

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

*June 2025 Newsletter*

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# From Your Minister

*Rev. Diana Smith*

Dear Ones,

It is so good to be back with you after my sabbatical. May was a great month at UUS and it was wonderful to see your faces again and find out about all that you did while I was away. I am so grateful to this congregation for supporting me to take a sabbatical, as well as all the ways you took care of each other and supported so many in our wider community.

My sabbatical was wonderful. I left for Peru at the beginning of February, returning in late March. While I was there, I spent three weeks in intensive Spanish study in Cusco while also learning about Peruvian culture and visiting sites in that area. And then I went traveling around Peru.

A few weeks after I returned, a friend and colleague asked me what three takeaways or learnings were from my time in Peru. These have changed a bit since then and will likely continue to change as I digest my experience, but briefly put they are:

- That I love and am fascinated by the world – human and natural – and I love falling in love with the world again and again. I love learning and experiencing new things, whether it's language, culture, history, how people have created systems for empowerment and resilience throughout time, or ecology. And I love how we enrich each other.
- Rest is crucial, living life at a more sustainable pace is crucial, and I need to take better care of myself. I got called back into that covenant with myself and my ministry by many people during my sabbatical.
- I can do a lot that I wouldn't have thought possible. I can't do all the things I've ever been able to, I won't always be able to do the things I can now, and that makes savoring and always finding new ways to love the world a very important part of my life's journey and ministry.

After I returned home, I enjoyed a few weeks of living at a slower pace and learning to apply some of the lessons of my time in Peru to my life here. In the coming weeks and months, I'm looking forward to sharing more about my sabbatical and what I learned. On June 8, I'll be leading a worship service sharing more about this, as well as the 50+ ways to rest that my Spanish teacher schooled me on (some of them surprised me!). Then, after the service on June 8, I'll be sharing a slideshow and some more stories. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

I hope that this spring and summer you take some time to rest (however rest looks to you), reflect on what you're learning about it, and share that with me and others in our beloved community.

Blessed be,  
Rev. Diana

# Upcoming Services

## *June 2025 Sunday Services*

### **June 1: Blessing of the Animals**

Join us as we celebrate our interdependence with our all ages blessing of the animals! Favorite stuffies, small animals in cages/containers, as well as service animals are invited into the sanctuary for the service. We will also be honoring our animal companions who have died, so please bring a picture. After a short service, Rev. Diana Smith will head outside to bless animal companions of all kinds - particularly larger hairy or hooved ones who couldn't come inside.

### **June 8: Learning to Rest**

During my recent sabbatical I learned a lot about slowing down, learning to rest, falling in love with the world, and savoring. Join me (Rev. Diana Smith) to hear some of what I learned and how I'm working to apply it to my life.

### **June 15: PRIDE!**

Join us for our annual LGBTQIA+ Pride worship service! We'll hear from members and Rev. Diana Smith, and all who would like can receive a glitter blessing. After the worship service, we'll have materials and space for making signs and things for the Iowa City Pride parade on Saturday, June 21.

### **June 22: Meet the Moment**

Join us for a General Assembly worship service. Rev. Dr. Nicole C. Kirk preaching.

### **June 29: Learning from Nature**

UUS Member Kezia Walker-Cecil 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](https://www.youtube.com/@UUS_IC).

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## **June Offerings**

June Sunday Offerings benefit Iowa City [Free Medical Clinic](#), a nonprofit organization providing access to affordable health care in Iowa City. FMC believes that access to health care is a human right and strives to provide a wide range of services to those who would otherwise not be able to access health care.

Cash and check donations are collected during the Sunday service offering. Checks should be made out to UUS and have "Free Medical Clinic" 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.

# From Your Membership Coordinator

*Victoria Huitt*

## Starting Point Classes Offered in June on Zoom!

Have you ever wondered about the history of our values and traditions of Unitarian Universalism? Or about our local UUS history? Have you found yourself longing for community and spiritual growth and wondered how to find like-minded individuals? Have you wondered how to get more involved here in the UUS with the Social Justice Team, Green Sanctuary, Covenant Groups and more?

If you are new to UUS as a visitor, new member or a longer term member with an interest in learning more about us, please join us for four Thursday evenings in June! We will be meeting from 7–8:30pm on Zoom June 5, 12, 19, and 26.

Each week will offer a different focus of materials to develop relationships, explore Unitarian Universalism and our congregation. You are welcome to attend any or all of the 4 weeks.

