

December 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.

7-8 OWL and 8-9 COA are meeting inside with masks for those 12+ and vaccinated.

Registration for K-1 OWL and 5-6 OWL opened up and 8 people registered for 5-6 OWL which will start after the Winter Break.

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 has two classes on the Widening the Circle report and the World Religions class concluded after a few additional weeks by request.

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 brough in two days a week and will continue with volunteers from the group.

A survey is being developed to ask for people's needs and passions.

Membership and Community

Membership Committee

One more 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

Membership did a Sunday Spotlight on December 12th that was well received.

Members of the Membership Committee decorated the church of the holidays, and will clean up the decorations in January. Damaged or aging decorations will be removed.

Membership met 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 December as daughter Sarah had two surgeries and entered into a difficult recovery period.

Card Ministry

13 cards were mailed to members and friends

Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care had 38 contacts in November. Rev. Amy had 7 contacts

Childcare (Hannah Notch)

New childcare staff were hired but did not remain. We are currently at 2-3 childcare staff

A childcare staff member contracted COVID the last week of December. This did not impact services, as we had no service on 12/26, and were digital on Jan 2.

(Liz Bredesen- Stewardship)

The Stewardship Team is planning the January - June monthly events.

We have identified members who have not attended an event, but continue to pledge. These folks have received an acknowledgement and thank-you card.

FUMAF 2022 is in the planning stages. Emily Perry is working on forms for collecting information from artists. Last year's artists have been contacted and 7 have agreed to participate this year.

We are working with Barb Martin and Doug Aupperle on coordinating the musicians. FUMAF 2022 is scheduled for the last Saturday in February (2/26). It will be a live event with an online opportunity for purchasing artwork.

Emily is working on updating the online store.

Facility/Grounds (Doug Aupperle)

No report received. Diane Ford has stepped down as head of the committee for personal and health reasons, and the Committee has not yet shared who will be their point person for communications.

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

The Communications Team continues to directly coach Emily Petty on Intercom and website issues.

Deidre has been providing copywriting and communication strategy assistance to the Kitchen Project team.

Social Justice/Outreach

(Morgan Dredge- Asylum Seekers)

First Unitarian, led by the immigration Justice Team, is collecting donations to set-up an apartment for a refugee family. We have reached out to USCRI and let them know we are ready for our match. We are just waiting to hear back from them for next steps.

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

SJMLT is working on creating a covenant and ways to support social justice efforts by providing a potluck and retreat in the future

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 continues preparing & serving dinner at the Shelter of Central Iowa monthly.

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 December

(Ron Heideman- Green Sanctuary)

Meeting was held on December 22, 7:30pm.

Green Sanctuary is planning for a Forum to be held at church on January 9th. Five or six members of Green Sanctuary will present.

Other topics suggested that will be discussed at the next committee meeting:

- Vegetable Garden with donated produce
- Composting: Begin using our compost bin. Donate compost to others' gardens; Jenea will donate a kitchen container for collecting compost.

- Animal Agriculture is contributing a lot to our climate crisis. Matthew suggested these videos: [Cowspiracy](#) and [Seaspiracy](#). We should serve exclusively vegan food for environmental and spiritual reasons. Ideas: Vegan Breakfast followed by a video and discussion; sharing videos with congregation.
- We should reach out to the city to see if we can get a sign posted on a bike trail that a portion of the trail is maintained with the help of First Unitarian.

Since Green Sanctuary had two meetings in December and the Forum on January 9, we won't have a January meeting. Our next meeting will be February 2 at 7:30 pm on Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87393985689?pwd=TDh6bW1ZTFM5R2FjRUtHUjVoNmhwUT09>

Next Steps

- Discuss the Forum and recommendations from participants.
- Ask for ideas from the Kitchen Committee and people who regularly use the kitchen about recyclables vs disposables.
- Discuss shared leadership for our team.
- Vegetable Garden with donated produce or Pollinator Garden with plants and fruit trees.
- Composting: Begin using our compost bin. Donate compost to others' gardens; Jenea will donate a kitchen container for collecting compost.
- Vegan actions at our church.
- Adopting a trail. We will reach out to the city to see if we can get a sign posted on a bike trail that a portion of the trail is maintained with the help of First Unitarian.

Decisions that our group have previously made:

Composting

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

Recycling (Waste Management Rules)

- 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

(Elaine Imlau- Family Promise and FFFF/PPP)

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

Family Promise

The FP Team are prepping sign-up for the first week in January hosting

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

No activity in December. Bill Brauch responded to a request from UUSJ for feedback that he has been disappointed by their cutting back of the letter-writing effort as their approach seems to have morphed into one emphasizing Zoom meetings with Congressional offices from one focusing on written communications. (Some of our members sometimes participate in the congressional meetings, but even those are hit and miss, not held on a monthly basis.) Donna Jo Wallace provided similar feedback. They both received personal responses thanking them for their input.

