UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF DUBUQUE

2024 Annual Report

GATHERING MOMENTUM

"A community with momentum is one where there is a palpable sense of positive energy, growing participation, visible progress towards shared goals, strong leadership, and a network of individuals actively engaged in driving change. Often characterized by a contagious enthusiasm that inspires others to join the movement and contribute to its success; essentially, it's a community that feels like it's actively moving forward with increasing force and impact."

Source: AI Overview

UUFD Mission:
To provide a welcoming community that inspires growth by encouraging individuals and families to examine their religious and spiritual beliefs, to explore new ideas, to share our journeys, to respect and enjoy each other's differences, and to be active and supportive in the community that surrounds us.

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2024 Board of Trustees

President: Marian Maciej-Hiner (2024-2025)
Treasurer: Jerry Guenther (2023-2024)
Secretary: Amy Ressler (2024-2025)
Trustee (2 Year): Linda Ressler (2024-2025)
Trustee (2 Year): Gail Guenther (2023-2024)
Trustee (1 Year): Diane Baker (2024)

Agenda of 2024 Annual Business Meeting

Sunday, December 8, 2024 – 10:30-11:30am
(in-person and via Zoom)

1) Call to order – Marian Maciej-Hiner, President
2) Member Count (in-person and via Zoom) – Amy Ressler, Secretary
3) Reports
    a. 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes/approval – Amy Ressler
    b. 2024 Review and 2025 Priorities – Marian Maciej-Hiner
    c. 2024 Budget Update and 2025 Budget Proposal/approval – Jerry Guenther, Treasurer
4) Gratitude exchange activity – Marian Maciej-Hiner
5) Action Items
    a. Nomination/Election of Board positions (only members vote) – Marian Maciej-Hiner
    b. Committee Member Recruitment – Linda Ressler
6) Information
    a. 2025 UUA General Assembly: June 18-22, 2025 – Baltimore, Maryland
    b. UUFD Congregational Retreat: September 2025
    c. Denominational Stewardship: Gold Star Congregation
7) Adjourn

Minutes of 2023 Annual Business Meeting

Sunday, December 3, 2023 – 10:25-11:15 am In-person at 1699 Iowa Street, Dubuque IA and via Zoom

1) Call to order at 10:25am and Opening Words – Marian Maciej-Hiner, President

2) Member Count – 21 members and 7 friends with those who attended via zoom denoted in bold for a total of 28 participants.

Members – Karen Buechele, Bob Dunn, Gail Guenther, Jerry Guenther, Cyndi Hartley, Katie Heil, Karen Kascel, Pam Kress-Dunn, Jo Ellen Langerman, Marian Maciej-Hiner, Judy Nauman, **Mary Nevans-Peterson**, Dave Overby, Frank Potter, **Tam Prenosil**, **Amy Ressler,** Linda Ressler, Wendy Woodhouse, Ed Zaccaro, Sara Zaccaro, Alyssa Zasada. Friends – Alice Butler, John Butler, Calvin Gatch, **Barbara Gatch**, Jon Luckstead, **Louise Thurn**, Adam Veasman. Wendy Woodhouse, Secretary, gathered the names of the individuals counted.

3) Reports

a. 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes – completed by Wendy Woodhouse, Board Secretary. There were no questions or comments and minutes were unanimously approved.

b. 2023 Review and 2024 Board Priorities presented Marian Maciej-Hiner. Board President.
2023 Annual Report – "Deepen Connections & Widen Community" – sent to Members & Friends.
2023 Review: Moved back to church, recognized for our historic preservation work, Open House.
Highlighted many accomplishments – gratitude to Board, Committees, Work Groups, all volunteers.
2024 Priorities: Spirituality, Volunteers, Leadership, Membership

c. 2023 Budget Updates and 2024 Budget Proposal Jerry Guenther, Treasurer
2023 Operating Budget: Income: $40,125; Expenses: $35,600; Difference: $4,525
2023 Building Project Budget: Expenses: $1.9 million; $145,000 available (in cash and loan)
2024 Budget Proposal: Expenses: $37,000, Building Fund: $3,000 = $40,000 (same as 2023)
Unanimously approved.

4) Affirmation of Rev. Samuel Felderman – Linda Ressler, Trustee
Rev. Samuel Felderman provided up to 16 Sunday services yearly over the past few years. He met with members/friends as needed and provided excellent service to our Fellowship. The Board will contract with Samuel for 2 years, starting January 2024, to continue these services. Linda requested a vocal affirmation of Samuel's Ministry to the Fellowship – the response was unanimous.