**Thursday, June 5 – Week 1:** We are a welcoming spiritually diverse home, and we embrace the ongoing quest for meaning. Reverend Diana will be joining us to share our principles, values, covenantal relationships, shared ministries and more!

**Thursday, June 12 – Week 2:** We nurture deep connections – Topics include life span religious education, small group learning and spiritual growth offered at UUS. Nic Kaplan, Director of Lifespan Religious Education, will be joining us.

**Thursday, June 19 – Week 3:** We act on our values and advocate for racial and social justice. Speakers will include members from our Social Justice and Green Sanctuary Teams.

**Thursday, June 26 – Week 4:** Stewardship of our congregation and preparation for membership. This meeting will cover the ways you can become involved at UUS in areas that interest you and rights, responsibilities of membership.

These classes will be a wonderful way to meet up with others here at UUS and start the membership process if that is your interest.

Please email Victoria Huitt, Membership Coordinator to register or with questions:  
[welcome@uusic.org](mailto:welcome@uusic.org).

# **Augusta Chapin Award and Evans Worthley Social Justice Award Recipients**

During our Spring Congregational Meeting on May 18, awards were presented to Peg Bouska, Pete Brokaw, and Dave Martin. Below are bios for each of the recipients.

## **Peg Bouska, Evans Worthley Social Justice Award**

In 1931, Evans Worthley became the minister of the Iowa City congregation where he remained until 1951, the longest ministry in the history of the congregation. He was an active community intellectual, a political and social leader and a warm minister. He worked with a local Baptist minister to integrate restaurants in the Iowa City area. In addition, he sponsored dances for college students in the lower hall of the UU church at 10 South Gilbert, charging 50 cents per person in order to raise money for the church and provide a creative outlet for students during the hard depression years.

This year's Social Justice Award winner is Peg Bouska. Peg is one of six kids that were raised on a farm in northeast Iowa. She is a Physician's Assistant. With a continuing focus on health care, she works and volunteers with migrant farm workers. She also has volunteered for over 30 years at the Free Medical Clinic in Iowa City and Cedar Rapids.

In addition, she served the migrant community by teaching English for several years through Iowa City Compassion. She's very active on the UU Sponsorship Team for UUS. This is the group that is currently sponsoring a Cuban couple. Peg reads with kids at Lucas Elementary. In addition, she works with Grow Johnson County. This group is sponsoring field trips for 6th graders in the Iowa City School District. On these field trips, the kids see how food is grown and visit acres of prairie to see pollinators at work.

Peg served as co-chair of the Racial Justice Committee at UUS and taught an anti-racism class. She was instrumental in bringing Caleb Rainey to UUS for a performance as well as Jonathan Buffalo, a member of the Mesquakie Tribe. She visits a prisoner at Oakdale every 6 weeks. In collaboration with Luther College, she and family are working with the Iowa Soybean Association to gather farmers in June to see conservation practices on the family farm.

I think you'll all agree that Peg is a UU to be proud of – she has and is benefitting this congregation, the Iowa City area, and all of Eastern Iowa.

## **Pete Brokaw, Augusta Chapin Meritorious Service Award**

Pete Brokaw has been a member of UUS since 2009. During that time, he has contributed much to our congregation. Pete sent me a list of his activities since he joined and as I looked through the list of his many contributions four words came to mind: Membership - ministers - money - and munchies.

**Membership:** In his early years, Pete served on Membership Associates with Jean Reese and was co-leader of CAYAC - the College and Young Adult Community with Lois Cole. He now participates in a Hospitality Team and a Covenant Group.

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**Ministers:** Pete has been active in supporting our ministers. He was a member of the Ministerial Search Committee that nominated Rev. Steven Protzman, a Member of the Interim Minister Support Team for Rev. Diane Dowgiert and he just finished his time on the Ministerial Internship Support Team for Bridget Laflin.

**Money:** Pete is also a money guy. In the years of his involvement Pete has served on the Board of Trustees, Endowment Committee, and the Stewardship Committee. He was part of the team who looked for a new insurance company for the church and he currently serves on the Finance Committee.

**Munchies:** Pete knows the importance of food. He has helped with dinner preparations for Welcome Home Wednesdays, has provided home meals when needed, and brings great dishes to potluck events. He helps with the Free Lunch program and is the Lead of the Little Free Pantry team.

