

**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 began Around the World in 11 Religions class in September with 17 signed up to participate. The Widening the Circle of Concern Study Guide class, and Widening Our Circle of Concern groups will begin in October
- CUUPs continues to meet online. They continue with Monday night classes and social meets and are planning a Samhain event in October.

## **Membership and Community**

### **Membership Committee**

In late September the role of the Membership Coordinator was removed for immediate future so that this role could be reshaped to meet the congregation's needs going forward. The new UCDSM Human Resources Committee will be helping to shape this role and to assess the number of hours needed for it.

In the absence of a Coordinator, Reba Eagles is leading the volunteer group and Shelly Kaldenberg will be the person answering the Membership Committee emails for the immediate future. Sally Boeckholt has joined the team along with LeeAnn and Dash Back. Reba has also asked Terry Meek, who leads the Hospitality Group, to work closely with Membership so that Hospitality is more supported and new members can potentially be added into the Hospitality rotations as ushers, greeters, and coffee ministry volunteers

The Membership Committee is dedicated to making sure things go well going forward. They met in September and began to coordinate with Hospitality and the Kitchen Committee for our initial services back in the building. They have spoken to one potential new member, and with Rev. Amy about four more former members who wish to return.

### **Classes**

No new member classes were held in September.

### **Caring Ministry**

Leadership of the Caring Ministry changed in September, with Becky Evans stepping down from leadership and Jude Cigrand stepping forward.

### **Card Ministry**

Six cards were mailed to members and friends

### **Pastoral Care**

Pastoral Care had 33 contacts in September. Rev. Amy had 6 contacts

### **Childcare (Hannah Notch)**

- Childcare returned to UCDSM on September 18th.
- We recognize providing childcare as a necessity in line with our congregational values, and so are trying to rebuild our childcare staff (all of whom were laid off over the course of the pandemic) as soon as is possible. We currently have Hannah Notch and Katie Lint.

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

- A family of beavers have taken down several trees on the property and so we have contracted for the services of a licensed trapper to safely, and ethically, remove the animals. He has set up a series of cameras to monitor and count the animals and will remove them when he has all of the information he needs to do so. We do not have a hard timeline at this point
- A tree removal and clean-up day was held Saturday, September 11, 2021
- A urinal in the upstairs men's room was leaking and has been repaired
- A leak was noted in the ceiling to the right of the doors from the upper parking lot and has been repaired

### **Social Justice/Outreach (Morgan Dredge- Asylum Seekers)**

- No updates for this month.
- UCDSM has been approached about possibly sponsoring a refugee family and Morgan Dredge is reaching out to get details on the type of support they are looking for

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

- SJMLT is exploring presenting a variety of forums this coming Fall and Winter and has scheduled the first of these on November 7th. The team will each share how we sustain ourselves in this stressful Covid-times. The participants will then have small group discussions on how they sustain themselves. Plan to attend to help nurture yourself as you work on social justice issues. This Forum will have Zoom and in-person options.

### **(Bruce Martin- FEDS)**

- FEDS began both delivering and serving the food at the homeless shelter in September, feeding over 200 people. They will continue to do this COVID permitting

### **(Faith in Action)**

- The FIA partners for the year are Knock and Drop and Just Voices and they began as partners in September
- Steve Gilson will be leading FIA this year
- There were no volunteer opportunities or events for our partners in September

### **(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](mailto:Green@ucdsm.org).
- "Climate Solutions 101 – Project Drawdown" video series began at Trinity Presbyterian Church this month. This is a series of videos which 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
- Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, (<https://www.facebook.com/WILPFDSM/>) has reserved First Unitarian for Saturday afternoon, October 9<sup>th</sup>, for an event, regarding clean water and regenerative farming.

### **(Barb Klubal- AMOS)**

#### **ALL AMOS MEETING**

26 leaders attended the meeting on September 9. The agenda included planning for the September 19<sup>th</sup> Delegates Assembly, the mental health civic academies and goals for the AMOS 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fund-raiser.

#### **AMOS DELEGATES ASSEMBLY**

100 AMOS leaders and 20 local and state elected officials and mental health decision makers attended the Assembly, either virtually or in person, at Plymouth Congregational Church on September 19. Des Moines Police Chief Dana Wingert committed to hire a mental health clinician within 9-1-1 dispatch. Des Moines City Manager Scott Sanders, Julie Gibbons with Polk County Health Services, and Steve Johnson with Broadlawns all committed to continue to work with AMOS to expand and improve new crisis services.

The \$25,000 goal for the fall fundraiser was announced, marking the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of AMOS. Over \$3,000 was raised during the delegates assembly, and we have a pledge within First Unitarian Church to match every dollar raised up to \$2,500! Invest in AMOS here! [www.amosiowa.org/invest](http://www.amosiowa.org/invest) Click here for fundraising campaign flyer highlighting 25 years of AMOS in action.

