

Unitarian Universalist Society  
2355 Oakdale Road  
Coralville, IA 52241  
[www.uusic.org](http://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

*September 2025 Newsletter*

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# From Your Minister

*Rev. Diana Smith*

Dear Ones,

The new congregational year has begun, and with it we're exploring our Soul Matters theme of Building Belonging. This rich theme has me thinking about how building belonging is a spiritual practice that we engage in for ourselves and others.

Even when we find places where we feel belonging, they don't stay that way without our efforts. We're responsible for helping places of belonging stay strong and vibrant, and for continuing to expand belonging to include more people, to widen the circle. This becomes even more complicated because belonging means different things to different people, and we all have our own reactions.

One response to this is creating a community of communities – a phrase that I've borrowed from UU religious educator and 8th Principle co-creator Paula Cole Jones and that you may have heard me use over the past few years. As UUS grows, we're intentionally creating multiple smaller communities – some defined by identity, others by interests – within our congregation while also attending to how all our communities come together. I hope you'll learn about some of these communities at our Opportunities Fair on September 7, and then, as the months unfold, join and help strengthen one or two of them.

Another response to building belonging is working on how we understand it and talking with others about what it means to them, as well as working on how we talk about Unitarian Universalism. We'll be engaging with this through worship services and an Articulating (Y)Our Faith workshop on September 14, but you can dive in more deeply by joining a covenant group that engages with our monthly Soul Matters themes (contact Nic Kaplan at [education@uusic.org](mailto:education@uusic.org)). Then, on October 9, 23, and 30 from 5 – 8 pm you can learn even more at the Managing Dynamics of Difference training at UUS that we're co-sponsoring with Johnson County Interfaith Coalition (contact me at [minister@uusic.org](mailto:minister@uusic.org) to sign up).

There are also many more ways you can help build belonging by volunteering to teach religious education once a month, attending our mind and spirit groups, engaging with our justice teams, helping support other members and friends, helping keep UUS functioning, and much more. I hope that as you read the rest of this newsletter you find one or two ways of engaging that speak to you.

Love and Blessings,  
Rev. Diana

# Upcoming Services

*September 2025 Sunday Services*

## **September 7: Immigration Stories**

Unitarian Universalism embraces immigration as a core part of its mission to build a more just and compassionate world. It's not just about welcoming strangers; it's about recognizing that every immigrant has a unique, valuable story that enriches the entire community. By sharing personal narratives—the reasons for leaving home, the struggles endured, and the dreams for the future—we break down barriers and build bridges of understanding.

Sharing and listening creates a deep sense of belonging for everyone. Immigrants feel seen and valued as individuals with inherent worth and dignity. For those in the receiving community, hearing these stories expands their empathy and challenges preconceived notions. It transforms a stranger into a neighbor, and a statistic into a person. In this way, we foster a communal tapestry woven from diverse experiences, where each thread—each personal story—is essential to the whole, and where true belonging is built on mutual respect and shared humanity. UUS Worship Associate Quanda Hood preaching.

After the worship service, we'll have our annual Opportunities Fair, where you can explore ways to engage at UUS.

## **September 14: Articulating (Y)Our Faith**

One way we build belonging (our September theme) is by how we talk about who we are. But what is Unitarian Universalism? How do we talk about it and invite others to join us or learn more? Join us to celebrate our UU heritage and explore these questions. After the worship service Rev. Diana Smith and ministerial intern Madison Colquette will lead an experiential workshop where you can learn more about and practice articulating (y)our faith. Rev. Diana Smith preaching.

## **September 21: Harvesting What Has Grown**

As the autumnal equinox and Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, approaches, we are called to harvest what has grown. This time of reflection and renewal reminds us of cycles—of time, of relationships, of the work it takes to build community together. In this time of harvest and new beginnings, we enter a season of balance, renewal, and possibility. Madison Colquette, Ministerial Intern, preaching.

## **September 28: Constructing Knowledge, Building Belonging**

How do we know what we know? Who figures out what we get to learn? How does that change through time? And how does this help build or destroy belonging? Join us to creatively explore these questions. We'll be doing a collection for Banned Book Week. Rev. Diana Smith preaching.