5) Nomination/Election of Board Members: Since there were no nominations from the floor, Frank Potter recommended having the Slate of Nominees approved: Marian Maciej-Hiner for Board President, Amy Ressler for Board Secretary, Linda Ressler for 2-year Board Trustee, Diane Baker for 1-year Board Trustee. Linda Ressler moved to approve, Gail Guenther seconded. Unanimously approved. Marian thanked Wendy Woodhouse, outgoing Board Secretary, for her service to the Board and the Fellowship.

6) Committee Member Recruitment – Linda Ressler
All committees' welcome new members. This is a great opportunity to get involved in Fellowship life. Rotation of Committee Chairs is welcome, so chairs can have a chance to join other committees.

7) Information and Closing – Marian Maciej-Hiner
UUFD Leadership Retreat: January 2024; UUA General Assembly: June 20-23, 2024 – ALL VIRTUAL

8) Adjourn: Linda Ressler moved to adjourn, Gail Guenther seconded. Unanimously approved.
The meeting ended at 11:15am. A light meal and activity in our Fellowship Hall followed. We have almost completed what was and is a wonderful year for UUFD.

Respectfully submitted by Wendy Woodhouse, UUFD Board Secretary

Minister's Report

Dear Friends,
What a year it has been! We have so much to celebrate as a community. As a congregation we have welcomed new members and friends to our community, but also said goodbye to friends and loved ones who have passed on to their next great adventures. We have supported one another in times of sorrow and joy. We have studied and meditated and sang together. We have chosen love again and again, even as we have watched some in our larger community choose to become more closed off and suspicious.

It has been a blessing to be able to share regularly with you all in Sunday services and other important events such as the Juneteenth celebrations, as one of your delegates to the MidAmerica UUA Regional Assembly, at the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) gatherings of the Prairie Star District, and at the Ecumenical Dialogue celebrations held at Wartburg Seminary. It was a joy to be with you all as we hosted our first ever congregational retreat where we dreamed of all that our fellowship has to give to those gathered both inside and outside the walls of our building.

I have been privileged to be with you in your homes and hospital rooms, at gravesites and at community gatherings. All told I have been able to log over 100 hours of care visits and almost 800 miles of travel. Spending time with all of you in your highest and lowest moments has been an honor and privilege, and I cannot wait to see what 2025 has in store for us.

May the Love that has drawn us together continue to support us in our journey towards a brighter future.

Peace & Good,

Rev. Samuel Felderman

President's Report

Because of the energy you bring to this community, we gather and maintain momentum as a congregation. Through the work you do on the Board, Committees, Teams, Work Groups, other groups, and as individuals, this has been a remarkable year! Here is evidence of the momentum that's keeping us balanced in the present as well as moving us forward toward the future.

CLARITY: New activities are helping us explore and clarify our values, beliefs, purpose, and meaning:
- **Building Your Own Theology** class
- **Morning Roots** mindful activity and mindful discussion
- **Afternoon Summer Camp** attending to the rhythm of the calendar year
- **Book of Soul** meditation and discussion
- **Easy Readers** article discussion

COMMUNITY: There were many reasons to gather in community and celebrate this year:
- **New Member Ceremonies** – part of Sunday services, welcomed 11 new members!
- **Picnic at Murphy Park** – recognized importance of volunteers in our all-volunteer organization
- **Congregational Retreat** – long-time and new members and friends looking to the future
- **Annual Meeting** – recognize who we are as a religious organization, how we conduct business

CONNECTIONS: We build connections with our wider community in many ways:
- **Jackson Park Neighborhood Association**
- **NAACP, DACU and charities**
- **Pride Events**
- **Historic District Coffee House**
- **Speakers at Sunday services**
- **Nursing home visits** (UUUU)

CASH FLOW: Thanks to your generous financial support of the work of UUFD, we have:
- Balanced actual income and expenses for our operations budget
- Managed expenses and funding sources for building project – donations, grants, Tax Credits

COVENANTS: We made a commitment to promote healthy relationships and a healthy community:
- **Board Covenant** – "We remind ourselves that we are human, and we are both lifted and limited by our humanity. May we be kind, compassionate, and make room for growth, both within ourselves and within this group. Here, we practice governance rooted in love."
- **Congregational Covenant** – work-in-progress that started at our Congregational Retreat.

Treasurer's Report

General Fund Update
Through October 30, 2024, our financial figures are:

Income: $34,000
Expenses: $41,500

A significant amount of our expenditures were covered by Building Funds for our Sound System, Security System, etc. We were within our Budget for normal General Fund expenditures and we are in very solid shape financially.

