Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames

Annual Report to the Congregation 2022

Presented at the Annual Meeting, December 11, 2022
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames

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

Board of Directors:
board@uufames.org

Interim Minister:
Rev. A.J. Galazen
515.292.8929 | rev.A.J@uufames.org

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

www.uufames.org
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!

**2022 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!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title</strong></th>
<th><strong>Member</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Jamie Gurganus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Christopher Chase</td>
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<tr>
<td>Past President</td>
<td>Sarah Carlson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretary-Treasurer</td>
<td>Mike Francom</td>
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<td>Member at large, through 2022</td>
<td>David Brenner</td>
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<td>Member at large, through 2022</td>
<td>Sam Ose</td>
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<td>Member at large, through 2022</td>
<td>Nichole Olson</td>
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<td>Member at large, through 2022</td>
<td>Keary Saul</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister, ex officio (through June 30)</td>
<td>Rev. Kent C. McKusick</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interim Minister, ex officio (st. August 1)</td>
<td>Rev. A.J. Galazen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cong. Admin., ex officio</td>
<td>Bradley Duckstein</td>
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I arrived in Ames in August, 2022 as your new Interim Minister, your temporary spiritual guide for the 2-year period preparing for the calling of your next settled minister. Part of my job is to remind you of my temporary status. This reminder is for both you and me! A good image of my usefulness is acting as a kind of “stranger in the balcony.” You have made me feel very welcome, and for that I am grateful. But if I grow too comfortable in my position, I might believe that I will remain in Ames forever! (Which is against the rules, by the way.)

Although I’ve only been with you for four months, we’ve already accomplished a great deal. I’ve met weekly with your President, Jamie Gurganus, who is helping me find my bearings around this Fellowship. We’ve commissioned your Transition Team, a group of three dedicated members who meet with me monthly to set goals, make priorities, and communicate with the Board and the congregation about the ongoing interim process. We’ve already worked on the goal of rethinking the way that new members are welcomed and involved in the Fellowship.

The Rev. Sharon Dittmar from the UUA staff facilitated a well-attended Friday evening Town Hall to “jump start” the process of gathering comments on the hopes, fears and history of the Fellowship. Rev. Sharon then guided the Board on a retreat, and she remains in contact with us as we continue our work together. I meet with several groups of ministers each month to utilize their collective experience, and bring their suggestions back to this congregation.

I’ve had the pleasure of working closely with Amy Slagell and the Sunday Services Committee, planning and speaking at our weekly services. Each congregation has its own methods and customs, and it’s not my job to tell you how to do Sunday morning! One of my favorite mottos is “Worship is the work of the people,” and I’ve enjoyed creating services in cooperation with the many speakers, musicians, technicians, artists and leaders of this Fellowship. There is always room for new ideas and new participants to help out, particularly if you feel strongly about a subject!

I’m available to meet with people individually, and in groups. I love getting together both for “business” and casual gatherings. Oftentimes we can spark a new project without even knowing it, engaging a passing conversation! This is a big part of my theology: when we are intentional, every moment is “holy now,” as the songwriter Peter Mayer reminds us.

Your Congregational Administrator, Bradley Duckstein, has been instrumental in making my first few months proceed so smoothly. Transition time is never easy, but Bradley’s dedication to this Fellowship has gone beyond simply doing a great job. His connections to this community exemplify the important values we hold dear: caring for each other and striving for justice. We’re very
lucky to have Rylee, Gabby and Eva working to support the Religious
Education program. It’s great when students can use their talents and
flexibility in ways that benefit others. I would also like to thank the many
volunteers who work behind the scenes, and I look forward to our next year
together, as we continue living into our vision for the future.

In fellowship,

Rev. A.J. Galazen

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The 2022 year began with many, if not all, of us thinking the worst of the
COVID pandemic was behind us. Members, friends, and visitors were able to
see others in person for Sunday programs, committee meetings, and other
events. Unfortunately, the infection rate kept increasing, and the decision
was made (in alignment with the developed CDC guidelines) to close the
Fellowship to in-person activities on January 10. It wasn’t until March 7 that
we reopened our doors. And on May 15, we celebrated when we were finally
able to sing together and, most importantly, serve coffee again on Sunday
mornings!

On Saturday, January 28, the Board held its annual retreat where we spent
time getting to know each other, writing our covenant and developing our
goals for the year. Liaisons were also selected for our many committees, and
work continues toward rejuvenating/revitalizing those that the pandemic put
on hold. One of our goals was to begin creating action steps for our
congregation as a result of adopting the 8th Principle at the annual meeting in
December 2021. To facilitate this first step, board meetings shifted to the
third Wednesday of the month, to allow participation in the national 8th
Principle UU Learning Circle.

Every beginning has an end and every end is a new beginning.”
-Santosh Kalwar

Only one month into my presidency, our settled minister, Rev. Kent McKusick,
announced that he would be retiring on June 30. The Board and I received a
lot of support from the UUA Transitions office and from our MidAmerica
Region Congregational Life liaison, Rev. Sharon Dittmar. Together, we were
able to navigate into the next phase of congregational life: interim work. The
first step was to form an Interim Search Committee, and I want to thank
Board members Christopher Chase, Keary Saul and Nichole Olson for
volunteering to serve on the committee with me. We knew that there was a shortage of interim ministers, so we worked hard in March and April on putting together the best Congregational Record possible. We were pleased when we were given the names of four candidates, and we scheduled interviews with three of them. After the interviews, we were thrilled to have a mutual “Yes” with the Rev. A.J. Galazen and to offer him the job as our interim minister for the next two years, starting August 1, 2022.