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

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

## September Offerings

September offerings support [Shelter House](https://www.shelterhouseiowa.org). Since 1983, Shelter House has provided housing and supportive services to people experiencing homelessness. "Simply put, we help people move beyond homelessness". Learn more at [www.shelterhouseiowa.org](https://www.shelterhouseiowa.org).

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

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## From Your Membership Coordinator

*Victoria Huitt*

It is the start of the church year and there is lots going on!

Our annual **Opportunities Fair** is Sunday, September 7 at 11am after the service. This is a great event to find out about the many groups and activities offered at UUS – volunteering, joining a hospitality team, covenant group, and many more groups to consider.

During the Opportunities Fair we will be offering information and assistance in updating your church profile on Realm at our **Directory Booth** for an updated directory and photos – bring your own (no older than 2024) or have one taken that day.

On Wednesday September 10, we will begin offering 4 weeks of **Starting Point** classes. Each week will have a different focus for learning about our community here at UUS, Unitarian Universalist history, principles and values, covenantal relationships, and the many ways to engage and grow. These classes are offered to those who are new to us, as well as current members, on Wednesday evenings on Zoom 7 – 8:30 pm. You can attend one or all of the classes. Please email Victoria Huitt, at [welcome@uusic.org](mailto:welcome@uusic.org) to sign up or get more information.

### **Hospitality Teams Update:**

Hospitality teams here at UUS have a new volunteer coordinator; Nicole Johnson. We thank Nicole for her willingness to take this important job on, and a big Thank you! to Pat Pavelich for her 3 years of service in this capacity!

# 2026-2028 Social Justice Agency Nominations

*Sue Dasovich, Social Justice Committee*

It is time for UUS members/friends, adults and youth to nominate a local, national, or international agency that works for social justice. The congregation will then vote to select twelve agencies to support with donations monthly over the next three-year period. Find complete information on this process HERE: [bit.ly/AgencyInfoSheet2026](https://bit.ly/AgencyInfoSheet2026). Submit your nomination: [bit.ly/AgencyNominations2026](https://bit.ly/AgencyNominations2026).

Here's the timeline for the nomination/voting process:

- Nominations begin **August 31, 2025**
- Nominations are due **September 29, 2025**
- November 1, 2025 Voting begins, December 1, 2025 Voting Concludes
- December 14, 2025, New Agencies Announced, January 1, 2026 We begin supporting the newly selected agencies.

\*UUS members and friends, adults and youth are all invited to nominate an agency and to vote for agencies.

This year the process will be entirely electronic for nominations and voting. **Remember to look for Social Justice Volunteers after services with laptops to help you nominate or vote.**

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## Endowment 40 Year Celebration

*Vicki Siefers, Endowment Committee*

In 1985 the UUS Board of Directors established a special trust fund into which memorial funds, endowment funds and other investments were to be combined and overseen by a 3-member committee. Before this time donations were invested with the UUA in Boston. Gordon Strayer, Jean Hood and Charles Davidson were the original members of the endowment committee. The UUS Endowment has consisted of the General Fund and several donor specified funds such as the Detiger Fund, the Music Fund, and the Handicap Access Fund (which was used in 1996 to install the elevator at 10 S Gilbert).

The General Fund is the primary endowment fund and for many years the committee recommended investing the earnings back into the endowment until it reached one million dollars. Due to that foresight, the General Fund has been able to accomplish several things for the congregation including funding several building projects and providing an annual spending allowance (ASA) for operating expenses and the building mortgage. For several years the General Fund provided supplemental funds to be used for the building mortgage.

In 2025, the Endowment Committee, working with the finance committee, created 2 new funds, folding the old donor specified funds into the new funds. The new funds are designed for long term growth to fund future needs but also to address short term projects or emergency needs. The funds are designed to supplement the existing General Fund that is used for normal UUS operating costs.

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The Reese-Nordquist Fund for Building and Grounds Enhancement will serve as a building reserve fund used to pay for major capital expenditures and significant improvement projects related to the building and the real property of the Society, including grounds and landscaping, over and above regular maintenance costs.

