

**April 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)**

- 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 will continue until the end of May. They are Sing and Play the UU Way, 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 7 Principles. Art Craft started after spring break, replacing ChUURch Craft. 1,2,3,4,5,6,9,16
- YRUU is doing social nights once a month and the Youth Council meets once a month. After the Board moved UCDSM to Level 1, the youth have met outside with Devon McClurken, masked. 1,2,3,4,5,6, 9, 10, 15,16
- 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

- The Sangha continues to meet on Zoom, with between 13 and 19 people attending. 1,2,3,4,5,6
- 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
- CUUPs continues to meet online, and will have Mayday and a maypole event outside and masked. They also continue with Monday night classes and social meets 1,2,3,4,5,6
- 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. A lot of parents are ready to move to in person. There will be Summer activities planned to build back community but no RE over the summer 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 but waiting for UUA facilitator training. Pandemic support, Soul to Soul book groups, and TED talk forums are programs that are being developed. The council is also looking into different activities for Parents on Wednesday nights. 1,2,4,6,8,9,10,13,15,16
- Rev Amy and Devon meet to talk programming for next year and came up with a plan that will make Sundays and Wednesdays more engaging and Devon is actively requiring teachers for the fall. Classroom management will be a key component in this and a training is being developed.. 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**

Most of the Membership Committee had previously scheduled commitments, so no meeting was held in April. The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, May 15. Several members have resigned, so we are trying to recruit others. 6,9

### **Membership**

#### **Cards**

One thank you card and two get-well soon cards were sent to members. 3,7

#### **Chalice Groups**

One Chalice Group was held on April 17. The patio and areas around the church were cleared of leaves and debris. 4,10

Interest has been expressed in having a gardening-themed Chalice Group. However, it still needs a leader. One person had agreed to lead it but had to back away from doing so. Lyra is still trying to find a replacement. 10

### Classes:

A UU and You class was scheduled for April 25. Reminders were sent to the three individuals who registered, but none of them came. Emails were received from all, who said that they had last-minute conflicts that prevented them from attending. One-on-one sessions have been scheduled with each person for the week of May 9. 10

The Newcomer's Circle and Pathways to Membership classes will be rescheduled for June. Lyra is streamlining the Pathways class from six sessions to three. Turnout may improve if the classes are held at First Unitarian; established protocols will be followed. The class size may be limited by current COVID level 10

### Community Outreach:

After receiving positive feedback about participating, First Unitarian applied to the City of Des Moines to participate in its street cleanup program. The application was approved. We will be responsible for picking up the litter on Keosauqua Way between Enos Avenue and 19<sup>th</sup> Street. For the time being, we will be using the equipment that is provided by the Metro Waste Authority. MWA requires two days before and after the event to reserve, pick-up, and return of equipment. A deposit of \$5.00/safety vest, \$5.00/trash grabber, and \$20/duffel bag will be charged. The deposit is 100% refundable provided all equipment is cleaned and returned in the condition in which it was picked up, otherwise we will be charged. Waste bags are provided at no-charge. 4,10

A general call for volunteers for the first clean-ups has been made; to date, there have been no responses; personal asks will be made next. 4,10

### Yard Signs

Progress has been made on designing yard signs for members/friends to place in their yards. These will help increase awareness of and stimulate interest in First Unitarian. 9

### Membership

Current membership number is 439. 511 with pledging friends. 1,6

### Caring Ministry

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

### Card Ministry

One thank you card and two get-well soon cards were sent to members. 7, 10

### Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care had 25 contacts in April. 7, 10

## Membership Numbers

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

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

- The decision was made to schedule an all church work day on May 22<sup>nd</sup> to clean the grounds. The Grounds Committee meeting in April had to be cancelled and postponed until May. 11

### Social Justice/Outreach

#### (Morgan Dredge- Asylum Seekers)

- The Outreach Team of the First Unitarian Immigration Justice Team started collecting donations for the detainees in Hardin County to go toward commissary. They collected over \$500. 3,9,10
- An attempt to break into Briana's apartment occurred. She is staying with Elaine and plans to move to California once she gets her work permit this month. The team is helping her clean out the apartment and prepare for her move. We are working with the Trans Alliance Group that her friend put her in touch with and her attorney at Drake to make sure we get everything transferred for her. 1,2,3,6,7