Building Project Update
We currently have about $25,000 in Restoration Funds still available and we submitted our request in August for $496,000 in Tax Credits. These Tax Credits will be used to pay our current $300,000 Restoration Loan.

2025 Budget Proposal

INCOME	
Annual Pledges	$40,000
Other Contributions	$ 5,000
TOTAL INCOME	**$45,000**
EXPENSES	
Administration	
Facilities (utilities, repairs)	$15,300
Supplies & Miscellaneous (PayPal, etc.)	$ 1,075
Internet	$ 1,200
Congregational Retreat	$ 1,000
Ministerial Functions	$ 5,000
Cleaning – Church and Emerson House	$ 4,000
Child Care for Sunday services	$ 1,500
Workers Comp Insurance	$ 225
Sub-total	***$29,300***
Committees	
Program Committee	$10,000
Religious Exploration	$ 1,000
Social Action	$ 1,000
Membership	$ 600
Library	$ 300
Care Committee	$ 100
Sub-total	***$13,000***
Denomination and Community Connection	
Dubuque Branch - NAACP	$ 150
Dubuque Area Congregations United	$ 150
Iowa UU Witness Advocacy Network	$ 100
UU@UN	$ 100
Unitarian Universalist Association	$ 2,200
Sub-total	***$ 2,700***
Total Operating Expenses	**$45,000**
Building Fund	**$ 0**
TOTAL EXPENSES	**$45,000**
TOTAL INCOME	**$45,000**
BALANCE	**0**

NOTE: There will be additional expenditures for Social Concerns, ie. Bi-Monthly Charity or Thanksgiving Meal. These are not budgeted, and are dependent on Sunday service cash contributions or special collections.

Board of Trustees

Members:
Marian Maciej-Hiner, President; Amy Ressler, Secretary; Jerry Guenther, Treasurer; Linda Ressler, 2-year Trustee; Gail Guenther, 2-year Trustee; Diane Baker, 1-year Trustee

Since 2020 when we launched the $2.1 million Building Rehabilitation Project, the Board has served the Fellowship in two capacities:

- **Fellowship Life Administration:** oversee the operation of the organization and sustaining the health and well-being of the Fellowship as a religious community.
- **Building Project Management:** oversee the financing, construction, restoration and historic preservation of the entire church building and Emerson House exterior – manage relationships with partners, consultants, work groups, granting agencies, donors, media, and the general public.

Our monthly Board meetings, which typically run for 2 hours, have been structured with separate agenda items for each area – so we could give our dedicated attention to both roles. For the past few months, while we are still attending to some building activities, we are paying greater attention to our congregational life. We are committed to helping all entities – Committees, Teams, Work Groups, other formal and informal groups – gather momentum and work together to shape our future.

This Annual Report includes just one report from the Board, on the highlights of our accomplishments in both areas of responsibility.

Fellowship Life Administration Accomplishments

- **Transitioned building-related tasks to other groups within the Fellowship**
  With the building project wrapping up this year, the Board worked with the Buildings & Grounds Committee, Interior Design Work Group, Technical Support Team, and other individuals to integrate building-related activities into their roles and responsibilities.
- **Created a Board Covenant**
  Creating and agreeing to a covenant can be an effective tool for building a foundation of trust within an organization. Covenants provide clarity around shared expectations for right relations and healthy behaviors, including how to communicate and reach consensus. The Board approved its Covenant in May and shared it with Members and Friends in June. Board members read a short version of the Covenant together, out loud, at the start of every Board meeting.
- **Expanded the Annual Leadership Retreat to include all Members and Friends**
  The Annual Board Retreat has been a UUFD activity to plan for the upcoming church year and to provide leadership development for Board members. In 2020, it was expanded to include Committee Chairs, in 2023 it included Work Group Leads. In 2024, all Members and Friends were invited to participate in a full-day retreat – so everyone could be part of identifying new directions for the Fellowship and charting our course for the future. Our first **Annual Congregational Retreat,** hosted by the Board and Long Range Planning Committee, was held on **Saturday, September 14**.
- **Supported the development of a Congregational Covenant**
  Preliminary work on a Congregational Covenant started at the Congregational Retreat. As a follow-up, the Long Range Planning Committee took on the development of a Covenant, which they crafted and presented to the congregation at a Sunday service in October. For more information about the Congregational Retreat and Congregational Covenant see “Long Range Planning Committee.”
- **Formed a Ministerial Committee**
  Many UU congregations have a committee to support and work with their minister to focus on all aspects of the congregation's ministry. The UUFD Ministerial Committee was formed in December, with 3 members. For more information, see “Ministerial Committee.”