**In addition:** His miscellaneous jobs include helping as an office volunteer, being active in Social Justice Teams, and helping to sew the cloth book bags we used to make for school children. Pete always shows up on the grounds outdoor work days. One October he even somewhat reluctantly climbed up on the roof with Gary Lawrenson to help clean out the roof drains – it's not the going up the ladder or being on the roof that bothers him – It is coming back down the ladder-- now that is a true commitment.

We are pleased to present Pete with the Augusta Chapin Meritorious Service Award.

## **Dave Martin, Augusta Chapin Meritorious Service Award**

Dave has been a member for 50 years. He has taught RE, OWL and was Co-Director before it was a paid position. Dave has held four Board positions: President, Treasurer Finance and at large, and served on two Ministerial Search Committees. He served on Stewardship, Racial Justice, Social Justice and Endowment. Dave was also a member of the Capitol Campaign for our building.

Before we were Midamerica, he served on the Prairie Star Board as Vice President. After we became MidAmerica he was elected to the first Board for three years. Dave attended Midwest Leadership School in Beloit WI, and served on the staff for three years.

He served as a UUS delegate to several UUA General Assemblies as well as Mid America Regional meetings.

## Upcoming Events

### Men's Sunday Social, June 1

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. 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).

### Rev. Diana Community Office Hours, June 4

Rev. Diana will be at Press Coffee from 4:30pm 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!"

### Banned Book Club, June 8

Join us for our first monthly gathering of our Banned Book Club. This month we will be discussing *Nineteen Minutes* by Jodi Picoult.

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

### Compassionate Connections, June 8

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.

### Pride Vespers, June 11

Lament: As we often say, PRIDE is both a protest and a party. Part of the protest is coming together to support our community around our losses and griefs. Join us for a special LGBTQIA+ PRIDE vespers-style worship service where we'll mark the losses our LGBTQIA+ community has suffered in recent months.

### Free Lunch Program, June 13

The UUS Free Lunch Team will be serving a meal on Friday, June 13. See the Free Lunch Program update in the UUS Committees and Teams Report below for all the details.

### Let Love Fly! North Liberty Pride, June 14

Come celebrate Pride with UUS at the North Liberty Let Love Fly! Pride event on June 14. More details to follow.

### UUS Men's Sharing Circle, June 15

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, June 18

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.

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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).

### **Iowa City Pride, June 21**

Join UUS at the Iowa City Pride parade on June 21! The parade will begin at 12 pm and the vendor fair will go until the evening. More details to follow.

### **Vegan Community Plantuck, June 21**

More details to follow.

### **Compassionate Connections, June 22**

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.

### **Sound Bath Meditation, June 25**

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 June Events at [uusic.org/upcoming-events](https://uusic.org/upcoming-events).

## **UUS Committee and Team Reports**

### **AESTHETICS TEAM, BUILDING AND GROUNDS**

We are looking for a new home for one of the remaining pews from 10 S. Gilbert. The pew is currently in the hallway of UUS. If you are interested and able to move it, please contact Theresa Ullerich at [tullerich@aol.com](mailto:tullerich@aol.com) or 319-541-6555.

### **COVENANT GROUPS**

In May, group members shared the gifts that "The Practice of Imagination" has to offer. Nothing happens without imagination. You can't think, dream, love, create--even fear, without calling upon imagination. Imagination can be playful, in the form of happy daydreaming; inspiring, in the creation of art or scientific thought; or terrible, in the form of suspicion and hatred born of ignorance and misunderstanding. It can spur you to action that changes your life and your part of the world, or it can plunge you into despair and paralysis. Einstein famously said, "Logic will get you from A to Z; imagination will get you everywhere."

So, imagination is a great force, but it manifests itself not only in great deeds but in small, everyday actions. What role does imagination play in your daily life? How does it inform your choices? Which parts of you make the most use of imagination?

In June, groups will tackle the thorny question of freedom. How do we define it, recognize it, live it? Americans hear the word a lot, but we experience it very differently. In this fraught time in our history, what does freedom mean to us as individuals, as UUs, as citizens?