#### **CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH**

AMOS continues to work to improve access to mental health services in Iowa. AMOS leaders have committed to create and organize mental health civic academies to educate families about new crisis services, listen and understand other mental health pressures, and act together to improve mental health services. Register here for upcoming "train the trainer" sessions for mental health civic academies:

- Ames & Norwalk: Sunday, Oct. 17<sup>th</sup> at 2:15pm
- Ankeny: Sunday, Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm
- Des Moines: Thursday, Nov. 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm
- Des Moines: Sunday, Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm

AMOS has also begun researching the issues relating to the challenges Polk County Health Services is facing in finding qualified people to staff positions.

### **AMOS ORGANIZING TRAINING**

22 leaders completed the 2-day training at Corinthian Baptist Church, Des Moines (a new AMOS member church!) on October 1 and 2.

### **HOUSING**

The housing teams continue to meet and do research in both Ankeny and DSM.

We are also strategizing ask to Polk county board of supervisors at public forum for spending American Rescue Plan Act money!

### **LET'S TALK/DES MOINES SCHOOLS**

No news this month.

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

- Food Fair events are in progress and well-attended. Discussions have begun about the Post Pandemic Party from the 2019 fundraiser. Board input/recommendations welcome.

### **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.
- 30 individuals signed up to volunteer for our 21<sup>st</sup> week of hosting volunteer drivers were not needed at all. Total of about 125 volunteer hours.

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

No activity in September

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

- Developed and sent out a mailer in September to all households to promote Faith Formation activities for adults & kids
- Continued gathering information for an annual communications calendar to help prompt others to plan ahead for promoting events
- The Communications Team worked with Kerrie Lee on updates to the website to reflect the classes and other activities happening this fall. Kerrie informed us that we will need to change the program used to create sign-up forms on the website as Caldera will no longer support the software past the end of the year. We will need to transition to Gravity Forms. This will affect Faith Formation the most.
- Due to Kerrie's resignation, Comm Team members have temporarily taken on the tasks of the Intercom and website changes.

### **Gianfranco Berardi, Doug Aupperle- Transgender Action Group**

- TAG met by Zoom on September 23rd at 7pm to continue reimagining and reinvigorating TAG
- TAG talked about planning a 2nd Trans Lives Fest in the spring. Conversation was tabled on Trans Lives Fest until Doug and/or Franco could join the conversation, since they had the most experience organizing the event.
- TAG continued talking about a Trans Day of Remembrance (TDOR) event. We weighed the pros and cons of having a virtual, in-person, or hybrid event. We weighed the pros & cons of setting up our own event and what we might focus on or lending our resources to another event. We discussed a possible outcome of having our own event while another was also being held: that we would divert attention away from an event that might be led by people of color and their organizations. Given that, we discussed looking out for other events in the area to support (with finances, tech support, volunteer capacity, etc.) before moving forward with our own event.
- Ysa Morigan offered to reach out to Buffy Jamison with Iowa Queer Communities of Color Coalition to see if they have planned anything or are aware of any other events for TDOR. Birch Spick will also look out for any events that may be held by other area groups (Supply Hive, etc.). TAG welcomes any information about local events being held, especially events help by POC and indigenous groups.
- The next TAG meeting will be the 2nd Thursday of October (10/14) at 7:00PM. We will continue our discussion of TDOR and talk about planning Trans Lives Fest. If you have any questions or feedback about this meeting or these notes, please speak with Birch Spick.

### **Liz Bredeson – Stewardship Team**

- Two monthly events have been held: August and September
- We have heard from all but 1 household in the August group.
- We have heard from 9 of 36 households in the September group. This group includes 11 households from whom we had not received a pledge in spring, 2021.
- The Stewardship Team has assigned the remaining months to members of the team and we will be recruiting co-hosts in the new few months.
- Those who weren't able to attend their monthly get invited to the next month's event.
- Non-responders will then be sent follow-up letters and phone calls.

The team has drafted a letter that will be sent to those who have not made a donation of record in the past two years. Those who confirm their desire to remain members will be kept on the membership list and included in the monthly events. Those who do not respond will be dropped from membership.

The team has also been discussing how we can better communicate what it means to be a member. We've gathered some information from other congregations and are working on a draft to provide to the Board. Our goal is to clarify what's expected from members: participation, volunteering, attendance, and pledging. We will also outline the benefits of membership: rites of passage services, voting at the annual meeting and other congregational matters, RE class registration preferences, etc.

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

August

9/5/21 Making a Joyful Noise, Rev. Amy	58 screens +6 at church
9/12/21 Pouring Out Our Hearts, Rev. Amy	63 screens + 18 at church
9/19/21 Volkswagen Salvation & Sacred Sushi, Rev. Amy	62 screens +14 at church
9/26/21 If It's Mental Illness You Don't Get a Lasagna, Patty Notch	58 screens +20 at church

**Podcast Status**

The First U Think podcast has had 289 downloads in the last 90 days, and 635 total downloads. There were 81 downloads in September.

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