Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames


Annual Report to the Congregation 2019

Presented at the Annual Meeting, December 8, 2019
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames

1015 Hyland Avenue  |  Ames, Iowa 50014
515.292.5960  |  uufa@uufames.org

Office Hours:
Monday – Thursday  |  10:00 – 4:00
Friday  |  by appointment

Board of Directors:
board@uufames.org

Minister:
Rev. Kent C. McKusick
515.292.8929  |  minister@uufames.org

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515.423.0490  |  recoordinator@uufames.org

Congregational Administrator:
Bradley Duckstein
515.292.5960  |  uufa@uufames.org

www.uufames.org
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019 Board of Directors..................................................................</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Structure..................................................................</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the Minister............................................................................</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the President of the Board of Directors..................................</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the Religious Education Coordinator.......................................</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019 Offertory Split Recipients...................................................</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the Administrative &amp; Property Cluster......................................</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Committee..........................................................................</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounds and Landscape Committee....................................................</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dustin Berger Memorial Library Committee........................................</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the Community Building Cluster..............................................</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring Network..................................................................................</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregational Life Committee........................................................</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Relations Team......................................................................</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Services Committee.......................................................</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominating Committee........................................................................</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the Finance Cluster...................................................................</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowment Acquisitions &amp; Disbursements Committee............................</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowment Fund Investment Committee...............................................</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Committee............................................................................</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Committee..........................................................................</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the Outreach Cluster..................................................................</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Church Committee...................................................................</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice Committee....................................................................</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the Program Cluster...................................................................</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Exhibition Committee....................................................................</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Education Committee........................................................</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Service Committee...................................................................</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the Generosity Team....................................................................</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We express our deepest gratitude for your dedicated service, genuine concern and interest, and for your ongoing commitment to the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames. Your Fellowship thanks you!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Liaison to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Melissa Niesen</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Sarah Carlson</td>
<td>Admin &amp; Property</td>
</tr>
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<td>Past President</td>
<td>Ben Woline</td>
<td>Finance</td>
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<td>Secretary-Treasurer</td>
<td>Chris McClure</td>
<td>Community Building</td>
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<td>Member at large, through 2019</td>
<td>Molly Helmers</td>
<td>Program</td>
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<td>Angie Poole</td>
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<td>Member at large, through 2020</td>
<td>Sue Koehrsen</td>
<td>Generosity Team</td>
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<td>Dennis Dake</td>
<td>Outreach</td>
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<td>Youth Representative</td>
<td>Jaiden Fuqua</td>
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<td>Minister, ex officio</td>
<td>Rev. Kent C. McKusick</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cong. Admin., ex officio</td>
<td>Bradley Duckstein</td>
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FROM THE MINISTER

The Rev. Gordon B. McKeeman wrote that “Ministry is all that we do together. Ministry is that quality of being in community that affirms human dignity, beckons forth hidden possibilities, invites us into deeper, more constant, reverent relationships, and carries forward our heritage of hope and liberation.”¹

His words ring true through every year of ministry and especially this year. We worked effectively together while I was in residence and during my four and a half month sabbatical from mid-February through June. I am thankful for the collaborative work of the Board, the Sabbatical Committee, and the working committees of the Fellowship. It was a time of rest, study, reflection, renewal, and an opportunity for a break from the responsibilities of ministry. This report offers highlights of our year of ministry together as well as some highlights from my sabbatical.

Growing Spiritually

We opened another successful year of thematic ministry with Possibility. This theme guided us into a year of learning to let go with the resulting transformative change being an impetus for new possibilities. A focus statement invited us to frame our new year: There is no power greater than a community discovering what it cares about. Ask: “What’s possible?” not “What’s wrong?” Keep asking. Notice what you care about. Assume that many others share your dreams. Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters. Expect to be surprised. Treasure curiosity more than certainty. Trust that meaningful conversations can change your world. Rely on human goodness. Be Yourself. Stay together. Radiate possibility. I used this approach to frame the sabbatical experience, as well.

The Sunday Morning Service Committee worked diligently and effectively to communicate and collaborate with 14 guest ministers while I was away on sabbatical. We worked well together preparing how to assist and guide our guest speakers. Many of my colleagues shared that the members of UUFA are wonderful hosts and a congregation that really knows what it is doing. It was a rich variety of voices and preaching styles. My only regret is that I was unable to attend these services!

It was a pleasure to return to the pulpit and service planning on July 1st. I introduced a new opening for each service: the ringing of a chime and a piece of music (Let Us Be Drawn In). The purpose is to have a recognizable and memorable entrance into our time of transformation together. This was

¹ https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/ministry—all-we-do
one of the many benefits of attending a worship design studio workshop at Lake Tahoe in May. I have had many positive remarks concerning this new element and am exploring other pieces of music to incorporate into the opening moments of service.

In several services, I have incorporated stories and photographs from my sabbatical experiences as a way of sharing some of my own spiritual growth and learning during the time away. One service explored how I can continue to approach doing difficult things in life. The story of a challenging walk in Santa Barbara CA was the underpinning of a personal and spiritual epiphany. Another service highlighted art and music from Burning Man after visiting a profound exhibit at the art museum in Cincinnati. It was fascinating to observe the parallels in the guiding principles of an intentional community in the desert to our own UU Principles.

There were specific aspects of the sabbatical that were dedicated to my own spiritual growth and reconnection to daily spiritual practices. Exploring the California coastline in Santa Barbara and Big Sur provided a sublime connection to that which is larger than any of us. The art museums and beauty of Balboa Park in San Diego deepened my exploration of art, spirituality, and the human condition. Returning to my home state of Maine, I had the incredible joy of spending six days on Monhegan Island, 10 miles off shore. It was a lifelong dream to visit this island. The sunrises, sunsets, and ocean views offered new spiritual meaning every day.

For Ames Pride Weekend in September, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of Stonewall and the life of Marsha P., a black transgender activist in the service No Longer Dismissed: Marsha P. Johnson. She was the public face of the most marginalized and ostracized among the LGBTQ community, remembered for standing up to police harassment and for insisting on respect. For years, her history had been erased. This service was an invitation to continue the work she began 50 years ago and recommit to being better allies and activists for transgender people.

