Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames

Annual Report to the Congregation 2021

Presented at the Annual Meeting, December 12, 2021
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames

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Board of Directors:
board@uufames.org

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

Consulting Religious Educator:
Janelle Carlson
515.423.0490 | reeducator@uufames.org

Congregational Administrator:
Bradley Duckstein
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2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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!

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<th>Title</th>
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<td>Interim President</td>
<td>Sarah Carlson</td>
<td>Community Building</td>
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<td>Mike Francom</td>
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<td>Chris McClure</td>
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<td>Jane Runneals</td>
<td>Grounds, Sunday Service</td>
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<td>Cathy Slade</td>
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<td>Cong. Admin., ex officio</td>
<td>Bradley Duckstein</td>
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Organizational Structure of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames

Congregation

Board of Directors
board@uufames.org

Executive Leadership Team*
eel@uufames.org
(president, VP, past president, minister)

Minister
minister@uufames.org

administrative & Property Cluster
Building Committee
building@uufames.org
Grounds & Landscape Committee
grounds@uufames.org
Library Committee
library@uufames.org

Community Building Cluster
Membership Services Committee
membershpservices@uufames.org
Healthy Relations Team
health@uufames.org
Caring Network
caring@uufames.org
Nominating Committee*
nominating@uufames.org
Congregational Life Committee
congregationallife@uufames.org

Finance Cluster
Finance Committee
finance@uufames.org
Endowment Acquisitions & Disbursements Committee*
endowment@uufames.org
Endowment Investment Committee*
investments@uufames.org
Personnel Committee
personnel@uufames.org

Outreach Cluster
Partner Church Committee
partnerchurch@uufames.org

Program Cluster
Religious Education Committee
recommittee@uufames.org
Sunday Services Committee
sundayprograms@uufames.org
Art Exhibition Committee
art@uufames.org

Generosity Team
generosity@uufames.org

Religious Educator
releducator@uufames.org

Childcare Staff

Youth Advisors
(volunteers)

Congregational Administrator
uufa@uufames.org

Membership Development
Coordinator
mdc@uufames.org

Fellowship Voices Coordinators
(volunteers from within choir)

Fellowship Voices Accompanist
(contact UUFA office)

Sunday Service Accompanists
(volunteers scheduled by Sunday Service Committee)

Affinity Groups*
Discussion Groups
AFAR (Ames Freethinkers and Rationalists)
afar@uufames.org
Buddhism Study Group
buddhism@uufames.org
Climate Action Team
contact office
Persephone’s Children
persephone@uufames.org
Skadberg Science Circle
skadbergscience@uufames.org
Women of Wisdom
wow@uufames.org
Women’s Book Group
books@uufames.org
Meditation Groups
Dance Be-Cause
dance@uufames.org
Mindfulness & Meditation
mindfulness@uufames.org
Musical Groups
Fellowship Voices
fellowshipvoices@uufames.org
Recorder Consort
recorders@uufames.org
Women in the Round
womenintheround@uufames.org
Social & Service Groups
Conscientious Crafters
crafters@uufames.org
Fellowship Family Night
ffn@uufames.org
Kitchen Angels
kitchen@uufames.org
NOT SURE WHOM TO CONTACT?
Give the UUFA office a call!
515-293-5960
uufa@uufames.org

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* The primary purpose of ELC is to set the Board meeting agenda.

* Affinity Groups are part of the fellowship life, but not of the business structure. All UUFA Affinity Groups must be approved by the Board of Directors and meet in UUFA facilities.

* Nominating and Endowment Acquisition & Disbursement Committees include one or all members directly elected by the congregation. Endowment Investment Committee is entirely board-appointed.

Positions shown in PURPLE are paid staff positions.
"To be a people of renewal is to ask not simply, ‘How do I refresh?’ but also ‘How do I return?’ The challenge of life is not just about moving forward but moving forward without losing touch with all we hold dear.” - Rev. Scott Taylor

The practice and process of renewal as framed by Rev. Taylor underscores the journey of the Fellowship board, staff, and members throughout 2021. There were significant challenges, both expected and unexpected, and there have been significant joys and successes. Most challenges and joys are related to the continuing pandemic and how Fellowship life is impacted. The unexpected resignation of the Religious Educator and subsequent letter of complaint offered significant challenges for the Board and staff and significant learning opportunities.

As the fiscal year ends, Interim Board President Sarah Carlson and I continue to be in conversation with a human resources consultant and an attorney who are assisting us in navigating confidential personnel matters raised in the letter of complaint. These outside resources ensure that the process of how to address and respond to employee grievances are clear to present and future employees, the minister, and the Board.

A revised employee handbook (several years in process) is under review by the consultant to ensure that we remain in compliance without losing touch with all we hold dear. This work has been very time consuming and stressful. I greatly value and commend the work of Interim President Sarah Carlson and Interim Vice President Mike Francos who stepped forward to fill Board resignations and lead the Board through this challenging and joyful year. The entire Board has engaged challenging work with dedication, thoughtfulness, and compassion. I also extend my sincere appreciation to Angie Poole and Carol Spencer who served the Board and Fellowship well during the first quarter of this year.

The Religious Education Committee also stepped forward to complete the RE program year from mid-March through May. Many thanks to the leadership and hours of service provided by Tigon Woline, Nichole Ose, and Sam Ose.

I met with the Religious Education Committee on April 29 to discuss a potential approach and next steps to fill the Religious Educator position. In March 2020, the UUA published a self-study preparation course for transitional staff. After review and in line with the UUA employee titles and capsule descriptions, I discussed and recommended the possibility of a six-month Consulting Religious Educator position running from mid-July through January. The RE Committee was unanimous in recommending to the board that the UUFA minister and RE Committee in collaboration with the Personnel Committee develop the job description and fill this temporary six-month, up
to 30 hours a week position with the best immediately available candidate subject to an application and review process.

The Board approved the position and description. Janelle Carlson was hired and began her consulting position on July 22. She has been doing excellent work in her role, and it is a pleasure to have her return to UUFA as someone familiar with the RE program, the committee, and families. Given the timeline and demands, Janelle will be extending her time of service through the end of this program year. Please read her report addressing the work that she is accomplishing on behalf of the children and youth of UUFA.

As the year began, Angie Poole, Sarah Carlson, Jamie Gurganus, Amy Slagell, and I continued the final months of Retooling for a Sustainable Future, a UUA program bringing representatives from similar size congregations (UUFA, Des Moines, and Main Line UU in Devon, PA) to discuss systems and challenging issues of congregational life such as regathering, white supremacy culture, membership, and staff/volunteer burnout. We were guided by facilitators in the process of developing action proposals and worked together as a team and with the other congregations to identify a project. The UUFA team chose to work with the Board on member engagement and develop a process to share the results of the 2021 congregational survey. Given the Board’s high level of engagement with personnel matters, this project will move into 2022. We will seek additional input from members who did not complete the survey.

From our retooling sessions, four essential guiding questions were offered that are useful in the work of the minister, the Board, every committee, and any group functioning at the Fellowship: What is going well? What do we need to adjust? Are there any blockages/cross-purposes we need to identify and address? What do we need to do next? I encourage all committees to engage these questions as we transition into a new fiscal year.

The Regathering Taskforce (Sarah Carlson, Brenda Witherspoon, Dr. Jennifer Killion, Bradley Duckstein, Janelle Carlson and me) has been meeting regularly through the year to carefully develop a gradual reopening of the Fellowship, to minimize the possibility of COVID exposure. While we surely miss being together, we have found new ways to gather as a community safely. The decision to move cautiously has prevented us from making a false start and then having to move backward.

As I write this report, the infection rate for Story County is increasing. We are adhering to guidelines developed by the Centers for Disease Control and the compassionate leadership of UUA President Susan Frederick Gray who wrote in August: “We must all remain flexible in our plans, policies and guidance, centering care for the most vulnerable and staying committed to protecting each other’s health and safety.” Even though we yearn for connection, please
maintain the safety protocols that have helped sustain the health of the congregation. Your continued vigilance matters.

Virtual Sunday services continued from January through August. Preparing services in this format is considerably more time consuming for me and the members of the Sunday Services Committee (SSC). The SSC has been dedicated and courageous in learning new ways of doing our work together. We were pleased to supplement our work with services prepared and offered by the UUA and UU Justice Ministry for the Earth. Additionally, UUFA participated in a summer collaborative with nine other midwestern congregations to share services, allowing Sunday service providers a much-needed break. It was enjoyable to experience other UU congregations’ approach and hear different and diverse voices from our region. I hope that we might be part of this collaborative again in the coming year.

