

**February 2021 Executive Report**  
**Rev. Amy Petrie Shaw**

**Our Mission: Grow ethically and spiritually, serve justly, and love radically.**

**Our Ends Statements 2016 – 2021**

**We:**

- 1. Grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, and ethically.**
- 2. Explore and experience what it means to be human.**
- 3. Cultivate compassion toward ourselves and others.**
- 4. Foster personal connections to life, nature and/or the divine.**
- 5. Seek, embrace, and share experiences of wonder.**
- 6. Develop our Unitarian Universalist identities.**
- 7. Ask for and receive loving presence from one another, especially in times of joy, sorrow and transition.**
- 8. Respectfully connect across differences for understanding.**
- 9. Intentionally invite and engage others to grow in community with us.**
- 10. Generously share our time, talent and treasure.**
- 11. Maintain a facility and grounds appropriate for our needs and aligned with our values.**
- 12. Build authentic partnerships, responding to needs our partners articulate.**
- 13. Show up with passion and enthusiasm to grow our values in the world.**
- 14. Share our talent and resources to support groups with whom we share values.**
- 15. Provide leadership and space for civil discourse.**
- 16. Welcome and accept transformation that comes through authentic relationships within and beyond our church.**

**Lifespan Learning (Devon McClurken)**

- The Sangha continues to meet, with between 13 and 19 people attending. 1,2,3,4,5,6
- Children’s Chapel continues Sundays from 9:15AM to 9:45AM with a core group showing up each week. We have an object lesson and story done by Rev. Amy and songs performed by Nancy Bratt. There is a mediation and activity and then a take home. 1,2,3,4,5,6,9,14
- The Wednesday night classes continue. They are Sing and Play the UU Way, ChUUrch Craft and Talking Flight. ChUUrch Craft will conclude after Spring Break but Chelsea Hayes has been working with Devon to develop a class called Art Craft, which would let participants create physical art projects that then the youth could replicate in Minecraft. It will use the Rainbow Curriculum and the Principles 1,2,3,4,5,6,9,16
- YRUU is doing social nights once a month and the Youth Council meets once a month. The Youth Led service is March 7th and the youth have been working on their connections to commitment. 1,2,3,4,5,6, 9, 10, 15,16
- Rev. Amy will be beginning a class on the book Small Gods, by Terry Pratchett, on March 5th. The class will last for 12 weeks 1,2,9,15
- Humanism and Sage continue meeting online. 1,2,9,15

- Soul Matters groups are meeting, and one Wellspring Group is meeting. There are three small social groups that continued from the summer but online, to give people a chance to connect during this time of COVID. More Chalice groups have started.  
1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,15,16
- At the end of March there will be a meeting to discuss what we plan to do with the information from Widening the Circle. 1,2,3,6,8,15,16
- The RE Council met in February to talk about next year's focus. The RE Council talked about adding more members to the council and about what it will look like when we are meeting in person. The Council is focusing on community building rather than just lessons for a while. They are also discussing what Wednesday programming brings to our community and if it is taking away from the community and if we should focus more on Sundays as a way to bridge the feel of two separate churches. 1,2,3,4,5,6, 8,9,10
- There will be an Adult RE Council forming in March to bring back the Sage forum and other classes for Adults to Seniors 1,2,4,6,8,9,10,13,15,16

### **Membership and Community (Lyra Halsten)**

#### **Grief Ministry**

Sally Boeckholt continues to lead the informal Grief Circle group on Mondays by Zoom.  
1,2,3,6,7

#### **Membership Committee**

The Membership Committee met on February 20 at 3:00 PM. The new Pathways to Membership process was streamlined and sent to Rev. Amy for review 6,9

#### **Membership**

One person has signed up for the next Membership class 1,6

#### **Facility/Grounds (Diane Ford/Doug Aupperle)**

- No problems or issues reported at this time. 11

#### **Social Justice/Outreach**

##### **(Morgan Dredge- Asylum Seekers)**

- Morgan Dredge shared about the asylum project at the SJMLT even on Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>.  
1,2,3,6,9,10,12,13,14
- The church continues to support Briana. Briana completed her biometric appointment with immigration on Feb 15. Her birthday was Feb 8. A few church members gave her an Amazon gift card to purchase boots. She enjoyed a takeout dinner from the Honduran restaurant in town with Elaine, Sue and Morgan. Sue made her a cake. Dave Wilke joined via Zoom to sign Happy Birthday. She was very happy!  
1,2,3,6,9,10,12,13,14

##### **(Katie Allen- Social Justice Ministry Leadership Team (SJMLT))**

- Social Justice Ministry Leadership Team (SJMLT) met in February 1,2,3,6,13,15

- In February the SJMLT hosted a 90 minute ZOOM event on February 13th to encourage people to join in social justice work and to allow groups to share what they are doing and invite others to join them. 1,6,12,13,15

**(Bruce Martin- FEDS)**

- FEDS provided dinner for over 200 at the homeless shelter through cash donation, which they will continue to do monthly. This helps to minimize contact with COVID surging 1,2,3,6, 10, 12, 14

**(Judy Haver- Faith in Action)**

- 5 new members were added to the Faith in Action team: Cory Clegg, Hillary Hippen-Leek (special projects), Judy Davis, Steve Gilson & Sonya Ewert 1,2,3,4,6,9,10,12,13,14,15,16
- FIA met 3 times in February due to the need to ramp up for the 2022-3 solicitation of new UU member champions & Community Partners 1,2,3,4,6,9,10,12,13,14,15,16
- A church sponsored Zoom link was obtained from Finance for use by this team as they have been using a Simpson College sponsored link, provided by Katherine Vance (FYI)
- Barb Royal, Deidre Fudge & David Witke gave feedback to the committee via email and Zoom on their role as UU member champions: time spent (0.5 to 1/0 hours every 1-2 weeks) and lessons learned (it is a worthwhile experience but can be time consuming) 10
- Barb Royal informed FIA of the pending website revamp & offered an electronic application and revision of the Responsibility document, which the team turned down in lieu of creating these themselves 10
- Sonya Ewert created an online Google Documents form for the Community Partner application that was piloted by the team members 10
- The 2021-2 Roles & Responsibility documents were reviewed by the team members & revisions are pending 10
- A timeline for the application process leading up to the annual meeting has been established & shared with the membership via the website, Intercom and Sunday Services. 10
  - Timeline:
    - March 8 through April 19 - Non Profit/ Champion Applications submitted
    - April 19 through May 3 – Applications reviewed, accepted or declined
    - May 3 through June 4 – Nominated Organizations educate membership
    - June 6 – Annual Congregation Meeting (confirmation of date pending) – Organizations selected by approval voting/ ballot
- Personal cards from each team member were sent to Adele Villimez, exiting team member, in appreciation for her contributions to Faith in Action 7,16
- February check amounts to the current Community Partners are not available at the time of this report (FYI)

**(Barb Klubal- AMOS)**

**ALL AMOS MEETINGS: 1,12,13,14**

2.10.21 - ALL AMOS MEETING– 37 attended from 19 Institutions including 6 members from First Unitarian - strategies to increase funding for children’s mental health services and affordable housing.

3.3.21 – ALL AMOS MEETING – 50 attended including 4 from First Unitarian – relationship building; financial picture; planning

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING RESEARCH TEAM: 3,12,13,14**

Members of the affordable housing research team continued to meet with government officials and others to help us develop strategies to bring more affordable housing to Polk County.

2.9.21 - Meeting with John Norris, Polk County Administrators

2.12.21 - Meeting with Senator Clair Celsi

2.18.21 –Affordable Housing Team Meeting

2.20.21 – Des Moines Register letter to the editor from AMOS regarding SF 252, a bill that would ban Iowa municipalities from using a potential tenant’s use of a federal housing voucher as reason to refuse to offer a lease on a dwelling unit. The legislation would in effect eliminate or decrease the number of units available to low-income people with a secure means of payment.

In February and March AMOS sent a position statement on SF252 to all Iowa Senators and to select members of the Iowa House.

3.4.21 – Meeting with Eric Burmeister, Exec. Dir. of the Polk County Housing Trust Fund and Emily Kessinger, Director of Capital Crossroads.

3.6.21 – Meeting with a board member of the Story County Community Housing Corporation.

3.9.21 – Affordable Housing Team Meeting

**CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH TEAM (submitted by Bill Brauch): 2,3,12,13**

Youth Crisis Response – Learnings to Date March 5, 2021

AMOS has been working to bring about creation of children’s mental health crisis services in Polk County for several years. After enactment of a bill to create a new statewide mental health

system for Iowa children in 2019, AMOS turned its attention in 2020 to lobbying the Legislature for funding to allow service providers to implement its changes, including provision of crisis services. That funding did not come. Therefore, earlier this year AMOS decided to focus locally, to engage local service providers, city and county elected officials and service providers, educators, neighborhood associations, and others to determine what might be done in Polk County short of state funding and in light of the passage of a local option sales tax to, in part, fund these services.

Those meetings began in early February. During the meetings we learned that the City of Des Moines and Broadlawn Hospital have been in discussion regarding putting local option sales tax dollars (\$400,000) to expanding the mental health services currently provided by a joint effort of the Des Moines Police Department and Broadlawns.

Currently, when a call comes in to the 911 operator about a youth in crisis, a uniformed officer may be initially dispatched to the youth's location. If the officer determines the mobile crisis team will be helpful, the officer calls to summon the team to the scene. If the team determines the youth requires service, the youth is taken to a local emergency room. If the officer determines the youth may have committed a crime the youth is taken into custody. None of the people involved in responding to the situation are specially trained to deal with youth mental health crises. The service is available from 7:00 a.m. through midnight. No one is available to respond to youth mental health crises from midnight until 7:00 a.m.

The new plan under discussion includes:

- 1) Special training for DMPD's 911 operators on how to deal with calls involving children in mental health crisis, and special training for the crisis response team in how to treat children in a mental health crisis.
- 2) Hiring two more health care professionals to be assigned to staff the mental health crisis response team, plus the purchase of another response vehicle such that a mental health crisis team is available to respond to a person (adult or child) in a mental health crisis 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

AMOS has concerns about the proposed plan, to the extent:

- 1) It requires a youth, parent, or other concerned person to dial 911 to seek help, rather than a number devoted to mental health services, such as is available in other Iowa communities.
- 2) It continues to assume the first responder to a youth in mental health crisis will be a uniformed police officer, regardless of whether the youth is thought to be armed, have committed a crime, or is otherwise a danger to others. This goes against "best practices" for dealing with youth in crisis and will deter families and youth from calling for help.

3) The mobile response team are not specialists in responding to youth mental health crises. Most of the situations in which they are called involve adults in crisis, a very different circumstance with very different needs.

4) The plan does not include taking the child to an observation center, where the child's condition and needs can be assessed, and any placement recommendations made.

5) The plan does not include a stabilization center, a location to which the child might be placed after observation (with parental permission) until the child's condition has stabilized and the child is ready to be returned home.

We've learned that the next step for Broadlawns and the City will be for Steve Johnson of Broadlawns to prepare a plan for review and approval from City Manager Scott Sanders that we should expect to be consistent with the "new plan" as described above. Should Sanders approve, the plan will come before the Broadlawns Board for approval. It is unclear where things go from there. City Council Member Boesen, who we learned is very informed on this issue, said that the Council has already approved expenditure of the funds and that implementation is the realm of the City Manager, but that the Council could ask for him to report on this at a City Council meeting.

AMOS continues to meet with public officials, school officials, local activists and others and looks forward to working with the City of Des Moines and the Broadlawns Board of Directors as decisions are made regarding how best to expend the funds available for responding to children in mental health crises in Polk County.

**(Elaine Imlau- Family Promise and FFFF/PPP 2020-2021)**

**FFFF**

FFFFF had no activity this month

**Family Promise**

25 volunteers supported 3 families of 4 with meals and overnight hosting at Westminster Presbyterian for a total of 128 hours. 3,8,10,12,13,14,16

**(Bill Brauch/Donna Wallace- Write Here, Write Now)**

- In connection with the UUSJ's Write Here, Write Now February effort, First Unitarian members joined in writing letters to Senators Grassley and Ernst, urging them to support bills to raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour. 2,3,8,10,13

FYI - Since we don't send letters in as we did pre-Covid, we don't know how many letters each congregation has sent. Bill asked UUSJ last fall to see if they could check their records as to how many letters writers we had from our church. The response was they'd check into it. Bill reiterated the request in January but haven't heard anything since on that front.

**(Terry Lowman and Linda Lemons- IUUWAN)**

IUUWAN will met with Rev. Amy Petrie Shaw in February to discuss:

- the current vision and purpose of IUUWAN
- how Widening the Circle of Concern impacts us and our social justice work
- how can UU ministers, UU congregations and IUUWAN best collaborate together
- what would be an example of a good covenant between all of us
- IUUWAN by-laws and congregational financial support 1,12

**Barb Royal, Deidre Fudge, Liz Bredeesen, Cheryl Long- Communication Group**

- The Communications Team spent the month reviewing every detail of the new website, and making additions, changes, and updates. 10
- The Team worked closely with Communications Coordinator Kerrie Lee, without whose expertise we could not have accomplished all that we have. 10
- The Team communicated with specific individuals on the staff to get input about specific sections. 10
- Communications also started talking about upcoming projects: a website style guide and general communication policies. 10
- By the time this report is released the Team will have done a demo of the new website at an informal board meeting and begun preparing for a late March or early April live date. 10

**Service Attendance (of households/screens, NOT number of people):**

2/7/21 Riding the Nian (Amy)	122
Service 2.0 (30 minute micro-services) 2pm Facebook	177 views
2/14/21 The Hidden Pandemic (Lyra)	77
2/21/21 Side With Love Sunday (Recorded- UUA)	113
2/28/21 Unfinished Business (Harvey)	118

Ends 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,16

**Membership Numbers**

Month	# of New Members	Deceased	Moved	Withdrew Membership
February				1
January				
December		2		
November				6
October				

## **Operations**

- The audio upgrade in the auditorium has been completed. Once we're ready (likely when we reach Level 2 of building access), the technicians will come back and run a series of training sessions for our A/V crew to get them up to speed with the new sound board.