Examples of what could be covered include:

- Constructing or replacing outdoor structures, e.g. natural playscape
- Replacing the lawn tractor, if unrepairable
- Replacing or upgrading the solar panels/system.
- Significant periodic maintenance projects, e.g. exterior painting / staining, roof replacement, driveway repair.
- Unusual music program expenses, e.g. new instrument or significant repair of existing instrument.

The Jean Hood Fund for Community Engagement will be used to support individual and collective service to the larger community. It is intended to be used for social justice projects in the community.

Examples of what could be covered include:

- Honorarium fees for bringing in national speakers on racial, social, and justice issues.
- Contributions to US member-affiliated programs that did not make the monthly agency contributions list.
- Community engagement programs that specifically communicate about UUS and our values.
- Social justice programs partnering with other UU churches in Iowa, other churches in the Iowa City area (with JCIC).

The Endowment Committee is excited about these 2 new funds which will provide support for our community and further our values in the larger community. Questions can be directed to any Endowment Committee member. Members are Bruce Alexander, Dan Cummins, Dave Martin, Paul Pomrehn, and Vicki Siefers. To make a donation, contact Maya Yoder, UUS Administrator.

## Upcoming Events

### Opportunities Fair, Sept. 7

This is a great event to find out about the many groups and activities offered at UUS – volunteering, joining a hospitality team, covenant group, and many more groups to consider.

### Men's Sunday Social, Sept. 7

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).

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

### Starting Point Class, Sept. 10

Led by Victoria Huitt, Membership Coordinator. Held on Zoom at 7 pm to 8:30 pm. Email [welcome@uusic.org](mailto:welcome@uusic.org) for more information.

### Rev. Diana Community Office Hours, Sept. 11

Rev. Diana will be at Sacred Collective at 213 N. Linn St. 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!"

### Free Lunch Program, Sept. 12

The UUS Free Lunch Team will be serving a meal on Friday, September 12th. See the Free Lunch Program update in the UUS Committees and Teams Report below for all the details.

### ELLI Fundraiser, Sept. 12

Come support the UUS' new microlending project (ELLI) which helps under-resourced people in the community start their own businesses, and also provides emergency loans for those facing unexpected financial hardships.

7-9 p.m. Friday, Sept. 12, at the Unitarian Universalist Society, 2355 Oakdale Rd.

Enjoy desserts, drinks and music by Iowa music legend Dave Moore. Door(s) open(s) at 7. Remarks at 7:30 Music starts at 8.

Come learn more about microlending, how it can help create economic democracy and support equity and fairness in our community. Tracy Jon Sergeant of the Iowa Multicultural Development Center will speak about the impact of this microloan program.

This is ELLI's 2025 fundraiser. Donations accepted at the door (there will also be information available about how to donate electronically). Please be generous!

### Compassionate Connections, Sept. 14

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.

### Youth Group—Building Our Own World, Sept. 14

Our combined middle and high school youth group meets for a "Building Our Own World" session.

During these monthly sessions, youth will co-create a world setting for a role-playing game while exploring questions of ethics, morality, and social justice. With discussion questions and activities, participants will explore the topics of race, mortality, class, abilities, goals, gender identity, diversity, exclusion, and many of the "ism's" that plague our attempts to build a better world. Building Our Own World sessions will be the second Sunday of every month.

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The sessions will run from 11:30-1:30 and will include lunch. Youth do not need any supplies or previous knowledge of Role Playing Games (RPGs) to participate.

If youth have their own dice set, they are encouraged to bring them.

### **Articulating (Y)Our UU Faith Workshop, Sept. 14**

On September 14 from 11:30 - 1 pm, ministerial intern Madison Colquette and Rev. Diana will lead the Articulating (Y)Our UU Faith workshop. This is a great opportunity to learn about and practice talking about Unitarian Universalism. This workshop is for newcomers and long-timers alike!

### **Banned Book Club, Sept. 14**

Join us for our monthly gathering of our Banned Book Club. This month we will continue 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).

### **UUS Board Meeting, Sept. 17**

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).

### **Starting Point Class, Sept. 17**

Led by Victoria Huitt, Membership Coordinator. Held on Zoom at 7 pm to 8:30 pm. Email [welcome@uusic.org](mailto:welcome@uusic.org) for more information.

