

Julu 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 was not held in the summer. Rev. Amy will be including a larger children's segment in the Sunday service beginning in September after Water Communion
- Youth programming concluded for the Summer to work on planning for the fall with many contingency plans.
- Soul Matters groups and Wellspring Group concluded in June
- Small chalice groups have continued to meet in person
- The Sangha continues to meet on Zoom, with between 13 and 19 people attending.
- Rev. Amy's class on the book Small Gods, by Terry Pratchett, concluded in June. The class had 11 participants
- Humanism and Sage continue meeting online
- CUUPs continues to meet online. They had a Mayday and a maypole event outside in May. They also continue with Monday night classes and social meets
- 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. Tai chi will be held and an end-of-life workshop as well.

- RE Council has meet to talk about what programming will look like in the Fall but with the pandemic multiple options have had to be looked at. 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 recruiting teachers for the fall as a few more are needed. Classroom management will be a key component in this and a training is being developed

Membership and Community (Lyra Halsten)

Grief Ministry

Sally Boeckholt continues to lead the informal Grief Circle group on Mondays by Zoom.

Membership Committee

Membership Committee met over the summer and is currently recruiting new members

Membership

Cards

Six cards were mailed to members and friends

Classes:

A UU and You class is scheduled for August 19th 2021.

Membership

- Current membership number is 429. 501 with pledging friends.
- Ten members went inactive in July. One person let Lyra know that she should have been made inactive “a long time ago”, but she didn’t indicate how long ago that was. Four members moved to other parts of the country to be closer to family members; one person moved away for a new job. Four people indicated that they were looking for a more spiritual service with more rituals and wanted to see if they could find what they were looking for elsewhere. No one who went inactive cited the church being closed and activities being curtailed due to Covid-19 as their reasons for going inactive
- Lyra offered each person the ability to remain a distance member and assistance in helping them find and connect with communities if they would like help in doing so
- Lyra will be restarting Afternoon Teas, in hope that members will share needs and offer the church a chance to address these needs

Caring Ministry

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

Card Ministry

Six cards were mailed to members and friends

Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care had 7 contacts in July. Rev. Amy had 4 contacts

Facility/Grounds (Diane Ford/Doug Aupperle)

- An all-church workday on July 17 to clean the grounds. There was concentration on weeding, general cleanup, pruning small suckers and overhanging small tree branches above sidewalks, deconstructing the damaged arbor near the play structure, and similar tasks
- A small but mighty group worked on church Grounds projects Saturday, July 17. Thanks to volunteers Elaine Imlau, Dash Back, Al Powers, and Grounds Council members Theresa Miller, Doug Aupperle, Chuck Mertes and Diane Ford for accomplishing the following: derecho-damaged gazebo deconstructed, trees trimmed along east walkway, several gardens weeded and cleaned up, east walking path cleared of overhanging trees and shrubs, parking lots repaired and spruced up, outdoor drains cleared, watering system set up, weed suppressant and Deer/Rabbit Liquid Fence applied where needed.
- A special thanks goes to Al for putting a new wheel on our wheelbarrow, bringing his trailer to help haul, for all his work on our parking lots, and for tasks I don't know about. And many thanks to Doug for spending all day Saturday AND Sunday working on the grounds. Many of the tasks above were accomplished by him. If you missed all the fun this last Saturday, stay tuned for the next opportunity to step up on our Grounds. We need all the help we can get!

Social Justice/Outreach

(Morgan Dredge- Asylum Seekers)

- In May, we passed our goal to raise \$500 to fill commissary accounts of people being detained by ICE in the Hardin Co. Jail
- In July UCDSM provided assistance, through the Minister's Discretionary Fund and personal donations, to an immigrant family with small children who needed emergency assistance to get out of their car and into an apartment. Thanks to Knock and Drop/Zuli Garcia for notifying us of the situation and asking for emergency help
- In July, Briana, our sponsored asylum seeker, got her work permit and moved to Tennessee to be closer to family. Special thanks to Elaine Imlau who helped with unexpected housing after initial travel plans were changed several times

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

- Social Justice Ministry Leadership Team (SJMLT) did not meet in July due to Rev. Amy's vacation
- Looking forward, SJMLT have adapted their leadership to co-leadership. Sally Boeckholt. and Ron Heideman will be joining Katie Allen to lead the group.
- SJMLT is exploring presenting a variety of forums this coming Fall and Winter.

(Bruce Martin- FEDS)

- FEDS provided dinner for over 200 at the homeless shelter on July 6th with 5 volunteers assisting.
- Beginning in September, FEDS will once again be both delivering and serving the food, COVID conditions permitting

(Faith in Action)

- The FIA partners for the coming year are Knock and Drop and Just Voices. They will begin as partners in September!
- Judy Haver will no longer be leading FIA

(Ron Heideman- Green Sanctuary)

- Green Sanctuary is reorganizing and revitalizing at First Unitarian. Look for information over the coming months
- Don Shepherd, Linda Lemons and Ron Heideman met on July 21 for an organizational meeting of our Green Sanctuary efforts. [Learn about their plans to reinvigorate our church's commitment to environmental justice](#)
- If you want to be part of the work, contact Ron at Green@ucdsm.org.

(Barb Klubal- AMOS)

AMOS FIRST UNITARIAN CORE GROUP MEETING:

AMOS First UU Core Team met on July 16 to set goals and to get updates on new AMOS congregations. There were reports from the teams working on racial and juvenile justice, affordable housing and children's mental health.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING RESEARCH TEAM MEETINGS:

The Ankeny Affordable Housing Group continues to reach out to and meet with local leaders. On August 3, the AMOS team met virtually with a board member of the newly formed Ankeny Human Rights Commission, Past Tim Olson of Ankeny's Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. The group is also planning a meeting with Ankeny City Manager David Jones.

LET'S TALK/DES MOINES SCHOOLS:

On August 4 – 6 at First Unitarian Church, 18 people attended the 3-day Let's Talk training for the new embedded model that will roll out in 5-6 middle schools this year. This model will pay people \$25.00 an hour, which is a big change. Two thirds of the group were African American, which was very encouraging as we sit down with young people who are also students of color. We will also still have our "on call" mediation people available for those schools who do not have the embedded model. (Submitted by Ellen Taylor)

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH:

A full description of the services available via the new Children's Crisis Services Mental Health System services can be found at this link. Scroll down and click on Children's Crisis Services

Mental Health System Decision Tree on the left. All services listed are FREE.

<https://pchsia.org/childrensmentalhealth>

AMOS June Report

ALL-AMOS MEETING:

June 16 – The meeting focused on preparation and agenda for the June 27th Delegate Assembly. The Finance Committee presented a draft budget for questions.

AMOS DELEGATES ASSEMBLY:

June 27 – 100 AMOS leaders gathered in person at Our Lady’s Immaculate Heart Catholic Church in Ankeny for the first time in over a year for the Delegates Assembly. They celebrated victories like the Lauridsen Skate Park and children’s mental health and committed to hold 1 on 1’s, house meetings, and neighborhood walks this summer to strengthen AMOS and build relational power in their institutions.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING RESEARCH TEAM MEETINGS:

June 2 – Rezoning on the eastside of Des Moines where a parcel of land was changed from residential to industrial has left a neighborhood of homeowners unable to easily get loans for improvements. Efforts are underway to recruit east side churches to better address this problem with people living in the area.

June 24 – The study of the housing situation in Ankeny continues and will be a long-term effort. The escalating cost of homes and apartments makes it difficult or impossible for a segment of the population to work and live in Ankeny. It is hoped that what is learned in Ankeny can be duplicated in other parts of the metro. The team is in the process of compiling a contact list of AMOS leaders in Ankeny, and several members of Ankeny AMOS institutions have joined the Ankeny team since our last meeting. Team members met with outgoing Ankeny City Council member Kerry Walter Ashby and will be contacting the Ankeny Chamber of Commerce.

LET’S TALK/DES MOINES SCHOOLS:

AMOS Let’s Talk is in the process of connecting with Des Moines middle schools to see which schools want to work with the new format of having AMOS-trained people in the schools every day for 2/3 of the day and to determine how many people will be needed to support the schools’ requests. (This will be very different from the original version where AMOS did mediations on request and occasionally some trainings in restorative circle process for staff at some of the schools).

Training for mediation and restorative circle process will take place in August 4-6 at First Unitarian Church. Trained people will be paid by the hour.

CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH:

Thanks to the work of the AMOS Children’s Mental Health Team and many other stakeholders, Polk County is poised to launch a comprehensive children’s crisis services mental health system.

The AMOS Team has achieved nearly all of its goals and will be monitoring the implementation of a more compassionate and effective system, for which it has advocated for more than 4 years. This promises to create vastly better outcomes for children with mental health needs than the current police-first model. (See Des Moines Register Op-ed of 6/14/2021: [pdf version].)

