

**October 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)

- Fall programming started with a Kickoff on Sept 22nd and all programming started on Sept 29th. The younger youth classes are At Home in Our Church for grades K-3, Outside Church for 4-6. Those classes meet outside as the youth cannot be vaccinated yet. Sing and Play the UU Way is the online offering for all ages for those that don't wish to meet in person yet. 7-8 OWL and 8-9 COA are meeting inside with masks for those 12+ and vaccinated. YRUU meets on Sundays outside until too cold and then inside masked. Children's Chapel is now part of the service with the hope youth doing the Chalice Lighting and mediation in the future. Volunteers for supervision of youth during the latter part of the service are being sought.
- An end-of-life workshop was presented by Hilary Hippen-Leek.
- Tai chi classes began and are meeting twice a week.
- The Adult RE Council has met 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.

- Heart Sangha, Humanism and Sage have been meeting online.
- Rev. Amy continues Around the World in 11 Religions class on Fridays at 6pm, Widening the Circle of Concern Study Guide class on 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, and Widening Our Circle of Concern group on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays. In October, they also held a two-session class called Talking Across the Divide, which was about how to navigate speaking to and remaining in relationship with those whose beliefs and perspectives did not match your own.
- CUUPs continues to meet online. They continue with Monday night classes and social meets and held a Samhain event in October.
- Soul Matters started up again with some groups waiting until October.

Membership and Community

Membership Committee

- Two new members have signed the book
- There are multiple other potential members now involved in the membership process
- Rev. Amy and Nancy Bratt cleaned out the former Membership Coordinator's office. The Membership Committee will now be using the double cubical against the windows in the center of the main office
- No new member classes were held in October. A class is scheduled for Nov. 21 at 2pm.

Caring Ministry

Leadership of the Card Ministry changed in October, with Carolyn Spencer stepping down from leadership and Jill Moser stepping forward.

Card Ministry

Eight cards were mailed to members and friends

Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care had 18 contacts in October. Rev. Amy had 4 contacts

Childcare (Hannah Notch)

- Childcare returned to UCDSM on September 18th.
- An ad for childcare workers was placed with Indeed, with multiple responses received. The HR Committee will do initial and follow-up interviews together with Hannah Notch. Rev. Amy will make final decisions as needed.
- After receiving multiple applications for the role of Childcare Coordinator, the HR team was able to support the hiring of Hannah Notch as the permanent Childcare Coordinator. This role will be combined with Hannah's roles at Social Media and Executive Support Specialist and Tech Specialist to create one 32 hour a week job.

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 now set up traps and has removed multiple animals to a site 50 miles away.
- Another leak was noted in the ceiling to the right of the doors from the upper parking lot and the roofing vendor was notified. Waiting for date of repair
- Ongoing volunteer activities continue: regular trash pickup by Bruce Martin, Barb Martin, Al Powers and Ann Lowry; Peace Pole Garden maintenance by Amanda and Alan Kruse; Oak Tree garden bed maintenance by Elaine Imlau; West Entrance Circle Beds maintenance by Theresa Miller; Pollinator Garden maintenance by Diane Ford; Memorial Garden maintenance by Doug Aupperle; Labyrinth Maintenance by Andrea LeMeuse; Drains Cleared around building by Doug Aupperle; Parking Lot rehab and maintenance by Al Powers; Tree Trimming by Eric Hayes and Al Powers; Weed Eradication under Sanctuary window by Doug Aupperle; sweep entryways to church before in-person services (Hospitality Teams).
- Organized Volunteer Workdays so far in 2021 include May 22 (8 volunteers including 3 Council members); July 17 (7 volunteers including 4 Council members); August 6 tree trimming on parking lot, Al Powers and Eric Hayes; September 11 tree clearing (6 volunteers including 4 Council members).
- There is a Volunteer Workday planned for November 6. So far, 5 volunteers and 4 Grounds Council members have responded. Planned tasks, depending on volunteer numbers, are finishing the last row of a retaining wall, transplanting some plants, blowing and raking leaves, cleaning up the planters and entrances, preparing beds for the winter, cleaning out the tool shed, clearing the walkways and stairways, moving a big pile of chips to the trail on the east side.
- Earlier Workday tasks included deconstructing old arbor, weeding, raking, trail clearing, tree trimming over walkways, removing hazard trees, mowing, sweeping, applying deer browse protection, replanting, mulching, setting up watering system.
- Ad hoc tasks continue: repairing mower for labyrinth and trails (but now it doesn't work again), (Diane Ford); straightening poles, replacing signs and bumpers, and weed prevention on parking lot (Al Powers); getting gas leaf blower going and clearing patio, walkways and lower parking lot (Diane Ford); repairing culvert washout (Al Powers); repairing roof drain washout (Al Powers); working with tree service to remove hazard trees (Diane Ford); working with animal removal service to address beaver and groundhog damage (Charlie Lewis); cleaning patio and area for youth group (Lyra Halston and volunteers); rehabilitating play structure near patio (Chelsea and Eric Hayes and volunteers); mowing and cleaning up labyrinth (CUUPS); and more
- The official Grounds Council membership at this time consists of 8 people, with Al Powers essentially a ninth unofficial member in addition to all his other volunteer work for the church. Four of the eight members are inactive due to health and personal reasons. Three of the remaining four have significant knee or back issues but have continued to perform some pretty hard labor tasks. As church resumes meeting in person, tasks like more weeding and attention to entrances and walkways and planter maintenance during the growing seasons will be added. The effort to find regular volunteers has been pretty successful for established garden beds and some tasks (see above), but we need more participation in the Grounds Council leadership and

