

November 2021 Executive Report
Rev. Amy Petrie Shaw

Our Mission: Grow ethically and spiritually, serve justly, and love radically.

Our Ends Statements 2016 – 2021

We:

Grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, and ethically.

Explore and experience what it means to be human.

Cultivate compassion toward ourselves and others.

Foster personal connections to life, nature and/or the divine.

Seek, embrace, and share experiences of wonder.

Develop our Unitarian Universalist identities.

Ask for and receive loving presence from one another, especially in times of joy, sorrow and transition.

Respectfully connect across differences for understanding.

Intentionally invite and engage others to grow in community with us.

Generously share our time, talent and treasure.

Maintain a facility and grounds appropriate for our needs and aligned with our values.

Build authentic partnerships, responding to needs our partners articulate.

Show up with passion and enthusiasm to grow our values in the world.

Share our talent and resources to support groups with whom we share values.

Provide leadership and space for civil discourse.

Welcome and accept transformation that comes through authentic relationships within and beyond our church.

Lifespan Learning (Devon McClurken)

At Home in Our Church for grades K-3, Outside Church for 4-6 have been meeting outside but many of the youth are being vaccinated and after Christmas they should be considered fully vaccinated and we can move inside with masks.

Sing and Play the UU Way is the online offering for all ages for those that don't wish to meet in person yet and this will continue to be offered.

Registration for K-1 OWL and 5-6 OWL will start soon. 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 once they are vaccinated.

Volunteers for supervision of youth during the later part of the service are being sought and are needed once more youth attend the service.

CUUPS, Heart Sangha, Humanism and Sage have been meeting online. Soul Matters started up again.

Rev Amy continues two classes on the Widening the Circle report as well as a World Religions class.

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 as well as OWL for Adults but waiting for UUA facilitator training.

Pandemic support, Soul to Soul book groups, and TED talk forums are programs that are being developed by adult RE.

Tai Chi was brought in two days a week and will continue with volunteers from the group.

Membership and Community

Membership Committee

One new member has signed the book

There are multiple other potential members now involved in the membership process and we are getting more each week

The Membership Committee is now using the double cubical against the windows in the center of the main office

A new member class was held on Nov. 21 at 2pm.

Membership will be meeting with Rev. Amy in December to smooth out the path to membership, begin scheduling routine new member classes and welcome services, and solidify the process of moving people through from visitor to member

Caring Ministry

Support was provided for the Lauers in November as they waited with the daughter for her surgeries

Card Ministry

Six cards were mailed to members and friends

Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care had 20 contacts in November. Rev. Amy had 5 contacts

Childcare (Hannah Notch)

7 new childcare staff have been hired and are in the process of training and being police checked.

Hannah Notch began her 32 hour a week position, which includes childcare coordination.

Childcare will be fully available beginning in mid-December

Facility/Grounds (Diane Ford/Doug Aupperle)

The trapper we hired continues to live trap raccoons, possums, and beavers and relocate them to a site 50 miles away. We do have 2 kill traps fully submersed in the water of the creek but continue to try to live trap the remaining beavers and search for other non-lethal ways to remove them before additional serious damage is done.

Liz Bredeson has offered to fill the planters on the east entrance of the church, and LeeAnne Back has offered to look at the west entrance planters. Barb and Bruce Martin and Al Powers and Anne Mowers continue regular trash pickup on the grounds. Al, Doug Aupperle, Chuck Mertes and others continue to address random issues on the grounds. Diane Ford is resigning from the Grounds Council at the end of this month for personal and health reasons, but will continue to "adopt" the Pollinator Garden and take part in volunteer days when possible. That leaves Doug Aupperle, Jane Rider, Theresa Miller, Chuck Mertes, Ron Bowerman and Nate Hoogeveen as Council members. Sue Huber's status on the team is currently uncertain.

Below is the report for the volunteer workday in November:

Sixteen volunteers showed up on November 6 to work on the church grounds, and this small but mighty group accomplished the following: raked the leaves; finished the retaining wall by the west entrance except for some final brick cuts; swept all the walkways and patio; hauled mulch from the chip pile to the trail; planted and transplanted plants into the various beds; cleaned out the trash area; swept and straightened the shed; cleared all the drains around the building and grounds; straightened and installed parking signs; swept the roof for the winter; picked up trash; cleared the planters; trimmed trees and shrubs near street parking areas; trimmed back flower beds for the winter; and more.

Thanks to Theresa Miller, Al Powers, Chuck Mertes, Susan Jellinger, Liz and Larry Bredeson, Elaine Imlau, Ilene Fagen, Tom McFarland, Sandy Simmons, Doug Aupperle, Andrea and Bob LeMeuse and friend; Chris Rinner and Diane Ford. It was a beautiful day to be outside, made better by the tasty chili lunch provided by Chris!

Social Justice/Outreach

(Morgan Dredge- Asylum Seekers)

The immigration justice group is partnering with USCRI to set up an apartment and be family friends to a refugee family that is resettling in Des Moines. They will start collecting items and donations in December and hope to be ready to set up an apartment by mid-January.

Members of the Asylum Seekers group worked on fundraising for the Mary Campos scholarships in October and the scholarship's luncheon was held in November. 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 presented their first multi-platform Forum on November 7th. The team shared how they sustain themselves in this stressful Covid-times. The participants then had 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 preparing & serving dinner at the Shelter of Central Iowa on Nov. 15, an activity practice that had been interrupted by COVID and resumed just in September; this time seven volunteers were involved in about 200 meals.

