their time” in education spaces.

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If you're able to give one hour a month supporting families, email me at education@uusic.org

The world is a different place than it has ever been before and it's continuing to change. Let us support the future of our world by supporting the parents and caregivers working so hard to raise that future to be just and full of love.

From Your Membership Coordinator

Victoria Huitt

We are pleased to have new members who have completed the Pathways to Membership process join on **Sunday, January 26**. Come help us welcome and celebrate our newest members during the service and after during social hour.

Stewardship Committee Update

Stewardship Team Current members: Liz Swanson, Pete Brokaw, Lucy Gamon, Barb Haring, Bridget Raflin (Ministerial Intern), and Rev. Diana Smith.

As of December 13, 2024, 154 household units have pledged for a total of \$336,777.40 dollars for the campaign. With the match generated from UUS members of 10,900, the total is \$347,667.40 or approximately 87% of the \$400,000 dollar goal. We extend a gracious thank you to everyone who pledged, and to our members of the congregation who provided matching funds to assist in the campaign. We will continue to follow-up with individuals who have not provided us with pledge information for this campaign.

During our campaign, we piloted a video of four members who shared their thoughts and feelings on belonging to this unique society. During a worship service, three members shared moving testimonials about what UUS has meant to them. Listening visits were again used for this campaign where 11 visitors (congregant members) visited by phone 44 households.

As we go forward, we face a crossroad of change and commitment. Each of us is called on to share our skills, passions and resources as we support our UUS community to bring LOVE ever more fully into the world.

Submitted by Liz Swanson and reviewed by Pete Brokaw, Bridget Laflin, and Lucy Gamon.

Upcoming Events

Lunch then Learn, Jan. 5

Join us after service for a meal and presentation. Details to follow!

Men's Sunday Social, Jan. 5

UUS adult men are invited to gather together the first Sunday of most months from 6 to 8pm 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.

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Rev. Diana Community Office Hours, Jan. 8

Rev. Diana will be at Sidekick Coffee & Books from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. 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!"

Free Lunch Program, Jan. 10

The UUS Free Lunch Team will be serving a meal on Jan. 10. See the Free Lunch Program update in the UUS Committees and Teams Report below for all the details.

Compassionate Connections, Jan. 12

For those who would like to share their joys or sorrows in conversation in a smaller venue after worship services, the Pastoral Care Associates lead a Compassionate Connection circle immediately after worship services on 2nd and 4th Sundays. These circles are opportunities to share with and support each other in our lives' journeys.

Deep Dive with the Minister, Jan. 12

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. RSVPs are appreciated but not necessary.

UUS Board Meeting, Jan. 15

The UUS Board of Trustees holds a meeting, open to all members, each month at 7 p.m. 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 or [join by phone](#).)

UUS Men's Sharing Circle, Jan. 19

All adult UUS members and friends who identify as men 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 p.m. For questions, contact Ron Pile and Niklaus Jakob at menssharingcircle@uusic.org.

Rev. Diana Community Office Hours, Jan. 22

Rev. Diana will be at Press Coffee from 4 pm to 6 pm 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, Jan. 22

Join Tina McCoy in the Fellowship Hall for a mini-retreat from the distractions and busyness 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.

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We will begin at 6:30pm; please plan to arrive 15 minutes early to create your comfort space for the session. Bring props (e.g., yoga mat, blanket, etc.) to support and deepen your comfort. Chairs are available for those who prefer to be seated. This is a free-will offering event.

Compassionate Connections, Jan. 26

For those who would like to share their joys or sorrows in conversation in a smaller venue after worship services, the Pastoral Care Associates lead a Compassionate Connection circle immediately after worship services on 2nd and 4th Sundays. These circles are opportunities to share with and support each other in our lives' journeys.

Dungeons & Dragons Club, Jan. 26

Dungeons and Dragons Club starts January 26th on Sundays from 2 until 4 pm. For ages 8+, kids would need to be accompanied by an adult.

Luke Leonard, UUS parent, will have materials available for people to play the game and for kids to run the games (dice, paper pencils, D&D materials, character sheets, etc.). The first few sessions, depending on numbers, Luke will also provide some RPG safety tools and oversight of how the sessions are run.

The group will focus on teaching people, kids and adults alike, the basics of roleplaying and how to effectively run fantasy roleplaying games.

Check out the UUS Committee and Team Reports for more events.

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

UUS Committee and Team Reports

BUDDHIST SANGHA

The birth of the Buddha in Lumbini in 543 BCE and a Happy New Year 2025 makes this B.E. 2568 to Buddhists. The dates of upcoming Sangha meetings will be **Dec 30, Jan 6, 13, 20, and 27**. Mark your calendars and join us.