We also said goodbye to Janelle Carlson, our Consulting Religious Educator on June 30. Janelle worked with the RE Committee and Kent to draft a new job description for the Religious Educator position, and she strongly advocated for making the position full-time. The candidate pool is small nationwide, and while we had fruitful conversations with two quality candidates, we still do not have anyone hired. The search is currently on hold, so that the RE Committee could focus on putting together this year’s programming, which began on September 11. As I write this report in November, I’m pleased to know that our children are still provided excellent and fun-filled educational Sunday morning experiences, even in the absence of a full-time staff member. Many thanks to the RE Committee, our volunteer teachers, RE Helper Rylee Matthews, and Nursery Lead Gabby Casini for all your efforts!

In April, the caring and generous nature of our congregation came through in remarkable ways. We received a letter from Rev. Lajos Lorinczi, minister of our partner church in Romania, sharing the struggles they were having keeping their food program going. Higher costs of living and increased numbers of Ukrainian refugees significantly stressed their system, just as they were beginning to recover from the pandemic. The response from our congregation was inspiring, raising $10,450 in additional support of their programs. We really are a caring community, and this gift made a significant difference for many Romanian and Ukrainian lives.

As they say, “Many hands make for light work,” and we needed as many hands as possible for the April 23 chair renewal party. After two years of being cooped up in a closet, our chairs were in great need of some TLC. Many thanks to the 15 volunteers who showed up on a Saturday morning to clean and repair approximately nearly 100 chairs. And, they were done just in time for the April 30th memorial service for Joanna Courteau. This was the first memorial service that Kent and the Caring Network held at the Fellowship since March 2020.

After months of the Board putting its goals aside while four members worked on the search for an interim minister, we were able to discuss the progress on our goals at the May meeting. We did accomplish one goal that gave us cause for great celebration—the revised Employee Handbook was complete, after several years of revisions and being put “on the back burner.” This monumental task could not have been accomplished without the assistance
of our lone and loyal Personnel committee member, Cheryl Lawson, who helped Bradley and me compile all of the recommended edits and additions to the handbook from the UUA and our hired human resources consultant.

On June 3-5, Rev. Kent and I attended the Jubilee Three Antiracism Training, an online program offered by Paula Cole Jones through the UUA’s 8th Principle Facebook Learning Group. The workshop centered on three themes: racism, classism, and white privilege. For years, Paula believed that our attention needed to be on racism as the only way to eliminate racism. Now she is certain that in order to eliminate both racism and classism, our work needs to be focused on understanding the history and culture of white privilege as embodied in our own individual lives and the lives of our institutions, including Unitarian Universalism. In Kent’s words, “It was a rare experience to have deep personal learning at the level I experienced in this workshop. It was extraordinary to be led into a deep reflection of the cultural context that I was born into without choice or contribution to that context. We are all at a different social context and location that “raised us” in a culture of white privilege and taught us how to navigate in that culture. The experience triggered old memories that were both enlightening and troublesome. This personal timeline was nurtured throughout the workshop and is a valuable tool that will serve me as I continue to work on understanding the culture of white privilege and how I might interrupt systems of oppression.” The work of dismantling the oppression of white privilege in ourselves and our institutions is embraced by every part of the UUFA mission: Growing spiritually. Creating community. Striving for justice. Learning to love.

On June 18, I and several other board members attended a day-long, online workshop presented by the UUA Transitions Office entitled How to Manage a Well-Executed Ministerial Search. It was an excellent workshop that gave a detailed timeline for the search process along with several valuable resources for congregational leaders.

On June 19, Rev. Kent gave his last service, both to this congregation and of his ministry. He brought us back to his first service at the Fellowship on August 25, 2012 as he reflected back over his time with us. His final weekly bulletin message that week closed with the following words that he wrote for his installation on October 20, 2013:

In the name of all that is holy,  
May the connections between us, inspire and sustain us.  
May the flame of life within us and amongst us  
Be a sacred reminder that we are all called to serve,  
To grow, and to love as we continue this journey of transformation.

On June 26, we held a retirement celebration for Kent that was the largest gathering assembled at the Fellowship since closing in March 2020. We
presented Kent with a memory book filled with contributions from congregants, a one-year subscription to the Drift Away Coffee Club, and the Spirit of Life wall hanging from Room 3 that was crafted by our Conscientious Crafters in honor of his installation. Thanks to Rilla Fox for stepping up to organize this very memorable morning for Kent.

Although the Board did not meet in July, we made a few decisions over email. One of those decisions was the appointment of Rev. A.J.’s Transition Team. I had the pleasure of having lunch with A.J. when he stopped in Ames on his way to Wisconsin from his last appointment in Texas. He asked me to assemble his Transition Team, so they were ready to begin working with him in August. I am grateful to Sarah Carlson, Cindy Scholten and Chris McClure who all agreed to serve on this important, two-year committee.

Rev. A.J. began his time with us on August 3. Many thanks to Bradley and Janelle for spending a week in the beginning of July organizing, cleaning, painting and redecorating the minister’s office in preparation for his arrival. I enjoy my weekly, Monday afternoon meetings with A.J. where he and I make sure we are all on the same page about our next steps as we move through these next two years together.