Sunday services and Board initiatives have been influenced by the three priorities established and communicated by the UUA and President Susan Frederick Gray: continuing pandemic support for congregations; implementing the recommendations of *Widening the Circle of Concern* (anti-racism is the heart of our faith and foundation for years to come); and strengthening the organization by simplifying and streamlining governance and policy.

Responding to the recommendations of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change to advance initiatives that interrupt and “undo” structural and systemic racism and the white supremacy culture is challenging and critical in order for us as Unitarian Universalists to live into the promise of our faith.

Throughout the year, I have centered the voices of people of color. For example, during the month of February, the theme was *Beloved Community*, a fitting theme to parallel Black History Month. In Sunday services, we centered the narrative and theologies of Rev. Darrick Jackson and how Unitarian Universalism is his theological home even though it does not speak to his Black identity. To that end, we looked at ways that Unitarian Universalism is frequently a “vehicle for words, not for an experience of the holy” and how there are many different experiences of the sacred. To be more welcome and open, we need to offer a broad variety of cultural narratives, voices, music, theology, and imagery in our efforts to be the diverse community we aspire to be.

The UUA-produced *Side with Love* Sunday service brought four diverse and inspiring people to our Sunday experience. The service focused on four themes from *Widening the Circle of Concern*: living our values; hospitality & inclusion; educating for liberation; and restoration and reparations. What if to “side with love” meant making bold, faith-full choices? What if it were even a little bit scary? This worship service brought together worship leaders and musicians from across the country to offer hopeful, moving, challenging
reminders about what we, as Unitarian Universalists, are called to do and be in the world. It was a fine service which brought an important message to the congregation and served as a precursor to our future reading and work on the recommendations of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change.

Youth Group representatives brought the 8th Principle Project to the Board and proposed that we adopt it as a congregation. The current language of the proposed 8th Principle is: “We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.” I introduced the 8th Principle in three Sunday Services: February 28 - The UU 8th Principle; May 23 - The Call of Our Faith; and November 7 - The 8th Principle: A journey of Healing and Wholeness. The Article II Study Commission will finalize the wording of the first draft by January 2023 for presentation at the 2023 General Assembly. A final review and vote to add the 8th Principle is scheduled to take place at the 2024 General Assembly.

At the 2021 UUFA annual meeting, you will vote to either approve adoption of the principle as a congregation or defer approval for a year of study. By approving this principle, UUFA would be joining at least 32 other congregations across the country in adopting this principle before it is voted upon by the General Assembly. Adoption by congregations is a grassroots project in support of the broader UUA initiative.

In mid-April, Interim President Sarah Carlson and I collaborated on a letter in support of the nomination of Dr. Anthony Jones, the Ames Community School District (ACSD) Director of Equity; the district as a whole; and the ACSD Board of Directors as recipients of an Iowa School Character Award. They served our community with distinction through the development and offering of The Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action from February 1 to 5, 2021. We were extremely pleased to support Dr. Jones and the school board with other churches and individuals. The combined efforts resulted in both receiving character awards during a year of contentiousness in the schools and the state with regard to critical race theory. Our thanks to Allison Brundy for bringing this initiative to our attention.

On August 29th, Sunday services shifted from being 100% virtual to being offered to a limited gathering in Fellowship Hall while broadcasting live with Zoom technology to individuals and families at home. Pre-registration for up to 40 people in Fellowship Hall was initiated and is working well. Masking is required, and chairs are distanced to meet social distancing guidelines. We currently average 27 people attending “in person” and 40 “sign-ons” through Zoom (which often includes more than one viewer). This is the steepest learning curve for us since the pandemic’s first significant impact on UUFA in March 2020. I am proud of what we have been able to accomplish,
remembering that our work is never about perfection. I am excited for the future possibilities of holding community together and growing. We are committed to learning and working to improve the technical quality of services and the experience for those at home and those at the Fellowship. I extend many thanks and appreciation for the dedicated work of Sam Ose, Bradley Duckstein, Dan Haug, and Mary Richards as they continue work together on our multi-platform delivery system.

In the congregational survey, respondents indicated a desire for additional adult religious education opportunities. Given the pandemic demands and that adult RE has not been in the job description for religious educators during my nine years of service, I have offered classes each year as time allows. This year, I offered a Zoom series, Beyond Sunday, to view and discuss 14 episodes of Eyes on the Prize, a video series on the Civil Rights movement from the 1960s to the present. It was a powerful and often emotional experience to witness the American response and lack of response to the issues of racism, oppression, inequality, injustice, and white supremacy over the last 60 years. Two people regularly participated. I look forward to offering more video discussion series next year to increase our understanding of the white supremacy culture and how to become anti-racist.

Shortly after closing the building last year, I obtained permission from the UUA to stream Building Your Own Theology, a 10-session curriculum that invited the participants to explore their fundamental religious beliefs, values, and convictions that inform how they live and move in the world. The class was a joy to facilitate with five participants.

In March, I began facilitating a new and short-term Soul Matters small group listening circle. It was a very enjoyable and deeply moving experience. We will continue to explore thematic ministry, the value of small group listening circles, and additional ways to bring this thematic style of ministry to more people.

Looking ahead, I look to facilitate a multi-session class designed for congregational discussion of Widening the Circle of Concern. The UUA is developing a curriculum that will help us navigate and better understand systems of oppression and white supremacy. I look forward to continuing the work with you; it is a lifelong commitment.

Outside of the congregation, I was invited to speak to the Gilbert High School Interfaith Club on April 6th. The students invite ministers to be their guests and answer questions about the faith traditions that we serve. It was a wonderful experience! The students were very interested in how a religious institution without a creed works and what the Sunday service experience looks like. They were also very interested in my personal spiritual journey and
how one prepares to serve a pluralistic tradition. It was a pleasure to respond to their timely, respectful, and interesting questions!

We have had the pleasure of people visiting our virtual services on a regular basis. To be able to offer an online membership class was identified as a high priority. I developed an Online Path to Membership. This is primarily a video-based, self-study program that is sent to people who wish to know more about Unitarian Universalism and the UUFA. Instead of a half-day in-person member exploration class with childcare provided, each person follows a “self-study” program with videos of various lengths ranging from 1 minute to 12 minutes and an overall watch time of 96 minutes. Once complete, we have a Zoom session for people interested in membership to meet each other, share their spiritual journeys, and ask questions. Moving forward, this online program will serve as the foundation for membership interest. The social and relational session will transition to in-person meetings with a virtual option available. This program offers the opportunity to immediately engage an interested newcomer, rather than waiting several weeks or months for a class to be populated and scheduled. Streamlining the process (of what was formerly primarily time together spent in lecture-based learning) opens the opportunity to spend all of our meeting time (whether in small group or one-on-one) on relationship building. Once we have returned to being fully open, we will have a large and festive celebration for new members.

One of the great joys of this year has been observing the 75th Anniversary of the Fellowship. When the 75th Anniversary Taskforce was planning the month-long celebration in October, we felt certain that the pandemic would be behind us. We had no idea that we would be in the steepest learning curve (probably) in 75 years. The Sunday Services Committee (SSC) is to be commended for their commitment to supporting the vision of non-committee leaders for meaningful services exploring the evolution of our history. Each Sunday was dedicated to a particular facet of Fellowship life: founder’s service; music and memories; building resilience and change; religious education; and our future. Planning these services was extremely time consuming and worthwhile for the lay leaders, the SSC facilitators (one assigned for each week), the tech team, and me. While challenging, this was a fine celebration! We look forward to extending the celebration into post-pandemic months in order to share a large community gathering and “break bread (and a lot of other good food!)” together. Fellowship meals are part of the legacy of our history and we intend to continue the practice when safe to do so. As a teaser, I have received videos from several ministers who either served this congregation or realized the call to ministry as members of UUFA. It will be exciting to share their thoughts and greetings with you.

With sadness and joyful remembrance, we witness the loss of two longtime members: Peggy Gurau and Honorary Life Member Lotus Miller. We are filled with gratitude for the many contributions Peggy and Lotus made to
Fellowship life throughout many years. Celebrations of their lives will be scheduled once we are able to gather freely. May their memories be blessed.