Volunteer Workdays if we are to sustain the volunteer maintenance of the 4.5 acres of grounds and equipment around the church.

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

- Morgan Dredge is currently in touch with USCRI to match our church with an Afghani refugee family.
- Members of the Asylum Seekers group are also working on fundraising for the Mary Campos scholarships. The Mary E. Campos Scholarship Program honors the Des Moines Civil Rights leader by providing scholarship opportunities for students, especially youth of color to obtain a higher education.

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

- SJMLT will present their first multi-platform Forum 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.
- SJMLT will be working collaboratively with Leadership Committee to help the various groups of our church develop charters, covenants, and vision/mission statements which it within our larger church mission and vision

(Bruce Martin- FEDS)

- FEDS continued delivering and serving the food at the homeless shelter in October, feeding over 200 people.

(Faith in Action)

- The FIA partners for the year are Knock and Drop and Just Voices and they began as partners in September
- There were no volunteer opportunities or events for our partners in October

(Ron Heideman- Green Sanctuary)

- Revisited Vision and Mission and made significant changes. We put Mission first as the “umbrella” overview with Vision following as the details of how we will implement the Mission. We have ongoing discussion about Mission and Vision and will continue the discussion next month.
- The mission of Green Sanctuary is: 1) Individual and Congregational Evolution; 2) Anti-Oppressive Climate Work in church and community; 3) Collaboration and Mobilization with organizations throughout the state of Iowa and the UUA.
- The vision of Green Sanctuary is: We will bring forth an environmentally sustainable, socially just, spiritually resilient world where we share and use resources to benefit all. We will incorporate our UU Values and the Seven (and proposed 8th) Principles into our climate and social justice activism. We will dedicate time and space for education, action, and reflection.

Composting in the Kitchen

- Fruits and vegetables
- Eggshells
- Coffee grounds and filters
- Tea bags

Recycling in the Kitchen

- Cans
 - Cardboard (no food residue)
 - Paper
 - Paper Cartons (waxy, coated food and beverage cartons like milk, juice, and soup broth)
 - Plastic containers that have Twist-Off Lids
-
- Reusables vs. Disposables: This will be an ongoing conversation. There are many factors and preferences that need to be discussed. We'll continue discussion next month and invite the Kitchen Committee, kitchen workers, and Forum participants to join the discussion. Refer to these websites: <https://news.umich.edu/is-reusable-always-best-comparing-environmental-impacts-of-reusable-vs-single-use-kitchenware/>; <https://www.greenbiz.com/article/settling-score-reusable-vs-recyclable-cups>
 - GS will host a Forum at church on January 9th at 11:00 am. Planning is in progress
 - Next Meeting: December 1, 7:30pm
 - Regeniowa hosted an Earth Regen X 3030 & World Food Forum on October 1st, 2021. <https://regeniowa.org/>: RegenIOWA
 - Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, (<https://www.facebook.com/WILPFDSM/>) reserved First Unitarian for Saturday afternoon, October 9th, and held an event regarding clean water and regenerative farming.