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

- Social Justice Ministry Leadership Team (SJMLT) met in April 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](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 and was shared with the congregation in April  
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/Sonia Ewert- Faith in Action)**

- FIA promoted the application process through April with a deadline of April 19th. On April 19th, we had submissions from three organizations:
  1. Knock and Drop (Championed by Mike Lauer and Gene McCracken)
  2. Just Voices (Championed by Harvey Harrison)
  3. U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants -- Des Moines Chapter (Championed by Morgan Dredge) 1,2,3,4,6,9,10,12,13,14,15,16
- All three applications are complete with the exception of Just Voices which is still waiting for 501C3 documentation from the IRS (they applied last fall). We are currently working with Charles Lewis (DFA) to better understand if pending documentation is sufficient. 1,2,3,4,6,9,10,12,13,14,15,16
- Between now and the end of May, FIA is working to educate membership about the nominees. We will do this through sharing application summaries through the website and intercom, with additional announcements at Sunday services. 1,2,3,4,6,9,10,12,13,14,15,16
- 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 in April. 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**

April 14, 2021 – ALL AMOS MEETING – April 14 - Five members of First Unitarian Church joined leaders from the other AMOS Institutions. Discussions included the Grand Opening of the Lauridsen Skatepark, ratification of the Industrial Areas Foundation contract, planning for the April IAF Regional Training and the June Delegate Assembly and relationship building

**Virtual IAF Regional Training 1,9,12,13,14,16**

April 23-25 – Forty- five AMOS trainees joined 12 professional organizers and leaders from Colorado, Iowa, Nebraska and Michigan to learn the organizing principles and practices of the nation’s largest and longest standing non-partisan organizing network, the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF).

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

April 13 – Members created two sub- groups. One will focus on affordable housing in Ankeny. AMOS has a strong presence there with six member institutions. In the past, some of these churches have attempted to address with local government the lack of affordable housing in Ankeny. A second group will focus on zoning changes within the City of Des Moines.

Week of April 19 - AMOS Affordable Housing Team members attended the Polk County Housing Trust Fund's 10th annual Affordable Housing Week: **How We Grow: Achieving Housing Equity, Affordability and Accessibility in Metro Des Moines**. Virtual meetings included conversations with special guests about the housing data from the communities within Polk County and interactive presentations of the goals and strategies of the Des Moines Regional Workforce Housing Strategy Report. Participants shared thoughts on these strategies with city staff from the many communities that make up Greater Des Moines in a breakout room format sponsored by Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity.

April 26 – Ankeny Sub-group Meeting – This group has begun work on identifying key AMOS institutions and people in Ankeny to assess their interest in working on affordable housing in Ankeny. There is an interest in pursuing this. Our small group will reach out to interested AMOS members in Ankeny in order to grow the Ankeny sub-group.

**CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH TEAM (Submitted by Connie McKean, Walnut Hills United Methodist Church): 2,3,12,13**

As you may know, it's been 4+ years that the AMOS Children's Mental Health Research Team has been working to improve children's crisis mental health services in Polk County with a goal of seeking funding through the state legislature. Since efforts to secure adequate sustainable funds at the state level have failed to date, AMOS has continued to explore other funders in Polk County. We wait in anticipation to see what this year's legislature will do.

Since January we have been meeting with any stakeholder we can uncover in regard to this issue. We have also continued to research best practices for the 4 services we know are needed:

• **A phone number that can be called for help when a children's mental health crisis occurs**

- o We are much closer to fulfilling this need in part...during a recent meeting with Police Chief Wingert he stated he is working on securing a mental health professional to sit with 911 dispatchers to assess the need when the call comes in and how to respond to it. 911 will not be staffed with a mental health professional 24/7 at this point. However, the goal is that through data collected, the 24/7 coverage by a mental health professional will be achieved in the future. **The goal is to have this initial plan in place by July 2021.**

• **Children's Mobile Crisis Teams staffed with mental health professionals trained to work with children/adolescents in crisis. Currently the crisis teams are trained to work with adults.**

- o Through our conversations with Broadlawn's staff and board members, it appears that Broadlawn's will hire a crisis team staffed appropriately to work with children, with that service being provided by July 2021. **AMOS is organizing a show of support at the May 18 Broadlawn's Trustee Meeting. Let us know if you are interested in joining us.**

· **An Observation Center for children/youth** where they may be assessed more extensively than during the time when the crisis teams has been dispatched. Youth would be able to stay here for up to 23 hours. Extensive conversations have been had around this need. **Currently no plans are underway to make this much needed service a reality.**

· **A Stabilization Center/Community Team** will include a location where youth may stay for 5 days during which time treatment plans are developed, resources secured, along with conversations with parents/guardians prior to the youth leaving the Center to discuss resources and next steps. Upon leaving the Center the parent/youth will have connections to needed services and a team who will follow up after the child/youth leaves the Center. **The intent at this point is that this service will begin July 2021.**

At the time of this writing, we are trying to secure a meeting with the mental health professionals who staff the mobile crisis team to understand their needs and more.

