

Caring Ministry:

Three rides were provided. Cleaning services were provided to one member twice.

Card Ministry:

Cards were requested and sent to seven people.

Pastoral Care:

Pastoral Care had 33 contacts.

Membership:

Over the course of the last fiscal year, my records show that 12 members and one friend resigned their membership. The main reasons for the resignations were people moving out of state to be closer to their families or for new employment. Offers were extended to these people to remain virtual members of First Unitarian, but none were accepted. Individuals felt that they wanted to find and support congregations in their new areas. Other reasons included that their spiritual needs are not being met here. One person noted that they grew up Catholic and missed some of the “religious” elements of those services. Zero members listed “the pandemic” as the reason for leaving. Three members and one friend passed away; the friend is listed in Power Church under two different names.

Cards were sent to 14 people, including the high school youth who graduated this year. One card was delivered in person. Cards were also sent to the folks who volunteered their time to help with the June 13th Pride Fest event (including stuffing 400 giveaway bags with brochures, a friendship bracelet, and candy!) and working the table at the event. Unfortunately, the extremely hot weather may have played a role in the small turnout; only six bags were handed out. The remaining bags will be converted into Visitor gifts when we return to in-person services.

Capital City Pride waived the vendor fees for organizations for the festival and requested that donations be made instead and I’m checking into getting that made. No suggested amount was given; it is up to our discretion.

The Membership Committee met on June 19, 2021. We are close to finalizing the yard signs and t-shirt ideas. We will only have one yard sign design to ensure consistent messaging. As did the “I AM First Unitarian” shirts, the t-shirts will be sold to help bolster Membership. (Income from t-shirt sales has been nominal in past years, most likely because we are out of the most popular sizes (Men’s/Unisex L, XL, 3XL).

Now that we are at Level 3, we discussed ways that we can begin offering opportunities for connection/re-entry. Suggestions include:

Re-Enter and Reflect: Individuals will sign up for time slots ranging from 5-10 minutes to come to the building when staff is present to sit in the auditorium to quietly reflect. Several fellow UU churches have been offering this for months while they were closed and members have reported feeling calmer and more connected to the church community.

Get Acquainted/Re-Acquainted Tours: For people who joined during the pandemic who have never been to the church or for those who would just like to get re-acquainted with the building, short tours of the building and grounds can be given. Perhaps with some historical facts included!

Indoor or Outdoor movies: We would need to ensure we have a Church Video License as these would be public screenings. If we do not have one, we could get a license at the 200-499 person level which would be \$275.00 annually. This would allow us to show movies that are covered under the agreement for sermon illustrations, movie nights, classes, Youth Cons, etc. FunFlicks Outdoor movies is a company that could provide services for outdoor movies (screens, projection, even popcorn if desired) for another cost.

Other ideas included picnics/cookouts at a local park and tailgate parties. The tailgate option was the most popular as everyone could bring their own food.

The Membership Committee will not be meeting in July and possibly August due to members planning vacations.

I met with Peggy Garrigues who is the Membership Coordinator at the UU church in Coralville and treasurer of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Membership Professionals. Due to the small number of UU congregations in Iowa and the distance between them, we discussed my idea of forming a network of Membership Professionals and Volunteers. The focus will be on increasing Iowa's presence in UUAMP (Peggy and I may be the only two members at this time) and creating a community of support for our state. I've received the list of other UU churches in Iowa and I'm drafting a letter and working on finding to whom they should be mailed.

I'm looking forward to starting the Membership Professional Certification process through UUAMP. We have sent in the paperwork and fee, but I haven't received the materials. I'm working with UUAMP to determine the cause of the delay, as I'm excited to begin. The program will cover core areas such as welcome, UU Identity, building a community of belonging, and boundaries. There are several "elective" areas to choose from such as engagement, administration and volunteer management, integration and leadership, pastoral care, communication/social media, and stewardship.

I am also working on a welcome video for the website so when visitors click the "I'm New Here" link, that will be something that pops up. This is an idea that was promoted at the GA Professional Days. Due to internet issues at the church, I wasn't able to connect to much of the programming, but UUAMP will be releasing the recording shortly.

-Lyra Halsten, Membership Coordinator