Building Project Accomplishments

- **Balanced building rehabilitation budget and expenses**
  Gronen Development and Restoration reported in December 2023 that they were able to come in under budget for our $2.1 million project, by making decisions to put some things at the Emerson House on hold, such as replacing windows. With the cost-savings realized by those decisions – which the Board approved – we were able to cover our share of the cost of the East Wing ceiling restoration and storm window installation (cost not covered by grants received for these projects).
- **Oversaw completion of East Wing ceiling restoration**
  Tony Kartsonas, Historic Surfaces, Inc. out of Detroit, Michigan, spent the month of July on-site to complete the restoration of the rare historic ceiling. The Board hosted an Open House to reveal the finished ceiling on Tuesday, July 30 – and submitted a report on the grant funds received from the City of Dubuque the next day, to create a video about the restoration work done on the ceiling. Duane Hagerty, Heritage Works, developed the video. We also received a $5,000 grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation for this project. A report will be submitted in early 2025.
- **Oversaw Storm Window installation**
  We received a $24,000 grant from the Historic Resources Development Program of the State Historical Society of Iowa | Iowa Humanities Council, to complete the installation of storm windows over our historic church windows, to preserve the restoration work that was completed in 2023. The storm windows were installed in August 2024. A report will be submitted in early 2025.
- **Documented final 2-to-1 matching donation**
  Received a final donation from John and Alice Butler in June, to match the increase in State Historic Tax Credits for which we were eligible – as more preservation work was done on both the church and Emerson House than originally anticipated. We are grateful to John and Alice for providing additional resources needed to meet our financial commitments for the project.
- **Filed for State Historic Tax Credits**
  Worked with accounting firm from Des Moines, Forge Financial, to submit the final application for State Historic Tax Credit reimbursement. Our tax return was filed by Forge in August 2024, for reimbursement of 25% of eligible expenses, for a total of $496,843. We are waiting to hear from the State of Iowa Department of Revenue with an update on the status of our return.
- **Finalized integration of Sound and Audiovisual System**
  Monitored the effectiveness of the new sound and audiovisual system to meet the needs of in-house and remote participants in our Sunday services and other events. Documented issues and concerns and reported them to Embark. With the help of the UUFD Tech Team – RRS Stewart, Frank Ebersold, Tom Griep, Katie Heil – worked with Embark representatives to troubleshoot and resolve problems. All components of the system seem to be working – including use of listening devices and connection to individuals' hearing aids – as long as speakers are close to the microphones. Transitioned responsibility for interfacing with Embark to the Tech Team.
- **Hired consultant to develop design for library shelving**
  The current UUFD library bookshelves were donated by UUFD members and friends, for which we are grateful. But they will be replaced with new shelving when we receive Tax Credit funds to cover the cost. The Library Committee provided input on what would be desirable for new shelving, and the Board followed up by hiring an interior design consultant to develop a design for shelving and other elements in the library space. A design was submitted in October and shared with the Board, Library Committee, Interior Design Work Group, and Buildings & Grounds Committee. Proposals for building the shelves – with an estimate of cost – are being solicited from a few individuals and vendors. The goal is to have this project completed early in 2025, depending on funding availability.

Buildings and Grounds Committee

Members: Frank Potter (outgoing chair), Frank Ebersold (incoming chair)

Mission: Maintain the physical interior and exterior properties of the UUFD in a safe and frugal manner. Sidewalks and lawn are maintained, along with appliances such as dishwasher, refrigerators and microwaves, fire equipment and safety signs, and routine maintenance such as replacing furnace/air conditioner filters. Trash is removed and set out. The B&G advises the Board on maintenance issues.

Change: The major change this year was Frank Ebersold replaces Frank Potter as chair. Frank E has had extensive experience with maintenance as the owner of a bed and breakfast. Frank P has been the chair since the building was purchased in 2004, and worked closely with Jon Luckstead, who provided major contributions for design and did excellent construction work. Jon Luckstead and Craig Reber stepped down from the committee due to health concerns – we are looking for a third member.

Maintenance Manual: A major action this year has been to create a Building and Grounds Maintenance Manual for future use, to answer questions that members might have, and assist in avoiding conflicts.