I am very grateful for the dedication and professionalism of the UUFA staff. Congregational Administrator Bradley Duckstein has worked countless hours in service to the Fellowship in strong support of staying together while apart. His depth of experience and ability continue to support the mission of the Fellowship. Consulting Religious Educator Janelle Carlson continues to shape the future of religious education at UUFA in collaboration with the RE Committee and me. As we gradually move to fully regathering, it is time for volunteers to once again step forward to support the mission and vision of the Fellowship. Depending so heavily on a small staff has been exhausting for the staff and unsustainable in the long term. What aspects of Fellowship life excite you? Wherever your primary interests are located, there is a place for you to work in support of the UUFA. Please contact me to discuss volunteer opportunities, whether your experience level is seasoned or new. Live into your UU values in support of the future of UUFA!

The UU Partner Church Council made some significant changes during 2021, merging with the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists. The end result is intended to broaden the meaning of partnership, provide better training for lay and professional leadership, and to support and empower existing and emerging groups. Our partnership with Rev. Lajos and the Unitarian Church in Tordátfalva remains strong. Rev. Lajos expressed their deep appreciation for the special funding UUFA provided in support of their community meal service when the pandemic eliminated their funding source, camps for youth from Romania and Hungary.

In Unitarian Universalism, Statements of Conscience (SOC) approved at General Assembly focus the efforts of congregations and other UU groups on the topic of the SOC, shape the meaning of contemporary Unitarian Universalism, and empower the UUA staff to lobby our positions in pending legislation. SOC’s are part of a long process, honoring democratic principles and determining where we wish to stand as a community, recognizing that not all of us will agree on all points. The 2021 assembly passed this Statement of Conscience: *Undoing Systemic White Supremacy: A Call to Prophetic Action*. The first sentence reads as follows: “Seeking universal justice and equity, we call upon the Unitarian Universalist Association and Unitarian Universalist individuals and congregations/groups to actively engage in undoing systemic white supremacy in all of its manifestations.”

Its passage is historic and testifies to Unitarian Universalism’s aspirations for justice and equality as an expression of our faith and values. The entire text can be found here:

https://www.uua.org/action/statements/undoing-systemic-white-supremacy
President Susan Frederick Gray observed that she is inspired by the powerful truth of our interdependence and how we continually show up for each other. In this liminal time between closure and reopening, she calls us to remember the values and practices that helped us survive the pandemic. She also reminds us that perfection is not the goal.

Over the last nineteen months, I have been impressed and inspired at what we have successfully navigated and engaged as a congregation. The Board and staff worked untold extra hours in new and unknown contexts to provide Sunday morning services, religious education, and virtual meeting spaces for managing Fellowship life while striving to enrich each other spiritually, maintain a sense of community, engage justice work, and learn new ways to love. It was never about perfection and that’s a good thing! We didn’t always get it right. When we don’t get it right, we pause, reflect, learn and return to our shared values and aspirations. Then, we begin again. The Rev. Oscar Sinclair, minister at the UU Church of Lincoln NE kicked off the Prairie Summer Service Cooperative with an excellent service that underscored these themes. With head and heart, he addressed the tension lines between our aspirations and not getting things right. He included the poetry of Richard Blanco’s poem What I know of Country and how it relates it to the journey of the United States, the UUA, and UU congregations:

“...to know a country takes all we know of love. some days are better than others, but never easy to keep our promise every morning of every year, of every century, and wake up, stumble downstairs with our raging hope, sit down at the kitchen table again, still blurry eyed, still tired, and say: Listen, we need to talk.”

May we always show up for each other. May we remember to celebrate our successes, and when we stumble or fall, may remember to pause, reflect, learn, and return to our values and aspirations.

May we continue to move forward into the next 75 years without losing touch with all we hold dear.

May we hold on to our raging hope.

In the ministry we share,

Rev. Kent C. McKusick
The Board began 2021 under the leadership of Angie Poole as president and Carol Spencer as vice president. At that time the secretary-treasurer position on the Board was vacant. In January, an ambitious list of goals was set at a Board retreat, which have carried us through the year.

In 2020, more serious discussion was held about options for taking care of issues with the UUFA roof. In the past, various parts of the roof were dealt with individually when issues occurred, but the overall roof from all three construction phases was not looked at as a whole. The UUFA seemed to be making frequent repairs without having a larger picture of the problems with the roof. Based upon recommendations from a Roof Taskforce of Larry Koehrsen, Dave Fox, Danelda Allen, Craig Mushel, and Bradley Duckstein, the Board engaged an engineering consultant with construction expertise to study the issues with the roof and make recommendations on how best to move forward. The consultant provided several phased replacement scenarios with potential costs and the Board decided to go with the option of replacing the entire roof. The replacement was made while the building was not being widely used, due to our pandemic closure. The consultant was further engaged to manage the bid process, bids were received and a contractor selected, a capital campaign completed, and the work was completed by the end of July.

In March, our Religious Educator Jamila Johnson abruptly resigned and the board president and vice president resigned as well. We understood Jamila was going to submit a written letter of concerns at a later date. We are grateful that members of the Religious Education Committee then stepped up to carry out the programming for children and youth through the remaining months of March, April and May. The Board held an executive session and elected Sarah Carlson as interim president and Mike Francom as interim vice president to fill out 2021. Chris McClure agreed to come back on the board as secretary-treasurer to fill out the remainder of 2021. Jamila’s letter outlining her concerns was received in late May and the Board engaged the services of an external HR consultant to review and investigate the concern and recommend further action. An attorney was also consulted, and the Board is following recommendations from the consultant and the attorney.

The Board continued to work on their list of the goals and accomplishments toward those goals are noted below.

1. **Plan a 75th anniversary celebration for 2021:** Jane Runneals led a taskforce to plan and carry out activities throughout the year. The minister included photos of remembrances at the end of each Sunday service. October was selected for a month-long celebration with the planning of five Sundays where the programs revolved around various themes related to our history.
2. Set up a technology taskforce to study and recommend technology needed for implementing multi-platform (with Zoom plus onsite participants) Sunday services later in 2021: Sam Ose led a team to work with tech vendors to examine capabilities of various technologies and the Board accepted the taskforce’s recommendations. The roof capital campaign included an ask for funds to cover the technology costs for Fellowship Hall. Secondary stations (Fireside Room and Room 3) were funded by operating funds already on-hand. Hybrid services went live in September 2021.

3. Read Widening the Circle of Concern, a book examining institutional racism within the UUA, and discuss: The Board began reading the book and held three discussion sessions and found the writing style very dense with a focus more at a denominational level, rather than local. Other commitments hindered full Board participation and the Board decided to delay further discussion until a more readable curriculum to accompany the book (pending from the UUA) is available. The Board also recommends greater Fellowship engagement in this study through adult education in the coming year.

4. Conduct a survey of UUFA membership: Mike Francom led this challenge by coordinating the development and distribution of the survey and compiling results. The Board examined the survey results by various topics across several months and Mike presented the results at the final Sunday service of October. The Board recommends holding congregational-wide small group meetings to discuss and address needs identified by the survey.

5. Educate the congregation on the 8th Principle and discuss adoption by the UUFA. Rev. McKusick most recently presented a Sunday service about the principle in November and the issue is to be voted on by the Congregation at the annual meeting.

6. Consider adding adult religious education to UUFA programming: The congregational survey indicated that there is a strong interest by UUFA members for adult education opportunities, and our current staffing model cannot support such. We recommend further examination in the coming year of how to accomplish this expansion in programming.

7. Increase the Board presence with the congregation: This is an area that the Board did not have much time to address and needs further attention, particularly when in-person contact opportunities are limited by COVID conditions.

8. Finish the revision of the employee handbook. A draft of the employee handbook was sent to our HR consultant for recommendations and revisions before it is reviewed and approved by the entire Board. We recommend that the Board study and approve the update in 2022.

9. Rebuild the UUFA website. Funds were set aside to begin working on a new website with an external designer. Our congregational administrator
needs to be involved with the selection of vendor and website rebuild. Because of increased workload and competing priorities, the project was tabled until more staff time can be devoted to this.