### **Girls & Nonbinary Night Out, Sept. 17**

GNNO will meet at Reunion Brewery in Coralville at 5:30 pm. More information can be found in the GNNO update!

### **UUS Men's Sharing Circle, Sept. 21**

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).

### **Sound Bath Meditation, Sept. 24**

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.

### **Starting Point Class, Sept. 24**

Led by Victoria Huitt, Membership Coordinator. Held on Zoom at 7 pm to 8:30 pm. Email [welcome@uusic.org](mailto:welcome@uusic.org) for more information.

### **Rev. Diana Community Office Hours, Sept. 25**

Rev. Diana will be at Sacred Collective from 12 pm to 2 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!"



## Compassionate Connections, Sept. 28

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.

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

Find our full list of September Events at [uus.org/upcoming-events](https://uus.org/upcoming-events).

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## UUS Committee and Team Reports

### AESTHETICS COMMITTEE

Thanks to a generous donation from the Reese-Nordquist Endowment Fund, UUS is able to realize a long-discussed dream for our congregation: an art gallery to share the talents of members and friends. The gallery will be located in the corridor off the atrium which leads to the restrooms and RE rooms. A new exhibit will be mounted every 6-8 weeks.

If you are an artist with a body of ready-to-hang work and are interested in more detailed information, send an email to [gallery@uus.org](mailto:gallery@uus.org).



### BUDDHIST SANGHA

The UU Buddhist Sangha will complete their reading and study of BUDDHISM. The scholarship of the authors Smith and Novak has been noted by sangha members, describing it as beautifully written, and noting the clarity of the three major Buddhist schools as it spread from India to Japan. Our interest continues in Part II "The Wheel Rolls West" with details of how these traditions and meditation spread into Europe and the U.S. Thoreau and Emerson were part of that story.

Later in September our attention will turn to THE DHAMMAPADA. The Dhammapada is a collection of 423 verses, gathered probably from direct disciples who wanted to preserve what they had heard from the Buddha himself. It is one of the most widely read and best known Buddhist scriptures. Dhammapada means "the path of dharma," the path of harmony and righteousness that anyone can follow to reach the highest good. Several translators from the original Pali have been suggested: Eknath Easwaran, Gil Fronsdal, Ananda Maitreya. Scholarly notes, glossary, highly readable translation, and authentic stories of the life of the Buddha distinguish the best editions.

## COVENANT GROUPS

In August, groups didn't meet for discussion sessions but had the option of gathering informally for a picnic or other social event. Many members attended the All-Covenant Groups Potluck on Saturday Aug. 16, the first time it's been held since the pandemic. It was scheduled to take place at Wetherby Park from 5-7:30 p.m. but was moved to the Robert A. Lee Community Recreation Center at the last minute due to a heat advisory on that day. Many thanks to Nic Kaplan and Erica Reschly for organizing it and changing its location so efficiently.

Groups will reconvene in September to begin a new year of discussing topics from Soul Matters, a UU Wide Curriculum series drawing on themes of spirituality and socially responsible living. If subjects 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.

## ELLI MICROLOAN PROGRAM

Come support the UUS' new microlending project, ELLI (Equitable Local Lending Initiative), which helps under-resourced people in the community start their own businesses, and provides emergency loans for those facing unexpected financial hardships.

**An Evening with Dave Moore:** 7pm to 9 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 12, at the Unitarian Universalist Society, 2355 Oakdale Rd.

Enjoy desserts, drinks and music by Iowa music legend Dave Moore. Doors open at 7. Remarks at 7:30. Music starts at 8.

Come learn more about microlending, and how it can help create economic democracy and support equity and fairness in our

community. Tracy Jon Sergeant of the Iowa Multicultural Development Center will speak about the impact of this microloan program. It is intimately related to many of our UU Principles.

This is ELLI's 2025 fundraiser. Donations accepted at the door (there will also be information available about how to donate electronically).