Emerson House

- Original (circa 1915) iron central waste pipe that runs from the upstairs restroom to the basement was replaced with PCV pipe. Frank E and Frank P did carpentry work to save several hundred dollars.
- Dehumidifier, which runs most of the time except in winter was replaced.
- Blinds replaced the upstairs shades in three rooms and the one in the workroom on the first floor.
- Window on outside door to workroom was painted black to avoid seeing in, to avoid theft. Paint looks pleasing from outside compared to other materials, can handle constant direct sun exposure.
- GFIs electrical outlets in basement and kitchen shut off if more than one appliance is plugged in at one time (including dehumidifier in the basement). Will have electrician repair it.
- Air conditioner has switch on condenser that can be activated by us, saving a visit from AC company.
- Frank P replaced the street sign made by Jon L on the wall of 17th Street.
- Guests: We are fortunate to be able to have temporary overnight stays. Frank P cleans, maintains upstairs and downstairs restrooms, Frank E maintains carpets, Tam Prenosil maintains linen.

Church

- Waste pump (needed since plumbing pipes end lower than street pipes to collect waste) in lower level serviced (for the first time) and clogged motor replaced. The problem was disposable wipes. 1) Announced that wipes are not disposable; 2) Added waste cans with lids to both restroom; 3) Placed signs in restrooms to not throw wipes in toilets.
- Old storm windows for the church donated to Council Hill Station for ceremonies. They were replaced with the help of a grant from the State of Iowa Historic Resource Development Program.
- TV and sound system in Fellowship Hall has not been reinstalled, so Frank P created a portable unit that can be used in both the Fellowship Hall and in the Emerson House.
- Worked with Interior Design Work Group to hang flaming chalice in arch after chalice was painted.

Grounds and Exterior

- Cement curbs edges have been repainted and painted for visibility for safety.
- Drain between two buildings is a few inches too high, we will deal with that in spring 2025. Grass on the east side of the church may need to be replaced.
- Tool-box outside next to the church may be repainted and keep it balanced.

Respectfully submitted,
Frank Ebersold, Chair, with assistance of past Chair, Frank Potter

Care Committee

Members: Samuel Felderman (chair), Wendy Woodhouse, Gail Guenther, Anne Benda

The Care Committee continues to respond to UU Fellowship members' needs as they arise. In 2024, Committee members did the following:

- Coordinated delivery of meals to those in need – through the "Meal Train"
- Sent cards to members and friends experiencing loss, illness and injury
- Extended condolences to members & friends who have lost family members – and invited Fellowship support, through email notices
- Encouraged visits and phone calls to those who are unable to attend Sunday services

There is also a very caring network among all UU members and friends who relate information, concerns and actions on behalf of the Fellowship.

Pastoral Care
Rev. Samuel Felderman provided pastoral care to those in need, including home, nursing home and hospital visits on behalf of UUFD. He conducted Celebration of Life services, and worked with Fellowship members on arrangements and serving lunch to family and friends following services held at the church.

Finance Committee

Members: Jerry Guenther (Chair), Gene Schaul, Merilyn Tommaro

Purpose: Fundraising, budgeting, pledge record-keeping, bookkeeping, audit, other financial tasks.

Goals:
- Budget, track, and report income and expenditures
- Plan and implement steps to remain financially solvent

Library Committee

The library continues to be updated and improved, and new shelves are very much anticipated.

Changes and Improvements in 2024

- About 50 books deemed old or mildewed were weeded.
- A survey of people's knowledge and use of the library was distributed in August, and 21 were returned. Results were sent to the Board. Overall, most respondents were familiar with the library and with Libib, the online app.
- Following a reflection by Amy Muchmore (Carnegie-Stout Public Library) and UUFD member Allison Zordell (Cedar Rapids Public Library), the Library Committee asked for donations of the ten most-challenged books. All ten books were donated, and all will have a bookplate (designed and printed by Allison) on the first page saying, "Free to Read – This Banned Book Was Donated by" with room for the person to sign their name. We hope to continue pushing back against book banning.
- High-quality magazines are now being accepted as donations. People are free to take them rather than check them out. A magazine rack will aid in their display.
- We continue to draw from the $500 donation from Mary Ellyn Jensen's family. This year, our costs exceeded our budget by $136.90, so that donation now totals $363.10. We will continue to draw on this generous gift as needed.
- An envelope for checkout cards has been placed on the back church counter for people who want to check out the books displayed there without going downstairs.