(Barb Klubal- AMOS)

AMOS 25TH ANNIVERSARY FUNDRAISER

As of November 9, First Unitarian has raised \$850 (\$1700 with match) of its \$5,000 goal. The goal includes a generous pledge within First Unitarian to match every dollar raised up to \$2500. Invest in AMOS here! www.amosiowa.org/invest Click here for fundraising campaign flyer highlighting 25 years of AMOS in action.

All-AMOS OCTOBER MEETING

This meeting focused on accountability and next steps for the actions launched at the September Delegate Assembly:

- Updates on progress towards AMOS' \$25,000 fall fundraising goal
- Turnout work for upcoming children's mental health civic academy "train the trainer" sessions
- Reports on organizing work within Ames and Ankeny Clusters around local elections
- Proposal to organize around ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding coming to Polk and Story Counties.

FIRST UNITARIAN CORE TEAM – OCTOBER

Agenda included fundraising, Let's Talk, an AMOS forum, the mental health civic academies and engaging with the Des Moines Education Association (more on this under Children's Mental Health).

LET'S TALK/DES MOINES PUBLIC SCHOOLS

One more middle school is being added to the list of middle schools being served in Des Moines, bringing the total to 8 schools.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

After 4 years of AMOS organizing, there is a new children's crisis system in Polk County. New services include a hotline, community stabilization team to come to a child in crisis, a community stabilization center to support youth for up to 5 days, mobile crisis responders trained to work with youth in crisis and a public commitment by Des Moines Police Chief Dana Wingert to hire a mental health professional within 9-1-1 dispatch to decrease officer involvement in mental health emergencies. AMOS continues to work to improve access to quality, culturally appropriate mental health services in Central Iowa. AMOS has launched a "Civic Academy" organizing strategy to educate our community about these new resources, listen and understand barriers to access and other mental health pressures, and grow our constituency to be able to act on these pressures. AMOS leaders from First Unitarian and other member institutions joined a recent Des Moines Education Association meeting and held virtual house meetings with over 60 teachers and other school staff. Mental health is only one of the critical issues facing our public schools. DMEA is a potential AMOS member institution.

WORKFORCE HOUSING & MENTAL HEALTH - AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA)

The affordable housing and mental health teams joined forces this month in multiple meetings to strategize around funding from ARPA for AMOS priorities in Polk and Story Counties. Polk County is targeting approximately \$57 million in 4 key areas: affordable housing, economic well-being, water quality and mental health. At the Polk County Supervisors' first public forum on ARPA, AMOS leaders testified in support of investing in Project Iowa, mental health and workforce. Press coverage here: WHO13 and KCCI. AMOS leaders recently met with Polk County Supervisor Angela Connolly, and the workforce housing team met with the mayor, city manager and assistant manager of Ankeny to discuss workforce housing there.

(Elaine Imlau- Family Promise and FFFF/PPP)

FFFF-Team is considering when to hold the the Post Pandemic Party from 2019 fundraiser. Board input/recommendations welcome.

Family Promise

- In October 30 individuals signed up to volunteer for our 21st week of hosting. Volunteer drivers were not needed after all. Total of about 125 volunteer hours.

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

No activity in October

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

- The Communications Team said good-bye to Kerrie Lee on Oct. 11. Before Kerrie departed, she did a training session with Deidre Fudge and Barb Royal to turn over the Intercom to Deidre and show Barb what items need weekly updates on the website and other maintenance items.
- Deidre supported the Kitchen Project Team by creating a PowerPoint pre-show presentation for their Oct. 17 Forum and providing editing feedback on their Intercom and service spotlight pieces. Barb provided Zoom technical support during the Forum and Rev. Amy created a video from the Zoom and PowerPoint.
- Louise Alcorn is researching what's needed to transition website class registration forms from Caldera to Gravity Forms at the end of the year. She will talk to Devon about what's needed for RE classes in the spring. We want to find a way to balance making registration easier for parents (i.e. filling out fewer forms) with Devon's need to track registration data by class.