On the last Sunday of September, we celebrated Transylvanian Thanksgiving on the same Sunday that our partner church celebrates Thanksgiving. It is hard to believe that a year has passed since I visited Rev Lajos, Tunde, and the members of the Tordátfalva congregation. The service spoke to our Unitarian roots in Transylvania. A bread and grape communion celebrated the gifts of the earth and the teachings of Jesus. Rev Lajos and I exchanged Thanksgiving messages/prayers which were delivered to the congregations on the same day. Members commented that having the special service on the same day as our partner church helped them feel more connected. The Sunday Service Committee feels strongly that we celebrate Transylvanian Thanksgiving on the last Sunday in September on an annual basis. We look to continue to strengthen our relationship and partnership with the people of Tordátfalva.
Creating Community

During January, the RE Committee, Janelle Carlson, the Personnel Committee and I worked together to make a transition plan, given that Janelle would vacate the position in July. The job description was updated to accurately reflect the duties of the position as it had evolved over the previous three years. The position was posted, and while I was away, we were fortunate to attract and hire Jamila Johnson as our new RE Coordinator. In the one instance of being in touch with the Fellowship during sabbatical, I had a telephone conversation of welcome and introduction with Jamila as I looked at the ocean off Monhegan Island. She brings a level of excitement and expertise to the program and has revitalized the Youth Group Programming after the board approved increasing hours for the position. She is assisted by Braden Fitzgerald, the volunteer Youth Advisor.

It is exciting to have a growing and vital children’s program. With the increase in child participation, we continue to explore how to best communicate the safety policy to parents, care providers, teachers, children, and the congregation. Our hope is for the children to experience the Fellowship as their spiritual home, have fun, and learn how to share community space with multi-generations in a way that everyone is safe and feels supported.

I worked closely with stewardship consultant Mark Ewert and the Board in preparation for the Stewardship and Generosity Weekend in February. The Generosity Team did an excellent job of embracing and bringing a new vision and culture of generosity to the congregation. Generosity moments were introduced as part of the Sunday service each week. This was an interesting and engaging way for members of the Fellowship to reflect on giving and receiving as part of Fellowship life.

Emily Watts was hired as the UUFA Membership Development Coordinator (MDC) in February. She served well in that position and streamlined the process of engaging visitors on Sundays with follow-up through several means to encourage people onto the path to membership. Three Member Exploration Classes were offered this year resulting in 20 new members, twice as many as in 2018. It was bittersweet news to receive her resignation effective August 18th to pursue other opportunities. She documented the work accomplished in her role for us to utilize in our planning future communications with visitors, visitor retention, membership exploration classes, and new member Sundays. Having a professional in this role pointed out the skills that serve the position and Fellowship best and the need to increase hours. In the interim, the Membership Committee and I are working to better define the relationships between the MDC, the minister, and the committee and glean together what we learned over her 6 month tenure. With the passing of the 2020 budget, we will begin a search for a
Membership Development Coordinator with an increase in the part time position from 8 to 15 hours a week.

During the first weeks back, sabbatical debriefing meetings were held with each staff member individually. We have the greatest staff Committee debriefing meetings took place with Sunday Service Committee, the Generosity Team, Religious Education, Membership, Caring Network, and Partner Church. The format/process was not intended to be an information dump. Each session was attended by one or two members of the committee, a member of the Sabbatical Committee, and me.

The same questions were addressed at each session. The committee answered: What successes or skills or strengths emerged during this time? Were there any key gaps or areas where ministerial absence was striking? What one or two things are top of the agenda when your group starts working regularly with Kent again? Share one anecdote of joy, of pain, of laughter, or anything from Kent’s time away.

I answered: What insights, if any, did you develop during your sabbatical related to the work of this committee/group/role? What element of your work with this committee did you miss the most? The least? What one or two things are top of the agenda for your return to this area’s work? Share one anecdote of joy, of pain, of laughter, or anything from your time away.

It pleased me greatly to learn that during the sabbatical, fellowship life continued smoothly, for the most part. I returned with great appreciation for the volunteers of the Fellowship who served and continue to serve selflessly and effectively. It was affirming to be welcomed back with feelings of gratitude for what I offer as a leader and the sense of relief that I was home.

The service that Bradley Duckstein provides the Fellowship as Congregational Administrator is phenomenal. Throughout the year (and especially during sabbatical), he managed and continues to manage a broad range of responsibilities with excellence and good cheer that contribute to the smooth operation of the Fellowship. We all benefit from his professionalism and dedication to the congregation and our mission, vision, and shared ministry.

Before going on sabbatical, Anne Kimber and Peggy Earnshaw approached me with regard to the UUFA hosting a Town and Gown outreach program. On September 26, we hosted the Russian Renaissance, an award winning balalaika and accordion quartet who presented a workshop about their instruments and played several pieces of music. The event was well attended by 50+ people and was followed with a potluck meal. It was a remarkable evening, and I invited the artistic director, Paula Forrest, to consider us for future outreach programs. This was an exciting cultural and artistic event with world-class musicians that brought many people from the Ames community into our sacred space.
On October 10th, Erv Klaas and I facilitated an OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) class on Unitarian Universalism, a Religion for Our Times. It was a one night continuation of a series started last year that explores and discovers what different faiths believe. The class was attended by 35 enthusiastic individuals. Erv offered an excellent summary of our commitment to climate justice, and I addressed a brief history of Unitarianism, Universalism, the UUFA, and the principles and sources. It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

As part of the UU collegial community, I was invited to offer the “charge to the congregation” as part of the installation service for the Rev. Amy Petrie Shaw in Des Moines on October 20th.

On November 13th, I facilitated the first session of UU Corner, a gathering for conversation, storytelling, and Fellowship chat for members living at the Northcrest Community. We will continue meeting on the second Wednesday each month. My hope is to organize a similar monthly meeting at the Green Hills community.