After four plus years of hard work, we are hopeful that appropriate decisions will be made soon, enabling vital crisis mental health services for children/youth to become a reality.

**ALL AMOS EVENT (A sneak peak at the May report!)**

May 7 - AMOS and Des Moines celebrated the ribbon cutting and grand opening of the Lauridsen Skatepark. The country's largest open-air skatepark all started 17 years ago with an AMOS house meeting with Grace UMC youth who shared the need for more recreational opportunities for youth and their dream of a skatepark. The imagination, persistence, and leadership of AMOS institutions and others made the Lauridsen Skatepark a reality! The Skatepark will be the host site of the U.S. Olympic skateboarding trials later this month!

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

**FFFF 10,13,01**

The food fair committee consisting of four members: Susan Seitz, Sally Merritt, Dagny Fidler and Elaine Imlau conducted the first online food fair event using the Bidding Owl auction application. Stats are as follows:

50 Donors

40 Events—37 In Person (20% did not sell)/3 Virtual (57% did not sell)

69 Items—34 Food (100% sold)/ 35 NonFood (31% did not sell)

57 Bidders—406 Bids

\$9.605 Gross Raised

\$9.125 Net Raised—after 5% fee of \$480.

**Family Promise 1,2,3,7,10,13,14,16**

20 volunteers provided 132 hours of volunteer time contributing meals and overnight supervision for three families at Westminster Presbyterian April 18-25

**(Bill Brauch/Donna Wallace- Write Here, Write Now) 6.8.9.13**

In April, church members wrote to Senators Grassley and Ernst urging they support the Climate Stewardship Act, a bill that provides nature-based solutions to remove heat-trapped carbon dioxide from our atmosphere while creating living-wage jobs. Our letters also urged they support a bill that provides necessary assistance to Black farmers to successfully farm in ways that reduce emissions, sequester carbon, and promote soil health. Church members later joined UUSJ in meetings with representatives of the Senator’s offices about these bills.

**(Terry Lowman and Linda Lemons- IUUWAN) 6,9,11,12,13,15**

Terry Lowman is 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 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, and possibly another two services next church year.

**Barb Royal, Deidre Fudge, Liz Bredesen- Communication Group**

- The website successfully launched on April 1, and seems to be functioning quite well. 10
- We have continued to meet with Kerrie Lee (Communications Coordinator) and Rev. Amy Petrie Shaw to discuss any needed changes, as well as starting to look at recommendations for procedures and policies and the role of our team going forward. 10
- We will be looking for additional people with writing and editing skills as well as expertise in social media who might be interested in joining our team.10
- We sponsored a Website Scavenger Hunt to encourage people to explore the new sight. This effort met with limited success, as only a handful of entries were submitted. Two people did achieve perfect scores and each will receive a gift certificate to the church store and a pair of brightly colored UUA socks. 10

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

4/4/21 Rise Up (Easter) (Rev. Amy)	72
Service 2.0 (30 minute micro-services) 2pm Facebook	114 views
4/11/21 Growing Beyond Our Stereotypes: Dismantling Rape Culture (Amy)	76
Service 2.0 (30 minute micro-services) 2pm Facebook	90 views
4/18/21 Always Look on the Bright Side of Life (Amy)	90
Service 2.0 (30 minute micro-services) 2pm Facebook	89 views
4/25/21 Pathways to Creating a New Earth Day Story (Pachamama Alliance Iowa)	69

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

**New Commercial May 9, 2021**

<https://www.facebook.com/AmyPetrieShaw/videos/10226261276977943>

**Podcast Status**

The First U Think podcast continues to do well, with 35 downloads for April so far. First U Think can be found anywhere you download podcasts, or here on our UCDSM Buzzsprout page <https://www.buzzsprout.com/1609618>