Our first board meeting with Rev. A.J. was in August, and it was packed! We established a bylaws review taskforce, in preparation for the upcoming ministerial search. We approved the Youth Advisor job description, in anticipation of at least a dozen teens interested in youth group this year. At that point in the search for our next religious educator, it was becoming clear that the focus of our limited volunteer resources needed to shift. Sam Ose, who has dualed as a board member and RE Committee chair these past two years, worked with Rev. A.J. to develop two new staff positions that would help fill the gap with current staff: RE Helper and Nursery Lead. We made the transition just in time for RE kickoff, and we’re so pleased with the work and growth we’ve seen from Rylee Matthews and Gabby Casini, our childcare providers that filled the new roles respectively. We also approved the hiring of Hoffman Construction for sidewalk and step repair that was completed in October. Rev. A.J. discussed the importance of bringing back the Committee on Shared Ministry and asked me to find three members of the congregation to serve on it. I want to thank Jonah Powell, Ronni Kahn and Jan Vine for agreeing to serve on this committee.

Rev. A.J. and I planned for the Board to meet with our MidAmerica Congregational Life staff, the Rev. Sharon Dittmar in early September for an Interim Start-up Workshop, intended to give the Board and the congregation an overview of the work we will do over the two-year interim period. We enjoyed having Sharon visit our congregation in person for the first time. We began on a Friday evening with a town hall meeting, where we talked about our congregational history, origins, and the good and not-so-good about our
time with each of our three called ministers. Additionally, Sharon had us share our hopes and fears during this transition time:

Hopes for the Interim Period

- Reestablish way of being in community after COVID
- Hit stride with multiple ways of being (pre-COVID and COVID/post)
- Have FUN!
- Look at structures (what is working/not with committees/taskforces; how to work with minister; communication & coordination)
- Membership – getting new members interested in us
- Bring those that have “fallen away” back in
- Recreate sense of community
- Develop clarity between professional & volunteer responsibilities
- Reach out to community – marketing & communications
- Improve/increase internal communications about Fellowship offerings
- Integrate Zoom presence in community and retain it
- Integrate affinity groups into worship & official programming
- Reestablish conflict resolution group/committee
- Leadership development
- Focus on internal community first year, external focus second year
- Address unsustainable funding – few people pledge a lot
- Hire needed staff to support programs
- 8th Principle passage
- Reinvigorate music program
- Reinvigorate/stay connected to Partner Church
- Reestablish potlucks
- Outreach to college
- Outreach to LGBTQIA+
- Figure out how to fill staff positions – RE & Membership
- Return of young families

Fears for the Interim Period

- Being spread too thin / working too hard
- Unrealistic expectations
- Prevent in-person gatherings from splitting the Fellowship into two congregations – in-person & online
- Lose curiosity/fun and become negative – won’t move forward
- Absolutism – people only interested in their opinion/way
- Not enough young people
- Bradley won’t be available to do all the things
- Social activism not balanced with other areas of Fellowship life
- Losing the space to develop our individual spiritualities
• Unused facility during the week

On Saturday, Sharon led an all-day work session with the Board. We reviewed the interim minister contract, so we understood the goals and approach of the interim period. We also looked at our committee structure and staffing for a congregation of our size, discussed current and necessary staffing to attract ministers, and developed a list of goals for the Board to work on during our transition time (develop several new policies, review committee descriptions, practice term limits for committee chairs, review job descriptions).

On September 11, the wonderful sound of our children joining us on Sunday mornings began! Every week, we have more and more new families joining us, as well as other visitors. The RE Committee, chaired by Sam Ose, needs to be recognized for its outstanding work to give our children and youth strong programming in the absence of a Religious Educator. We continue our efforts to hire a full-time staff person, but there is a national shortage of educators; many of our neighboring congregations (including Des Moines and Iowa City) are also currently searching.

Now that the congregation is fully regathered after the pandemic, it is time for volunteers to once again step forward to support the mission and vision of the Fellowship. One of the first committees that the Transition Team has focused its efforts on is membership, and they held a membership exploration session for the first time in two years on October 29, and we welcomed 10 new members on November 13. And with Sunday services being live-streamed every week, we continue to be in need of more volunteers on the tech team. Thanks to Donald Lewis and Fritz Keinert for joining Dan Haug, Sam Ose and Mary Richards, so that Bradley doesn’t have to fill in as often (as much as we like his presence, he deserves his weekends off from work!). And, of course, we continue to regularly seek volunteers for coffee fellowship and greeting visitors at the welcome table. There are many ways to contribute your time and talent; these are just a few examples.

Rev. A.J. and I attended a workshop on October 5 sponsored by the Association of Interim Ministers. Dan Hotchkiss, author of Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership was the event speaker and shared his process for guiding congregations into the future. It was a very good workshop that gave us some good ideas for future Board and committee work.

The Fellowship is the place to be on Wednesday nights! I visited with the family night gathering before heading upstairs for the October Board meeting. It was great to see so many parents and their children sharing a nice meal before they enjoyed an evening of fun and games. Youth Group also meets most Wednesday nights. I encourage everyone to consider
attending a Wednesday evening for some good food and fellowship with our younger families and their children.

And finally, it’s worth noting the long and challenging, yet good, discussions the board had just before the issuing of this report:

- We discussed the best platform for holding the annual meeting in the midst of a forever-changed congregation. The pandemic brought technology and home-broadcasting to our doorstep, and while most have come back to the Fellowship building, many are still utilizing this service heartily. It was decided that multi-platform, complete with its challenges, would at least allow the Fellowship to remain open in what has become quite a busy place on Sundays.
- Larry Koehrsen from the endowment taskforce led a discussion on the changes to the Endowment Enabling Document and bylaws. These changes are important to creating a strong and useful endowment for the Fellowship’s future, and they require a super quorum vote of approval, so please plan to attend the annual meeting on December 11.
- Claus Niesen, Finance Committee chair, and Mike Francom, Secretary-Treasurer, walked us through the proposed 2023 operating budget. Thanks to those who have already submitted their pledges (contact the office if you have yet to do so – it’s never too late!), and to those who have joined the many sustaining givers or increased their pledge amounts for next year.