Striving for Justice

On sabbatical, I made a Civil Rights Pilgrimage, driving alone through Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, and Kentucky. It was a truly remarkable and a deep learning experience to visit sites, museums, and historic parts of the Deep South. Visiting and learning about the history of the Civil Rights movement as it relates to the culture of racism and white supremacy in this country today is a sobering and inspiring experience. Some of the highlights of this pilgrimage will inform Sunday services and additional programming throughout the coming months. Some especially memorable visits included:

- The National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Hotel: Memphis TN
- The Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center: Glendora MS
- The Museum of Mississippi History: Jackson MS
- Mississippi Civil Rights Museum: Jackson MS
- Selma to Montgomery March sites and memorials
- The National Memorial for Peace and Justice (Lynching Memorial): Montgomery AL

The Humana Festival for New American Plays in Louisville KY was an incredible theatre experience offering new plays and forums dedicated to social justice and spiritual issues. The Thin Place explores the boundaries between life and death. The Corpse Washer tells the story of a conflicted Muslim son who desires to be an artist, yet is expected to follow his father’s journey as the person providing the ritual washing of bodies during the war. What We’ve Come to Believe explores the mentality of group think where hundreds of followers are duped by a charismatic leader. How to Defend Yourself examines the culture of rape on campuses and beyond and
questions how we can protect ourselves. *Everybody Black* is a blistering, bold, and witty satire. In the play, a black historian agrees to write the definitive black experience for a wealthy group of white people and a huge sum of money. The problem is that he has never met another black person. This series of plays was entertaining and thought provoking in the many ways that theatre as a spiritual practice holds a mirror up for us to observe ourselves.

I also made trips to Minneapolis, Chicago, and New York City to attend theatre and saw productions of *Metamorphoses* (based on the tales of Ovid), *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Cambodian Rock Band*, *Ms. Blakk for President*, *The Curse of the Starving Class*, and *Hamilton*.

My first day back to the Fellowship, I was invited to participate in the Lights for Liberty demonstration and candlelight vigil at the Story County Justice Center on July 12th. I presented a UU statement of faith concerning why the treatment of immigrants and families at the border is wrong. It was my pleasure and honor to do this. I was the only clergy that participated.

On August 7th, I participated in another demonstration and candlelight vigil with regard to gun violence and mass shootings. The gathering took place outside of Rep Steve King’s office and was attended by roughly 50 people.

The Transgender and Non-Binary of Ames group has reorganized after the founding leader and UUFA member, Freddi Funnell, moved to another state. The meetings take place in the Channing Barton Room on first Tuesdays from 6 to 8 PM and on third Saturdays from 10 to Noon. To my knowledge, this is the only transgender support group (other than PFLAG). The difference is that it is dedicated to transgender individuals and allies.

Ames Pride was a great success. It was my pleasure to attend, spend some time at the booth, and appear on stage during the drag show with drag king Nick D from Chicago. Several ministers were on stage and introduced as ministers serving congregations that welcomed people from the LGBTQIA community.

On September 10th, UUFA hosted a Poor People’s Campaign event, a screening of the movie *Poverty, Inc.*, followed by a discussion. The Poor People’s Campaign is an intersectional, moral fusion, national movement organized by the poor, marginalized, religious and moral leaders, and advocates. It was a pleasure to participate in the event.

The UUFA hosted climate activist training on Sat., September 28th. The session was attended by approximately 25 people. It was a very worthwhile program offering an approach to activism and lobbying politicians that is in line with our UU values.
Learning to Love

On November 3, Rilla Fox and I co-facilitated Sitting Vigil, a session for those interested in how to approach spending time with people who are approaching the end of their life. The session was attended by 30 people and very well received. A copy of the dvd New Rules for End of Life Care featuring Barbara Karnes, end-of-life educator and hospice pioneer, has been donated to the UUFA library.

One of the unseen and essential parts of the ministry we do together is pastoral care. Being with members during all the milestones of life, including death, is an essential part of ministerial and Fellowship commitment. It is an honor and privilege to make the journey together with the collaborative support of the UUFA Caring Network and many individual members.

The Caring Network managed the general pastoral care of the congregation while I was on sabbatical and did it well. In collaboration with Mary Richards and Susan Franzen, celebrations of life for Tom Barta and Don Durand were well crafted and presented while I was away. I am very thankful for the contributions of the caring people who provided meaningful care and memorial services for families and members of the Fellowship.

With sadness and joyful remembrance, we celebrate the lives of Tom Barta, Max Bovenmyer, Don Durand, Dorothy Kizer, and Bobbie Warman. We are filled with gratitude for the many contributions these individuals made to Fellowship life throughout the years. May their memories be blessed.

Thank you for another year of ministry. It is my pleasure and honor to serve as your minister, and I look forward to the years ahead.

In faith and the ministry we share,

Rev. Kent C. McKusick
November 22, 2019

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

I give my heartfelt thanks to the board and staff for their commitment and hard work this year. I’m constantly amazed at how effective the UUFA board is. Board members make an effort to attend every monthly meeting they can, show up prepared to discuss the issues at hand, share their ideas and opinions with open hearts, and are courteous, even when those opinions differ. Delicious treats at board meetings don’t hurt, either!
Our board strives to look at the big picture. Are we, as a congregation, headed in the right direction? How do we best use the resources provided by our members? How do we ensure we stay healthy and vibrant? Are we providing the programming we need? We think about policies, priorities, committee structures and health, programs, individual members, leadership succession, and so much more. It’s a lot to think about, especially with those limiting rascals, the 24 hour day and the 2 hour board meeting. However, we love this place and want to see it continue to thrive. We endeavor to do our best within the limitations present.

Sometimes, we are asked to support big projects or ideas from committees or members. Two of those this year were going 100% solar with SunSmart Ames to live into our seventh principle, as well as the Stewardship and Generosity weekend with consultant Mark Ewert to ensure the sustainability of our fellowship. Of course, most of the major work for these and other projects and events comes from committees and groups of members, with support from staff. We, as the board, cheer these teams on and provide support when necessary. Monthly committee reports are invaluable to us in our board work. Without them, it would be much harder to keep our finger on the pulse of the fellowship. We appreciate the time taken to submit these reports.

One somewhat unusual task the board handled this year was Reverend McKusick’s sabbatical. Kent often offers very valuable insights during our board meetings, so we missed him during his time away. However, thanks to excellent preparation by staff and the sabbatical committee, things went fairly smoothly. We are very grateful for the time spent to get ready for the change, so that Kent could recharge and explore topics to enrich our programming.

I am excited to see the board will be in very competent hands these next couple years, with Sarah Carlson and Angie Poole agreeing to be our next two leaders. I know you will show them the love and respect you have shown me this year.

Thank you all for all you do for our beloved community!