(Gianfranco Berardi, Doug Aupperle- Transgender Action Group)

- TAG met on 10/14/2021 and 10/28/2021
- Planning for Trans Lives Fest, Doug Aupperle & Franco Berardi will share some of the spreadsheets, emails, & planning documents they used to put together the 2019 and proposed 2020 events. They suggested reaching out to prospective artists and performers in November or December and following up in January. They also mentioned using the REACH grant to pay for promotional materials (flyers, radio ads, etc.) as well as honoraria for performers.
- TAG will follow up on the possibility that they may be able to ask for REACH funding back, given the circumstances of the pandemic. They had obtained a grant, but the event for 2020 was cancelled.
- TAG resumed conversation about Trans Day of Remembrance. Ysa Morigan reached out to a BIPOC leader, but has not heard anything back. She suggested someone else might want to reach out to this leader, or perhaps to Sonia Reyes. The goal is to avoid taking participation from any event lead by POC or indigenous activists.
- TAG decided to lead a Sunday service on 11/28/2021, rather than organize an event which was not centered on communities of color.

(Liz Bredeesen- Stewardship)

- The Stewardship Team has organized 4 monthly pledge events (August, September, October and November). Attendance has been good: overall (55 individuals attended out of 155 potential).
- We are planning a "catch-up" event the first Sunday in December for those who couldn't make one of the first 4 events.
- The team has forwarded ideas for strengthening our membership benefits and requirements to the BoT (Scott Clair).
- The team has discussed this church year's Music and Art Festival (FAFUMAF). We believe this event is important enough to deserve its own dedicated team and should probably not reside with Stewardship after this year. We will be looking to form a team this year to take it over going forward.

- A letter requesting confirmation of interest in remaining a member of the church will go out to those we haven't heard from in 2 years.

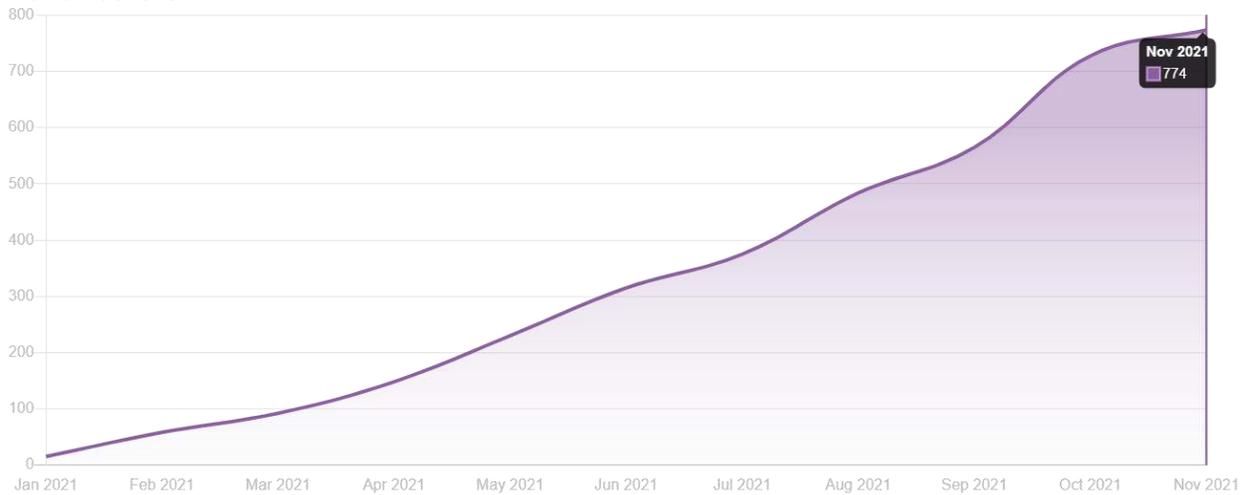
Service Attendance:

October

10/3/2021 Exploring Belief in our own Identity as an Act of Self-Love, Dr. Rebecca Gibson	51 screens +16 at church
10/10/21 Listening the Circle Wide, Rev. Kimberly Debus	48 screens + 11 at church
10/17/21 Ghosts, Rev. Amy	30 screens +76 at church
10/24/21 Four Noble Truths and Some Great Big Lies, Rev. Amy	31 screens +76 at church
10/31/2021 Take Up All That Remain, Birch Spick	28 screens + ? at church

Podcast Status

The First U Think podcast has had 325 downloads in the last 90 days, and 774 total downloads. There were 83 downloads in October. Every month there are slightly more downloads than the month before.



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