

March 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, Art Craft, and Talking Flight. ChUUrch Craft concluded after Spring Break, but Chelsea Hayes and Devon developed a class called Art Craft, which lets participants create physical art projects that then the youth replicate in Minecraft. It uses 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 was March 7th and after the Board moved UCDSM to Level 1, they had an outside hike at Ashworth Park with masks. 1,2,3,4,5,6, 9, 10, 15,16
- Rev. Amy began a class on the book Small Gods, by Terry Pratchett, on March 5th. The class will last for 12 weeks and has 11 participants. 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
- RE Council added three more members to the council. The RE Council is reaching out to the congregation to check in and see what their thoughts and feelings are about programming next year. 1,2,3,4,5,6, 8,9,10
- The Adult RE Council has meet several times to talk about Sage forums and other classes for Adults to Seniors. We are looking into OWL for Seniors. Pandemic support, Soul to Soul book groups, and lots of other programming. 1,2,4,6,8,9,10,13,15,16
- Rev Amy and Devon meet to talk about programming for next year and came up with a plan that will make Sundays and Wednesdays more engaging. 15

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 Saturday, March 20 at 3:00 PM. We discussed possible options for building connections. Member engagement was discussed and the number of activities that have been offered. Zoom and computer fatigue seem to be a large factors in the low engagement. We discussed possible options for SWAG and new t-shirts. Work has started on designing small signs for members and friends to display in the yards. 6,9

Membership

Bob Baker and Charlotte Shivers have resigned their membership. They moved to Florida. Ananda and Ben Spadt resigned their membership. It was due to family difficulties. Cards were sent to each of them.

Current membership number is 439. Lyra spoke with three people about attending/joining First Unitarian. The Pathways to Membership Class was canceled; only one person registered. UU and You is scheduled for April 25. 1,6

Caring Ministry

There were no requests for assistance (meals or rides) in March.

Card Ministry

One card was sent to Al Powers and Ann Mowery for Al's daughter. Bill and Lois Leonard also received cards.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care had 21 contacts.

Facility/Grounds (Diane Ford/Doug Aupperle)

- It is time for the spring clean-up. In April we will determine if this should again be done by a commercial company or if it can carefully be scheduled with volunteers. 11

Social Justice/Outreach

(Morgan Dredge- Asylum Seekers)

- Briana has applied for a work permit and just waiting to see if it gets approved. She is really looking forward to working. 1,2,3,6,7

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

- Social Justice Ministry Leadership Team (SJMLT) met in March 1,2,3,6,13,15
- In March the SJMLT created a Letter of Conscience (representing only the Team members and not presented as a representation of UCDSM as a whole) regarding voter rights legislation which was sent to Iowa Legislators and can be seen here: https://www.change.org/p/iowa-legislators-and-governor-progressive-iowans-of-faith-for-a-better-iowa?recruiter=1185811700&recruited_by_id=5d4b3a70-84f4-11eb-bb77-69bd494bf44c&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink&utm_campaign=petition_dashboard. This Letter was signed by 205 people 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)

- FIA met in March 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
- FIA requested Rev. Amy announce a Call for Champions on a Sunday in March 10
- 2021-2 Community Partner Applications are being received via a link on the church website and Intercom until May 3rd 1,2,3,4,6,9,10,12,13,14,15,16
- The 2021-2 Roles & Responsibility documents were finalized by the team members 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

(Barb Klubal- AMOS)

ALL AMOS MEETINGS: 1,12,13,14

3.3.21 – ALL AMOS MEETING – 50 attended including 4 from First Unitarian – relationship building; financial picture; planning. Next meeting is April 14, 2021

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

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

3.9.21- Planning for engaging AMOS institutions in the Des Moines suburbs in organizing for increases in workforce housing in the suburbs; discussions on the impacts of changes in zoning (from residential to industrial) on lower-income neighborhoods in Des Moines.

3.16.21 – Reports on discussions with residents of neighborhoods negatively impacted by zoning changes.

Next Steps: Contact members of City Council and the Planning & Zoning Board; create list of and reach out to neighborhood associations; identify and reach out to churches in affected areas.

3.30.21 – Continued discussions on zoning changes in Des Moines. Questions on how to identify affected areas as comparisons between old and new zoning maps are difficult. Will reach out to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Park Neighborhood Association, as this may be an affected area.

Future efforts will concentrate on the zoning issue, addressing vacant and dilapidated housing and affordable housing in the suburbs.

AMOS LET'S TALK/DES MOINES SCHOOLS PROGRAMS: 7,8,9,12,14,15,16

The AMOS Let's Talk group has begun negotiations with the Des Moines Public Schools for restorative justice work in middle schools beginning in September. It has not yet been determined how much of their work will relate to the SRO (School Resource Officers) Replacement Plan. Four of the police officers serving as SROs prior to the recent termination served in middle schools, and so far, the current DMPS replacement plan covers only high schools. Part of the group's near-term work will include an assessment of their need for people to serve as mediators.

**CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH TEAM (submitted by Barbara Klubal):
2,3,12,13**

After working for 4 years to improve children's mental health services in Polk County through the state legislature, an expanded AMOS Children's Mental Health Team has participated since January in over 25 meetings with stakeholders in health care, government, schools and police—and we are still meeting with more stakeholders. The result is a consensus from multiple sources that the current system of involving police first in children's mental health calls is not

working. Often this system escalates the problem, puts the child into the police system and creates fear in the minority communities so they are deterred from calling 911 because they don't want their children jailed.

Since efforts to increase funding were failing at the state level, AMOS has tried to work with those in Polk County. The team is asking for a dedicated crisis line number that can be called to serve children in mental health crisis, therapists trained in working with children to answer calls first (with police only as a back-up), a van to transport children in need of more help, a 24-hour stabilization center and a longer-term crisis care center. (At this point all calls go to 911. Police are first on the scene and have the option to call a therapist team if they feel it's needed, but children are either delivered to jail or a hospital where they often wait hours—and from there they are sent home with no stabilization or further treatment.)

Recent meetings include the Polk County Sheriff and Polk County Supervisors Matt McCoy and Angela Connolly. Linda Krypel did a presentation about how AMOS organizes for power with the Polk County Health Services Collaborative and presented the AMOS view of a best-practices model where police do not respond first to a mental health crisis. Linda also did a presentation at the Polk County Children's Mental Health Task Force. (Linda is co-chair of this group.) She will do a 3rd presentation at Corinthian Baptist church where they will be hosting AMOS-led house meetings about children's mental health crisis services.

The team is also currently working in large part with the Broadlawns Trustees, the Des Moines City Manager and Orchard Place to achieve these goals. Because AMOS was able, through its canvassing efforts, to ensure that the one cent sales tax passed, AMOS has a seat at the table for this effort. In the agreement with the city, if the sales tax passed, part of the proceeds would be put towards children's mental health crisis services.

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

FFFF

Food Fair-Team of Susan Seitz, Sally Merritt, Dagny Fidler and Elaine Imlau started the process for setting up the 2021 food fair fundraiser. Activities included email, text and phone call blitzes, announcements in the church intercom, on the website and in services. Bidding site is set up, the offerings list is growing. Submissions deadline is Friday, April 9, sale and auction begin Sunday, April 18 at 4:00 via zoom, sale ends Sunday, May 9 at 6pm. 10,13,01

(Terry Lowman and Linda Lemons- IUUWAN)

IUUWAN met with Rev. Amy Petrie Shaw in late 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
- Terry Lowman is also working with Rev. Amy and all local UU Churches to develop a Queer Your Faith collaboration, where churches share services throughout the year to

allow LGBTQ+ people and allies to attend services monthly which speak to important topics in queer justice work and support. Participating churches agree to publicly stream selected services. UCDSM will be doing one such service on May 2nd, 2021, and possibly another two services next church year.

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

- The Communications Team continues to work closely with Kerrie Lee (Communications Coordinator), including weekly meetings with her and Rev. Amy to discuss improvements to the new website. 10
- The Team gave an overview/demo of the website to the Board, Staff, and other attendees at the March 11 Board meeting, then sent a link to the site for all of those people to explore it and share feedback. 10
- The Team considered all of feedback and Kerrie and Barb continued to make updates through the end of the month. 10
- With lots of help from Ann Mowery, Chair of Pastoral Care, the Team developed and added new section in Rites of Passage about "What to do When There's a Death."
- The new website release date will be April 1, no fooling. 10

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

3/7/21 The Committed Youth (RE Youth)	75
3/14/21 Fund Raising and Ferengi (Amy)	74
Service 2.0 (30 minute micro-services) 2pm Facebook	124 views
3/21/21 Oh Freedom (Amy)	90
Service 2.0 (30 minute micro-services) 2pm Facebook	93 views
(Accidentally set to Private for 3 days)	
3/28/21 Holi (Amy)	86
Ends 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,16	

New Commercial March 18, 2021

<https://www.facebook.com/AmyPetrieShaw/videos/10225837037732227> (and the noted church Facebook address @FUCDM is unfortunately the real address of the churches open Facebook page.)

Podcast Status

On March 30th, 2021 the UCDSM public podcast, "First U Think" hit #110 in Religion podcasts through Apple podcasts. This is AWESOME for a less than three-month old podcast. The podcast can be found through multiple providers or here <https://www.buzzsprout.com/1609618>

Membership Numbers

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