- Melissa Niesen

FROM THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR

As the newly hired Religious Education Coordinator, my experience has been brief but busy! I started my position this past summer, working alongside the previous REC, Janelle Carlson, for a few weeks before jumping into the 2019-2020 program year. In my first few months, I’m pleased to report that I feel I’ve become integrated into the UUFA family.
**Facts and Figures for This Year (So far!)**

Total enrollment in programs from birth-12th grade for the 2019-2020 year is 80, a drop from 2018’s 136, due largely to cleaning of records, and the lack of a summer camp program. Our first day of classes for the 2019-2020 program year had 35 students in attendance, down some from last year (47 in 2018, 30 in 2017, and 17 in 2016). Total attendance (cumulative for July 1 through November 17) is 221 in all classes and 147 in the nursery.

**Childcare**

This summer we welcomed two more staff members to our childcare team. Gabby and Rylee are freshmen at ISU and came highly recommended by their previous positions. Both are young women who have tons of experience in classroom management and working with large numbers of young people.

With the help of the Religious Education Committee, I have created a new Childcare Agreement for all children participating in childcare or spending the mornings in the nursery. This has helped alleviate the concerns of childcare staff, in regards to behavioral issues, and created a more specific set of expectations for parents.

**Curricula**

Our *PreK and Kindergarten* class is using the *A Discovering Year* curriculum to learn more about processing emotions, interacting with classmates respectfully, and how to form a UU identity. Teachers are Suzanne Zilber and Nancy Tepper.

The *1st and 2nd grade* class continues to use *Spirit of Adventure* from this past year, which encourages active projects and physical activities. Teachers are Maya Hayslett, Rebecca Severin, and Erin Pederson.

*3rd-5th grades* are continuing lessons from the *Holy Days and Holidays* curriculum. This curriculum discusses holidays from around the world and helps broaden students’ minds to other cultures and traditions. In June I found a new and updated version of the *Holy Days and Holidays* curriculum, with updated holidays and information. I have also been editing these lesson plans to make the wording less centered around whiteness and revise additional language that is particularly othering. Teachers are Holly Bignall, Christopher Chase, and Allison Brundy.

*6th-8th grades* continue their adventures with *Popcorn Theology* and *Popcorn Theology Too*. *Popcorn Theology* takes modern movies and allows children to discuss them from a theological and ethical standpoint. The class expressed their interest in movies that were not listed in *Popcorn Theology*, since many
of them have seen most of the movies in the lesson plans. To accommodate this request, I’ve created extra lesson plans from the Popcorn Theology podcast and various other resources. Our teachers for this class are Chris McClure, Jennifer Killion, Navaab Munirih, and Angie Poole.

**Youth Group (Grades 9-12)** is discussing a new curriculum *Identities and Intersections*. I’ve created this curriculum and the lesson plans from several sources, including websites, books, and documentaries. We have a steady group attending each week, with at least 6 kids for each session. I am leading the Youth Group for the 2019-2020 program year, along with new member Braden Fitzgerald.

**Professional Development**

This fall, I was awarded a tuition scholarship to the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) Fall Conference in early November. I was able to travel to Baltimore using my professional development budget and support from the board for the rest of my expenses, which covered my housing, food, and supplies. In addition to the main conference, I attended the Worship Renaissance Module and learned more about worship traditions for kids and teens. The entire experience taught me more about religious education and Unitarian Universalism as a whole, and allowed me to connect with other religious educators from across the country. Stay tuned for more on the experience at a later date.

**Looking Ahead**

In the coming months, I will, of course, continue to support our volunteer teachers, learn more about Unitarian Universalism, and work with the RE Committee to expand the scope of programs offered at the UUFA. Additionally, one of my primary goals is to continue work with the Youth Group on their curriculum. My hope is to broaden our discussions on identity through cultural, religious, and racial lenses, and more.

~Jamila Johnson
### 2019 OFFERTORY SPLIT RECIPIENTS

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<thead>
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<th>Month</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>December 2018</td>
<td>SunSmart Ames</td>
<td>$172.00</td>
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<td>January 2019</td>
<td>Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance</td>
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<td>February</td>
<td>Iowa Rapid Response Network</td>
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<td>March</td>
<td>Reggie’s Sleepout</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>Mid-Iowa Community Action</td>
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<td>July</td>
<td>No More Deaths</td>
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<td>August</td>
<td>Ames Pridefest</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>One Heart Equestrian Therapy</td>
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<td>October</td>
<td>CROP Hunger Walk</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>Food at First</td>
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<td>December</td>
<td>Emergency Residence Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL (since last annual report)</td>
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### FROM THE ADMINISTRATIVE & PROPERTY CLUSTER

Committees whose missions support the administrative and property concerns of the congregation.

**Building Committee**

Contact: building@uufames.org

Mission: The committee is responsible for the non-emergency, non-urgent maintenance and long-term upkeep of the building and its façade.

Meeting time for 2020: Fourth Sunday of the month, 12:30 p.m., or as needed

Committee Members: Sally Daub, Donald Lewis, Dennis Lindeman, Craig Mushel (outgoing chair)

Report Submitted by: Bradley Duckstein, Congregational Administrator

2019 Projects/Improvements:

- January – Miscellaneous Electrical – contracted with Jaspering Electric – fixing outlets, rewiring light circuits in Fellowship Hall, removing unused light fixtures, etc.
- March – Dish Sanitizer – repaired by Hobart Service of Des Moines – replaced broken probe sensors (detect water depth and temperature)
- March – AED Purchase – unit is currently housed in office, but will eventually be hung in Fellowship Hall in a new combination cabinet that will also house a fire extinguisher. No training is required to operate the
unit; it will guide the user with voice prompts, and cannot shock patient without instructions being properly followed.

- April - Front Door External Light - replaced by Dennis Lindeman - new unit is LED and motion-sensored. Previous unit had shorted out and damaged the fixture and housing.
- July - Lower Level Kitchenette Faucet - replaced by Bradley Duckstein - after several months of leaking, faucet was replaced, as replacement parts were not available.
- July - Elevator Door Occupancy Sensor - replaced by Schumacher Elevator Company - occupancy sensor on rear elevator door (prevents door closing if person is present) failed and required replacement. Our regular maintenance service contract does not cover replacement/catastrophic, so this was a significant expense at approximately $2,400.
- August - Miscellaneous Light Ballasts - replaced by Donald Lewis
- October - Top Level Roof - repaired by Hedrick Construction - membrane had been punctured after last winter, and flashing around scutter (drain) box was loose. During this inspection, it was brought to our attention that this roof is also nearing the end of its life expectancy, in addition to other sections.
- November - Trash Shed Light - replaced by Jaspering Electric - new unit is LED and motion-sensored. Previous unit had shorted out and damaged the fixture and housing.
- November - East External Outlet - replaced by Jaspering Electric - previous unit had been punctured with a screwdriver-like object and shorted out.
- November - Dish Sanitizer - repaired by Hobart Service of Des Moines - exact problem TBD at time of report publication.