We began the October Board meeting by lighting our chalice with the following words by Rev. Erik Walker Wikstrom that I think capture the essence of why all of us choose to serve on the Board and other committees:

As we approach our agenda  
let us remember that we are doing the work of the Fellowship.  
When we do the work of this Fellowship, we touch lives.  
When we touch lives, we change the world.  
May this chalice flame we now kindle  
remind us throughout our meeting  
of our ministry and our mission.

I’ll close by saying how happy I am to see the Fellowship really coming back to life in so many ways after the pandemic. I’ve enjoyed serving as your President this year, and I thank the Nominating committee, the Board and especially Christopher Chase for seeing the importance of having me continue serving another year during this interim period. To quote Freddie Mercury and Queen, “Don’t stop me now. I’m having such a good time!”

-Jamie Gurganus
FROM THE CONSULTING RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR

The following notes were left for the annual report by outgoing Consulting Religious Educator, Janelle Carlson, who finished her contract with the UUFA on June 30, 2022. The position is not yet filled, as of the publication of this report.

RE at the Movies – Continued due to Omicron through March 2022. “RE at the Movies” had an average attendance of 15 students each week in January 2022, with an average of 9 participating K-6th grade, and 6 participating in 7-12th grade. RE for 7-12th grade transitioned to virtual on January 2nd due to weather, and then remained virtual through the month due to high COVID positivity rates. Attendance for this group went up since the transition to virtual and has remained consistent.

Allison Brundy prepared to lead an interest meeting for a Youth Climate Change Activism group on January 30th. No youth attended. Instead, Allison and I discussed ways of integrating different project ideas into a multiplatform RE curriculum this spring as part of Sunday morning programming.

RE and Fellowship Family Night hosted a movie/pizza night on Wednesday, April 13th to watch Youth v Gov. There were 8 attendees in person, and 3 virtually.

Minecraft Mondays in Winter 2022: There have been an average of 8 intergenerational attendees for Minecraft Monday each week. This program, organized and led by Sam Ose, has grown throughout January. In the next month this group will be testing out using a Discord server as a means to have a group audio chat while playing.

Valentine’s Friendship Cards went out in February to PreK-6th grade students from the RE program. This is to connect with them while still being virtual and to help reengage families who haven’t recently participated.

RE Feedback Sessions: On February 20th the RE committee hosted an RE Feedback Session that was facilitated by Tigon Woline. There were 8 attendees who are actively involved in RE this year who shared their experiences in the RE program and provided helpful information. Future sessions will be scheduled with an effort to engage families who are not actively involved. The goal is to use this information to inform future directions for the RE program. Additional sessions were facilitated by Tigon Woline in-person on April 10th, and by Maya Hayslett virtually on April 14th. The goal is to use this information to inform future directions for the RE program. There is 1 remaining feedback session to be held in-person on Sunday, May 15th during RE.
RE in Action - RE resumed meeting in-person at Emma McCarthy Lee park for April and May 2022. “RE in Action” began meeting on Sunday, April 3rd in person at Emma McCarthy Lee park. The final 8-weeks of this program year will focus on climate justice and education. This program will be all outdoors at the park. The final day for RE this year will be Sunday, May 22nd. There are 2 groups that meet at the park: Prek-5th grade and 6-12th grade. RE students, parents, and teachers are attending the Youth Climate Action Strike on Tuesday, April 19th.

Secret Friends - Pen Pals started at the beginning of March and is taking place completely through mailed letters. There are 13 pairs of Secret Friends participating in this year’s program. All participants (child and adult) received a packet with postage and activities to do with their Secret Friend completely through mailing letters. Secret Friends will be raising money for the Ames Solar Farm. Secret Friends will conclude with a reveal party on Sunday, April 24th 1-3pm at Inis Grove Park (Walnut Shelter).

The 2021-2022 RE program year culminated with an RE Service on May 22nd. This was an intergenerational celebration highlighting the different RE programs that have happened throughout this past year and a time to appreciate all of the volunteers who made the program come alive.

Coming of Age Program: Coming of Age began with a parent/mentor information session on January 23rd. A total of 13 students have been matched with mentors and they began the program with a group session (via Zoom) on Sunday, February 6th. This program will continue through April 17th.

The RE committee met for a work day on Sunday, June 12th and spent the afternoon working on long-term, RE program curriculum planning. They worked on developing program goals and learning objectives for students participating in Prek-12th grade RE at the UUFA. They also began the work to create a 3-year curriculum rotation, so that there is a comprehensive scope and sequence of religious education that is offered to children and youth at the UUFA. They will continue this work in July and beyond with their next Religious Educator.
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 uufames.org/offertory-history.

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<td>December 2021</td>
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<td>The Community Academy Microschool*</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>Prairie Rivers of Iowa^</td>
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<td>Planned Parenthood</td>
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<td>Iowa Watch (formerly Iowa Center for Public Affairs Journalism)</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL YTD 2022 (other)</strong></td>
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FROM THE ADMINISTRATIVE & PROPERTY CLUSTER

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

BUILDING COMMITTEE

Contact: building@uufames.org

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

*No report submitted. The committee is not currently staffed.*

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 2023: As needed

Committee Members: Cheryl Lawson, Catherine Huisman, Dan Taylor. Memorial Garden coordinators: Jan Vine, Sally Daub. And many volunteers along the way!