(Elaine Imlau- Family Promise and FFFF/PPP)

- Food Fair events are in progress and well-attended

Family Promise

- Special thanks to our 27 Family Promise volunteers who provided meals and overnight hosting for three families at Westminster Presbyterian Church 4th of July week.
- The week was glitch free thanks to this reliable team of volunteers which includes: Jean Tauber, Anne Roozeboom, Kay Hertz, Gene McCracken, Angela Tedesco, Barb Hendricks, Ellen Taylor, Amy Luebbert, Cathy Beck-Cross, Cheryl Long, Patricia Cale-Finnegan, Heidi Lackmann, Jude Cigrand, Lori Hackett, Judith Linden, Carmen Dow, Sally Merritt, Ann Mowery, Susan Jellinger, Carolyn Spencer, Fern Stewart, Sandy Simmons, Mary Hays, Dian Schmiedeskamp, Sachiko Murphy, Karen Miller, Crystal Loving, Amanda Kruse, and Ed Hotchkin
- We have now finished our 5th year and 20th week with the program. The schedule for the next year is not out yet, but we will be hosting back in our church and will need a full schedule of volunteers to cover roughly 300 hours.

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

The program is on summer hiatus

(Terry Lowman and Linda Lemons- IUUWAN)

- 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 did our first service on May 2nd, 2021, and will be scheduling another two services this church year.

Barb Royal, Deidre Fudge, Liz Bredesen- Communication Group

- The website continues to be tweaked and adapted
- Louise Alcorn has joined the Communications Team
- Peyton Busch has joined the staff team as Social Media and Executive Support Specialist. In July she has spent her time adjusting to the office administrator side of her role and she will begin expanding our church social media presence in September

(Gianfranco Berardi, Doug Aupperle- Transgender Action Group)

- TAG met by Zoom in June. The group will be meeting by ZOOM on Wednesday, August 25th at 7pm to begin reimagining and reinvigorating TAG

Childcare (Julie Morocho)

- On hiatus due to Corona virus. Julie will be stepping down as Childcare Coordinator due to increased responsibilities at her regular job.

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

May

5/2/21 On This Journey Together Birch Spick 70 +7 on Facebook

5/9/21 Mama's Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to Be Cowboys Rev. Amy Shaw 86

5/16/21 Vesak Awakening Heart Sangha 74

5/23/21 Happy Rev. Amy Shaw 82

5/30/21 Through Fields of Fire 70

June

6/6/21 Francis David and the Light of Reason Rev. Amy Shaw 81

6/13/21 Let's Play Denise Rathman 62

6/20/21 CUUPs 60

6/27/21 Circle Round for Justice (GA Service) 66 on ZOOM plus unknown number directly on GA portal

July

7/4/21 Interdependence Day Rev. Dr. Cynthia Landrum 48

7/11/21 Fill Up Your Cups Megan Westphal 44

7/18/21 Creating the Beloved Community Heather Vickery and Laura Randall UUCSJ 61

7/25/21 From Languishing to Flourishing Heidi Levine 58+ watch part

New Commercial

<https://www.facebook.com/AmyPetrieShaw/videos/4391807047553493>

Podcast Status

The First U Think podcast continues to do well, with 51 downloads for the two June services posted in June and 22 downloads for July and August so far, in the one day since all of the July and August services were posted.

First U Think can be found anywhere you download podcasts, or here on our UCDSM Buzzsprout page <https://www.buzzsprout.com/1609618>

Membership Numbers

| Month | # of New Members | Deceased | Moved | Withdrew Membership |
|----------|------------------|----------|-------|---------------------|
| July | | | 5 | 5 |
| June | | | | |
| May | | | | |
| April | | | | |
| March | | | 2 | 2 |
| February | | | | 1 |

Operations Notes

- The Building Team is up and running. Formally composed of Patty Notch, Christen Bain, and Louise Alcorn, with Al Powers in an advisory/support role, the team is the front line on building issues. They've already accomplished some minor repairs, arranged for more complicated repairs, and worked with contractors. If a non-emergency building issue is noticed, you can let them (and me) know by sending an email to buildingteam@ucdsm.org. We'll take it from there. Emergency building issues should be reported to me or Rev. Amy directly.
- The internet issues in the building have been resolved. Ultimately, it took a lot of troubleshooting (thanks to Victor Tonelli and Al Powers, along with the staff) and the replacement of both the modem and the router to get things back to where they should be. Since the fix was put into place, we've had two staff meetings with multiple people on Zoom on different computer both with a wired and a wifi connection, and have had no issues, as well as an end to individual connection problems. We are ready to move forward with hybrid events.
- The heavy rains have caused several roof leaks in the kitchen area. Reliable Roofing has been out after each incident and promptly resolved the problems. We are probably going to need to look at a major resurfacing or replacement of the roof in the next 5-7 years, possibly sooner depending on the severity of the weather in coming years.