Newly purchased books (most are gently used)

- The Artist's Way, Cameron (Self-Help)
- The Book of Soul, Nepo (Self-Help)
- Languishing, Keyes (Self-Help)
- Chasing Hope, Kristof (Social Action)
- Gardening for Life, Thun (Nature)
- Restorative Practices for Wellness, Kram (Self-Help)
- The Dawn of Everything, Graeber (History)
- The Japanese Art of Living Seasonally, Leon (Self-Help)
- Being Mortal, Gawande (End of Life)
- Humankind, Bregman (History)
- Easy-to-Use Feng Shui, Too (Self-Help)
- The Three Regrets, Kiyosaki (Self-Help)
- Neurotheology, Newberg (Secular Religion)
- All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten, Fulghum (Self-Help)
- From Beginning to End, Fulghum (Self-Help)
- Walden, Thoreau (History)
- The Exvangelicals, McCammon (Bio and Memoir)

Partial list of donated books (most from Pam and Sara)

- Love and Death, Church (End of Life)
- The Impossible Lives of Greta Wells, Greer (Fiction)
- Yoga, Schiffmann (Self-Help)
- Dry, Burroughs (Bio and Memoir)
- This is How, Burroughs (Bio and Memoir)
- A Blind Man Can See How Much I Love You, Bloom (Fiction)

- Fates and Furies, Groff (Fiction)
- Matrix, Groff (Fiction)
- The Dreams We Had, Zaccaro (fiction)
- Police Reform, Zaccaro (Social Action)
- The Exiles, Kline (fiction)
- Personal Librarian, Benedict (fiction)
- First Ladies, Benedict (fiction)
- The Book of (More) Delights, Gay (spirituality)

Itemized Library Spending
- New/used books = $300.73
- Libib subscription = $74.25
- Checkout cards and pockets = $15.99
- Jacket protectors = $30.94
- Bookends = $14.99
- TOTAL = $436.90

Other Spending (Ordered by Pam but not from Library budget)
- More hymnals = $226.02 (general or music budget)
- Pamphlets = $167.30 (RE or Membership budget)
- Pamphlet holder = $27.94 (RE or Membership budget)

Goals for 2025
- Price and raise funds for built-in shelving, including magazine rack.
- Recruit one more member for library processing and other tasks.
- Encourage borrowing via newsletter reviews and brief announcements of new books.
- Continue to partner with other committees in buying and using books.
- Continue to work with Membership committee to hand out Libib cards.
- Lead Common Read activities with RE Committee.
- Continue to lead small-group activities such as Easy Readers.
- We are working with the Program Committee to continue the UUFD tradition of having a few people present a group reflection on books from the library they have read.
- Continue to draw from the $500 donation from Mary Ellyn Jensen's family as needed.
- All donations will be recorded in 2025, along with purchases.
- In 2025, we will begin recording book checkouts.
- Once new shelves are installed, larger, more colorful signage will be included alongside the books.
- The Program Committee has Nick Rossman, director of the public library, on its list of potential speakers.
- We again request a budget of $300 for books, supplies, and our online catalog.

Respectfully submitted,
Pam Kress-Dunn (chair) and Sara Zaccaro

Long-Range Planning Committee

Members: Amy Ressler (Chair), Cyndi Lawton, Chris Chapin-Tilton

Congregational Survey
In 2023, the Long Range Planning Committee (LRP) conducted a congregational survey to better understand our identity as a community and our aspirations for the future.

Congregational Retreat
Building on this foundation, the LRP hosted a Congregational Retreat in September 2024, where participants reviewed the survey findings and engaged in discussions about deepening our connections with one another and the larger community.

Congregational Covenant
A key outcome of the retreat was the recognition of the need for a Congregational Covenant—a shared agreement to define how we relate to and treat one another, and how we address conflicts to maintain healthy relationships. The LRP has since drafted this covenant, which reflects our collective values and commitment to fostering a supportive and respectful community.

Next Steps
The committee proposes that the congregation adopt the Covenant by general consensus, with a plan to live into it for a year and revisit its effectiveness at the next annual Congregational Retreat.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy

Membership Committee

Members: Katie Heil (chair), Jo Ellen Langerman, Marian Maciej-Hiner, Marilyn Schroeder, Wendy Woodhouse

Book of Celebrations
The Membership Committee was very pleased to welcome 11 amazing individuals into our Fellowship this year! New Member Ceremonies were held during Sunday services on February 18 and October 13. New members sign the Book of Celebrations when they join UUFD. Other major life events – child dedications, weddings, celebrations of life – are also recorded in the Book of Celebrations.

Informational meetings
Committee Members held one-hour sessions following Sunday services, for people interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism and the Fellowship – and possibly joining UUFD as Members/Friends. Sessions were held January 14, February 4, and September 29 – there will be more in 2025.

Contact information
The Committee, along with Amy Ressler, Board Secretary, and Tom Griep, Website Team, collaborated to keep member contact information up to date with the UUA/***UU World*** magazine subscription list, the printable PDF directory, and the online UUFD directory. An email was sent to Members and Friends on December 1, with the printable directory attached and a live link to the online directory.

Welcoming visitors and regular attendees
Committee members created name tags for regular attendees, served as greeters on Sunday mornings, came up with different ways to connect with people who find the Fellowship on their spiritual journeys, and helped make sure no one who enters our doors is left unwelcomed!