10. Provide support to staff: The Board realizes that the pandemic placed challenges on all our staff and minister as they’ve had to adjust their workloads and work styles to be responsive to congregational needs and health concerns during this time. At the same time, the volunteer commitment from the wider UUFA congregation has diminished in the past several years, and a number of standing committees have been inactive. The Board recommends we continue to look at staffing levels and examine ways to increase member involvement and wider commitment to support the work of the Fellowship. Until we can financially support more staff, we need to find ways to support their workloads.

Beyond the recommendations listed above, the UUFA will be looking to hire a new Religious Educator in 2022, discerning the scope of work (do we include adult education?) and job duties. The longstanding “Fellowship model” within the UUA required wide participation of members doing the work and feeling responsible for the health of the organization, rather than relying on staff and minister to do it all. We’ve lost much of that commitment from members. At the same time, we need to reflect within structured small group discussions or “cottage meetings” what the Fellowship means to each of us, and how we can better keep connected to each other, support each other and welcome new people into our midst. Together, we can carry this Fellowship into the future, remaining a presence of liberal religious thought and justice action in our community.

[signature]

Sarah Carlson
FROM THE CONSULTING RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR

This was a year of transition and renewal for the religious education program. I started in the temporary role of Consulting Religious Educator in late July with the intention of staying on for six months to support the program’s transition and assist in finding a permanent UUFA Religious Educator. This fall, I extended my current agreement to stay through the end of the program year and intend to continue supporting the religious education program through June 2022.

I have a long history with the UUFA that began when I started as a childcare provider in 2012. In 2015, I became the part-time Religious Education Coordinator. Since resigning my position as RE Coordinator in 2019, I completed my master’s degree in human development and family studies and moved to Berkshire County, Massachusetts. While in Massachusetts, I worked with an early childhood non-profit organization as Program Director and navigated the beginning of the pandemic, closure and remote learning, and eventually reopening to onsite programming. When returning to Iowa this past summer, I was eager to work with the UUFA and the RE program to bring my institutional knowledge and my reopening experience to assist in this programmatic transition of regathering.

The primary goals for my position this program year are to support the return to onsite religious education; design and prepare curriculum for the 2021-2022 program year; and assist in the hiring and transition process for the next UUFA Religious Educator. Due to the ongoing pandemic, it was clear when I started this work that the program would look very different compared to previous years. I have collaborated with the Regathering Taskforce, the RE Committee, and fellow UUFA staff to find ways for the religious education program to connect and regather while still keeping COVID safety and inclusivity at the forefront of our decision-making. This work will continue into 2022 as we continue to develop a safe, flexible, and engaging multi-platformed program.

Sunday Morning Programming

This program year (2021-22), Sunday morning religious education have been divided into three unique, 12-week offerings with multi-platform from September 12, 2021 - May 22, 2022. This model allows the program to have the flexibility to be responsive to COVID community transmission, as well as provides varied experiences throughout the program year to meet the wide variety of needs in our community. These trimesters will consist of: RE at the Park (September 12-November 28), RE at the Movies (December 5 – February 27), and RE in Action (March 6 – May 22)
This fall, 40 students from preschool-12th grade were registered for RE. An average of 17 students participated in Sunday morning, RE at the Park, programming each week.

**RE at the Park** took place in person and exclusively outdoors at Emma McCarthy Lee Park on Sundays from 9:15-10:30am. Students reconnected with each other in person for the first time in 17 months. This program focused on engaging with nature, learning about environmental stewardship, and having fun exploring the great outdoors! Students reflected on the 7th Principle and ways to respect the interdependent web of which we are all a part. Classes were divided into three groups: young elementary (PreK-2nd graders), older elementary (3-5th), and middle/high school (6-12th grade). Rylee Matthews and Gabby Casini (former childcare providers) have provided much needed consistent program support by serving as paid teaching assistants for RE at the Park. Volunteer teachers for RE at the Park were: Maya Hayslett, Erika Johnson, Holly Bignall, Nichole Ose, Navvab Munirih, Mike Todd, Betsy Swanner Smith, and David Brenner. Tigon Woline, Andi Todd, Sam Ose, and Eric Schmidt from the RE Committee have also provided regular programmatic support on Sundays.

**RE at the Movies** will be a hybrid program for Kindergarten - 12th grade students on Sunday mornings beginning December 5th. Students will explore Unitarian Universalist values through film, activities, and discussion. UU curriculums *CartUUns, The Fifth Dimension*, and *Popcorn Theology* will be utilized. Students K-6 grade will be meeting online via Zoom on Sunday mornings from 9:30-10:15 am. Students 7-12th grade will be meeting in-person at the UUFA at 11:00 am in Channing/Barton. All RE participants meeting in-person will follow the current regathering guidance.

**Multi-Platform Religious Education**

In an effort to meet the diverse needs of families throughout the pandemic, the RE program has shifted to offering more multi-platform programming. The goal is that a diverse number of simple program offerings may allow the program to reach more individuals and maintain flexibility to be responsive to the pandemic and the needs of the congregation. The intention is for RE to be a more sustainable and accessible model for families. This means having
hybrid gatherings, synchronous and asynchronous programming, and offering diverse opportunities for faith development and community. Some of this new programming has included a REgathering Celebration, UUFA Storytime, RE activity kits, and a private UUFA Religious Education Facebook group. Many more multi-platform opportunities are being planned for 2022!

On Wednesday, September 1st, I hosted an all-ages RE Regathering Celebration at Emma McCarthy Lee Park from 5-7pm. This was an opportunity to kick-off the program year with a time for children and families to reconnect in-person. Students were registered for RE, voted on the October offertory recipient, and had fun with outdoor art. There were approximately 35 attendees.

UUFA Storytime is a virtual, prerecorded program where members of the UUFA community read aloud a children’s book. Along with being an asynchronous and virtual program offering available to families, the goal is also to engage members of the UUFA community who may not typically be involved with children’s RE programming. These videos will be available via the UUFA Youtube channel and website. We will be sharing these with families on a regular basis via email and social media. Karol Crosbie was the first reader for UUFA Storytime, and the video is available now! This program will continue with more readers throughout 2022.

RE Activity Kits became available at the beginning of October. These activity kits consisted of four unique, simple activities, and included all materials and instructions. Activities were a mix of stories, UU traditions, and creative expression crafts. A private Facebook group for families (UUFA Religious Education) has also been created in conjunction with these activity kits. This is a space for families to engage with virtual RE content, see and share photos, learn about upcoming events, and get connected with
other families. Activity kits will continue throughout 2022 and new kits will be available on a seasonal basis (January and April).

**Fellowship Family Night**

In winter and spring, families had the opportunity to gather for weekly movie nights via Zoom. Fellowship Family Night resumed meeting in-person on Wednesday nights this summer. They have maintained an active group and have been meeting in various parks this summer and fall.

**Religious Education Committee**

Sam Ose has continued on as the chair of the RE Committee this year. Current committee members include: Tigon Woline, Andi Todd, Eric Schmidt, and Cheryl Lawson. In the absence of a Religious Educator this spring, the committee carried out the remainder of the online spring RE program. They also contributed to a successful virtual RE service on June 20th. The committee has provided in-person support throughout the fall at RE at the Park and updated the [RE Safety Guidelines](#) in October.

**Looking Ahead**

Supporting the RE program through this transitional period has been a joyful challenge these past 5 months. I’m looking forward to carrying out the remainder of the 2021-2022 program year and helping to shape the future of the RE program at the UUFA. I will work closely with the Religious Education Committee in the search for the next RE staff member. Looking at the future of programming beyond this program year, I see a significant need for a full-time, credentialed Director of Religious Education on staff at the UUFA. Religious education programming this fall has been building momentum and if nurtured, could continue to grow with a positive impact on the UUFA. I am thankful for the many volunteers and participants who have supported the RE program this year. Thank you to everyone who helps this program come alive including RE teachers, UUFA staff, RE Committee members, and of course our children and families!

Janelle Carlson
2021 OFFERTORY SPLIT RECIPIENTS

Each month, our congregation makes it a tradition to share our Sunday offertory with various charities and non-profits whose values we support. Our hope is that, by sharing our generosity, we can help to make our community and world a better place.