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

## FREE LUNCH

The UUS Free Lunch Team served up some tasty loaded mac and cheese along with donated chicken tenders, fruit salad, and cookies on May 9. 90 people dined in and 20 took carry out so there were no leftovers. Frank Wildensee, Barb Haring, Margaret Kinsman, and Winnie Ganshaw were chopping onions and veggies and mixing up the sauce for the cheese. Juli Statton and Theresa Ullerich made the fruit salad. Terri O'Berry, Janet McKee, Carrie Z Norton, and Sharon Beckman served the food and the clean up crew was Cynthia Crawford, Gary Lawrenson, and John Elson. Rebecca Rong Guo from the College of Public Health joined our team for the morning. Gay Mikelson prepared the silverware. Sally Hartman brought homemade cookies and bars and Pete Brokaw brought pineapple for the salad. Bonnie Penno donated the funds to pay for the main dish in honor of Mother's Day. Join us next month on June 13 when we will make Shepherd's pie.

The team is looking for a couple more people to help with leading the team on the day of the lunch. When either Frank or Vicki are out of town it has become too much work for one person. Please think about joining an already well organized group. The main commitment is to be present for the whole morning. Send an email to [vicki.siefers@gmail.com](mailto:vicki.siefers@gmail.com) for more information. We are currently looking for extra help for July and September.

## GREEN SANCTUARY

### Reorganizing Green Sanctuary

While we have a respectable list of folks interested in Green Sanctuary, showing up for meetings is not how most of them want to participate. Therefore, GS is proposing a different approach to organizing the work. This involves splitting it into four ways for GS members can contribute. As we reorganize, we will take a break from regular meetings in June and July while we check in with current members about this plan.

1. **Planning Team:** The Planning Team will meet monthly to plan on actions and initiatives and propose policy. The roles are moderator, convener, note taker. Roles can be combined and rotated. Needs (but is not limited to) 4-5 people
2. **Communication Team:** The Communication Team is responsible for the monthly newsletter column, any Wednesday emails, the Green Geeks Directory, and the annual report. At least one member should attend the monthly planning team meeting.
3. **Helpers** (no meetings necessarily required): Helpers volunteer to help carry out plans at least two times a year with specific one-time or limited-time activities. These include Social and Environmental Justice Sundays, All Ages Sundays, Sustainability Bingo Sundays, potlucks, planning and putting on a service, helping with a fundraiser, joint activities with other groups, showing up at demonstrations, writing the Better Together column, volunteering to be a Green Geek, and proposing and helping plan specific GS activities.

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4. **Green Geeks (GGs):** GGs are passionate about an environmental/sustainability practice and willing to share about it in our GG Directory. This requires writing a brief description of how to get started in a practice, useful links, and a photo of them engaging in their practice. You don't have to belong to GS to be a Green Geek.

### **June Better Together - CONNECT WITH OTHERS**

Actively seek out and foster relationships with others, especially with those different from you, to strengthen a network resistant to crisis.

Last June, suggestions included getting to know your neighbors, learning about a species of plant or animal you see regularly, and exploring a different culture through its food, music, or literature. If you haven't had a chance to do these yet, give them a try. Ask to pet a neighbor's dog, or ask about a plant in their yard. Find the biggest tree in your neighborhood and figure out what it is, then look up information on its species. Try a different cuisine, by doing a search of international restaurants in Iowa City/Coralville and pick one to eat at for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

If you have taken some of these steps already, time to level up. Neighbors: Hold a modest social event with/for neighbors. It could be as simple as cookies and lemonade on your driveway or in a community space in your apartment block. Species: Download a species identification app like iNaturalist, Pl@ntNet, or Merlin (for bird songs) and hold a mini BioBlitz for yourself and a few friends to see how many species you can identify in your neighborhood in an hour. Culture: Commemorate and celebrate Juneteenth on June 19, the day that the Emancipation Proclamation was shared with enslaved

people in Galveston Texas. Check out local events at [icjuneteenth.com](http://icjuneteenth.com).

### **Social and Environmental Justice Sunday (SEJ) Sunday June 8**

For the May SEJ nine people wrote 25 postcards to thank Republican State Senators for supporting changes to the eminent domain law that would PREVENT condemning private property for the CO2 Pipeline. This would effectively STOP the pipeline in Iowa. On Monday, the Senate approved the changes. The House had already approved the changes, so the bill that can kill the pipeline is now on the Governor's desk.

Look for our table in the Fellowship Hall after the service on June 8 to pen a postcard, write a letter, or sign a petition to promote Social and Environmental Justice.

### **PRISON MINISTRY**

In May, 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' e-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 [www.uusic.org/connect/#justice](http://www.uusic.org/connect/#justice).