The precise size of the FEDS active volunteer pool is always uncertain and was perhaps reduced by COVID. Since the signup for December 6 was thin and has required some scrambling, on Nov. 22 Bruce Martin sent out the Signup-Genius invitation for our Jan.-June 2022 dates partly to appraise our situation before proceeding with next year's commitment.

Bruce is happy to report, the response has been very strong, filling up almost all slots. The volunteer list may be a bit smaller, but we've added a few to it.

(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 November

(Ron Heideman- Green Sanctuary)

Mission and vision statements are being finalized.

Reusables vs. Disposables: This will be an ongoing conversation. There are many factors and preferences that need to be discussed. Green Sanctuary invites 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 for the Forum which will include:

- Share who are committee members. Introduce ourselves. Each member is encouraged to take no more than one minute.
- Participants introduce themselves and talk about what draws them to environmental justice. What organizations do you belong to?
- Describe our group. Who we are: building on the work of the previous Energy and Justice for All committee with a new UU name; concerned members working on environmental and social justice; we will publicize events within First Unitarian, Des Moines, and Iowa; we will educate members of our church about environmental issues; Shared Leadership.
- What we are doing: we are surveying our building and grounds to determine what is currently being done and what needs to be implemented; spiritual component; working with Kitchen Committee; Recycling statement; Composting statement.
- What do you want to do with social and climate justice at First Unitarian? (take care of yourself)
- Forum participants ask questions
- Ongoing discussion: Reusables vs. Disposables

Next Meeting: December 22, 7:30pm

(Barb Klubal- AMOS)

AMOS 25TH ANNIVERSARY FUNDRAISER

First Unitarian has raised \$3,715 of its \$5,000 goal. This includes a dollar-for-dollar match (up to \$2500) from a generous member of our church. Invest in AMOS here! www.amosiowa.org/invest Click here for fundraising campaign flyer highlighting 25 years of AMOS in action.

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

The AMOS Affordable/Workforce Housing and Mental Health teams continued meetings in November and December to plan strategies and present AMOS funding priorities for the \$56

million in funding that Polk County will receive from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). There were multiple meetings with Polk County Supervisors and stakeholders. AMOS' requests for funding are in three key areas:

- Increase affordable/workforce rental housing for those in the 30-50% area median income bracket.
- Investment in career and skill building for marginalized communities, specifically in support of the nursing workforce with LNP and RN training with wrap-around support from Project Iowa and a living stipend
- Increase the number of bilingual and culturally competent mental health professions with a scholarship program.

One way AMOS can demonstrate broad, organized support for these funding priorities is by organizing 100s of Polk County residents to complete the short online ARPA survey by December 31, 2021. AMOS invites all members of First Unitarian to fill out the survey with AMOS priorities in mind. <https://www.polkcountyiowa.gov/arpa/> is the webpage and <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6FLGTDD> is the actual survey. **Before completing the survey**, please go to [this explanation and instruction page](#) in order get a better understanding of those priorities. AMOS' suggested comments are in red.

Click on the last link at the very bottom of the explanation and instruction page to let AMOS know when you've completed the actual survey.

A Mental Health Summit was held at Central Presbyterian Church on December 10 with more than a dozen providers in the community, along with various community constituents to identify main gaps in workforce and barriers to engaging bilingual/multilingual, people-of-color, and those with cultural competency skill into training programs. More information on the Summit will be in next month's report.

Meetings with DSM City staff have started in order to understand use of City ARPA dollars.

Let's Talk/Des Moines Public Schools

The Let's Talk group continues to work on a new training date for January to invite more people to join in the work. The schools are very glad to have us as they struggle with staff shortages.

- Ellen Taylor

(Elaine Imlau- Family Promise and FFFF/PPP)

FFFFF-Team has not yet released the dates of the PPP but are considering when would be appropriate

Family Promise

A dozen people were involved in providing and packaging food for the Greater Des Moines Family Promise annual fundraiser, the Comfort Food Cookoff.

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

No activity in November

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

The Communications Team began November continuing to directly support the Intercom and website due to the absence of a Communications Coordinator.

The new staff person, Emily Petty, began Nov. 9 and she has begun attending our bi-weekly meetings. Barb and Deidre have provided training for the Intercom and website and continue to provide support as issues come up.

(Gianfranco Berardi, Doug Aupperle- Transgender Action Group)

TAG met multiple times in November.

Planning for Trans Lives Fest continues.

TAG is reaching out to prospective artists and performers in November and December and following up in January. They also mentioned possibly using a 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 led a Sunday service on 11/28/2021, rather than organize a Transgender Day of Remembrance event which was not centered on communities of color.

(Liz Bredesen- Stewardship)

The Stewardship team meets every week.

They have been continuing their work on cleaning up the membership list.

They plan on sending a letter to those they've tried to contact from the September and October groups who have not responded. The letter will inform them that because we haven't received a response or a contribution we need to know if they wish to continue to be members.

They are working on the January - March stewardship groups.

Work on FAFUMAF 2.0 is underway. It will be held on the last Saturday in February 2022. The Stewardship Team will hand this event off to a separate group to coordinate; no longer to be managed as a Stewardship event.

Service Attendance:

November

11/7/21 Running Out of Gas, Blowing Out Tires, John Murray, Silver Linings, and You (Rev Amy)	30 screens + 92 at church
11/14/21 Adding an 8 th Principle? (Rev Amy)	31 screens + 90 at church
11/21/21 Saints and Sinners, Gratitude and Grace (Rev Amy)	38 screens + 69 at church
11/28/21 Crossroads of Perception (TAG)	25 screens + 52 at church

Podcast Status

The First U Think podcast has had 431 downloads in the last 90 days, up from 325 per 90 days, and 961 total downloads. There were 189 downloads in November, up from 83 downloads in October. Every month there are 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>