(Barb Klubal- AMOS)

UPCOMING - AMOS Forum (online only) – January 23, 11:00 am

Join members of the First Unitarian AMOS Core Team to learn more about how AMOS advocates for the common good in Central Iowa.

AMOS 25TH ANNIVERSARY FUNDRAISER

AMOS exceeded its overall \$25,000 goal for the 2021 fundraiser! Many thanks to those who contributed. We don't have a final total quite yet on the donations from First Unitarian, but we are very close to our \$5,000 goal.

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

In December, the AMOS Affordable/Workforce Housing and Mental Health teams continued meetings with Polk County officials and other stakeholders to plan strategies and present AMOS funding priorities for the \$56 million in ARPA funding for Polk County. Meetings with City officials also began. The City will receive \$95 million in ARPA funding.

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.

At the December 10th Mental Health Summit more than a dozen providers in the community, along with various community constituents identified key gaps in services and strategized ways to move the above goals forward.

Let's Talk/Des Moines Public Schools (from Ellen Taylor)

The Let's Talk group continues to work on developing trainings to invite more people to join in the work.

Please see the next page for the AMOS 2021 organizing successes.

AMOS 2021 Organizing Successes

In 2021, AMOS (A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy) celebrated 25 years of developing citizen leaders, strengthening community organizations, and advocating for the common good in Central Iowa.

Mental Health

- Organized an intense children's mental health campaign in the first half of 2021 including
 - Training for 75 Polk County leaders which led to 85 research actions with mental health decision-makers with the city, county, state, and mental health providers
 - Organized over 100 AMOS leaders to attend the Broadlawns Trustee meeting in support of youth mobile crisis services, the largest turnout they'd ever had
 - OpEd by AMOS Clergy in the Des Moines Register
- Secured a new Polk County Children's Crisis Mental Health System including a warmline (515-288-0818), community stabilization team, youth stabilization center, and youth-trained mobile crisis team
- Got public commitment of Des Moines Police Chief Dana Wingert to hire a mental health clinician within 911 dispatch at an AMOS Delegate Assembly
- Launched a Children's Mental Health Civic Academy organizing strategy to educate families about new crisis services, listen to understand barriers to access and other mental health pressures, and build our relational power to act on these mental health pressures

Infrastructure

- Celebrated the grand opening of the Lauridsen skatepark, the largest open air skatepark in the United States and the result of 17 years of sustained AMOS organizing efforts

Local Elections

- Organized an accountability action with all 4 candidates for Ames Mayor and City Council and got their commitments to work with the Ames AMOS Cluster on a zoning taskforce and expansion of permanent supportive housing services.
- Met with all 7 candidates for Ankeny School Board about Ankeny AMOS Cluster's priorities around children's mental health, racial justice, and support for ACSD staff

Strengthening Institutions

- 21 AMOS leaders trained at a local 2-day broad-based organizing training. 18 AMOS leaders attended regional and national IAF trainings.
- 3 neighborhood walk trainings equipped congregational leaders to build relationships and understand pressures impacting their neighborhood residents

Building Relational Power

- Welcomed 2 new dues-paying AMOS member organizations: Corinthian Baptist Church and Black Women 4 Healthy Living
- Raised over \$26,000 to support AMOS in addition to institutional dues

www.amosiowa.org
www.facebook.com/amosIAF/
twitter.com/amosiowa

(Gianfranco Berardi, Doug Aupperle- Transgender Action Group)

TAG met multiple times in December.

Planning for Trans Lives Fest continues.

TAG is reaching out to prospective artists and performers in 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.

Service Attendance:

November

12/5/21 Leaning Into Joy (Hannukah) (Rev Amy)	31 screens + 63 at church
12/12/21 I have Learned to Love the Fallow Way (Rev Amy)	28 screens + 65 at church
12/19/21 Christmas: A Distinctively Unitarian Holiday	17 screens + 113 at church
12/24/21 Haul Out the Holly (Rev Amy) 5pm	36 screens + 58 at church
12/24/21 O Night Divine (Rev Amy) 7pm	34 screens + 63 at church
12/26/21 NO SERVICE	

Podcast Status

The First U Think podcast has had 439 downloads in the last 90 days, up from 431 per 90 days, and 1,118 total downloads. There were 153 downloads in December, down from 183 downloads in November, however there was no service on 12/26 and we did not post a podcast of the 12/24 5pm service because it featured the children prominently. 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>