A running total history is available at utames.org/offertory-history.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 2020</td>
<td>KHOI Community Radio</td>
<td>$700.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2021</td>
<td>COVID-19 Emergency Fund for Story County Immigrants</td>
<td>$1030.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Citizens’ Climate Lobby</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Creative Vision Human Development Institute</td>
<td>$605.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Able Up Iowa (formerly Iowa Able Foundation)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Ames High School Prairie through The Nature Conservancy</td>
<td>$515.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Prairie Rivers of Iowa</td>
<td>$140.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Ames Pridefest</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Youth &amp; Shelter Services</td>
<td>$321.50</td>
</tr>
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<td>October</td>
<td>Ames Animal Shelter (Religious Education selection)</td>
<td>$226.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Friends of the Ericson Public Library (Boone)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Boone Area Humane Society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL (since last annual report)</td>
<td>$4382.50</td>
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| Jan-Oct     | Black Lives Matter - TBD                                             | $2354.82|
| Jan-Oct     | Black Lives Matter - local movement through DSM BLM Rent Relief Fund | $2000.00|
|             | Black Lives Matter - local movement through Prairielands Freedom Fund| $1000.00|
|             | Black Lives Matter - national UU movement through BLUU               | $1030.18|
| Jan-Oct     | Partner Church (non-budgeted)                                        | $525.00 |
|             | TOTAL (other)                                                        | $6910.00|
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 2022: As needed

No report submitted.

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 2022: As needed

Committee Members: Cheryl Lawson, Catherine Huisman, and volunteers Dan Taylor and Cindy Scholten

2021 Projects/Improvements:
- North lot maintenance, including clearing debris from drainage ways.
- Removed three dead serviceberry trees from front lawn.
- Removed weeds from the southeast corner of the lower lot.
- Replanted the lower lot entryway garden.
- Replanted yellow flag iris garden along the sidewalk.
- General yard, memorial garden, and parking lot island maintenance.
- Received bids for repairing uneven walkway.

Looking Ahead to 2022:
- Repair uneven walkway pending Board approval of funding.
- Plant the southeast parking lot drainage area with grasses.
- Continue general maintenance of the grounds.
- Replace plants in the Memorial Garden that were lost to drought.
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 2022: Second Saturday of each month, 9:30-12:00

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

Major Accomplishments:
• The committee returned to in-person work sessions in June.
• Continue to process returned items and add donated items to collection.

Looking Ahead to 2022:
• Put reviews of materials in the weekly newsletter and possible mini shelf reviews in the library
• Start a middle grade section
• Evaluate children’s books (keep? move to middle grade?)
• Explore ways to increase library use by groups in the Fellowship
• Support the UUA common read

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 is a small group of Coordinators, who manage and guide larger Teams (i.e. subcommittees) in order to facilitate a ministry of hope and caring within the Fellowship. The Network helps members to both support each other and be supported in times of joy, sorrow, loss or other life transitions.

Vision: The Caring Network, working closely with the minister, quickly and appropriately responds to member needs as its resources allow. A Caring Team is designated for each of the following: to send cards, make visits, or
provide transportation, meals, pastoral care, assistance with special short-term caring needs, or support for memorials and receptions.

Meeting time for 2022: Second Thursday of each month, 11:00 am via Zoom

Committee Members: Carol Barrick, Rilla Fox, Jamie Gurganus (chair), Rev. Kent McKusick (ex-officio), Jonah Powell, Lynne Van Valin

Major Accomplishments:
• Continued to contact congregants each month to make sure everyone was coping during the pandemic. We also continued with our usual response to an illness, death, surgery or new baby with cards, phone calls, and meals. Certain volunteers on the transportation list were still willing to provide rides to members, as long as masks were worn at all times.
• Purchased and read “Held: Showing Up for Each Other’s Mental Health” by Barbara Meyers. We read and discussed many chapters over several months, and hope to finish our discussion in 2022.
• This year, we lost long-time member, Peggy Gurai on January 17th and Honorary Life Member Lotus Miller on October 24th. Memorial services will be held at later dates due to ongoing COVID restrictions.

Looking Ahead to 2022: Rev. McKusick is already working with families to plan memorial services for those we lost in 2020 and 2021. The Caring Network will assist him in organizing receptions if CDC guidelines allow for such gatherings.

The committee hopes to recruit additional members to its core committee. We also need additional people who can provide transportation to members in need, since many on our list are now needing this service themselves.

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.

Meeting time for 2022: 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.

Meeting time for 2022: 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 2022: As needed

Committee Members: Peggy Earnshaw (2014-present), Jamie Gurganus (chair; 2015-present), Cindy Scholten (2000-present), Steven Trca (2019-present), Faith Winchester (2012-present)

2021 Remarks:
Jamie and Rev. McKusick attended an eight-month Retooling workshop held by the UUA. We had monthly virtual meetings with the two leaders and two other congregations, as well as monthly with our UUFA participants (Rev. McKusick, Jamie Gurganus, Sarah Carlson and Amy Slagell). The First Unitarian church in Des Moines and the Main Line Unitarian church from Devon, PA were the other congregations in the workshop. The workshop’s main focus was to connect and discuss with participants the concerns we are facing as we return from being closed due to the pandemic. Membership demographics and engagement and concern about religious education were the key components of the workshop, and we came up with strategies and action steps for how to reengage members and children after being away from our buildings.

Rev. McKusick created an online membership exploration curriculum. After sharing it with Jamie and Cindy, Rev. McKusick met with them to discuss its use for new members. Rev. McKusick’s mentee, Matthew Haar Farris, was the “beta tester” for the curriculum and met with Jamie, Cindy and Kent to give feedback about it, and he was the first to sign our virtual membership book. We also welcomed Ronni Kahn and Molly and Ray Lee as new members after they used the new online curriculum.
Looking Ahead to 2022:
We hope to work with the Board to begin identifying ways to improve member engagement, using ideas and strategies discussed during the Retooling workshop. In addition, we are hopeful that funding for a Membership Development Coordinator will remain a strong priority in our budgeting process.

The committee will also meet to write a new committee description, so it includes the use of the online membership exploration curriculum either combined with or instead of the in-person classes.

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.”

In addition to providing a slate of candidates for the annual meeting, the committee also provides slates for other elected positions, such as a ministerial search committee, when requested by the board. The committee may also be asked for nominations for other vacant positions, as needed. Insofar as is possible, the Nominating Committee seeks to make the best use of the talents and leadership skills present in the UUFA, and to ensure that its membership and the nominations it puts forward represent the diverse membership of the congregation.

Meeting time for 2022: As needed. Typically once per week during the months of August through October, but possibly starting in the spring.

Committee Members: Jamie Gurganus (chair; 2019-2021), Dan Haug (2020-2022), Molly Helmers (2021-2023), Navvab Munirih (2020-2021), Mary Richards (2021-2022)

2021 Remarks:
Jamie met with the Board on May 12 to discuss the positions that needed to be filled this year, as well as what characteristics they would like to see in new board members. The first meeting of the full committee was on May 27, and then we started having weekly, virtual meetings every Tuesday.

This was an usual year for the committee, since we had both the President and Vice President positions to fill besides two open Board At-Large positions, three Nominating and one Endowment position to fill. Because of the ongoing pandemic, we made a few in-person contacts with people, but mainly had to ask members by a phone call. The committee worked very hard, made a lot
of phone calls, juggled some previously filled (and shuffled) positions on the Board and presented the Board with our slate of candidates on November 10. We managed to fill the President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, three At-Large positions, and the congregation-elected nominating committee position.

We ended this year’s work the following remaining vacancies:

- (1) Nominating Committee (board appointed; term 2022-2023)
- (2) Endowment Acquisition & Disbursement Committee (term 2022-2026; term remaining 2019-2023)

We note that the committee will be considering merging with the endowment investments committee next year.

FROM THE FINANCE CLUSTER

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

ENDOWMENT ACQUISITION & DISBURSEMENT COMMITTEE

Contact: endowment@uufames.org

Mission: The Endowment 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 2022: As needed, semi-annually with Endowment Fund Investment Committee

No report submitted.

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 2022:** As needed - at least twice per year; often by email/phone

**Committee Members:** Larry Koehrsen (through 2021), Stu Huntington (through 2023) Dave Fox (chair; through 2025)

**2021 Remarks:**
The committee continues to work with Mercer Advisors as a financial manager of endowment funds and provides monthly summaries of income and expenses to committee members and the Board.

The committee worked with the acquisition & disbursement committee and the roof taskforce to develop a funding plan and implement the replacement of the Fellowship building roof, in entirety, as well as planned audio/video improvements. A summary of that financing (including funding for this year’s audio/video improvements) is available in the roof taskforce report.