Looking Ahead to 2020:

- Changing Station installation in lower level ADA restroom
- Extinguisher/AED Box installation in Fellowship Hall
- Upper Level Kitchenette Faucet replacement
- Light Fixture Repair in Hazelnut’s Room
- Emergency Door Replacement in Fellowship Hall and Fireside Room
- Roof Replacement - The Endowment committees are leading the effort to obtain roof replacement bids, as required, for various sections of the roof. Currently, the original/main/Fireside section is known to be past its life expectancy, followed by Fellowship Hall, Lower Level, Top Level, respectively. All sections will be evaluated, an RFP developed, and bids solicited to determine further process. The Building Committee will assist as appropriate.
GROUND AND LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE

Contact: grounds@uufames.org

Mission: The committee is responsible for all issues relating to the exterior of the building (not including the building façade), continuing to maintain, protect, and enhance the grounds surrounding the UUFA.

Meeting Time for 2020: As needed

Committee Members: Cheryl Lawson, Sally Daub, Catherine Huisman (special projects)

No Report Submitted.

2019 Projects/Improvements
• Main Entry Garden – designed & maintained by Catherine Huisman

Looking Ahead to 2020:
• Concrete leveling near entrance to Memorial Garden & other.

DUSTIN BERGER MEMORIAL LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Contact: library@uufames.org

Mission: The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames Dustin Berger Memorial Library will provide a place and resources for members and friends to explore the seven principles and six sources of our faith. It will provide an environment that is accessible, helpful, and multimedia in nature. The library committee will provide policies, structures, and assistance to live up to this mission statement.

Meeting Time for 2020: Second Saturday of each month, 9:30-12:00

Committee Members: Barb Abbott (chair), Roger Berger, Carol Elbert, Sue Koehrsen, Joyce Matters, Susan Posch (frequent book reviewer)

Report Submitted by: Barb Abbott

2019 Accomplishments:
• Added approximately 125+ titles to the library. A majority were donated; some were purchased
• Eliminated outdated titles, duplicates, and those materials that haven't been used. The plan is to fit the collection to the space.
• Catalog is now online on the UUFA website under “About Us” tab. A hard copy catalog notebook is also on the library table. These are updated occasionally. Thanks to Bradley for making these happen!
• Added an enthusiastic member to the committee, Joyce Matters.
• The fellowship added a better railing to get to the library/nursery level.
• Contributed newsletter articles/reviews to the fellowship online newsletter (3rd and 4th week each month)

Looking Ahead to 2020:
• Continue providing newsletter articles each month
• Continue processing donated/purchased materials to the collection
• Identify ways to make the library more visible
• Work with committees to make the library useful to them
• Take an informal survey about library use
• Place the free books table in a more prominent place occasionally
• Improve accessibility (wheelchair, walker) that was lost when we moved from Room 3 to the current location

FROM THE COMMUNITY BUILDING CLUSTER

Committees whose missions support congregational commitments to caring, connectedness, and fostering healthy relationships.

CARING NETWORK

Contact: caring@uufames.org

Mission: The Caring Network facilitates a ministry of hope and caring within the Fellowship, helping members to both support each other and be supported in times of joy, sorrow, loss or other life transition.

Vision: The Caring Network, working closely with the minister, quickly and appropriately responds to member needs as its resources allow. It seeks out and uses the most effective ways to help congregants care for each other and to provide ministry through cards, visits, transportation, meals, pastoral care, support for memorials and receptions, and assistance with special short term caring needs.

Meeting time for 2020: Second Thursday of each month, 1:30 pm

Committee Members: Rev. Kent McKusick (ex-officio), Rilla Fox (Compassionate Companions), Jamie Gurganus (chair; lead coordinator), Jonah Powell (general coordinator), Lynne Van Valin (cards & correspondence), Carol Barrick (general member)

Report Submitted by: Jamie Gurganus

Overall Congregational Involvement: About 50-100 other Fellowship members provide support (cards, food, transportation, etc.) when alerted to do so by a committee member, or act as point people for these and other areas of caring.
**Meals:** The Caring Network continues to provide meals to congregants following a new baby, hospitalization, or death.

**Cards:** Lynne Van Valin continues to send out card requests to her mailing list. Cards of sympathy, get well, new baby, and congratulations are sent as we are notified of congregants’ joys/concerns.

**Memorial Services:** This year, the Fellowship hosted two member memorial services (Don Durand and Tom Barta) and provided receptions afterward. Brenda Witherspoon and Sarah Carlson are the co-coordinators for the logistics of the services.

The Caring Network is currently in need of a receptions coordinator. In the meantime, Jamie Gurganus has taken on that role for the committee. We are also looking for additional people to help with the logistics part of the service.

**Welcoming New Babies:** Under previous staffing models, the Director of Religious Education or Director of Children & Youth Ministries visited families with new babies. Since current staffing models do not include this position, the Caring Network has been covering the visits.

**Transportation:** Lee Molgaard and Dave Fox remain the co-coordinators for arranging in-town and out-of-town rides for members.

**Outreach Cards:** The Caring Network continues to send out handwritten cards of thanks, appreciation, congratulations, etc. to people of all ages in the congregation. With Bradley’s creative involvement, we designed a new outreach card this year.

**Compassionate Companions:** This group contacts Fellowship members who are experiencing life-threatening illness issues for themselves or loved ones, or are dealing with end-of-life issues, providing a listening ear and a conduit to needed resources.

They planned and facilitated two workshops this year: *Sitting Vigil* on September 29, and *Sitting Vigil: Part 2* on November 3. There were approximately 30 in attendance at both workshops.

**Caring Network Table:** As a response to the generosity workshop early this year, the Caring Network began hosting a table in the Fireside Room on Sunday mornings. The table has two forms for congregants to complete: one that notifies the committee of a joy/concern for self or other congregant, and a second to sign up to be a part of the Caring Network. Since this space has met its intended purpose, it is no longer directly staffed (as of May 2019), but is still available to the congregation.
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMITTEE

Contact: congregationallife@uufames.org

Mission: The Congregational Life Committee fosters opportunities for congregants to build relationships and connect with each other through UUFA social activities and special events. Specifically, the committee is responsible for a) the disbursement of monies from the “Dream It Up and Do It Fund” and b) developing best practices for organizing Fellowship events.