## FREE LUNCH

On August 8 the UUS group served 154 meals at the CommUnity Kitchen. Mimi Sherburne and Barb Haring doctored up 3 large pans of frozen mashed potatoes and created 5 pans of buttery potato casserole goodness. Frank Wildensee mixed up several pans of banana spice cake for dessert and Rhonda Rowden and Gene McCracken cut up fruit for fruit salad. Janet McKee, Terri O'Berry, Sharon Beckman, and Carolyn Johnson served baked chicken strips and pork chops donated by a restaurant, green beans and the potatoes, fruit salad and dessert. Tina McCoy served the drinks and Gay Mikelson wrapped all the silverware. On the clean up crew John Elson, Cynthia Crawford, and Caryl Lyons washed all the dishes.

On Friday, **September 12** the UUS team will serve the next meal. Menu TBD by Frank and Vicki. Send an email to [freelunch@uusic.org](mailto:freelunch@uusic.org) if you are interested in getting information about volunteering at the next lunch.

Vicki Siefers, lead chair reporting for the group.

## GIRLS' & NONBINARY NIGHT OUT

Girls and NonBinary Night Out is going to Reunion Brewery in Coralville! Our group endeavors to enjoy each other's company while exploring all Iowa City, Coralville, and North Liberty have to offer for local restaurants!

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Join us on Wednesday September 17, 2025  
from 5:30-7:30 and get to know someone new!

Reunion Brewery  
516 2nd Street  
Coralville, IA 52241

Please RSVP by the end of the day on Monday  
September 15 at this link if you plan to attend:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XJ55P9J>

You do not need to RSVP if you cannot attend.

Reach out to Ruth Appleton at  
[rlapleton@gmail.com](mailto:rlapleton@gmail.com), Girls and NonBinary  
Night Out Coordinator if you have any  
questions, and blessed be to all!

## GREEN SANCTUARY

### Opportunities Fair Sunday September 7

Look for us at the Opportunities Fair the first  
Sunday in September after the service. We  
have two projects we could use help with.  
Sustainability Bingo is our fun way to keep  
track of green habits in the congregation.  
Green Geeks is us building a list of folks with  
green skills they are willing to share.

### September Better Together - Reduce Your Energy Use

Each month of Better Together we have  
actions that members of the congregation can  
take to address climate Mitigation, Adaptation,  
Resilience, and Justice. Our focus for the fall is  
Mitigation to reduce carbon emissions, the  
primary cause of climate change. Here are  
some baby steps:

1. Cut back on meat. Cutting back on  
meat can reduce up to 75% of the  
greenhouse gas emissions due to food  
production. That's if you go vegan. But  
that also means even small changes  
can have an impact. You can start by  
identifying all the meals you already eat  
that are vegetarian - like mac and  
cheese, scrambled eggs, or bean

burritos. Make sure they are in regular  
rotation. Take it slow, but bit by bit,  
change your meat habits.

[www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/meatless-meals/art-20048193](http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/meatless-meals/art-20048193)

2. Buy used. Check out these tips (how)  
and stats (why) for thrifting at the  
Center for Biological Diversity's  
Secondhand 101 webpage -  
[www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/population\\_and\\_sustainability/sustainability/secondhand\\_101](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/population_and_sustainability/sustainability/secondhand_101)
3. Do all the little things that help  
conserve energy in the home. Raise  
your thermostat in summer, lower it in  
winter. Wash your clothes in cold  
water. Check for air leaks and block  
them. Block sunlight from entering in  
the summer and let it in in winter. Clean  
and/or change air filters and vents,  
including for your fridge.  
[illumination.duke-energy.com/articles/easy-ways-for-renters-to-save-energy-and-trim-costs](http://illumination.duke-energy.com/articles/easy-ways-for-renters-to-save-energy-and-trim-costs)

### Our September Meeting Will be on Zoom!

Green Sanctuary Meeting is Wednesday  
September at 7 pm. Zoom Link:

[us02web.zoom.us/j/88132264216?pwd=R2hyZlJWOWxJYVFUd2J0amRhZHYrQT09#success](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88132264216?pwd=R2hyZlJWOWxJYVFUd2J0amRhZHYrQT09#success)

Meeting ID: 881 3226 4216, Pass Code  
184155 Contact Jan Weaver -  
[jan.weaver57@gmail.com](mailto:jan.weaver57@gmail.com) for more  
information, or to get on our email list.

## HISTORICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE

The Historical Records Committee has been  
sorting old pictures and we have some to give  
away. After the service on September 7, stop  
by our table in the Fellowship Hall.