For ease of bookkeeping, the various fund balances within the Endowment are currently calculated annually, at the end of the fiscal year. December 31, 2020 balances were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cook Fund</td>
<td>$17,146.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berger Library Fund</td>
<td>$21,776.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Replacement Fund</td>
<td>$51,325.53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Endowment Fund</td>
<td>$450,794.07</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$541,041.98</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Overall investment balance at the end of October 2021 (latest statement available) came to $521,011.44, which reflects 2021 withdrawals of $75,000 (roof) and management fees, as well as gains and losses. An additional $24,000 was transferred in October to the operating fund to cover the total audio/video improvement expense. All that considered, the endowment remains in a strong position.

**Looking Ahead to 2022:**
The major goal of the endowment committees - both A&D and Investment - is to provide information to the congregation about the Endowment and encourage gifts to it for growth. That growth will provide future funding for worthwhile capital and other projects needed by the Fellowship.

We also note that bookkeeping for endowment/investment funds is currently slated to transition to office staff management, beginning January 1, 2022. Our thanks to Larry Koehrsen for his detailed records over the last few years, which provide a solid foundation for the transfer of duties.
FINANCE COMMITTEE

Contact: finance@uufames.org

Mission: The Finance Committee is responsible for developing the annual budget and auditing the Fellowship financial records. The Finance Committee works along with the Congregational Administrator 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 2022: As needed

Committee Members: Stephanie Fox, Mike Francom, Chris McClure, Claus Niesen (chair)

Major Accomplishments:
The finance committee primarily met virtually during 2021, with one hybrid meeting. The committee completed the annual financial review of 2020 and compiled the 2022 budget.

Looking Ahead to 2022:
The committee will continue to fulfill its duties to perform the annual financial review and create the budget for 2023.

The committee continues to seek additional committee members. Please contact any of the committee members about joining.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

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 2022: As needed

Committee Members: Cheryl Lawson (chair), Brenda Witherspoon (special projects; compensation), Stephanie Fox (finance liaison)

Major Accomplishments:
Accepted the resignation of the Religious Educator, Jamila Johnson, March 2021.
Sought out an external consultant with HR expertise to be engaged by the Board for advising on personnel matters and updates to the employee handbook, July 2021.

Collaborated with the Minister to develop the job description for Consulting Religious Educator.

Collaborated with the Minister in the hiring process to name Janelle Carlson as Consulting Religious Educator, July 26, 2021 to January 31, 2022. Carlson has since extended her service to June 30, 2022.

Recommended staff salaries for 2022.

Looking Ahead to 2022:
Hire a religious educator.

Submit final revisions of the employee handbook to the Board for approval.

FROM THE OUTREACH CLUSTER

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

PARTNER CHURCH COMMITTEE

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 2022: TBD

No report submitted.

FROM THE PROGRAM CLUSTER

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 2022: As needed

No report submitted.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Contact: recommittee@uufames.org

Mission: The Religious Education (RE) Committee works with the religious education staff to nurture and educate our children and youth, helping them to understand Unitarian Universalism, themselves, and the world.

Meeting Time for 2022: Monthly, third Thursday at 7:00 pm via Zoom

No report submitted.

SUNDAY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Contact: sundayprograms@uufames.org

Mission: The Sunday Services 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 2022: Second Saturday of each month, 10:00-11:30 via Zoom

Committee Members: Sarah Carlson, Jan Cook, Kitty Fisher, Ralph Gandy, Dan Haug, Amy Slagell (chair), Nichole Ose and Jane Runneals served on the
committee for part of the year. Sam Wormley regularly supports the committee by maintaining historical records online.

Major Accomplishments:
- The SSC supported the minister in his work developing our thematic ministry throughout the year, as also supported by Soul Matters resources. From January to June, the service themes this year included: Imagination, Beloved Community, Commitment, Becoming, Story, and Play. This fall, the themes have been Embracing Possibility, Holding History, and Opening to Joy.
- From July to early September, the SSC worked with a collaborative of UU congregations around the Midwest to share services. Members of the SSC were able to work with elements of recorded materials put together by other congregations to create a service for the UUFA. This collaborative gave all UUFA members the opportunity to hear music, readings and messages developed by other congregations and ministers. It also allowed our minister and SSC members to take a break from creating new service content for a few weeks. Instead, we could focus on developing our technology tools and learning more about integrating live and recorded elements for online services. Kent took the lead on developing the UUFA service that was shared with the collaborative for Sunday, August 29.
- During the month of October 2021, the SSC partnered with the UUFA 75th anniversary taskforce to support the creation of five great services exploring different aspects of the history of the UUFA.
- Members of the committee created or shepherded about a dozen Sunday services during 2021.
  - Compared to 2020, this past year some members of the committee were now able to run a fully online service with Bradley or Kent maintaining our healthy Zoom connection.
  - The shift to hybrid services this fall presented a new learning curve for the SSC and for the members of the amazing technology team.

Looking Ahead to 2022:
The SSC will continue to further its mission and that of the UUFA. We are committed to developing new capacities and new approaches to help our virtual and in-person experiences be more engaging and meaningful. We hope to work again with other UU congregations to develop some summer services. We would be happy to hear from members with an interest in contributing to the work of the Sunday Services Committee.

Additional Narrative:
The committee is grateful for Reverend McKusick, Bradley Duckstein, Sam Ose and all of those engaged in providing expertise and learning the technology needed to allow us to return to in-person services on Sunday mornings while keeping connected with those joining through Zoom. We have all learned a great deal about online tools, connection speeds and bandwidth,
as well as about the role of Sunday services in supporting a sense of connectedness among members.

The committee appreciates the continuing engagement of members of the UUFA in our hybrid Sunday Services. This fall, we have had as many as 53 zoom connections and as many as 30 people attend in person. We look forward to a day when we can once again create live music together and still allow those who are unable to travel or gather on a Sunday morning to participate.

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 2022: 4th Wednesday each month, 7:00pm

No report submitted.

FROM 2021 TASKFORCES

The UUFA roof replacement project is the culmination of years of study and planning. It is now complete and financing for the cost of all improvements is in place. The different roof segments on the Fellowship building dated from the construction of the original building and the several additions/modifications. There has never been a comprehensive repair or replacement project undertaken during the life of the building, until this year.

The following timeline provides a perspective on how we got to the point at which we are now:

2012-2020  It was recognized that some segments of the roof dated from the original construction of the building and subsequent additions completed over the years. There had never been a comprehensive repair or replacement project, and there was a recognized need for something to be done. Periodic discussions about possible roof projects reinforced the needs but did not result in a project moving forward.

May 2020  A taskforce was formed to come up with a plan for repair or replacement of the roof. Members were Danelda Allen, Bradley Duckstein, Dave Fox, Larry Koehrsen, and Craig Mushel. It was the
consensus of this group that a comprehensive professional evaluation of the roof was the necessary first step.

June 2020  An engineering consultant, Shive-Hattery Engineers, was hired to do this evaluation.

Aug 2020  The consultant provided a “Roof Management Plan” that outlined several alternatives but recommended that the entire roof structure be replaced immediately or over the next few years.

Dec 2020  Plans and specifications were prepared by Shive-Hattery and reviewed by the taskforce. The UUFA Board of Directors authorized solicitation of bids for the project.

Feb 2021  Board authorized, and committee initiated, a capital campaign to fund as much roof replacement cost as possible. The response from the membership exceeded expectations and provided clear direction on how best to move forward. A complete financial summary is included below.

Feb 2021  Four bids were received for roof replacement. We had the option of doing half of the work now and half in a few years or doing the entire project now. Based on the positive results of the capital campaign, the Board authorized signing a contract with Brockway Mechanical and Roofing for replacing the entire roof at one time.

Mar 2021  Improvements were being planned for the audio/video system at the Fellowship. It was decided that the cost of these improvements could be a part of the overall financing package for the roof project.

April 2021  Roof replacement construction initiated.

Oct 2021  Roof contract and audio/video improvements completed.
Financial Summary
(as of October 31, 2021)

Project Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction/engineering expense</td>
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<tr>
<td>Projected A/V expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$348,888</strong></td>
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Funding Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member Support</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received to date</td>
<td>$200,281</td>
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<tr>
<td>Receivable (2021, 2022, 2023)</td>
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<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Endowment Support*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Improvements Fund (2020)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Improvements/Endowment A&amp;D approved (2021)</td>
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<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
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<td>Operating Fund Support</td>
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<td>Designated Funds (2020)</td>
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<td>Designated Funds (2021)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>$13,950</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total funding sources</strong></td>
<td><strong>$348,888</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Additional interim financing of $54,513 was taken from the Endowment Fund and will be repaid as pledges are fulfilled in 2022 & 2023.