Accomplishments:

- Weeded and mulched garden beds (Carol and Denny Barrick, Cindy Scholten, Jeff White, Dennis Woline, Dan Taylor, Catherine Huisman, Cheryl Lawson)
- Installed rain garden in the south-east corner of the lower lot (Dennis Woline, Lee Molgaard, Dan Haug, Dan Taylor, Cheryl Lawson, Catherine Huisman)
- Cleaned and organized the garbage/garden shed (Catherine Huisman & Dan Taylor)
- Pulled invasive garlic mustard plants from hillside and planted native plants and seeds (RE youth and teachers)
- Cleared a tree and brush from hillside trail (Jeff White, Cheryl Lawson)
- Arranged for pavement replacement to correct uneven walkways (Dave Fox, Larry Koehrsen)
- Moved the Joan Hill Lynch Memorial Bell to the Memorial Garden (Sally Daub, Jan Vine)
Looking Ahead to 2023:
- Continue general maintenance of the grounds
- Clear invasive plants from the hillside and north lot
- Weed and mulch the area under the Red Bud trees
- Add new flowers and shrubs to the Memorial Garden

Additional Narrative:
Thank you to the many unnamed volunteers that may have pulled weeds or worked on the grounds during the year!

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 2023: Third Saturdays, 9:30-12:00

Committee Members: Barb Abbott (chair), Roger Berger, Sue Koehrsen, Joyce Matters

Accomplishments:
- Worked toward better serving UUFA groups
  - provided one copy of each month’s selection for Women’s Book Group
  - ordered books requested by the board, Persephone’s Children, and meditation groups
- Worked toward making the library more visible and user-friendly
  - put giveaway books on table in Fireside Room
  - weeded collection (old/outdated, not checked out, poor condition)
  - added display easels to highlight selected books
- Maintained library collection
  - processed donated items
  - processed returned items and reminded users to return items

Looking Ahead to 2023:
- Submit reviews in weekly newsletter
- Post mini shelf reviews
- Continue weeding collection
- Consider reorganization of children’s collection at request of RE staff
- Consider adding a middle grade section to bridge gap between picture books and YA books
- Consider moving some items to table in Fireside Room for easy check-out
Additional Narrative
Overall long-term goals are to:

- encourage more use of the library and
- establish a system for reminding users to return items

FROM THE COMMUNITY BUILDING CLUSTER

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

CARING NETWORK

Contact: caring@uufanes.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.

Meeting time for 2023: Second Thursdays, 11:00 am

Committee Members: Lynne Van Valin, Rilla Fox (chair), Jonah Powell, Carol Barrick, Navvab Munirih, Trish Strah, Dorothy Lewis, Rev. A.J. Galazen

Accomplishments:
- April 9 - Memorial Reception for Julie Freed
- April 30 - Memorial Reception for Joanna Courteau
- June 19 - Retirement Brunch for Rev. Kent McKusick
- June 25 - Memorial Reception for Dorothy Kizer
- October 6 - Compassionate Companions bookmark-making workshop. At this workshop, committee members voted to rename the group to End-of-Life Concerns Group
- November 11 - The core committee of the Caring Network reviewed the lists of UUFA members who have signed up for the various subcommittees and made needed deletions and additions. This process revealed that the listings of people willing to provide care totaled 77 (with some duplications).
- November 13 - A Death Café was organized by the EOL group. A soup lunch was served to 37 UUFA members and friends, who came together for casual conversations about death.
- January-December - The Caring Network supported many UUFA members with cards, meals, phone calls, rides and visits
- During 2022 - Three new members were recruited for the core committee of the Caring Network, increasing its membership from four to seven.
Looking Ahead to 2023:
The core committee intends to continue its efforts to raise the Caring Network’s visibility within the congregation in order to better serve its needs. Tentative plans are to participate in a lay-led Sunday service in 2023. Another possibility is revising the network’s mission statement to more accurately reflect the way the Caring Network functions (see paragraph below).

The Caring Network is a system of providing care within the congregation as a whole. Each month the core committee tries to identify “people of concern.” The core committee attempts to make its outreach sensitive to each individual’s needs not only for caring but also needs for respect, confidentiality and autonomy. This can be a delicate balance. Sometimes it is better for a close connection to reach out, rather than to be contacted by a barely-known committee member. This is why we call ourselves a network. Our goal is to include all UUFA members and friends in the network of caring. The Caring Network is not equivalent to its core committee. The role of the core committee is to coordinate care among all UUFA members, not to be the only providers of care.

In an upcoming meeting, we will develop strategies to more reliably keep track of milestones and other UUFA members’ life-transitions.

Each year, the EOL subcommittee sponsors an event for the congregation at large, using feedback gathered at the present year’s event.

The Caring Network will continue to assist families with memorial services. In the interest of making those receptions less laborious, the core committee will consider asking the UUFA endowment to underwrite the purchase of one or two dishwashers to replace the sanitizer, which requires prewashing each glass and dish by hand.

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 2023: As needed

No report submitted. The committee functions upon request/need.
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 2023: As needed

No report submitted. The committee is not currently functioning, though a chairperson has been identified for 2023, in hopes that this vitally important committee will be regathered.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Contact: nominating@uufames.org

Mission: The Nominating Committee presents a slate of candidates for officers, Board members, and one new Nominating Committee member at the annual meeting. The committee announces its selections at least two weeks prior to the annual meeting. When requested by the board, the Nominating Committee can also provide nominations for vacant positions or other elected positions, such as a Ministerial Search Committee.