Committee Members: Joel Geske, Jane Runneals, Amanda Hassid

Meeting time for 2020: As needed

No report submitted.

HEALTHY RELATIONS TEAM

Contact: hrt@uufames.org

Mission: The Healthy Relations Team mission is to promote the well-being and emotional safety of the UUFA by assisting congregants in addressing and constructively resolving conflict in order to foster healthy relationships within our community.

Committee Members: Jan Cook (chair), Jonah Powell, Faith Winchester

Meeting time for 2020: As needed

No report submitted.

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES COMMITTEE

Contact: membershipservices@uufames.org

Mission: The Membership Services Committee welcomes, guides, facilitates, and encourages membership in the congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames.

Meeting Time for 2020: As needed


Report Submitted by: Faith Winchester
2019 Accomplishments:
- The committee successfully hosted three Membership Exploration Classes in February, April and September.
- We welcomed 20 new members and affirmed two long-standing and active friends into the membership.

Looking Ahead to 2020:
- We are looking forward to the search for a new Membership Development Coordinator!
- Our goals for the 2020 include reaching out to members who are not actively attending and possibly hosting a UUFA Reunion event.
- We plan to host three more Membership Exploration Classes.

Additional Comments:
Faith Winchester will be stepping down as committee chair at the end of 2019, after serving in the role for seven years. Karen Bates & Jamie Gurganus will temporarily fill the role as co-chairs for 2020.

Contact: nominating@uufames.org

Mission: Nominating Committee’s mission and structure is determined by the UUFA bylaws. “The Nominating Committee presents a slate of candidates for officers, Board members, and one new Nominating Committee member at the annual meeting. The committee will announce its selections at least two weeks prior to the annual meeting.”

Meeting time for 2020: As needed. Typically twice per month during the months of August through October.


Report Submitted by: Jan Vine

2019 Review:
The committee is responsible for recommending to the Board of Directors UUFA members to fill open positions on the Board, the Nominating Committee, and the Endowment Acquisitions and Disbursements Committee. When identifying people to fill open positions, we take into account how many other committees potential candidates are already serving on and for open Board positions we try to maintain a gender balance. This year we reached out to 32 people in our efforts to fill the open positions. This year we recommended candidates to fill the Board Vice-President position, a Board at-large position, the Nominating Committee position, and the Endowment...
Acquisitions and Disbursements position. We also filled the open position of UUFA representative to the Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance Board.

Looking Ahead to 2020:
The committee plans to fine-tune our strategy for filling positions.

FROM THE FINANCE CLUSTER

Committees that oversee the financial health and planning of the congregation.

ENDOWMENT ACQUISITIONS & DISBURSEMENTS COMMITTEE

Contact: endowment@uufames.org

Mission: The Endowment Fund Acquisition and Disbursement Committee shall cultivate, solicit, and steward gifts and bequests from all possible sources consistent with the Endowment Acquisition and Disbursement policies and procedures. This committee shall make a diligent effort to develop and carry out programs for acquisition purposes. Such solicitation shall not be conducted in competition or conflict with the regular pledge programs of the Fellowship.

Meeting time for 2020: as needed, semi-annually with Endowment Fund Investment Committee


Report Submitted by: Cheryl Lawson

2019 Accomplishments:
- Our committee agreed to make available endowment funds to get a professional assessment of the condition of each roof (original building and two additions) and provide recommendations and specifications for replacement.

Looking Ahead to 2020:
- Endowment funds are primarily used for major repairs and improvements to the Fellowship property. We will work with the Building Committee, Endowment Investment Committee, Finance Committee and UUFA Board to determine the best use for Endowment disbursements.
- Recognizing that the Endowment secures the long term future of the Fellowship, we will be creating and implementing a plan to grow the endowment fund.
ENDOWMENT FUND INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Contact: investments@uufames.org

Mission: To accept, invest and manage the resources of the UUFA Endowment Fund, consistent with UUFA investment policies, to transfer funds to be disbursed and to report the fund status to the Board and congregation.

The committee works to manage investments to maximize fund growth while maintaining security. The committee also maintains all contribution and disbursement records, to determine annually the value of each restricted and non-restricted account. They also consult with the Endowment Acquisitions & Disbursements Committee on actions for acquisitions and needs for disbursements.

Meeting Time for 2020: As required - at least twice per year

Committee Members: Dave Fox (chair; 2016-2019), Larry Koehrsen (2016-2021), Stu Huntington (2016-2023)

Report Submitted by: Dave Fox

2019 Accomplishments:
• Continued to use a financial adviser (Marrs Wealth Management) for management of Endowment funds.
• Joint meetings with Endowment Acquisitions & Disbursements Committee for combined benefit.
• Maintaining records as required.

Looking Ahead to 2020:
• Work in concert with the A&D committee to grow the Endowment and develop plans for proper use of any Endowment funds for the benefit of UUFA.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Contact: finance@uufames.org

Mission: The Finance Committee is responsible for developing the annual budget and auditing the Fellowship financial records. The Treasurer is responsible for the receipt, recording, care, and spending of all fellowship funds, as provided in Article VI, Section 5 of the Bylaws. The Finance Committee works along with the Congregational Administrator and Projects Coordinator to support the Treasurer and to coordinate communication among committees (particularly the Generosity Team, Membership Services Committee, Endowment committees, and Personnel Committee), the Board of Directors, and the members of the congregation.
Meeting Time for 2020: As needed.

Committee Members: Stephanie Fox (chair; end 2020), Dave Fox (end 2020), Barb Abbott (end 2019), Dave Sly (resigned 2019), Carol Spencer (end 2021). Two members added for 2020.

Report Submitted by: Stephanie Fox

2019 Accomplishments:
• Subcommittee completed annual internal financial review and report in February
• Developed monthly pledge projection model for the Board, which was updated periodically through the year
• Rewrote budget collection documents to encourage best case scenario budgeting rather than status quo/ negative budgeting
• Advanced budget collection timeline to July to get pledge target to the Generosity Team earlier in the year
• Compiled best case scenario budget for August Board meeting and discussion of priorities. THIS EARLY FEEDBACK WAS VERY HELPFUL. Final budget was approved at November meeting
• Utilized non-operating funds to enable 2020 budget expansion rather than denying requests
• Agreed with Endowment committee that additional funds should be invested with Marrs. Tabled the action until a master plan for accounting for these funds could be developed.

Looking Ahead to 2020:
• Provide training for new committee members on UUFA accounting and finance.
• Possibly present a short overview on UUFA accounting to the Board as a retreat topic. This would be done very high-level from a non-technical perspective.
• Conduct annual internal financial review using updated audit plan. Both reviewers will be new to the process and will provide fresh insight
• Collect budget requests from committee chairs, compile best case budget in July, and discuss initially with Board in August. Provide a draft budget in October and final in November.
• Conduct building inventory in January or February with building committee as well as volunteers in the fellowship
• Create a master plan for finance and accounting. This will be done by Fox and Duckstein as a long range plan from which individual elements can be brought forward as committee proposals.
• Create a plan for moving additional funds to the investment account and the accounting required for such a move. This will be done in cooperation with the Endowment committee and will be the first proposal to come from the master plan outlined in the previous bullet.
Additional Comments:
• The Finance Committee is committed to being a resource for other committees. We do not want to be the bean counters that stifle ideas but rather the partners that enable growth to occur through creative options!

CONTACT: personnel@uufames.org

Mission: The Personnel Committee provides support to the UUFA minister and staff in the implementation of the UUFA employment policies and practices. The committee also acts in an advisory capacity on personnel matters for the Fellowship Board.

Meeting Time for 2020: As needed

Committee Members: Cheryl Lawson (chair), Jason Breed, Dave Sly (resigned 2019)

No Report Submitted.

FROM THE OUTREACH CLUSTER

Committees whose missions support congregational commitments to community and international connections.

CONTACT: partnerchurch@uufames.org

Mission: The Partner Church Committee takes the lead in coordinating and facilitating our partnership with the congregation of Tordátfalva, Romania.

Meeting Time for 2020: TBD

Committee Members: Brian & Lisa Eslinger, Kitty Fisher (chair), Joan Mathews, Lee Molgaard, Mary Richards, Brenda & Mark Witherspoon, Dennis Dake (board liaison)

Report Submitted by: Kitty Fisher

2019 Accomplishments:
• Continued paid membership in UU Partner Church Council (UUPCC)
• Disbursed funds designated in 2019 UUFA Budget for Partner Church
• Submitted a 2020 UUFA PC Budget Request
• The Kopjafa was installed on a wall in the Fellowship Hall with a plaque describing its significance. It is a visual reminder of the importance of our partnership.
• During Rev. Kent’s sabbatical, plans for a UUPCC ReFresh Weekend were made. The dates March 13-15, 2020, were selected, but that plan is currently being rescheduled because those dates occur at the start of spring break. There was some concern expressed that congregational participation might be hindered if members are away for spring break.
• Plans for a 2021 trip to Transylvania are in the works. The ReFresh Weekend activities will help jump start the increased congregational involvement necessary to sustain the partnership and generate a group to make the trip.
• On September 29, 2019, the annual Harvest Service honoring our partnership was held. There are some significant differences between Thanksgiving here and in Tordátfalva. In Romania, Thanksgiving is observed on September 30th and is one of the four most sacred days in Unitarianism. A bread and grape communion will be served. Learned about the liberal religious connections with our partner church and shared more pictures from Rev. Kent’s visit last year. Some members expressed their hope that this service will continue in September instead of the every other year in November because our partner church celebrates its harvest in September.

Looking Ahead to 2020:
• Continued membership in UUPCC
• Disbursement of funds to our partner church
• Regular communication between UUFA and Rev. Lajos in Transylvania
• A successful ReFresh Weekend in conjunction with the UU Partner Church Council
• Organize a series of programs relevant to UU history and the Partner Church program to educate the congregation. Many newer members are not as familiar with the partnership, its origins and purposes. Generating interest in a UUFA trip to Transylvania will be paramount.

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Contact: socialjustice@uufames.org

Mission: The Social Justice Committee studies social justice issues in our community and world, informs Fellowship members about social justice issues and actions, and encourages UUFA members to be active in making social justice happen.

Meeting time for 2020: The committee is not currently functioning.
Committees whose missions support and oversee the programming and education efforts of the congregation.

**ART EXHIBITION COMMITTEE**

Contact: art@uufames.org

**Mission:** The goal of the Art Exhibition Committee of the UUFA is to exhibit spiritually enriching art work that supports the creative process in us all. The art exhibition area of the Fellowship building, known as the Gallery in the Round, has a dual role as a continuing aesthetic and artistic enrichment to the practice of ethical and liberal religious ideals within the UUFA and as a community-based professional art gallery.

The Art Exhibition Committee supports and encourages freedom of expression in all its activities. Issues of diversity, individuality, complexity, inventiveness, artistic quality, and the presentation of ideas and issues are considered in the selection of the exhibition program.

The Committee welcomes the open discussion of issues and ideas raised by the exhibited art works (and the artistic processes employed in their creation).

**Meeting time for 2020:** As needed

**Committee Members:** Bob Anders, Mary Brooks, Dennis Dake (chair), Rilla Fox, Stu Huntington, Chris Martin, Kyla Perkins, Jamie Robinson Niman, Melissa Stenstrum, Fred Vallier, Roberta Vann

**Report Submitted by:** Bradley Duckstein, Congregational Administrator

**2019 Exhibits** (visit www.uufames.org/gallery/previousexhibits for more information):

- January 5, 2019-March 29, 2019: *Art Exhibition Committee Collects*
- March 29, 2019-May 4, 2019: *Natura Moderna* by Amy Harris & Debora Pappenheimer, ISU Dept. of Art & Visual Culture
- June 24, 2019-August 17, 2019: *Sharing Schnitts; 40 Years of Paper Cuts* by Linda Emmerson
- August 17, 2019-October 12, 2019: *4 from ’69* by Stewart Buck, Rex Heer, Karen Kellogg, and (the late) Mike Stohlmeyer
- October 12, 2019-December 6, 2019: *Originality: Past and Future* by Dennis Dake
Contact: recommittee@uufames.org

Mission: The Religious Education (RE) Committee works with the religious education staff to nurture and educate our children and youth.

Meeting Time for 2020: Monthly, Tuesday or Thursday at 6:30 pm (exact week TBD)


Report Submitted by: Tigon Woline

2019 Accomplishments:
- Successfully transition the position of RE Coordinator, Summer 2019
- RE-palooza: Registration, Parents Orientation meeting, teacher Orientation and Safety Training, August 2019
- Revived High School Youth Group, September 2019
- RE Committee Retreat to connect as a team and begin to look at larger ideas of how RE supports the UUFA, September 2019
- Jamila Johnson attended the Liberal Religious Educators Association Fall Conference in Baltimore MD, November 2019

Looking Ahead to 2020:
- Expand pool of potential OWL instructors for future program years
- Further explore the connections between RE programs and the Generosity Team to support a culture of generosity
- Continue to grow the High School Youth Group
- Support Jamila Johnson as she plans RE programming for 2020-2021
- Refining the vision and program goals

Additional Comments:
The RE program at the UUFA went through a major change in the middle of this last year. We said good-bye to Janelle Carlson in July. Fortunately, before leaving, Janelle was able to spend some time with our new REC, Jamila Johnson. They worked quickly to ensure as smooth a transition as possible. We continue to have high involvement of youth in our programs, a rebirth of the High School youth group, and look forward to all the new ideas we can implement next year. Thank you all for supporting the RE program in 2019!
Contact: sundayprograms@uufames.org

Mission: The Sunday Service Committee (SSC) supports the minister's responsibility for Sunday morning services.

Sunday morning services are the most visible manifestation of the ministry of the UUFA. This committee embodies our Fellowship’s tradition of shared ministry. Specifically, the SSC aims to realize the congregation’s commitment to being “a beacon of social justice and liberal religion” by providing collaborators, facilitators, ideas, and feedback to support the minister’s Sunday services and by planning, shepherding, and implementing services when our minister is not in the pulpit.

Meeting Time for 2020: Second Saturday of each month, 10:00-11:30

Committee Members: Karen Bates (co-chair), Sarah Carlson, Jan Cook, Peggy Earnshaw, Kitty Fisher, Ralph Gandy, Dan Haug, Nichole Ose, Jane Runneals, Amy Slagell (co-chair). New addition in 2019 was Pegi Bevins, and Catherine Huisman and Mark Witherspoon came off the committee this year.

Report Submitted by: Amy Slagell

2019 Accomplishments:

- 2019 will long be remembered as the year of the Sabbatical! For 20 Sunday mornings from February 24 (when services were canceled due to weather) to our July 7 hymn sing, members of the SSC, supported by Rev. McKusick’s great work lining up guest speakers, worked with a wide range of ministers and others to shepherd and facilitate Sunday services. By the end of 2019, members of the SSC will have shepherded or presented 27 Sunday services during 2019 when the minister was not in the pulpit. It was an energizing experience and we learned a great deal during the year.

- The committee worked within the sabbatical budget and appreciated the generosity of many members of the congregation who participate in services, provide housing for guest speakers, put away chairs, and help make Sunday mornings a time when members and visitors can all feel welcomed and supported.

- The SSC also collaborated with many other committees, groups and individuals during the past year. Board members, RE, youth, Partner Church, musical groups, the generosity team, AMOS, the Art Committee, the makers of treats and coffee, and many others help make Sunday mornings an enriching experience for members and visitors.

- The SSC makes great use of Soul Matters materials and enjoys the guidance provided by the monthly themes. The work of the committee is supported by its strong traditions and the way members carry out the
work of the group guided by the committee covenant with which we begin every meeting.

Looking Ahead to 2020:
The Committee will continue to work with the minister in building services to support the upcoming monthly themes of Integrity, Resilience, Wisdom and Liberation. We will continue to benefit from the ideas and practices Reverend McKusick had an opportunity to engage during his sabbatical. We look forward to the possibilities of improved technology and providing a variety of services to support the mission of the UUFA.

FROM THE GENEROSITY TEAM

Contact: generosity@uufames.org

Mission: We will create a culture of generosity that sustains the mission and vision of the UUFA. We will emphasize and elevate generosity as a spiritual and ethical practice.

Meeting Time for 2020: 4th Wednesday each month, 6:30pm

Committee Members: Molly Helmers, Ben Woline, David Slade, Mary Richards, Chris Poole, Jennifer Killion, Kitty Fisher, Sue Koehrsen, Sam Wormley, Rev Kent McKusick (ex-officio)

Report Submitted by: Sue Koehrsen and Sam Wormley, co-chairs

2019 Accomplishments:
- Created a new team in place of the former stewardship committee
- Assisted in planning the congregation-wide Stewardship and Generosity workshop in February 2019 led by our consultant Mark Ewert
- Initiated education on the meaning of expanded stewardship/generosity for our team and for application to our work with the congregation
- Established a weekly series of Generosity Moments (May-September) in Sunday Services where members shared their reasons for being part of the UUFA
- Participated in early conversations with Endowment A&D regarding their intent to revive a planned giving program
- Organized and led a successful budget drive campaign! This included a campaign kickoff Sunday Service on September 15th, entitled We Are Changing Lives. As of this report, the campaign includes a $30,000 increase in contributions pledged over last year.
- Learned some lessons that will make us even more effective next year
Looking Ahead to 2020:
- Resume a series of Sunday Service Generosity Moments, with monthly focus on offering recipient organizations and continued sharing of stories by members.
- Support RE generosity activities as initiated by their committee; include children in Generosity Moments and Sunday morning offering on occasion.
- Coordinate with the initiative on a planned giving program.
- Consider a State of the UUFA presentation; lively and complete enough that everyone learns something - and meets someone - they didn't know.
- Consider offering a workshop on attitudes toward money.
- Add two new members to the team.
- Look for other opportunities to influence our congregation’s generosity culture.
- Lead another awesome pledge campaign building on this year’s experience.

Additional Comments:
The Generosity Team was established in October 2018 in response to recommendations from our consultant on strengthening the UUFA annual pledge drive and the need to develop a year round stewardship and generosity program. In Feb 2019 our consultant (Mark Ewert, Stewardship for us) returned to conduct a congregation wide workshop offering more specifics about how to approach this goal. All members of the Generosity Team attended.

Team building has been a major part of our work this year and has succeeded for a variety of reasons: clear understanding of intent from the beginning; professional assistance and encouragement; team members who wanted to be involved with a new challenge; support and experience of our UUFA congregational administrator and strong team leadership.