

August 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)

- Youth programming concluded for the Summer to work on planning for the fall with many contingency plans.
- The Fall programming will be At Home in Our Church for grades K-3, Outside Church for 4-6. Those classes will meet outside as the youth cannot be vaccinated yet. Sing and Play the UU way will be online for all ages for those that don't wish to meet in person yet. 7-8 OWL and 8-9 COA will meet inside with masks for those 12+ and vaccinated. YRUU will meet on Sundays inside masked. Children's Chapel will be part of the service with youth doing the Chalice Lighting and mediation.
- CUUPS, Heart Sangha, Humanism and Sage have been meeting online.
- Soul Matters and Wellspring concluded in June and will start up again in September. Groups are currently forming.
- The Adult RE Council has meet several times to talk about Sage forums and other classes for Adults to Seniors. They 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 beginning this fall

- An end of life workshop is in planning stages.
- Rev. Amy will be beginning three adult classes in September; Around the World in 11 Religions, Widening the Circle of Concern Study Guide, and Widening Our Circle of Concern
- 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
- The Sangha continues to meet on Zoom, with between 13 and 19 people attending.
- CUUPs continues to meet online. They continue with Monday night classes and social meets, and are planning a possible fall event.

Membership and Community (Lyra Halsten)

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee did not meet in August. Meetings will resume in September.

Classes

A UU and You class was held on August 19, 2021 with seven potential members attending.

Membership

- Current membership number is 437. 509 with pledging friends.
- One new member joined in August and one member asked to be made inactive. She indicated on her Exit Survey that she was only ever involved in a few classes

Caring Ministry

There were two rides given in August

Card Ministry

Four cards were mailed to members and friends

Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care had 13 contacts in July. Rev. Amy had 5 contacts

Young Adults Group

The Young Adults Group seems to be struggling. Earlier this year, long-time leader Kathryn Sutton, stepped away from the position and there are three new co-leaders. Leaders have reported what seems to be a “general lack of interest”. Leaders have planned activities and solicited ideas from members of the group about what kind of activities they want to do but have received no input. Lyra has put the YA leaders in touch with Matt Meyer who leads The Sanctuary in Boston (www.thesanctuaryboston.org)

Childcare (Hannah Notch)

- Childcare will be returning to UCDSM in September, beginning on September 18th.
- Hannah Notch, who has been a childcare provider for several years with UCDSM will be stepping up to take over coordinating the childcare staff

Facility/Grounds (Diane Ford/Doug Aupperle)

- A family of beavers have taken down several trees on the property
- A tree removal and clean-up day is scheduled for Saturday, September 11, 2021
- A urinal in the upstairs men's room is leaking. Charlie is working with a vendor to repair this
- A leak was noted in the ceiling to the right of the doors from the upper parking lot. Charlie is working with a vendor to repair this

Social Justice/Outreach (Morgan Dredge- Asylum Seekers)

- No updates for this month.
- Briana successfully moved to Tennessee
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(Katie Allen- Social Justice Ministry Leadership Team (SJMLT))

- 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 and has scheduled the first of these.
- SJMLT is working on a video for their scheduled Forum

(Bruce Martin- FEDS)

- 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
- Steve Gilson will be leading FIA this year

(Ron Heideman- Green Sanctuary)

- Green Sanctuary is reorganizing and revitalizing at First Unitarian. Look for information over the coming months
- If you want to be part of the work, contact Ron at Green@ucdsm.org.
- "Awakening the Dreamer" was held on August 10, 17, and 24. Awakening the Dreamer is a program offered by global Pachamama Alliance that offers one the opportunity to look at the challenging state of the world, reflect, and clarify where one is being called to take action.
- "Kiss the Ground", August 29, 1:30-3:30, in person at Trinity United Presbyterian Church, 200 S. Howard (east door), Indianola. "Kiss the Ground" is a full-length documentary narrated by Woody Harrelson that sheds light on a "new, old approach" to farming called "regenerative agriculture" that has the potential to balance our climate, replenish our vast water supplies, and feed the world.

- “Climate Solutions 101 – Project Drawdown”, a series of videos will be shown over five sessions: September 12; September 26; October 10; October 24; November 7. Each session will be 1:30 – 2:30 at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 200 S. Howard St (east doors), Indianola. with the latest need-to-know science and fascinating insights from global leaders in climate policy, research, investment, and beyond, this video series is a brain-shift toward a brighter climate reality.
- RegenIowa is hosting an Earth Regen X 3030 & World Food Forum on October 1st, 2021. <https://regeniowa.org/>: RegenIOWA Addresses Rural and Urban Economic Development, and Models a way to Regenerate the Health of our Planet
- Water Elders Event. A Water Event that Mike Delaney, a member of UCDSM is organizing. Currently the Raccoon River is considered one of the worst waterways for pollutants. It is the source of water for Des Moines and many municipal communities. They are planning an event at Izaak Walton on Wednesday, September 15.
- Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom: (<https://www.facebook.com/WILPFDSM/>) has reserved First Unitarian for Saturday afternoon, October 9th, for an event, regarding clean water and regenerative farming.

(Barb Klubal- AMOS)

ALL-AMOS MEETING

Twenty-five AMOS leaders gathered on August 12 via Zoom. The agenda included preparation and turnout for the Sept. 19th Delegates Assembly, training on organizing money as part of AMOS' 25th anniversary fall fundraising campaign and strategies that work, discussions of civic academies around education people on the new children's crisis mental health crisis services and turnout for local 2-day organizing training at the new member church, Corinthian Baptist, October 1 – 2.

AMOS FIRST UNITARIAN CORE GROUP MEETING – 9/5/2021

The team met on September 5 to discuss turnout for the September 19th Delegates Assembly and the 2-day organizing training at Corinthian Baptist. Plans and goals for the upcoming AMOS 25th anniversary fund-raiser were also discussed.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING RESEARCH TEAM MEETINGS:

Full Housing Team Meeting, 8/10/2021

Ankeny Report:

Meetings will be arranged with Rosaland Fox, John Deere Plant Manager in Ankeny and with the Ankeny City manager. The group is continuing to research Ankeny income data.

South/East (Des Moines):

The Des Moines City Council may be considering changing the zoning of the houses around E 21st St back to residential from industrial. A member of our committee will follow up with a City employee.

Ankeny Team Meeting

The Ankeny team continues to assess the lack of affordable housing there and research possibilities for improvement. On August 26, the Ankeny team met with MATT HAUGE, Director of Communications and Community Outreach for the Polk County Housing Trust Fund. Matt shared a slide presentation that summarized the status of affordable housing in all Polk County communities and specific findings on Ankeny. At least 25% of Ankeny residents pay more than 50% of income on rent.

Discussions that followed included new state funding for developers in the form of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, the expected growth of low-wage jobs and resulting increase in the lack of affordable housing, upward wage pressures on employers, and establishing relationships with more city officials.

The Ankeny team will send Matt the AMOS 2017 Ankeny Needs Assessment that reviewed Ankeny through the lens of poverty, considering needs for housing, schools, health care, etc. (The affordable housing situation has not improved since the report was written.)

LET'S TALK/DES MOINES SCHOOLS:

Currently Let's Talk has started the school year embedded daily or 3 days a week in 5 middle schools, with additional people available to do mediations in other middle schools if requested.

- Submitted by Ellen Taylor

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH:

The Children's Mental Health team is continuing to work to ensure that the services promised by the city, police, Broadlawns and Polk County Mental Health are actually provided. These include 1) Children's Mobile Crisis Teams staffed with mental health professionals trained to work with children/adolescents from Broadlawns, 2) a Stabilization Center/Community Team that will include a location at Easter Seals where youth may stay for up to 5 days and receive needed services for the child/family afterwards.

AMOS is continuing to ask for a commitment from the Police Chief, who is working toward the goal of staffing the 911 line with a trained mental health professional. That person would screen the calls for non-violent children's mental health situations and allow the Broadlawns therapists to arrive on-scene alone, thereby avoiding a police presence. We are also working toward an Observation Center for children/youth where youth could stay for up to 24 hours. We will be holding a public action 9/19 aiming for public commitments from stakeholders. We are beginning research to ensure the Des Moines services are built out to include the rest of Polk County.

- Submitted by Cheryl Long and Sally Boeckholt

(Elaine Imlau- Family Promise and FFFF/PPP

- Food Fair events are in progress and well-attended

Family Promise

- We have now finished our 5th year and 20th week with the program. This year 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)

- No report provided

Barb Royal, Deidre Fudge, Liz Bredesen, Louise Alcorn- Communication Group

- Added Louise Alcorn to the team
- Developing a mailer to all households to promote Faith Formation activities for adults & kids - due out mid-September
- Working on new room & equipment reservation form
- Started gathering information for an annual communications calendar to help prompt others to plan ahead for promoting events
- Working with Kerrie to help streamline and reduce the need for scrolling through the Intercom. One part of this is to start lengthy articles in the Intercom and then link to an online page for the rest of the information.

(Gianfranco Berardi, Doug Aupperle- Transgender Action Group)

- TAG met by Zoom on Wednesday, August 25th at 7pm to begin reimagining and reinvigorating TAG

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

August

8/1 Change the Harvest, Birch Spick	41 screens +16 at church
8/8 Spiritual is not Enough, Rev. Amy	48 screens + 20 at church
8/15 Why Do I Need a Bookmark, Rev. Amy	51 screens +16 at church
8/22 Friends, Family, Fishin’ and Philosophy, Rev. Amy	57 screens +20 at church
8/29 The Merits and Moral Imperative of Smiting, Rev. Dawn Fortune	61 screens + 5 at church

Podcast Status

The First U Think podcast continues to do well, with 109 downloads for August and 526 total downloads.

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

Administrative Matters

- Peyton Busch resigned her position as Social Media and Executive Assistant effective August 31. The search for her replacement is underway. In the meantime, new Childcare Coordinator Hannah Notch will be in Tuesdays through Fridays from 10 to 2 to facilitate deliveries and various and sundry other tasks.
- Cheryl Coker has been released from her role as bookkeeper. Her duties will be absorbed by DFA Charles Lewis. He will not be receiving a stipend for the extra duties this time to help save money. He is working with Barb Royal and the FOC to determine a regular procedure in regard to the weekly bank deposit.
- There has been a change in the building code regarding doors and elevators/lifts since we got the original bid from TK to replace the chair lift. It is looking increasingly likely that they will not be able to move forward. Al Powers is working with an engineer from a different company, AEL, who thinks that their product can be made to work with the restrictions of our space. He anticipates a definitive answer by the end of September.