Meeting Time for 2023: Day/time TBD. This committee typically completes the bulk of its work from late spring to early fall and often has brief weekly check-ins during that time period.

Committee Members: Dan Haug (elected 2020-22); Molly Helmers (elected 2021-23); Karol Crosbie (board-appointed 2022-23); Kitty Fisher (elected 2022-24); Sam Wormley (board-appointed 2022)

Accomplishments: Recruited and presented a full slate of candidates for elected positions to the Board, as also presented in the 2022 annual meeting packet.

Looking Ahead: The committee has proposed the following changes for consideration:

(1) Reduce the term of congregation-elected nominating committee members from 3 to 2 years. This would require changes to the bylaws. It’s increasingly difficult to find people willing to serve for 3 consecutive years, and there is limited benefit to the 3-year term as long as there is good communication, meeting minutes, and transitional notes from year to year.

(2) Reduce the number of nominating committee members. With the right committee members, this committee could function with as few as 3 people.
Rather than changing bylaws, this could be addressed by simply allowing seats to go unfilled unless needed to address a matter of congregational representation.

**Additional Narrative:**
The return to in-person services and a more active, engaged membership post-pandemic aided immensely in the Nominating Committee’s work this year. Members seem genuinely more interested in serving in leadership roles. Similarly, Rev. Galazen’s interim ministry brings with it new enthusiasm and energy that naturally boosts participation and service.

This time of transition came with some unique challenges for the nominating committee as well. In particular was the need to avoid overlap between the committee’s work identifying new board members and the Executive Leadership Team’s work to support the interim ministry with the creation of a Transition Team, re-establishment of the Committee on Shared Ministry, and preparations for the formation of a Ministerial Search Committee. The goal was not to have requests or roles overlap, which required regular communication and assessment of how best to use the talents and leadership skills of our small membership.

We are especially grateful for the flexibility of the current executive leadership team, who has agreed to a nontraditional presidential cycle for the upcoming year. Christopher Chase will jump to past-president, serving a 2-year term on the board. Jamie Gurganus will continue in her role as president for an additional year and move to past-president in 2024, ultimately serving a 3-year term. This arrangement offers continuity in the board presidency during the interim period and leaves open the possibility of Christopher participating on the ministerial search committee next summer. There are no bylaws that prevent this reassignment of roles, and we understand that it is without precedence.

**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 2023:** As needed, semi-annually with Endowment Fund Investment Committee

*No report submitted. The committee is not currently functioning, though some members of the committee did serve on the endowment review taskforce.*

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 2023:** As needed - at least twice per year

**Committee Members:** Larry Koehrsen, Stu Huntington, Dave Fox (all expiring if new committee structure approved with proposed bylaws changes)

**Accomplishments:**
- Accounting and review of investments continued monthly.
- Roof project competed with significant funding from Endowment funds.
- Sidewalk repair project completed with funds from capital replacement funds (75%) and operating repair/maintenance funds (25%).
- Workgroup on revising committee structure was completed and is awaiting approval at the annual meeting.

For ease of bookkeeping, the various fund balances within the Endowment are currently calculated annually, at the end of the fiscal year. December 31, 2021 balances were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cook Fund</td>
<td>$19,696.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berger Library Fund</td>
<td>$25,014.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Replacement Fund</td>
<td>$33,407.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Endowment Fund</td>
<td>$429,781.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$507,899.47</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Looking Ahead to 2023:
This committee will be retired if the working group recommendations are approved and a combined committee will be established. Those goals will be established after committee appointment and organization.

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 2023: As needed

Committee Members: Claus Niesen (chair), Mike Francom (treasurer), Fritz Keinert, Ralph Gandy

Accomplishments:
- Performed the annual financial review
- Performed a building inventory
- Compiled the 2023 budget

Looking Ahead to 2023:
The committee will continue to fulfill its duties to perform the annual financial review and create the budget for 2024.

The committee continues to seek additional committee members. Please contact the committee chair about joining.
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 2023: As needed

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

No report submitted. The committee is currently seeking additional members, particularly as the Fellowship looks toward filling vacant (and upcoming) positions.

FROM THE OUTREACH CLUSTER

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

Contact: partnerchurch@uufames.org

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

Meeting Time for 2023: TBD

No report submitted. The committee is not currently functioning.

FROM THE PROGRAM CLUSTER

Committees whose missions support and oversee the programming and education efforts of the congregation.

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 2023: As needed

No report submitted.
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 2023: Second Saturdays, 10:00-11:30 am

Committee Members: Kay Puttock, Kitty Fisher, Robin Sinn, Amy Slagell (chair), Ralph Gandy, Matt Farris, Sarah Carlson, Jan Cook, Dan Haug

Accomplishments:

- Supported the ministers in their work developing our thematic ministry throughout the year. The service themes this year, supported by Soul Matters resources, included: Living with Intention, Widening the Circle, Renewing Faith, Awakening, Nurturing Beauty, Celebrating Blessings, Belonging, Courage, Change, and Wonder.
- Lay members of the committee created or shepherded fifteen services during 2022. These services included collaborations with the Generosity Team and with the anti-racist study group. In addition, the SSC supported collaboration with the Interfaith Earth Day Service hosted by the Ames United Church of Christ and were active participants in the minister-led services.
- At several meetings in 2022, the SSC engaged the UUA materials, Decentering Whiteness in Worship, discussing what we learned from the videos and examining our practices.
- 2022 was marked by many transitions. Sunday services started online and moved to hybrid in March, back to online for July and returned to an in-person and zoom hybrid in August. SSC members contributed to the celebration of Rev. McKusick’s ministry and retirement at the end of June, and then developed six services in a row concluding with an ice cream social. We all welcomed Rev. Galazen for his first service with the congregation on August 14.
- This fall, we added the role of secretary to the structure of the SSC Committee; new member Robin Sinn volunteered to take on the role for this inaugural year.
- The heroic efforts of the tech team that partners with the Sunday Services Committee needs a special shout out this year. It is great to have some
people join the tech team rotation this fall; it is also clear that without Bradley Duckstein, Sam Ose, Dan Haug, Mary Richards, Donald Lewis, and Fritz Keinert, our hybrid model would never have gotten off the ground. Thank you, Tech Team!

Looking Ahead to 2023:
The committee is committed to supporting the creation of diverse and engaging services throughout the year ahead. Projects in the year ahead will include implementing a Google Doc planning document to improve coordination and communication. We also hope to bring more members onto the committee and enhance our connections with other committees of the Fellowship.

Our central goal remains to provide Sunday services that support the mission of the Fellowship. We look forward to rising to the challenge expressed in Rev. Galazen’s statement: “Worship is the work of the people!”

Additional Narrative:
Last year’s report ended with the observation that “this fall we have had as many as 53 zoom connections and as many as 30 people attend in person.” Since resuming “normal” operations in Fall 2022, we have had as many as 41 zoom connections and up to 83 people attend in person. Live music is once again part of our worship experience; we continue to seek ways to improve the experience for those who join through Zoom.

FROM THE COMMITTEE ON SHARED MINISTRY

Contact: cosm@uufames.org

Meeting Time for 2023: 2nd Wednesdays, 10:00 am; 4th Wednesdays, 1:00 pm with minister

Committee Members: Ronni Kahn, Jonah Powell, Jan Vine (chair), Rev. A.J. Galazen (ex-officio)

Accomplishments:
The committee was formed and approved by the board in September 2022. We’ve had two executive meetings (October 12 and November 9) and one working meeting (October 26) during which we revised our committee description and defined our meeting schedule.

Looking Ahead to 2023:
Our committee’s goals are to assess the ministry of the entire UUFA and its effectiveness in meeting our mission and vision. We will begin evaluating all parts of our shared ministry, including the board, the minister, staff, lay leaders, committees and affinity groups.
FROM THE GENEROSITY TEAM

Contact: generosity@uufames.org

Mission: To create a culture of generosity that sustains the mission and vision of the UUFA.

Meeting Time for 2023: 4th Wednesdays, 7:00pm

Committee Members: Sue Koehrsen (chair), Sam Wormley, Molly Helmers, David Slade, Melissa Niesen, Kitty Fisher

Accomplishments:
- June 19 Sunday Service, Thriving in Spite of it All, which celebrated the activities and congregational connections that survived the pandemic and serve as underpinnings for revitalization. The service was also intended as a "report to the congregation" of accomplishments and results of our collective financial support.
- September 11-October 2: We offered a variety of short messages on four subsequent Sundays focused on giving and pledging. Because our pledge format is moving toward "sustaining giving," we needed a new communication approach, and the combination of short verbal presentations, original songs, and videos - all in a lighthearted style - was successful. We also used four videos created by our team as inserts in the UUFA Weekly Email. Spreading the message over four weeks was a definite advantage over previous years when the Generosity Team conducted just one complete Sunday service. Pledges continue to come in, but the current estimate for next year's pledging is around $290,000.
- We will host a thank you coffee on December 11, the Sunday of our annual meeting. This is another opportunity to highlight generosity.
- And we hope to create and contribute a video to the UUFA self-study membership materials on giving in our congregation.

Looking Ahead to 2023:
- I (Sue Koehrsen) am writing this report in early November which is too early for us to have developed ideas for next year. However, I expect we'll continue work on streamlining our pledge drive process and will attempt to address the need for younger/middle aged families to begin a path toward more significant financial commitment. I also hope we find creative ways to let the congregation know the impact of their contributions.

Additional Narrative:
- A priority in our work is to build Generosity Team satisfaction in our accomplishments and creativity and camaraderie in the group. No one has to do tasks they truly dislike! Recruiting members to this team is difficult because so many people resist anything related to asking for money, but we truly try to keep team members working in areas they enjoy!
FROM THE TRANSITION TEAM

Contact: transition@uufames.org

Mission: To work with the interim minister to illuminate the congregation’s unique identity, its strengths, needs, and challenges.

Meeting Time for 2023: monthly, TBD

Committee Members: Sarah Carlson, Chris McClure, Cindy Scholten

Accomplishments:
- Since Rev. A.J. Galazen arrived at the UUFA in early August, we only began functioning as a committee in September. We began the interim process on Friday evening, September 9, with a workshop conducted by Rev. Sharon Dittmar. She helped us look at the positive and negative aspects of the UUFA and its 75-year history.
- We arranged a contact list so Rev. A.J. was able to connect with most of the individuals, committee chairs, and groups at the UUFA for an initial meeting.
- Chris McClure began work on a survey for the membership to identify what individuals see as the most important functions of the UUFA, what is most important to them personally, and what are the most important functions of a new minister for them. The survey will be issued early next year.
- The most immediate task of the Transition Team was reinvigorating the membership process after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic. A membership exploration committee was established and volunteers were recruited to help at the welcome table and greeting. The online membership exploration materials were updated with the help of the administrator; additional revisions will come next year.
- As a result, a membership exploration class was held October 29th with 10 people attending.