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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; email for passcode).

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

**The UUS Day of Service** enables UUS volunteers to join others in making a difference for families and agencies impacted by the current unstable governmental assistance. In the past we sorted and organized household goods, offered a party for Immigrant children, and assembled toiletries for those reentering after a sentence. In June, we will likely be volunteering for one of several agencies, but hopefully we will be returning to Houses into Homes. Join us!

**Check out the Second Sunday Social and Environmental Justice Table on June 8 to be in the know!** You will be able to write postcards, peruse handouts and talk to fellow UUs about such justice issues as prison ministry, environmental impact, income inequality and immigrant justice. You can ask to hear stories that illuminate how oppressive forces work. We all have the capacity to learn more than what is in the newspaper, social media and newsfeed.

**UUS Social Justice Team partnered with the Center for Worker Justice to offer sewing classes.** Carmen from Cuba, Alona from Ukraine, and women from other countries attended the classes. They made aprons, change purses, and tote bags. Special thanks go to volunteer Winnie Ganshaw and Jan Weaver, who secured funding for the class.

**The UUS program on Community Partners** enables UUS members to donate to twelve different agencies through the Sunday collection and Realm. The Community Partners are voted on and selected every three years. Look for a nomination form or e-form later this summer. Once we have nominations, then UUS members will vote on which ones will be the twelve to receive the donations generated on Sunday. Thanks go to Diane Martin and Susan Dasovich for organizing and promoting Community Partners.

**There is a rupture in our country's safety net!** Cuts in funding for Medicaid, children's mental health, assistance to food banks, housing, medical research, and teen pregnancy prevention, to name a few, will devastate many families. The quality of life for them and for all of us seems to diminish every day, with less funding for libraries, schools, renewable energy incentives, and perhaps even access to movies. Social Justice is much more than tossing money to ameliorate oppressive forces. That is why UUS offers many opportunities to get involved. **Join UUs in the quest for justice.** The Social Justice Team meets the 2nd Tuesday at 7 pm. Join us in person or hybrid (online). We need your voice, your experience, your thoughts. Join us **June 10**. There will be cookies!

## IUUWAN: State Action Network

The Iowa UU Witness and Advocacy Network connects all UU congregations in Iowa for Social Justice. Three subgroups meet monthly as does the IUUWAN board. These subgroups actively work to solve issues in the areas of Environment, Immigration, and LGBTQ+ issues. A plan was developed at the May IUUWAN board meeting to offer a stipend of \$100 to any Iowa UU congregation to spend for any activity related to Pride month.

Should you be interested in joining any of the subgroups or the IUUWAN board, contact Sally Hartman ([sallyahartman@hotmail.com](mailto:sallyahartman@hotmail.com)). During this uncertain time, UUs need each other more than ever!

## UU MYSTICS

UUMystics now gather monthly on the **first Wednesday of each month at 7 pm** (please note another new day & time change) in the conference room, and on Zoom, to continue our deep sharing and exploration of “Spiritual Awakening” and relevant topics. We are a community of spiritual seekers under the UUA & UUS umbrella, and we welcome your energy, presence, experiences, and sharing. Our UUMystics community is self-directed with shared decision-making.

*“Our separation from each other is an optical illusion.....when something vibrates, the electrons of the entire universe resonate with it. Everything is connected. The greatest tragedy of human existence is the illusion of separateness.” -Albert Einstein*

For the next few gatherings, we will continue sharing personal stories of our spiritual journeys and how that has led us to our current spiritual orientation. We affirm everyone’s personal journey, knowing there are as many “paths to the mountaintop” as there are people.

If you wish to participate and cannot be present, please join us here:

### Zoom A Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81502644724?pwd=3q7vYclH2qxbdf6wQA4L9xfCCisan0.1>

Meeting ID: 815 0264 4724

Email for passcode

Our gatherings are also open to anyone from the public who is referred by a group member and agrees to honor our mutual covenant. Please contact ([miriam.kashia@gmail.com](mailto: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.

We welcome your presence, your curiosity, your experiences, your spiritual practices and beliefs, and your questioning heart as we co-create this Spiritual Awakening adventure together.

# UUS Board Meeting Minutes

April 16, 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:** Victoria Huitt, Membership Coordinator.