## LAND MINISTRY

Join us for our Outdoor Workday on **October 4 from 9 am to 12 pm**. The Land Ministry is inviting you to volunteer on Saturday, October 4, 9 to noon to help get our beautiful property ready for fall and winter. Come for the whole time or for an hour. For more information, call or text Mary McMurray, contact information in Realm.

## PRISON MINISTRY TEAM

### Prison Ministry at Newton Correctional Facility Update

In August, the prison ministry at Newton Correctional Facility finally got underway! A group of about 30 incarcerated individuals have been meeting on their own for nearly a year to discuss UU principles and ideas. We've provided them with a few printed materials, but they asked for a representative from our congregation to meet with them inside. Former ministerial intern Bridget Laflin volunteered for that role and has been working hard for several months to meet all the qualifications to become a volunteer at Newton. She proposed ideas for services, purchased more materials for the men, and worked closely with Newton's chaplain to gain approval. Finally, on Monday Aug. 18, she made her first visit and got an enthusiastic reception by the men. She is only allowed a one-hour visit with them per month but is hoping to expand on that amount of time. Congratulations and thank you, Bridget! This is an important step for PMT and the UUS congregation.

### PenPals

PMT also 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. In a few cases, we've given donations from our fund to pen pals in financial need.

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. And now there's a new group of men at Newton to write to. Bridget reported that they're eager to hear positive stories about things that happen in UU congregations and the world. This is a great opportunity to connect not just with an incarcerated person but with someone who's beginning to explore UUism. Your personal stories and thoughts about the role UUism plays in your life could encourage and help guide them in the development of their faith. PMT 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).

### Worthy Now Prison Ministry

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).

### Monthly 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 September 2, 2025, at 7:00, either in person or via Zoom (Meeting ID: 848 0842 4430; Passcode: email [prisonministry@uusic.org](mailto:prisonministry@uusic.org)).

## SECULAR HUMANISTS

Starting with the September 16, 2025, Secular Humanist meeting, we will be back to meeting on the third Tuesday of each month from September through May. For the first program, Jeanette Carter has arranged for Orlando Redekopp to tell us about a local Sanctuary Church.

Orlando Redekopp, a retired minister who has lived in Chicago many years, is now living in Iowa City and is a member of the First Mennonite Church of Iowa City. He will share information about the Sanctuary Church designation of First Mennonite—what it means and how the congregation is involved in helping those individuals who are having to deal with the threat of deportation and other issues. He may also speak about other groups engaged in this work locally. Please join us at 7:00 pm in person at UUS or by Zoom for this informative and timely presentation.

## UUMYSTICS

### **UUMystics: Exploring Distant Healing**

UUMystics now gather monthly on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm in the conference room. As the days shorten, we will switch to an earlier time for the coming months – watch for notices. We gather in the conference room and on Zoom (if we can make it work), 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, curiosity and sharing. Our UUMystics community is self-directed with shared decision-making.

For the next few gatherings, we will be exploring “Distant Healing.” There is a wealth of scientific research we can look at, as well as a treasure house of anecdotal evidence.

If you wish to participate and cannot be present, please join us here: (I’m told this will be a permanent, ongoing link) Fingers crossed!

Zoom A Meeting:

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

Meeting ID: 815 0264 4724

Passcode: Contact 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. You may 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.

“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

We welcome your presence, your curiosity, your experiences, your spiritual practices and beliefs, and your questioning heart as we co-create this Spiritual Awakening exploration together. We affirm everyone’s personal journey, knowing there are as many “paths to the mountaintop” as there are people.

Namaste’

# UUS Board Meeting Minutes

July 16, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

**Present:** Sarah Ross (President), Jan Weaver (Vice-President), Lucy Gamon (Secretary), Michael Honey-Arcement (Treasurer), Erica Reschly (Trustee), Ernie Cox (Trustee), Jeff Walberg (Trustee), Rev. Diana (Ex-officio). Quorum met.

