

**February 2022 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.

**Ministry (Rev. Amy Petrie Shaw)**

We remained in digital services, with waiting rooms, through February. Because of the Zoom bombing, Zoom has blocked all non-UCDSM members/friends who were on the Jan. 30, 2022 church Zoom from the use of the Zoom app. Rev. Amy is currently working to try to get Zoom to release the restrictions on 4 people who were either church visitors who had logged in from outside of Iowa that day, or, in one case, on someone whose child had used their account and put a joke name on it which caused it to get caught in the ban.

In February Rev. Amy and Emily Petty gave an interview about the FUMAF on The Culture Buzz, which was well received.

The UCDSM Store is now fully launched and can be found at <https://first-unitarian-church-of-des-moines.myshopify.com/> . Going forward, the store will remain fully operational year-round, with new products created as needed and UCDSM church merchandise items coming soon. All groups/committees/teams at UCDSM can make requests for product creations to support

events (team t shirts, posters, other) and in late March the staff will be providing groups with information about the store and what it can do for them.

### **Lifespan Learning (Devon McClurken)**

- 5-6 OWL started in February with 9 youth total.
- At Home in Our Church resumed in person and COA and OWL continued in person.
- Sing and Play the UU Way concluded in February and the family that was the only attendees were offered a hybrid option of At Home in Our Church.
- YRUU met back in person to plan for the Youth Service in March.
- Children's Chapel remains part of the service and youth are part of the Chalice Lighting. Volunteers for supervision of youth during the latter 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 has continued. Rev Amy has a class on Widening the Circle report that has continued to meet online. Tai Chi was brought in two days a week and will continue with volunteers from the group.
- The Adult RE Council has meet several times to talk about Sage forums and other classes for Adults to Seniors. A survey was sent out and we received over 150 responses from the congregation including Members and Friends. Many of the responses were about starting up the many affinity groups again and that information was passed on to the membership committee.

### **Membership and Community**

#### **Membership Committee (Shelly Kaldenberg)**

A UU & You class has been scheduled for March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022. We have 8-13 potential new members/repeat visitors.

Reba Eagles met with members of Stewardship, Ann Mowery, and Rev. Amy to help create the most accurate membership list possible. We will continue to meet routinely to make sure the list remains accurate.

#### **Caring Ministry (Jude Cigrand)**

Jude Cigrand spent time this month working with Jill Moser and staff to fix problems in the Joys and Concerns reporting process and the Caring Ministry Google phone.

Jude also attended the Pastoral Care Team meeting in order to help facilitate information exchange between Caring Ministry and the Pastoral Care Team.

**Card Ministry (Jill Moser)**

6 cards were mailed to members and friends

**Pastoral Care (Ann Mowery)**

Pastoral Care had 24 contacts in February. Rev. Amy was on vacation for half of February and had 6 total contacts.

**Childcare (Hannah Notch)**

Hannah Notch has begun recruiting at local colleges with Early Childhood Education programs to find more childcare staff. For February the church had returned to in-person church, but there were minimal-no children returning yet so this was not an issue.

**Stewardship (Liz Bredesen)**

The team held the 2nd annual FUMAF event on February 26th. It was a live event with a virtual option.

The auction was successful with over \$3,500 raised. The online store continues to generate sales with great new products (the online UCDSM Store has had net earnings of \$1,106.61).

We plan on recruiting a team dedicated to FUMAF, separating this event from Stewardship.

We held the January and February stewardship months jointly on February 13th.

The March group is scheduled. We are working on recruiting the April - June groups.

The team will meet within the month to review the year-round pledge format and develop strategies for the future.

The team has been working with Membership and staff to review member's status. We have reached out to folks who have not been in contact with the church or whose pledge is not current.

**Facility/Grounds (Doug Aupperle)**

No events.

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

The team has been working on a Communication Policy. We have researched other churches' policies and will use the Iowa City document as a starting point.

We continue discussion around appropriate vehicles for various types of communication. One idea under consideration is creating a short “bulletin” distributed weekly to highlight and list events and news tidbits. A long-form monthly email would provide a selection of in-depth stories about events, groups, and issues.

Processes to ensure accurate, timely information on our website, social media tools and email continue to be monitored and refined.

### **Social Justice/Outreach**

#### **Asylum Seekers (Morgan Dredge)**

At this time we are still waiting to be matched with a refugee family from USCRI.