75TH ANNIVERSARY TASKFORCE

This taskforce grew out of one of the Board’s goals for this year, which was to celebrate the UUFA’s 75th anniversary. Board member Jane Runneals volunteered to enlist members of the congregation to be on the taskforce and chaired it until she had to step down in August. Jamie Gurganus then became the chair.

Beginning on May 17, we met monthly via Zoom up until August, when we started meeting every other week. After much brainstorming the first two meetings, it was determined that one event would not allow us to cover 75 years of incredible history in our congregation. A plan was put in place to designate the five Sundays in October for our 75th anniversary celebration. Due to ongoing COVID restrictions, we have put off a social gathering (i.e. party) until sometime in the spring of 2022, when we hope it is safe to gather again.
In addition to the Sunday services, we had a logo designed to be used for memorabilia and for the banner that is proudly displayed on the front of the lower level (East side) of our building. Jamie Gurganus and Ginny Huntington agreed to be the “memorabilia team.” Jamie researched numerous branding businesses and recommended a locally-owned business called B5 Branding. Jamie and Ginny worked with this business to create an online store that offered t-shirts, sweatshirts, tote bags and a coffee mug to those in the congregation who wished to purchase these items.

Below are descriptions of each of the Sunday services and those involved with each one.

October 3: Once Upon a Time
The committee of Sarah Carlson, Susan Franzen, Mary Richards, and Jane Vallier were tasked with presenting the history of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames over its first seventy-five years. We chose as a general framework the importance of myth and origin stories in keeping present day members of a group connected to its history, its heroes, and its sense of ongoing purpose. We incorporated four songs well known and generally beloved by the congregation, and also used a segment from a UUFA program celebrating a Fellowship birthday from more than 35 years ago. We emphasized the age of our Fellowship as compared to important UUA developments, and featured a more in-depth story of the development of the Fellowship’s role in community acceptance of and support for differently gendered persons. Special thanks to Stu and Ginny Huntington, who helped present some of the Fellowship’s hero stories in a conversational framework.

October 10: Music and Memories
Rev. Kent McKusick, Jamie Gurganus and Kitty Fisher planned this service. Our goal was to capture the gift of music that members of our congregation bring to us on Sunday mornings, whether as solo performances or as part of the Fellowship Voices. The opening words for the chalice lighting began with words from the 2011 Ministerial Search packet that read, “Music at the UUFA is not just an element to work into a Sunday service. It is an expression of who we are and what we believe, not just in lyrics or harmonies but in the participatory way we bring music to life.” We heard Reggie Greenlaw sing “Spirit of Life” and used a February 2020 recording of our children’s choir singing with the Fellowship Voices for the Time for all Ages. Our former and
long-time accompanist Sue Haug was welcomed back as our first live performance in Fellowship Hall since March 2020. Sue and Sam Wormley gave reflections from their years of being involved in music at the Fellowship. We heard several readings about the power of music and listened to some of our most memorable Fellowship Voices recordings.

**October 17: Hopes and Dreams: From a Cardboard Box to a Home that Inspires**
The goal of this service was to review the hopes and dreams that brought about the creation of our UUFA building and to appreciate its unique construction and our loving use of the space as our religious home.

Ginny Huntington and Dave Fox discussed and showed photos to illustrate the planning and construction of our building. Dave focused on the construction history of additions and property acquisition, as well as the financial generosity of members throughout our history. He highlighted the recent funding that eliminated mortgage debt, built the RE and administrative wing, improved drainage and flood recovery, and enabled a complete roof replacement. Ginny focused on the planning process, and the use of our building for meaningful activities and events.

Amy Slagell led the congregation in a guided meditation focused on our personal relationship with the building in the landscape and history of this part of Iowa.

This service celebrated not only the building but community, the spirit of generosity, and our reasons for gathering.

**October 24: 75 Years of Religious Education at the Fellowship**
The goal of this service was to convey a sense of the importance of religious education at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames and to give some examples of RE programming, past and present.

Highlights of the service included reflections by Rev. Sarah Richards, Dan Haug, and Ann Richards, D.R.E., which demonstrated the impact that the RE program has had on the lives of participants through many decades. Musical offerings were given by Kalyn Schmidt, Amelia Todd, and Leif Haug, and comments heard by children responding to "A Church is..." Other important elements of the service included opening words written and read by Dan Haug and Maya Hayslett, some images from the RE classes currently being held at Emma McCarthy Lee Park, a reading by Vivian and Mike Todd, and a closing responsive reading by Rev. Sarah Richards and her mother, Mary Richards.

Here is a list of those not mentioned above who assisted in the preparation and presentation of this service: Rev. Kent McKusick, Janelle Carlson, Bradley Duckstein, Sam Ose, and Stu Huntington.
October 31: Building a New Way Together
This was the concluding Sunday of our 75th anniversary celebration, with a look toward the future of the UUFA. Sue Koehrsen, with help from Ralph Gandy, coordinated the planning and Rev. Kent McKusick prepared the recorded portions and conducted the service. Jean Eells and Ralph were readers. Our reflections were presented in three parts: 1) video excerpts from a panel discussion by national UU leaders at the 150th Anniversary of UU Ann Arbor on “our Dawning Future”; 2) a recap by Sue Koehrsen of UUFA history and the qualities we bring to our future in an inevitably changing dynamic; 3) a sharing by Mike Francom of highlights from the congregational survey, especially those that will inform our plans for the future. The service was a strong conclusion to an inspiring month reliving the history of our congregation.

FROM AFFINITY GROUPS

AMES CLIMATE ACTION TEAM

The Ames Climate Action Team is an ecumenical group started by the UUFA in September 2018. ACAT is committed to advocating for a local climate action plan that prioritizes mitigation, adaptation, resilience, and justice.

Vision: A resilient, inclusive, equitable, and vibrant future for all people in the Ames, Iowa State University, and Story County community.

Mission: Supporting action centered in social justice at the city, county, state, and national levels to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Stay Updated on Our Work:
Our Website: https://www.amesclimateaction.org
ACAT’s Facebook Page
Public Google Drive (past minutes, resources, etc.)

WORKING GROUP 1:
The ACAT small group 1 was tasked with creating lines of communication with the mayor and city council of Ames, because that is the body that will make decisions about our community approach to the climate crisis. We decided upon a strategy of individual Zoom meetings with each person to discover their positions. We quickly discovered that there were many complications that we had not originally been aware of, and we widened our field of contacts to include city staff, county supervisors and staff, representatives of the construction industry, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Iowa Department of Transportation. In all, we have conducted these weekly conversations with 28 people, some twice, and feel we have laid a positive groundwork for a relationship with key players in the local climate action process.
WORKING GROUP 2:

Formed and facilitated a teen group called Youth Climate Action Team (YCAT).

Scheduled and managed YCAT educational programming for youth ages 13-15 related to climate change during the spring of 2021.

Helped organize and coordinate student interest projects in collaboration with ISU graduate student mentor Vivian M. Cook and ISU Community and Regional Planning Professor Neha Mehrotra so that YCAT students could present their projects on April 20, 2021, as part of the “Ignite Innovation Showcase at Iowa State University: Interdisciplinary Innovation, Arts, Environment, and Sustainability” for the program on “Ames Youth Arts and Environmental Communication” https://youtu.be/H-BDmfd5OvQ and https://www.regcytes.extension.iastate.edu/innovate/

Collaborated with diverse stakeholders such as Iowa State University students, staff and faculty, local government officials, community leaders, and various non-profit organizations in Ames.

Helped coordinate an April 14, 2021, Ames Public Library virtual panel discussion: “Climate Action Planning—What Ames Can Learn from Neighbors in Des Moines, Iowa City, & Linn County”. Expanded outreach and marketing efforts by collaborating with partners at Iowa State University and Ames High School. https://youtu.be/zDbAFBus024

Recruited individuals to apply to the Ames Climate Action Plan Supplemental Input Committee.