Commitment to share what we have with others
We have been focusing on creating procedures to streamline our work – so we can spend more time reaching out to and interacting with those who are looking for a spiritual home – and may find it at the Fellowship. We look forward to meeting many new wonderful people in the next year.

Goals for 2025
- Provide greeters for Sunday services
- Create a brochure about the UU Fellowship of Dubuque
- Host two Informational Meetings to provide information and answer questions about Unitarian Universalism and UUFD
- Host two New Member Celebrations to welcome new members
- Increase recruitment activities by developing and running ads in ***365ink*** and the ***Telegraph Herald***

Respectfully submitted by Katie Heil, Chair

Ministerial Committee

Members: Linda Ressler (chair), Julie Donovan, Nancy Turner

Overview
The UUFD Ministerial Committee is responsible for overseeing and supporting the professional ministry of our part-time minister, including providing feedback, facilitating conflict resolution, and assessing the alignment between the congregation's mission and the minister's work; essentially acting as a sounding board and advisor to the minister while representing the congregation's perspective.

Function
To provide guidance and support to the minister, evaluate performance, and ensure the ministry aligns with the congregation's needs and values.

Responsibilities
Conduct regular reviews of the minister, facilitate communication between the minister and congregation, address concerns or conflicts, and offer feedback on programs and initiatives.

Composition
Comprised of 3 members of the congregation who are selected by the Board of Trustees.

Confidentiality
Committee members are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding discussions and information shared during meetings with the minister.

Nominations Committee

Members: Amy Ressler (chair), Jo Ellen Langerman, Wendy Woodhouse

A nominating committee will be established by the Board each year to gather nominees for open Board positions. Nominees must be Members of the Fellowship, according to our Bylaws.

Composition
Three members should serve on this ad hoc committee. They should contact Members and provide them with descriptions of Board responsibilities. They should start by contacting current Board members to find out if they intend to run for another term.

Nominees
A slate of nominees will be sent to Members in advance of the Annual Business Meeting, and will be included in the Annual Report for the Annual Meeting. Nominations may also be taken from the floor at the Annual Meeting.

Elections
Elections are held at the Annual Meeting. The term of each position is two years, except for one Trustee position which is one year. The goal is to stagger the terms each year.

Program Committee

Members: Bob Dunn (chair), Calvin Gatch, Jr., Pam Kress-Dunn, Ed Zaccaro, Pam Rosmann (a welcome new member). The group meets the 4th Tuesday of each month at 9:30am.

The committee's main work is in the planning, preparing, and presenting of weekly Sunday services for the UUFD. Committee members typically function as facilitators at Sunday services. The committee seeks to select individuals from the fellowship, the local community, and beyond to provide quality, engaging Sunday presentations that relate to the mission and principles of the UUA.

Our Sunday services bring in speakers from outside and within the Fellowship. We see these presentations as a means of communicating to our members topics of interest and relevance to our UU Principles. The committee seeks a balance between the spiritual and the secular in our offerings. Through elements of the service and after-service fellowship, we hope to accentuate and cultivate a feeling of togetherness and closeness among our members. We strongly feel that certain elements of the service – Joys, Sorrows, and Concerns; Readings; Music; Meditation; Closing Circle – aid in promoting a sense of connection.

This Year's Goals:
Our goals for the past year are much the same as every year:
1. Successfully conduct meaningful and engaging Sunday services
2. Provide a variety and diversity of speakers and programming that resonate with our principles.
3. Promote congregational involvement in the services by recruiting members to provide music and readings
4. Create a detailed list of facilitator tasks

Proposed Anchor Services
We also try to adhere to a schedule of "anchor services," to be held roughly once a month:

January – My Life's Turning Point (3-4 UUFD members)
February – Social Justice & Equality Service
March – UU Principle Service (rotating through the 7 principles)
April – Earth/Ecology Service
June – Flower Ceremony
July – Outdoor Service/Potluck
August – Water Ceremony
September – Service for Peace
October – LGBT /Diversity Service
November – Remembrance Service (honoring those who have passed on)
December – Christmas/Winter Holiday/Luminescence (Finding the Light)

2025 Goals
For the coming year the committee's goals include:
1. Involve more members in the services – as facilitators, readers, musicians, and presenters
2. Plan and present 2-3 events/year at the UUFD outside of Sunday Services
3. Seek to maintain some ministerial presence in the UUFD services and possibly complement Samuel Felderman with occasional presentation from other UU ministers.
4. Have 1-2 Exchange Services/year, where a UUFD member gives a service at another fellowship and we receive someone from that congregation to lead our service.