#### **SJMLT (Katie Allen, Sally Boeckholt, Ron Heideman, Doug Aupperle- Social Justice Ministry Leadership Team)**

A Vegan Forum & Potluck sponsored by Green Sanctuary is scheduled for March. We discussed the wording for a table discussion card to encourage people to have conversations about what they heard during the Forum.

Hymns Writing by Enslaved African People: Doug Aupperle shared an NPR article that tells about some white congregations paying "royalties" when they sing hymns that come from the Negro spiritual tradition. They say it's a matter of racial justice. Doug suggests that the SJMLT lead this discussion at First Unitarian.

The Trans Lives Festival sponsored by TAG will be held Saturday, March 26, 11:00-4:00.

The next meeting is Thursday, April 7 at 7:30; Katie Facilitator, Ron Centering/Timekeeper, Sally Recorder.

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

FEDS is glad to report full return to the homeless shelter on March 7--i.e., indoors serving, which had been suspended for Jan. & Feb. due to COVID, plus some prep. and delivery of food, which had continued. Hopefully we are fully back for good.

#### **Faith in Action (Steve Gilson)**

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 February

#### **Green Sanctuary (Ron Heideman)**

In February the team worked on creating a Vegan potluck to be held in March. They are still discussing a policy statement from Green Sanctuary about reusables vs. recyclables.

The Team is adopting a shared leadership model.

The next meeting is March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022

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

FFFFF-Team did not have any activity this month.

**Family Promise**

No activity

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

No activity in February

**AMOS (Barb Klubal)**

**All-AMOS Meeting**

Twenty-six AMOS leaders gathered virtually on February 10. The agenda included ratification of the agenda for the February 20<sup>th</sup> Delegates Assembly, planning the March 24<sup>th</sup> action around the 10th anniversary of AMOS' workforce intermediary Project Iowa, and planning the institutional development training scheduled for April 29-30.

**AMOS Delegate Assembly**

The Delegate Assembly is the decision-making body of AMOS and represents its relational power in action. Fifty AMOS leaders met virtually and in person on February 20 to launch the spring organizing strategy. Strategies include the March 24<sup>th</sup> Project Iowa 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration/action and the two-day organizational development training on April 29-30.

Members reported on ongoing AMOS work to enhance children's mental health and efforts to seek American Rescue Plan funds through Polk and Story county governments.

AMOS welcomed its newest dues-paying member institution: The Des Moines Education Association.

**AMOS Forum**

First Unitarian AMOS leaders held a live/virtual forum on Sunday, February 27. Small group house meetings were held to discern how members can feel more connected to First Unitarian, The forum included updates on recent AMOS work around children's mental health, workforce housing and increasing the nursing workforce.

**Let's Talk/Des Moines Public Schools**

A one-day training took place on February 14.

Hoyt Middle School has been added to the Let's Talk list of schools, leaving Brody Middle School as the only middle school not served by Let's Talk.

### **Other AMOS Actions**

A parish walk training with the Diocese of Des Moines.

An Ankeny AMOS Cluster meeting to organize a children's mental health civic academy with daycare providers and parents to strengthen public schools in Ankeny.

A workforce and mental health ARPA action with the Polk County Supervisors. AMOS advocated to invest ARPA funds to increase the diversity and number of licensed mental health professionals with a scholarship and loan forgiveness program.

The AMOS Affordable Housing team continued its research on community land trusts, a means of providing **long term** affordable housing.

For more information about and tickets to the Project Iowa 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner, Auction & Celebration on March 24: <https://www.projectiowa.org/10-year-party>

### **Transgender Action Group (Gianfranco Berardi, Doug Aupperle)**

TAG met multiple times in February. Planning for Trans Lives Fest continues with at least 4 musical acts and multiple artists involved .



**JOIN US!**

# Central Iowa Trans Lives Festival

featuring  
TRANSGENDER, GENDER QUEER, & NON-BINARY  
CREATIVES and THEIR ARTISTRY

**Saturday, March 26, 2022**  
**11:00 am - 4:00 pm**  
**First Unitarian Church**  
1800 Bell Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa

*Facility is ADA Accessible*  
*Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination & Masks Required*

**Admission is FREE**

- Art & Crafts
- Poetry readings
- Performances
- Music
- Great food
- Community Resources
- AND MORE

*Many artists will offer their art for sale!*

*Street tacos & more by Nachos Daddy's Tacos*

**What is the Trans Lives Fest?**

In honor of the International Transgender Day of Visibility, the Central Iowa Trans Lives Festival will provide a safe space for trans adults and youth to celebrate & present their creative work to the LGBTQIA community and allied members of the public. Sponsored by the Transgender Action Group of First Unitarian Church of Des Moines, an LGBTQIA Welcoming Congregation & member of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Questions? email [tag@ucdsm.org](mailto:tag@ucdsm.org)

## Leadership Group (Katie Allen)

The following is the report from Leadership Lift-Off event held at the end of January. It was prepared by Sally Boeckholt.