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

Hearing no objections, the following Consent Agenda was adopted:

| Reports   | Decisions  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Minister's Report - June</li><li>Treasurer's Report - June</li><li>Committee Meeting Minutes-June</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Approve June Board Meeting Minutes</li></ul> |

**Review and Approve Vision of Shared Ministry**—The Board created a tentative draft of the annual “Vision of Shared Ministry” at the Board retreat on July 12th. At the regular meeting, the Board reviewed and refined this draft with some additional editing.

**Motion:** Honey-Arcement moved to adopt the Vision of Shared Ministry for the 2025/2026 Congregational year as developed by the Board of Trustees, with support from the Minister and input from Staff and Congregational Team Leaders. Weaver seconded the motion. The Board passed this motion unanimously.

**Review Endowment Committee Quarterly Report**—Walberg led the discussion of the Report. At the August 10th Sunday service, there will be an Endowment 40th anniversary celebration announcement to the Congregation.

**Update on Endowment Annual Spending Allowance**—Honey-Arcement updated the Board on how the Endowment Spending Allowance (“ASA”) may be calculated for 2026. The ASA comes from the “non-corpus” portion of the Endowment. The ASA has been 5% since the new building opened, to help pay down the mortgage. In the future, the ASA may be tied to the Consumer Price Index (“CPI”) inflation rate.

**Action Step:** In the fall of 2025, Walberg will bring an ASA policy recommendation proposal to the Board.

**Update on Stewardship Campaign**—Gamon updated the Board regarding the Stewardship Team’s preliminary plans for the Fall 2025 campaign. The Stewardship Team has been revitalized with five new members and two returning members. The Fall Campaign will kick-off on Sunday, October 5th, and culminate with a Celebration Sunday on Sunday, October 26th. Chris Taylor and Tina McCoy have agreed to be co-leaders of the campaign.

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**Review Treasurer's Second Quarter Report**—Honey-Arcement presented the Second Quarter Treasurer's Report. Revenues have been strong, in large part due to contributions to the Mortgage Campaign. There have been some unexpected expenses due to glass breakage in the sanctuary and the recent need to replace the kitchen refrigerator. Rev. Diana reviewed the budgeting process and presented the idea of "Mission Based Budgeting" for the Board's consideration.

**Congregational Engagement**—Rev. Diana led an extensive discussion of whether the Board wants to conduct both Open Questions and a congregational Mission and Vision revision process this year. The last Open Questions were done in 2023. The last Mission and Vision revision was adopted in 2020. Our engagement with "Hope 4 Us" may affect the timing for these processes. The Board reached a consensus that we want to do one process or the other, but not both. It is most likely that we will begin an Open Questions process in January of 2026, but no definitive conclusion was reached, and discussions remain ongoing.

**Motion to go in and out of closed session to discuss personnel issue**—Walberg moved to go into a closed session to have a personnel discussion. Weaver seconded. The Board passed the motion unanimously. Board discussion regarding the personnel issue thereafter ensued. Gamon moved to go out of closed session. Weaver seconded. The Board passed the motion unanimously.

## **Closing**

There were no Process Observer comments. Honey-Arcement provided Closing Words. With the Agenda completed and no new business from the floor, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:10 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.*

**Addendum:** Effective July 24, 2025, the Board unanimously approved (by email) the following Addendum to the Consent Agenda:

At their July 21 meeting, the Endowment Committee allocated \$8,178 from the Reese-Nordquist fund to cover the cost of replacing the three door refrigerator in the kitchen at the request of the Buildings Team. Prior to the Endowment Committee's consideration of the request, the Finance Committee reviewed and approved the expenditure at their July 14 meeting and suggested that Buildings request funds from the Endowment Committee.

**Addendum:** On August 17, 2025, the Board met in special session to discuss the budgeting process for 2026. Walberg gave a Powerpoint presentation regarding past budget deficits and pledging trends dating from 2015. Guest Kara Beauchamp from the Finance Committee presented a review of the revenues and expenditures in 2025 (year-to-date and projected).

Ross led the Board in a discussion of how we want to approach goals for the 2026 budget. These goals will give direction to the Finance Committee and the Board as we work together to build and revise the 2026 budget. This discussion will continue at the August 2020 Board meeting, as we review 2026 non-discretionary expenses.

*The Board approved these minutes at its regular meeting on August 20, 2025.*