Looking Ahead to 2023:
- We plan to continue developing ways to engage the congregation in discussions about the interim process through congregational conversations after a Sunday service, in smaller groups of cottage meetings, other offsite locations, or personally as we prepare for our next settled minister.
FROM AFFINITY GROUPS

BUDDHISM STUDY GROUP

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

Meeting Time for 2023: 2nd/4th Sundays, 4:30-6:00 pm

2022 Remarks:
We completed studying Mahamudra meditation and have begun studying the book *Dropping Ashes on the Buddha*. One "accomplishment" is that we have four newly ordained Zen priests, some of whom have begun helping to lead this group.

FELLOWSHIP VOICES

Meeting Time for 2023: Sundays, 11:15 am

Accomplishments:
- Resuming rehearsals and service music in person after a hiatus of 2 1/2 years
- Providing offertory music for three services in the fall of 2022

Looking Ahead to 2023:
- Encouraging former members to resume attendance and adding several new members
- Providing special music related to the month’s theme for services approximately once a month during the program year

Additional Narrative:
We dedicate our rehearsals and performances to Sam Wormley, our faithful and talented director for the past several years.

MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION

This group gathers to encourage and support each other in mindful meditation practices.

Meeting Time for 2023: Sundays, 6:00-7:00 pm

2022 Remarks:
M&M began hybrid meetings this year, and the group has grown in size, averaging 10-12 people in person at the Fellowship and another 5-8 on Zoom. We read two books together this year and practiced a number of different meditation techniques.
Looking Ahead to 2023:
We look forward to offering more opportunities for leadership within the group and continuing to welcome new participants.

RECODER 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 2023: Thursdays, 2:00 pm

Accomplishments:
• We met outdoors for rehearsals during COVID to keep up our skills and learn new music.
• Upon returning to the Fellowship, we rehearsed weekly and have provided special music for three services during the fall of 2022.

Looking Ahead to 2023:
We plan to broaden our repertoire for our own edification and to provide a variety of listening experiences for the congregation.

SKADBERG SCIENCE CIRCLE

The Science Circle was started by Fritz Franzen & Sam Wormley more than 18 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 2023: 2nd/4th Tuesdays, 7:00-9:00 pm

2022 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!
Our first mission is to learn and perform women's choral music based on monthly themes to be used in Sunday services once a month. Our second mission is to provide connection and support for each other.

Meeting Time for 2023: Wednesdays, 7:00 pm

2022 Remarks:
- We have met throughout the COVID pandemic including early 2022 by Zoom, not for singing but for mutual support.
- Starting in the summer of 2022 we began meeting in my home, both to rehearse and to prepare music for services.
- We provided offertories and gathering music at services in September and October, 2022.

Looking Ahead to 2023:
- Add more members. I have already talked to several women who may join the group.
- Expand our repertoire to make it possible to find music that supports the theme of the month.

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 2023: Mondays 3:30-5:00 (3rd Monday is hybrid; other weeks via Zoom)

2022 Remarks:
During the last year, we have been transitioning from meeting mostly on zoom to resuming monthly in-person meetings, while at the same time continuing weekly check-ins on zoom. We also had one weekly book group on aging (“Landscapes of Aging and Spirituality”) at a different time for roughly 6 weeks, led by Cindy Scholten. In addition, we added a WOW On the Go component, which encouraged WOW members to meet outside of our regular time for special activities, including ice cream at Hickory Park, meeting at a park, going to an exhibit at the Brunnier, and going to a patio concert at Wheatsfield.

We currently 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.

Over the years, the role of the facilitator has varied. Group members are all encouraged to step up in various ways, but it is up to the facilitator to make executive decisions, send email notifications, and make sure meetings run smoothly. Since we began having WOW on the Go events, most of the implementation has fallen on me (Nancy Tepper). Ideally, we will move to having others take on individual events.

Looking Ahead to 2023:
After considerable discussion, we decided to continue meeting weekly on zoom as well as in the hybrid format (in person and on zoom) monthly on the third Monday for the foreseeable future. With the isolation phase of COVID “in remission” and many other activities resuming, some will plan to come only in person. We will make a renewed effort to focus on a topic each month. New members are welcome!

We also plan to offer another book group on aging - probably “Finding Meaning and Spirituality in Aging” - and offer WOW On the Go opportunities.

WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP

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 2023: 1st Mondays (September-June); 7:00 pm

2022 Remarks:
This affinity group meets 10 months of the year in-person and using a Zoom platform. We discuss many different genres of literature which are chosen by group consensus. This is an open group with a core of 12 to 20 attendees per month. Some women drop in occasionally but many are regular participants. This is a good group for new and prospective members to join and to meet other book-loving women. We foster a welcoming atmosphere and lively discussions.

Reading list for the 2022-2023 program year:
- October 3: Deacon King Kong by James McBride
- November 7: A Woman of No Importance by Sonia Purnell
- December 5: The Memory Librarian by Danelle Monae
- January 2: Go Back to Where You Came From by WA. J. ahat Ali
- February 6: Agent Josephine by Damien Lewis
- March 6: Horse by Geraldine Brooks
- April 3: Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus
- May 1: The Sentence by Louise Erdrich
- June 5: Midnight Library by Matt Haig