We have found Zen Buddhism a rich treasure of practice and learning. Zen is an important school of East Asian Buddhism that constitutes the mainstream monastic form of Mahayana Buddhism in China, Korea, and Vietnam and accounts for approximately 20 percent of the Buddhist temples in Japan. In modern times, Zen has been identified especially with the secular arts of medieval Japan such as the tea ceremony, flower arranging, calligraphy, ink painting, gardening, and even martial arts. We will use the art of storytelling for moral education and Zen poetry to awaken our heart-mind to the possibility of human goodness.

The Sangha meets Monday evening at 7pm on Zoom. Login details will be found on our weekly agendas posted on Realm. To find out more, contact the Buddhist Sangha group leaders at buddhistsangha@uusic.org.

COVENANT GROUPS

In December, Covenant Groups gathered to talk about “Living Love through the Practice of Presence.” That’s a large subject. “Living Love” could fill an entire discussion session by itself, so how does “presence” figure in? If we understand it to mean more than just bodily presence but the quality of paying attention, practicing awareness, and truly experiencing the reality of another, then the implications for love become clear.

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How do we experience love for others, or for our environment/world, without being genuinely with them, transcending the boundaries that separate us and keep us from knowing and appreciating them? Being present to each other is the pathway to love.

We'll begin next year by investigating the power of "Story" in our lives. The stories we learn and tell others direct our lives in countless ways. We learn about our world through story—our country's history and current events are communicated in narratives through media of all kinds. We form our beliefs around them. More important are the stories we tell about ourselves—and are told about us. We base self-understanding on them. But are they necessarily true? Perhaps we think we're a certain way—socially clumsy, not very smart, accident prone—because we repeat those beliefs to ourselves over and over. What stories are running in your head about who you are, and who you are not, what you are and are not capable of? Where did those stories come from and why do they persist? And most important of all, how can the ones you don't like, that keep you from realizing your life's goals, be changed?

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. If you're interested, please contact Nic Kaplan (education@uusic.org) for more information.

FREE LUNCH

On Friday, Dec 13 a large group of volunteers from UUS made spaghetti casserole, pasta primavera (vegan), green and fruit salads, and holiday cookies to serve to 117 hungry diners. Those helping were Bob Littlehale, Paul Gilbert, Mary Dix, Juli Statton, Theresa Ullerich, Dick Siefers, Carolyn Johnson, Mark Penno, Janet McKee, Terri O'Berry, John Elson, Gare Calhoun, Caryl Lyons, and Cynthia Crawford. Frank Wildensee oversaw the cooking and Vicki Siefers purchased food from the Free Lunch fund for the casseroles. Those who helped by bringing salad fixings and fruit for the salads were Pete Brokaw, Virginia Stamler, Barb Haring, and David Quegg. The cookies were supplied by the Monday Daytime Covenant Group. The main dish was sponsored by Diana Miller and Carmen Griggs.

Next month the group will be using an arm roast donated to the Free Lunch program and making beef stew and a meatless vegetable soup, as well as the usual green and fruit salads. The next lunch is Friday, January 10. If you are interested in helping out at one of the shifts send an email to freelunch@uusic.org to get on the list to receive the Sign Up Genius invitation. Each shift is only 1½ hours long so you won't spend your whole morning working and you will get a nice warm fuzzy feeling helping to fight hunger on a cold January day.

GREEN SANCTUARY

Climate Justice Revival (CRJ) Updates

The CJR participants came up with ideas for 11 groups to follow up on climate justice intentions. After posting their ideas in the Sanctuary on Saturday, people had a chance to sign up for what they wanted to work on. We left them up for Sunday morning and got even more sign-ups.

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After that, Kirk, Sally, and Jan split up the lists and contacted all the folks who signed up by group with an outline for how they can get started. The groups are:

1. Social Justice Education* - Increase Social Justice in Jr. and Sr. High School
2. Difficult Conversations* - Be a community space for difficult conversations
3. Giving - Increase the culture of giving at UUS and beyond
4. Fix It Workshops - Have classes/workshops on how to fix things
5. Nature Education - Nature walks and education
6. Garden - Start a community garden to support those who need food
7. Engage with Diverse Groups* - Provide opportunities for engagement with diverse groups
8. Woodlands*- Improve health of our woodlands and improve tree canopy in Coralville
9. Diversity* - Give attention to building diversity in our congregation
10. Resiliency - Complete plans for becoming a resiliency center
11. Sustainability - Take what we learn about sustainability and bring it deeply into our homes

The first step for any group was to have someone take on leadership, and we have leaders for the starred groups listed above. Each group was paired with one or more UUS teams to help make sure efforts are coordinated with the rest of church programs. The leader's job is to call the first meeting where the group comes up with its specific purpose, and designates people to fill the roles of leading meetings, keeping a record of decisions, and managing communication inside the group and with the UUS team they are paired with. If you are interested in joining a group, or helping lead it, please email Jan at jan.weaver57@gmail.com.

January Better Together

Each month of Better Together we have actions that members of the congregation can take to address climate Mitigation, Adaptation, Resilience, and Justice. Winter's focus is Justice and Equity. For January the specific focus is to Aid the Refugee and Immigrant. We need to understand how our actions directly and indirectly upend the lives of others and act on them responsibly.

Begin by checking out the January Social Justice column for Three Things You Can Do to Support Immigrants. Sally Hartman spells out how you can Use Your Voice, Make Connections, and Take Action NOW.

What is the connection between climate change and migration? The Migration Policy Institute identified 33 million displacements related to natural disasters in 2022. The Institute found that most movement was within the displaced persons' own countries. They also found that by year's end after natural disasters, most returned home to rebuild.

However, the gradual changes produced by climate change are likely to affect migration patterns in far different ways. For example, just a degree or two increase in average temperature may make a formerly productive region unsuitable for a widely planted crop. It may increase water demands in already water stressed areas. It may cause the spread of insect vectors of plant and animal diseases because winters aren't cold enough to knock their populations back. This slow but unavoidable change in crop productivity will drive people away from their homes permanently because there will be nothing to come back to.

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The next best time is now. Plant your metaphorical tree now by taking your 1st or your 20th or your 100th step to reduce your climate impact.

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You will find suggestions and resources in back issues of the UUS newsletter in the Green Sanctuary column.

Electric Vehicle Enthusiasts

Join a Public Email Discussion List centered around electric vehicles (EVs), EV charging, EV life. Help promote Electric Vehicles and Plug In Electric Vehicles. Open to anyone interested in Electric Vehicles

To subscribe to this list, send an email to ev+subscribe@uusic.org. You will get a reply email verifying your request. Then just click 'Join This Group' button. Or if you have a google account, visit groups.google.com/a/uusic.org/g/ev, and click 'Join Group'.

Social and Environmental Justice (SEJ) Sunday January 12

Green Sanctuary is collaborating with the Social Justice Team to hold Social and Environmental engagement activities on second Sundays. Look for this sign and help us make good trouble by writing a letter, penning a postcard, or signing a petition for a SEJ cause. (SEJ is pronounced "sedge" like the plant.)

Our January Meeting Will be on Zoom!

Green Sanctuary is Wednesday January 8, 7 pm at us02web.zoom.us/j/88132264216. Contact Jan Weaver - jan.weaver57@gmail.com for more information or to get on our email list.

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."

PenPal Program

PMT continued to be active in its PenPal program. Members regularly correspond with incarcerated individuals either by "snail mail" or through the Iowa Department of Corrections' e-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 www.uusic.org/connect/#justice.

Worthy Now Prison Ministry Network

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 worthynow.org.

January 2025 Meeting

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

SECULAR HUMANISTS

The January Secular Humanist meeting will be on Tuesday, January 21, our usual third Tuesday, at the UUS building in Coralville at 7 pm. Caryl Lyons will host a discussion on the current state of the death penalty. Obviously, Iowa currently does not have a death penalty, but the possibility is brought up nearly every year in our legislature. In a number of states, executions are a fairly regular occurrence. Caryl will bring some information about where executions are taking place across the U.S. and around the world. We will discuss some of the ways any of us can advocate for change, if we are interested. Bring ideas and questions. There will be the usual online option.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Skip reading this if you think UUS social justice does not apply to you! If you do think social justice is integral to who we are as UUs, read on. The Social Justice Team wants to share three things with you. First, what are some plans the coming year, as in what is our Project 2025. Second, what were our 2024 immigration activities, and how to support immigrants this coming year. Third, who are our partners in Social Justice?

2025 Social Justice Planning

The UUS Social Justice Team members have a variety of passions, including racial justice, immigration, income inequality, and hunger. Planning for 2025 incorporated all those interests. One plan is to hold a monthly Day of Service instead of a yearly one day event. Last month was our start of this format, and many of showed up to create holiday baskets and wrap presents for our Circle of Friends families.

Throughout January we collect toiletries, backpacks, t-shirts, underwear and socks for men associated with the Inside Out Reentry Community. Many are leaving prison with nothing. Look for a donation box in the UUS entry.

The following month, join us on February 15 at 1 pm for the Day of Service Valentine's party for immigrant children and their families. We will serve snacks, play games, and give small gifts. There might be a piñata or even dancing. All are invited!

The second 2025 plan involves encouraging contact with our state legislators by writing letters, but also by attending Lobby Days held by social justice organizations. Both Interfaith Alliance and Citizens for Community Improvement have scheduled a lobby day in February where one-on-one conversations with legislators takes place. Let's carpool and show up at the Capitol!

Immigration 2024 and 2025

What are Carmen and Yoel up to? Yoel has been working and learning to drive. Carmen is job hunting and in the meantime sews and works on learning English. In November they welcomed Carmen's son, Lázaro and his partner, Yeneys. A great team of folks has been working with both couples. Thank you, Peg Voelker for the timely donation of furniture, and John Cunningham for providing housing to our newest Cuban couple. Many others have contributed by tutoring, providing transportation, job searches, completion of forms, and numerous other tasks. A special thanks goes to Fanny and Tom Carver for housing Carmen and Yoel for six months.

What is up for 2025? Many agencies and organizations are gearing up for an uncertain but possibly painful year for immigrants. Our presence brings hope to those fearful of what the future may bring. For this reason, support for immigrants compels us for heart-felt action.

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Three things we can do to support immigrants... and that we can't do when it is too late.

1. USE YOUR VOICE: Write legislators by making a plan. Consider how you would be most likely to follow through. Do you need to designate a day of the week for letter writing? Is it easier with a friend or group? Do you have the email addresses of your legislators? Have you researched or found a fact sheet to help you make points? Choose a focus. Are you going to write about mass deportation or the use of Iowa National Guard for enforcement? Here are some points about mass deportation:

- Family separation means family trauma
- Exorbitant costs of such action will be borne by the taxpayers
- Communities who depend on workers face a huge loss, including hotels, construction, including roofers, restaurants, hospitals, nursing homes, etc.

2. MAKE CONNECTIONS: Increase your proximity to men, women and children who are immigrants. Then you will understand their challenges and be able to act. You could volunteer for an organization that serves that population. Check their websites:

- UU Society Circle of Friends: contact Sally Hartman (sallyahartman@hotmail.com)
- Immigrant Welcome Network: Volunteer to help families new to Iowa City (see below)
- Open Heartland: Volunteer to sort clothing, tutor, etc. openheartland.org/
- Center for Worker Justice: (see below)
- Catholic Worker House: volunteer in two immigrant houses: iowacitycatholicworker.org/

3. TAKE ACTION: Get ready and show up. To start, attend informational meetings, tune into podcasts, and read articles. Attend rallies, public witness and protests. Attend lobby days at the Capitol sponsored by such groups as Interfaith Alliance and Citizens for Community Improvement (CCI). People in turmoil will need transportation, monetary support, food, housing, and visits in jail. Learn empathy and advocacy. Time at the sidelines is over.

Community Partners

UUS Social Justice involves working as a team, but it also calls us to connect with community partners to build rapport and trust. Here are a few of our Community Partners we rely on for assistance. We can give back by donating and volunteering.

Immigrant Welcome Network Johnson

County: The focus of IWN-JC involves settling immigrants new to Iowa City. Other options are not possible, so families often move in with another family. Two families at a time stay in the rental house. IWN-JC started a campaign to purchase their own house. Donate to ensure a softer landing for immigrants coming to our community. Check the website: www.iwnjc.org

Center for Worker Justice: CWJ is known for their tenacious pursuit of those who steal wages from workers. They recently recovered \$27,000 for two workers, and their next project of theft involves \$54,000. In addition to wage theft issues, CWJ is working on affordable housing, confronting banks not honoring the Johnson County Community ID, and offering computer, English, and sewing classes. A new Rapid Response Team will challenge threats against immigrants. Join them: cwjiowa.org

Houses into Homes: Our own Ian Cawley serves as the Director of Operations for this organization. Donations of furniture and household items are passed on to needy families.

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Ian says they have a need for volunteers and would love for UUS members and friends to join them. Contact Ian:

ian@housesintohome.org

UU MYSTICS

Monthly Meeting

UUMystics will gather on 2nd Wed of January (01/08) at 7pm in the conference room if it is available. If not, watch for a sign redirecting you to an alternate room. Or join via Zoom: us02web.zoom.us/j/81502644724?pwd=MC10EW4b3riemcksasC3XkWC1IPEbB.1.

Meeting ID: 815 0264 4724
Passcode: 029046

UUMystics Expand Our Search for Truth & Meaning

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. We are currently brainstorming a rich variety of topics for our future gatherings. You are warmly invited to bring your curiosity, your yearning, your experience, and your loving heart.

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)