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

Consent Agenda	
<b>Reports</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Endowment Results Q1 2025</li><li>• LDC Election Nominees 2025</li><li>• Governance Committee Minutes Mar. 4</li><li>• Staff Reports<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Nic Kaplan</li><li>○ Maya Yoder</li><li>○ Victoria Huitt</li><li>○ Andrew Bryant and Hsin-hui Liu</li></ul></li></ul>	<b>Decisions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approve March Board Meeting Minutes</li><li>• Set July 12 as the likely date for summer retreat, pending Rev. Diana's response. Hold June 28 as backup</li></ul>

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

**Staff Discussion with Membership Coordinator**—Victoria Huitt, Membership Coordinator joined the meeting to update the Board on Membership issues. Seventy-two people have expressed an interest in joining the church. Of these, twenty-one have been through an orientation. Everyone who expresses an interest in membership receives a follow-up email, connecting them with a team leader or an event which aligns with their interests. Huitt plans to offer a “Starting Points” class for new members again in the summer. There is an independent route to membership as well, called “Pathways,” which is available on-line. Despite the efforts of Huitt and her Membership Associates Team, people are not readily engaging in the membership process, and overall church membership has remained essentially flat. Board members discussed various reasons why membership may not be increasing, and commended Huitt for her efforts.

**Updates on Rentals Program**—Cawley informed the Board that the newly formed Rentals Program Assessment Committee has recently met. The goal is to make the Rentals Program successful and sustainable. Walberg updated the Board on revised staff goals and strategies with respect to the Rentals Program. Staff have said they will be unable to reach the current rentals budget goal with existing available hours.

**Action Step:** Cawley will have a written report from the Rentals Program Assessment Committee available for the Board in time for the May meeting.

**Finalize Agreement with HOPE For Us**—The Board reviewed the proposed “Agreement with HOPE for US Conflict Engagement Team”, as well as supporting documents. The Hope for Us Team is encouraging us to get the Agreement signed soon. Ross informed the Board that she and Erica

Reschly have recently spoken with the Hope for Us team. The team would like to start work in July. Reschly has taken on a leadership role with this project.

**Motion**—Honey-Arcement moved that the Board formalize a consulting arrangement with HOPE for Us by signing the “Agreement with HOPE for Us Conflict Engagement Team.” Ross seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Discuss Q1 Financial Results**—Honey-Arcement used a newly-developed “dashboard” report format to update the Board on quarterly financials. He noted that the budget revenues for the first quarter of the year are significantly ahead of pace. Due to volatility in the stock market, the Endowment Committee has provided the entire year’s ASA payment to the Operating Budget in Q1, and pledge payments also tend to be higher in Q1. Honey-Arcement noted that many different types of deposits regularly enter the church’s operating bank account, and he proposed that we create a separate “transfer account” to hold those deposits that aren’t destined for the Operating Budget. Such an account will reduce confusion regarding revenue sources, and will give us a clearer financial picture of what funds are available to the Operating Budget. Honey-Arcement and the Board generally approve of our new accounting system, and the “dashboard” approach.

**Action Step:** Honey-Arcement will propose to the Finance Committee that we create a separate “transfer account” for revenues that aren’t operating funds. He will report back to the Board next month.

**Discuss Pledging and Membership Trends**—Walberg informed the Board of his concerns about pledging results compared to previous years. He projects donations for 2025 will fall short of the results for the past three years, and he pointed to a steady decrease in pledge units since 2021. Eventually, we may need a contingency plan if the 2026 stewardship campaign doesn’t result in enough pledge growth to reverse the trends. Walberg recommended a “more robust” budgeting process which would include additional people.

**Action Step:** Walberg will discuss his concerns with Rev. Diana, and report back to the Board before budgeting discussions for 2026 begin. Congregational Meeting Agenda—Gamon described logistics for the May 18, 2025, Congregational Meeting. The Board discussed ways to encourage member attendance, and to make the meeting run more smoothly and efficiently. Walberg presented a proposed Agenda for the meeting. The Board discussed a proposed Bylaws Amendment to reduce Endowment Committee members’ terms. Walberg also discussed with the Board how to address various logistical issues at the meeting.

**Motion**—Gamon moved to approve the proposed Congregational Meeting Agenda. Cox seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Closing**

Cawley provided Process Observer comments. Walberg provided Closing Words.

With the Agenda completed and no new business from the floor, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:20 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 its regular meeting on May 21, 2025.