5. In conjunction with our tech volunteers, work to improve the ease and functioning of our audio and visual elements of our services.
6. Have a designated greeter at the door for Sunday services.
7. Have designated volunteers to make coffee and provide snacks for Sunday services.
8. In terms of music, balance congregational singing of hymns with musicians presenting contemporary music.

The committee is always seeking names of potential speakers for Sunday services, as it is our main job and is a formidable task.

We would welcome an additional committee member. Some current members have served many years on the committee and would like to rotate off.

Respectfully submitted,
The Program Committee
Robert Dunn, Calvin Gatch, Pam Kress-Dunn, Ed Zaccaro, Pam Rosmann

Religious Exploration (RE) Committee

Members: Cyndi Lawton (Chair), Jo Ellen Langerman, Linda Ressler

Mission Statement
"The RE Committee seeks to deepen the spiritual life of the Fellowship's children, youth and adults through engagement and exploration of the Six Sources. We will strive to educate ourselves and our community in religious practices and texts and to help each other grow together as we intertwine our physical lives and knowledge with the spiritual. Through offering engaging and compelling religious education programming, we will instill and support a deeper understanding of our Unitarian Universalist principles and sources."

2024 activities focused on deepening connections within the fellowship:
- Continued having Childrens' RE during Sunday service, utilizing the UUA's "Tapestry of Faith" curriculum. Not very frequent participation but we are always ready.
- Began an article discussion group - The Easy Readers.
- Joined with Julie Donovan to facilitate an ongoing discussion of ***The Book of Soul: 52 Paths to Living What Matters*** by Mark Nepo.
- Invited Michele Grove from Stockton UU for a hybrid "Theology, Spirituality, and Religion: Discovering Your Journey in Community" course.
- Invited Lori Erickson to discuss her book ***Every Step is Home*** after presenting at a Sunday service.
- Brought food to celebrate the Jewish holiday Shavout.

2024 activities focused on widening our community reach:
- Hosted Dr. Adib Kassas, imam at the Tri-State Islamic Center, who led multiple sessions during Ramadan to teach us about Islam and the Quran.
- Sponsored a visit to the Tri-State Islamic Center to observe weekly prayer and a tour of the mosque.
- Collaborated with the Social Action committee to host informational tables at Dubuque Pride, Juneteenth, and a Student Involvement Fair at University of Dubuque.

Proposed 2025 activities to deepen connections within the fellowship:
- Coordinate another adult RE course with Michele Grove and ask Rev. Samuel Felderman for an activity.
- Organize and facilitate "Cakes for the Queen of Heaven" curriculum.
- Create opportunities for UUFD members to join together in small group activities.
- Collaborate with other committees to renew our "Welcoming Congregation" status with the UUA.

Proposed 2025 activities to widen our community reach:
- Find activities to collaborate on with the Tri-State Islamic Center, First Congregational UCC, and maybe the churches in our Jackson Park neighborhood.
- Continuing our presence at Dubuque Pride and Juneteenth. Expand our presence to other community events.
- Host a youth/teen event.

Respectfully submitted, Cyndi Lawton, Chair

Social Action Committee

Members: Diane Baker (Liaison), Frank Ebersold, JoEllen Langerman, Cyndi Lawton, Tam Prenosil (Chair)

Charity Recap: The committee polled the congregation in 2023 to determine which charities to include in our plate collection. Half of the non-designated cash collected is given to a charity.

- Jan/Feb - Dream Center - $379.00
- March/April - Dubuque Rescue Mission – $510
- May/ June – Presentation Lantern Center - $630
- July/August – Dubuque for Refugee Children - $614
- Sept/Oct - Crescent Community Health (bus passes) -
- Nov/Dec - Iowa Legal Aid -
- Dubuque Food Pantry - $50.75

Collaboration with other organizations:
Iowa Unitarian Universalist Witness Advocacy Network (IUUWAN):

- Wrote and received a $250 grant to purchase Swag for the Dubuque Pride Event on June 1, 2024
- Wrote postcards to Climate Voters in Wisconsin urging them to vote and also to remind their friends and family to vote
- Accepted stickers to encourage people to become familiar with Project 2025 and its policy agendas
- Amy Ressler gave a presentation regarding *Street Theater* and how it might be used to promote social justice issues
- Registered for the UUA Climate Revival program (free to small congregations in Iowa). Discussion program in December 2024 with a Sunday Sermon on January 5, 2025
- Submitted pictures of UUFD members at events to the IUUWAN website and Facebook pages

Dubuque Area Congregations United (DACU):

- