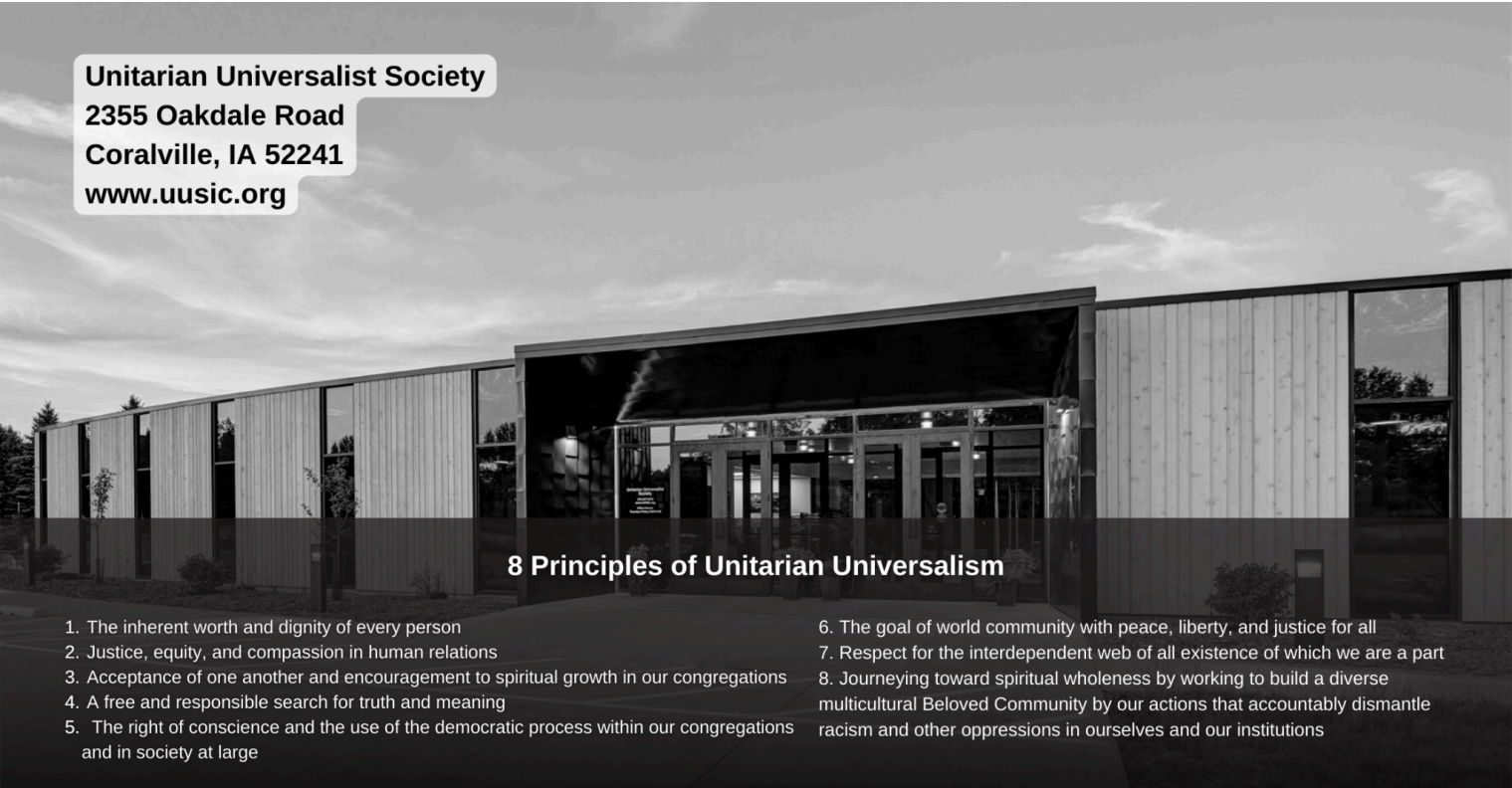


Unitarian Universalist Society  
2355 Oakdale Road  
Coralville, IA 52241  
www.uusic.org



## 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

*May 2025 Newsletter*

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# Upcoming Services

*May 2025 Sunday Services*

## **May 4: Music Sunday**

Join us as UUS's member musicians help us celebrate the power of Imagination through music during our annual music Sunday service. Rev. Diana Smith preaching.

## **May 11: Growing Our Garden**

Join us for our annual Flower Ceremony and to celebrate the volunteers that make UUS bloom. Rev. Diana Smith preaching.

## **May 18: Like Sand Through the Hourglass**

As the saying goes, the only constant is change. This Sunday we are honoring yet another change in the life of UUS as our Ministerial Intern Bridget Laflin says goodbye.

## **May 25: What is Service to You?**

Details TBA. Watch for the service description in our upcoming emails! Marsha Cheyney speaking.

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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## **May Offerings**

May Sunday Offerings benefit [Inside Out Reentry Community](http://www.insideoutreentry.org), a nonprofit organization based in Iowa City serving people returning to Johnson County after incarceration. They support people involved in the criminal legal system in changing from the inside out and to educate the public, in order to promote healing, restore relationships and achieve success in the community.

Cash and check donations are collected during the Sunday service offering. Checks should be made out to UUS and have "Inside Out" on the memo line. You can also donate online at [bit.ly/UUSPartner](http://bit.ly/UUSPartner) and select "Monthly Community Partner," text "GivetoUUSIC Partner" to 73256, or mail a check to the UUS office.

# Why Membership Matters

Paula Miller

Why become a member of the UUS? Excellent question! Most of the activities and services here at UUS are open to everyone regardless of membership status. In fact – you don't even have to be a member to contribute to the operating budget!

However, when you take those steps toward becoming a member you are walking in the footsteps of people who have dedicated so much time and talent to build the UUS we know and love today. Your new path will not only extend their legacy further, but will keep building and sustaining the UUS and our community partners in ways that will endure long after you are no able to contribute. Membership allows you to support the UUS in specific roles reserved for members, such as voting in the congregational meetings or joining one of our vital Board committees that do the groundwork for keeping the mission and vision of UUS vision intact and growing. You will also have priority and special rates for reserving the beautiful UUS facilities for major life events and ministerial services.

Membership is a personal investment because you are putting your time and energy into a place where you also get so much in return. When you make that commitment to officially become a member you are also expanding what UUS can offer based on what activities you feel personally drawn to. Almost every week there is a gathering or activity that could really use your specific skill set and where you might have potentially life changing encounters with brilliant, dedicated people.

Please reach out to Victoria Huitt, Membership Coordinator at [welcome@uusic.org](mailto:welcome@uusic.org) or any of our Membership Associates team ([membershipassociates@uusic.org](mailto:membershipassociates@uusic.org)) to get more information. Watch the calendar for Orientations and classes related to membership.

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## Upcoming Events

### Beltane Celebration, May 3

This event is open to all ages and physical abilities, the general public, and UUS members - the more, the merrier!

Join us for a joyful evening of music, merriment, and more to celebrate the peak of spring and the coming of summer. Enjoy wonderful music, set your intentions, and participate in (or just watch) a maypole dance and treats over the fire.

**Doors open at 6:00.** Festivities begin with the crafting of flower crowns and bee headbands, followed by music, singing, and preparing the ribbons for the maypole dance. We will process a short distance to the circle, acknowledge sacred space, and dance (or just watch) the traditional Maypole dance (instructions for the simple steps of the dance

will be given). After the dance ends and the ribbons are tied, we'll move to the bonfire for treats and drinks. We will sing our farewells at 9:00 pm

### Artist in Residence Performance, May 4

Ramin Roshandel, a Persian composer and setar player, will be performing at 4PM at UUS. All are welcome to enjoy this free concert by our first Artist in Residence.

### Men's Sunday Social, May 4

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. Currently, our monthly gatherings take place at 2Dogs Pub (1705 First Avenue, Iowa City).

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Send questions to Russ Lenth and Phil Beck at [menssundaysocial@uusic.org](mailto:menssundaysocial@uusic.org).

## **Free Lunch Program, May 9**

The UUS Free Lunch Team will be serving a meal on Friday, May 9. See the Free Lunch Program update in the UUS Committees and Teams Report below for all the details.

## **Compassionate Connections, May 11**

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, May 11**

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 are appreciated but not necessary.

## **Banned Book Club, May 11**

Join us for our first monthly gathering of our Banned Book Club. This month we will be discussing CRANK by Ellen Hopkins.

Please reach out to Nic Kaplan if you need help obtaining the book: [education@uusic.org](mailto:education@uusic.org).

## **Rev. Diana Community Office Hours, May 14**

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

## **Author Ellen Hopkins Visit, May 17**

Join us at UUS as we welcome the most banned author in the USA on May 17. Author Ellen Hopkins will lead a writing workshop in the morning and speak in the afternoon.

- **10 am - 11:30 am: Writing Workshop.** Bring your laptop or a notebook for the writing exercises.
- **2 -3 pm: Community Talk & Book Signing.** Ellen Hopkins will speak and answer questions. After she speaks, Ellen will sit for a book signing. Prairie Lights will be here before and after the talk with a selection of Ellen's books for sale.

## **Congregational Meeting, May 18**

Members of UUS will gather after service for the Spring Congregational Meeting. Details will be available via email.

## **UUS Men's Sharing Circle, May 18**

Men who are UUS members and friends are invited to join us at 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).

## **UUS Board Meeting, May 21**

The UUS Board of Trustees holds a monthly meeting at 6:30 pm on third Wednesdays, with the public portion typically beginning at about 6:50 after a chalice lighting and check-in. UUS members and friends are welcome to attend. Meetings are held in the UUS Conference Room, unless otherwise specified, and can also be joined via the Zoom link. Advance notice of attendance is appreciated by contacting the Board President at [president@uusic.org](mailto:president@uusic.org). ([Zoom Link](#), Meeting ID: 891 3256 0297, password:184155, or join by phone)

## **Day of Service, May 24**

Watch the updates for more details on the May Day of Service!

## **Compassionate Connections, May 25**

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.

## **Rev. Diana Community Office Hours, May 28**

Rev. Diana will be at City Park from 4 pm to 5:30 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, May 28**

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.

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

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

## UUS Committee and Team Reports

### BUDDHIST SANGHA

Spring brings new beginnings, and it is the same for UU Buddhist Sangha. Monday, May 12 is a special day on our calendar—Vesak, or Buddha's Birthday. This is the day the Buddhist world and the UN designated to honor and celebrate the birth of Siddhartha Gautama around 563 BCE in present day Nepal. There will be no Zoom meeting that date but a gathering of our members at a sacred site to be determined.

Beginning on May 19, we are opening a new introductory direction to welcome new members who wish to renew their interest in learning about the Buddha's teachings with a text by two great religion scholars—Huston Smith and Philip Novak. Our intention is to share a concise introduction to Buddhism by award-winning professors. Its interest to us is in the second half of the book, the global migration and development of Buddhism in the west, especially in America. We need the spiritual direction it offers in these troubling times.

So if you are curious about Buddhism, this will be a learned introduction—Buddhism 101. We are part of Groups to Nurture Mind and Spirit in the newsletter. We send an agenda each week to members of UU Buddhist Sangha on Realm. Weekly meetings are on Zoom Mondays at 7:00-8:30 pm. For more information, contact our leaders at [buddhistsangha@uusic.org](mailto:buddhistsangha@uusic.org).

### COVENANT GROUPS

In April, Covenant Groups discussed the importance of making time in our lives to experience and share joy. More than just important, it's essential, necessary for our well-being. Without moments of joy, life can be dreary and grim. The world is too often unforgiving, and our bodies fragile. What combats the toll they take on our spirits? Love, certainly. A feeling of belonging; a sense of purpose. And, no less important, the ability to transcend the ordinary by experiencing joy. Joy is not the same as happiness, which has more to do with achieving a certain level of contentment, a condition of balance. As Martha Beck writes, "Happiness is attached to things being a certain way. But joy is about the bliss of being. It transcends highs and lows."

What types of things bring you joy? Do you make enough time in your life to discover and feel joy?

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 at [education@uusic.org](mailto:education@uusic.org) for more information.

### FREE LUNCH

On April 11, the UUS Free Lunch Team made a garbanzo bean bowl with turkey, vegetables, and brown rice, along with a fruit salad and homemade vanilla bars baked by Pete Brokaw. Frank Wildensee came up with the recipe and Bob Littlehale, Juli Statton, Kezia Walker-Cecil, and Barb Haring helped mix up the bean bowls. Russ Lenth and Theresa Ullrich made the fruit salad.

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Carolyn Johnson, Janet McGee, Terri O'Berry and Gene McCracken helped serve, Mimi Sherburne and Gay Mikelson prepared the silverware, Gare Calhoun served drinks, and John Elson, Cynthia Crawford, and Caryl Lyons cleaned up. 122 meals were served.

Next month, Bonnie Penno will sponsor the meal in honor of Mother's Day. The team will mix up some mac and cheese, heat up chicken strips, and mix up some salads. Please consider joining us on May 9. Send an email to [freelunch@uusic.org](mailto:freelunch@uusic.org) to receive the Sign Up Genius or consider sponsoring a meal.

## GREEN SANCTUARY

### A Greener Home: Sustainability Bingo and Green Geeks

One of the initiatives from last November's Climate Justice Revival was bringing sustainability more deeply into our homes. This past Sunday, April 20, we launched our plan to do that with Sustainability Bingo and Green Geeks.

### Sustainability Bingo

When we introduced Sustainability Bingo this past Sunday it wasn't intended to be a scientific survey, just a fun way to get a feel for our sustainability actions. Folks could fill out a level 1 (24 actions) or a level 2 (48 actions) Bingo Sheet while enjoying after service snacks. Forty-seven people filled out a sheet.

The percentages of people taking actions listed on both the Level 1 and 2 bingo sheets were sorted into four groups based on what percentage of people practiced an action.

- **High (100-75%)** – people recycled, donated to thrift shops, met regularly with friends, used LED bulbs, knew their neighbors, and shopped local.

- **High Middle (75-50%)** – people reduced single use plastics, stayed hydrated, composted food waste, got regular exercise, limited pesticide use, limited social media, had good sleep habits, protested or lobbied, mended, and walked regularly.
- **Low Middle (50-25%)** – people were fixing leaks in doors and windows, donating to green causes, eating vegetarian, using public transit, knowledgeable about local species, and getting energy audits.
- **Low (25-1%)** – people used Freecycle, had high efficiency appliances, furnaces, water heaters, doors, and windows, were active in a green group, and reduced air travel.

People might have wondered a bit at the inclusion of social behaviors, like knowing your neighbors, and physical and mental health behaviors, like exercise and limiting social media. These actions are important for building social cohesion and community resilience. In addition, improving personal mental and physical health can help reduce the use of medications, some of which flow right through our bodies and then through wastewater treatment plants into streams, rivers, lakes and oceans.

If you have ideas for more things to include, or wonder why certain things were included at all, email Jan at [jan.weaver57@gmail.com](mailto:jan.weaver57@gmail.com). We are going to repeat this activity in July, so your suggestions to make it better will be very helpful.

If you didn't have a chance to try out Sustainability Bingo, you can play a less fun version at:

Level 1 – <https://bit.ly/44SRrig>  
Level 2 – <https://bit.ly/3RHxRya>

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### **Green Geeks**

We also shared information on **Green Geeks**, our project to find and promote the folks who are passionate about a green practice and willing to share what they know with people who want to try something new, but could use some help. We have four volunteers who can talk about gardening, rewilding a yard, electric cars, mending, and a whole house management system.

We are still figuring out the communication piece of this but will have more information next month. Meanwhile, we are looking for other Green Geeks. If you have a topic you are passionate about, let us know. Contact Jan (see above).

### **May Better Together – Strengthen the Interdependent Systems**

Work to preserve and grow diverse natural, social, and economic systems.

**Support diverse natural systems** by learning to identify plants. They make great candidates for learning about nature because, unlike animals, they don't move. Start with an APP like Plantnet or iNaturalist, or go old school with a plant ID book for Iowa. Once you learn what characteristics to look for, identification gets easier. When you get more confident, learn to ID invasive species, like garlic mustard. Become a garlic mustard scout. Learn how to identify garlic mustard and pull it up-roots and all-whenver you go for a walk on public lands. Identification guide here: <https://bit.ly/4ISP5q2>.

**Support diverse social systems** by getting to know your neighbors and interacting with them more. How to start? The first thing is to get outside more, and May is a great time to start.

You can walk around the block, putter in the front yard, or plant yourself with a chair and book in your driveway. Wave to whoever walks by, and if an opportunity presents itself, strike

up a conversation. You can show off your outdoor projects, asks about theirs, see if they have a tool you can borrow, or a contractor they can recommend. Want to take it further, check out these neighborhood initiatives: <https://bit.ly/44axRhu>.

**Support diverse local economic systems** by shopping local, going to farmers markets, and using thrift stores. Then you can take it up a notch by treating your hometown (or county) like a tourist destination. Check out sites like "Travel Iowa" and type in Johnson County to find places like the Johnson County Historic Poor Farm in Iowa City, or the Big Grove Preserve in Solon. Check out community calendars to see what events are happening in your town, like Coralville's Asian Festival (5/17 in S.T. Morrison Park).

### **Social and Environmental Justice (SEJ) Sunday May 11**

Look for our table in the Fellowship hall to write a postcard, letter, or to sign a petition to promote Social and Environmental Justice.

### **Our May Meeting Will be Hybrid!**

Green Sanctuary Meeting is Wednesday, May 14 at 7 pm. Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88132264216?pwd=R2hyclJWOWxjYVVFUd2J0amRhZHyrQT09#success>

Meeting ID: 881 3226 4216

Passcode 184155

Contact Jan Weaver at [jan.weaver57@gmail.com](mailto:jan.weaver57@gmail.com) for more information, or to get on our email list.

## **PRISON MINISTRY**

Back in January, team members Ron Pile and Phil Beck took part in a panel discussion on an episode of Sue Hutchins' YouTube series, Iowa Prison Perspectives. Their topic was "The Value of a Reformed Murderer," an essay by Michael Blackwell, who's incarcerated for life without parole in Iowa's correctional system.

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It makes a powerful case for giving a second chance to “lifers” who have turned their lives around and become productive members of society while still behind bars. Read the essay: <https://www.uusic.org/connect/#justice>.

Watch the Iowa Prison Perspectives video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nGlCg8leMU&t=687s>.

PMT continued to be active in its 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 individuals 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 [worthynow.org](http://worthynow.org).

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 May 6, 2025, at 7:00, either in person or via Zoom (Meeting ID: 848 0842 4430; Passcode: 184155)

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## UUS Board Meeting Minutes

March 19, 2025, at 6:30 p.m

**Present:** Jeff Walberg (President), Sarah Ross (Vice-President), Lucy Gamon (Secretary), Michael Honey-Arcement (Treasurer), Ernie Cox (Trustee), Ian Cawley (Trustee). **Absent:** Monique DiCarlo (Trustee). Quorum met.

**Guests:** Bridget Laflin (Ministerial Intern), Kaytee Rairdin (Communications Coordinator), Jan Weaver (future VP and Trustee).

The meeting opened at 6:30 p.m. with check-in. Gamon provided Opening Words. Ross lit the chalice.

Consent Agenda	
<b>Reports</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mortgage Feasibility Study Committee report</li><li>• Intern Minister’s Report – Jan.</li><li>• Intern Minister’s Report – Feb.</li><li>• Endowment Committee Minutes - Mar. 3</li><li>• Finance Committee Minutes - Mar. 17</li></ul>	<b>Decisions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approve Feb. 19 Board meeting minutes</li><li>• Approve Ruth Appleton for three-year term on the Personnel Committee, beginning Jan. 2025</li><li>• Appoint Christine Etler as Election Administrator through 2025</li></ul>

Hearing no objections, the Chair declared that the Consent Agenda is adopted.

**Discuss Rentals Program**—Rairdin joined the meeting remotely to describe the status of the UUS Rentals Program. Rairdin has overseen the Rentals Program for approximately three months, after taking over the program from a church member volunteer. According to Rairdin, the demand for church building rentals is strong, and she is very busy. Rairdin has devoted significant hours to restructuring and administering the rentals program.

The Board recognizes that the Rentals Program is aligned with our mission of serving the community, including the marginalized and traditionally underserved. The rentals program also generates significant revenues. The current annual goal for rental revenues is \$27,000. Cawley led the Board in a discussion of how best to manage the Rentals Program. The Board discussed whether we want to devote the time and resources to expanding the Rentals Program into events which generate large rewards but also require a larger expenditure of time and resources, such as higher end weddings. The Board determined not to engage in such an expansion for the remainder of this year.

**Motion**—Gamon moved that we form an ad hoc Rental Program Advisory Committee, chaired by Cawley, which will provide assessment and recommendations on appropriate goals, structures, and staffing to make the rentals program successful and sustainable. Cox seconded the motion. The Board passed the motion unanimously.

**Motion**—Honey-Arcement moved to extend the option for Rairdin to work up to 30 hours/week as needed through April of 2025. Ross seconded the motion. The Board passed the motion unanimously.

**Developing Direction for Fall 2025 Stewardship Campaign**—Gamon updated the Board on the status of the stewardship campaign for 2025, which has fallen somewhat short of the \$400,000 pledge goal. The Board discussed planning for the 2026 Stewardship campaign. Two members of the Stewardship Team have recently resigned. The Board discussed possible replacement members. The Board also discussed ways to integrate communication regarding the Spring Mortgage Campaign and the Fall Stewardship Campaign. The Board further discussed ways to improve financial education for the congregation and ways to encourage increased pledging.

**Spring 2025 Mortgage Campaign**—Walberg led the Board in a review and discussion of the Mortgage Feasibility Study Committee Report. Weaver contributed significantly to the discussion as a member of the relevant committee. The mortgage on the church building will be in the approximate amount of \$675,000 in November of 2025, when it must either be paid off or re-negotiated at a significantly higher interest rate. The Mortgage Committee spoke with multiple members of the congregation to determine the feasibility of reducing or paying off the mortgage this year, and the results were positive. The Board has also considered the input of the Finance Committee and the Endowment Committee regarding the feasibility of a mortgage reduction campaign.

The Board determined to follow the Mortgage Committee's recommendations, and to engage in a Spring mortgage reduction campaign. The Board discussed various strategies for such a campaign, including timing, messaging, and the possibility of multi-year pledges in addition to current donations. The Board also discussed the possibility of using up to \$200,000 from general (non-corporate) endowment funds, and the need for a congregational vote approving the usage of such funds.

**Motion**—Gamon moved that UUS shall conduct a campaign to reduce the mortgage in 2025, with a goal of raising \$350,000 from the congregation. Honey-Arcement seconded the motion. The Board passed the motion unanimously.

**Action Steps:** Cox and Cawley volunteered to engage in individual visits with selected UUS members who may consider larger donations to the mortgage reduction campaign.

### **Closing**

Ross provided process observer comments. Laflin provided closing words. With the agenda completed and no new business from the floor, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

*Lucy Gamon, Board Secretary*

Email the Secretary at [secretary@uusic.org](mailto:secretary@uusic.org) with requests for documents reviewed at the meeting.

*The Board approved these Minutes at the regular Board meeting on April 16, 2025.*