### CHALLENGES

We identified four challenge areas based on the conversations around challenges our leaders are facing: Building Teams, Team Development and Sustenance, Leadership Skill Development and Leadership Transition. Below is a summary of the challenges which were shared in each area.

#### 1. Building Teams

Biggest challenge seemed to be how to get connected to people who might be interested in your team. Challenges included: how to meet people; how to know what people are interested in doing; how to invite someone you don't know; how to invite across generations; and how to find volunteers when a team has a high need for lots of volunteers, either periodically or on-going.

There was a strong sense that people wanted to invite others to join them, and wanted ways to reach members of the congregation who might have an interest, but aren't aware of the team's work. There was also a sense that many people – adults, children and youth – are not engaged in any specific activity right now, and that we are missing an opportunity to build a more robust

church because of that reality. Using tools like Sign-Up Genius help with some things, but we need other tools.

Other challenges included: finding team members with complementary strengths/weaknesses; making space for younger members; avoiding a sort of “any warm body will do” and inviting without knowing if the person has any real interest.

## 2. Team Development and Sustenance

Biggest challenge here was connected to long-time teams which rely on established leaders and/or team members, who may be feeling tired or burned out. Some leaders were faced with feeling like only a couple of people were carrying a team, and it was hard to get others engaged and to take on responsibility for things like events or on-going work.

There was a sense that some teams were easy to move onto as they were fun and well-run, and others came into teams that needed mentoring. People weren't sure where to go for help or who to ask.

We also heard of a need to help on how to handle conflict within a team, how to keep on task in a meeting, how not to have a meeting or team taken over by the personal or personalities.

## 3. Leadership Skill Development

Both organizational and personal challenges were shared here.

Organizational: taking over a team that is in disarray and not knowing where to turn for support; building systems of responsibility and accountability within the team; creating a structure of how things are to be done; how to invite, support and build up emerging leaders; how to encourage team members to be self-chosen leaders and assume those roles; how to plan events when you can't be in person, or don't know if you will be able to do so; how to plan a worthwhile meeting on Zoom (and in person); how to work in partnership with the church staff.

Personal: how to let go of doing everything yourself and creating space for others to do the work; being a new leaders and not sure what skills they are bringing or need to be successful; setting boundaries and avoiding burnout; how to lead in a way that feel like all voices are heard and valued, but that also creates a sense that things are moving; how to deal with conflict within a team; how to manage time; would be good to be connected to other leaders.

## 4. Leadership Transition

The challenge here was clearly about how to invite and mentor team members to move into leadership, so that leaders don't end up feeling like they have “lifetime appointment.”

Challenge was in how to identify and mentor potential leaders, give them room to learn and grow into the role, and create a transition that keeps the team operating smoothly.



## LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

In addition to the 15 leadership characteristics the Leadership Committee provided for the meeting, we received a number of additional characteristics to consider including:

- Has a passion or enjoys doing the work of the team
- Flexibility
- Knows when to let a speaker go and when and how to pull back to be respectful of time and other voices
- How to keep from going too far into the weeds.
- Help members understand roles and provide feedback
- Help others identify their own inner gifts
- Knows who we are as a church and as a community – keeps the notion of community out front – not a cult of personality
- Concept of shared leadership
- Active listening – hearing when others are leading (from the side)
- Works with the team on creating and upholding a team covenant
- Driven – want to see action
- Ability to use technology
- Look for complementary skills within group and co-leaders
- Be willing and able to ask for help – and respond to others' ask for help

## Service Attendance:

### January

2/06/22 The Road to Change, Elaine Imlau	90 digital
2/13/22 A Word Between Us, Birch Spick	36 digital
2/20/22 Life is not a Dress Rehearsal, Rev. Dr. Deb Haffner	34 digital
2/27/22 Seeking Sanity and Grace, Rev. Amy Petrie Shaw	38 digital

## Podcast Status

The First U Think podcast has had 521 downloads in the last 90 days, and 1,488 total downloads. There were 180 downloads in February, up from 177 downloads in January. 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>



## 180 downloads in the last 30 days.