Encouraged attendance at ISU’s 2021 Fall Theater Kick-off of the Climate Change Theatre Action (CCTA) performance series and recruited ACAT volunteers for tabling at CCTA performances at Farmers Market, ISU, and APL to expand understanding of the upcoming CAP and gather signatures for our campaign.

Facilitated YCAT project presentations at the CCTA event at APL on October 3, 2021.

Collaborated with a YCAT student to initiate creating the new ACAT website and logo.

Shared information regularly throughout 2021 about regional climate-related events, engagement opportunities, and ACAT meeting schedules with ACAT members.

Shared information about other projects that ACAT members are involved in, such as the Interfaith Prayer Service and Celebration of Creation at St. Cecelia’s on October 3, 2021; the City of Ames study to evaluate options for
changing the waste hauling system in Ames; the Ames High Students work to advocate for recycling at AHS; Bob Haug’s study and presentation of the City of Ames’ Waste-to-Energy system; and the City of Ames study to evaluate options for upgrading the Waste-to-Energy system in Ames.

WORKING GROUP 4/ORGANIZING TEAM:

Beginning in March, researched and developed a rationale for GHG reduction goals for ACAT to endorse.

Beginning in September, designed and implemented a campaign to persuade the City Council to adopt the aggressive, aspirational carbon emissions reduction goal identified by the Ames Climate Action Team for the CAP (climate action plan). Developed an informational, interactive website as part of the effort.

On October 25th, through coordination with ISU Climate Reality, and Ames High School CAUSE (Citizens Actualizing and Understanding Sustainable Environments), we helped to host & participate in a public rally outside City Hall, in the Free Speech Zone. Our messaging and comments in the CAP Town Hall that followed the rally put the 2030 goal on the public record as the dominant message of the town hall. Our comments also resulted in a more expanded consultant survey method and an allowance for public questions that had been previously missing from the process.

To date, we have signed on twenty-five businesses and organizations, and 150 individuals. By working with the ISU’s Climate Change Theater Action, we’ve also obtained another 15 pages of supporting signatures.

Looking Ahead to 2022:

WORKING GROUP 1: Continue to follow up with city council members and start creating connections between that city government and county and school board officials.

WORKING GROUP 2: We will continue to share information regularly about regional and local climate-related events and engagement opportunities with ACAT members.

The current goal for Working Group 2: organize and promote educational opportunities that support individual and collective action in developing the Ames Climate Action Plan (CAP).

As the Ames Climate Action Plan is expected to be completed with consultants by October 2022, a large part of our activities will likely be focused on promoting public engagement in this process.
Thank you for the opportunity to recognize the need to complete our 2022 Work Plan and a reevaluation of our 2022 Goals.

WORKING GROUP 4/ORGANIZING TEAM: Immediately, we will continue to push for an informed, aggressive climate action goal for Ames, up to the December 21st decision deadline.

After that, we will re-strategize with the other ACAT working groups, and likely shift our focus to engagement and education efforts that encourage robust public participation in developing the actions and activities of the CAP.

BUDDHISM STUDY GROUP

This group focuses on studying Buddhist philosophy and practices from multiple Buddhist traditions.

Meeting Time for 2022: 2nd/4th Sundays, 4:30-6:00 pm, hybrid

2021 Remarks:

- We continued meeting and studying together, despite the pandemic. In late October, we began utilizing the Fellowship’s multi-platform capabilities.

RECORDER CONSORT

The recorder consort gathers to provide artistic challenge and camaraderie for its members and to provide recorder music for Sunday services.

Meeting Time for 2022: Thursdays, 2:00 pm in Fellowship Hall

2021 Remarks:

We continued to learn new music and improve our performance of music from past years. We were able to practice in safe outdoor spaces during clement weather before the UUFA was open for us to practice there. We seek to try new genres of music to fulfill requests from members for a variety of music. Our latest variety is music from South America, which requires different playing styles.

Each year except for 2020, we have played at Reiman Gardens near the conservatory during their special evening hours around the holidays. We will enjoy playing again in 2021, this year during the Christmas light show.
Looking Ahead to 2022:

We will continue to welcome both UUFA members and those from beyond our congregation, always stretching our musical capacities and building important human connections.

**SKADBERG SCIENCE CIRCLE**

The Science Circle was started by Fritz Franzen & Sam Wormley more than 17 years ago. Meeting in the home of Susan and Fritz Franzen, we began watching and discussing Jacob Bronowski’s “The Ascent of Man” PBS series. When member Marv Skadberg passed, the group was renamed in his honor. The group is open to all wishing to discuss science topics.

**Meeting Time for 2022:** 2nd/4th Tuesdays, 7:00-9:00 pm via Zoom

**2021 Remarks:**

Recently, the Skadberg Science Circle has spawned:

- 2016: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Iowa State class: “Communicating Science”
- 2019: KHOI Community Radio weekly program: “Science Bytes”
- 2021: OLLI class: “Science in the News”
- 2022: OLLI (at Drake University) class: “Science in the News”

Since the pandemic began, the circle has met virtually, allowing participants to share printed articles, images, and short science videos with excellent sound and clarity. Should you wish to receive curated science articles and participate in discussion meetings, ask the office to add your name to our email list!

**WOMEN IN THE ROUND**

To provide a choral experience for women and friends of the UUFA. During non-COVID times we seek to find and learn music that may fit into Sunday services about once a month.

**Meeting Time for 2022:** Wednesdays, 7:00 pm in Channing/Barton

**2021 Remarks:**

We recorded music for the service in October that was focused on the history of music at the UUFA. Our major accomplishment for the past year, however, was providing a weekly time for group sharing and support. We had a sharing theme each week and enjoyed over two hours of true
connection by Zoom. That was particularly valuable during COVID, with several members who are widows or otherwise lacking in personal support.

Looking Ahead to 2022:

As COVID settles down and we are able to sing for services at the UUFA, we plan to once again provide music regularly.

WOMEN OF WISDOM

Women of Wisdom (WOW) is a place where women age 55 and older can gather to exchange ideas, stay in touch, and provide support to each other. Some like to think of it as a place to sift wisdom from our everyday experiences. Note: this is not a professional support group.

Meeting Time for 2022: Mondays 3:30-5:00 (3rd Monday is hybrid; other weeks via Zoom)

2021 Remarks:

During the COVID shutdown, we successfully transferred from in-person meetings to zoom and later hybrid formats. We also decided to supplement our regular third-Monday meetings with weekly “check-ins.” For some people who were extremely isolated or going through rough times, we were a major contact point.

In the past year, Lynne Van Valin, who had led the group for a number of years, decided it was time to step down from that role, although she is still an active member. Thanks to Lynne for being such a caring, reliable leader! Nancy Tepper has since moved into that role. We have some 25 women on our email list (after people were invited to be taken off the list if no longer interested). We have about 15 who come on a frequent basis, with an average attendance of 8-10. New members are welcome at any time. Confidentiality is stressed, as well as respect within the group.

Looking Ahead to 2022:

We plan to continue meeting weekly as described above for the foreseeable future. From time to time we focus on a specific topic. New members are welcome!
This group meets to engender community among thoughtful women readers who enjoy discussing topics elicited by literary works. Our goal is to share ideas and to have fun talking about the ideas expressed.

Meeting Time for 2022: 1st Mondays (September-June); 7:00 pm via hybrid

2021 Remarks:

We met via Zoom for most of the year and were delighted that some members who moved away from Ames were able to join us. We started hybrid Zoom and in-person meetings in October. Our average attendance is 10-12 people.

Our reading list for 2021:

- January 6: Acevedo, Elizabeth: *The Poet X*
- February 3: Le Guin, Ursula: *No Time to Spare: Thinking about What Matters*
- March 3: Munro, Alice: *Dear Life: Stories*
- April 6: Stark, Peter Astoria: *Astor & Jefferson’s Lost Pacific Empire: A Tale of Ambition & Survival on the Early American Frontier*
- May 4: Gottlieb, Lori: *Maybe You Should Talk to Someone: A Therapist, Her Therapist & Their Lives Revealed*
- June 1: Marsh, Henry: *Admissions: Life as a Brain Surgeon*
- October 4: Toews, Miriam: *Women Talking*
- November 1: See, Lisa: *Peony in Love*
- December 6: Backman, Fredrik: *Anxious People*

Looking Ahead to 2022:

We are the longest-running affinity group at the UUFA and intend to continue in the future. We are an open group and welcome people to join us regularly or on a drop-in basis.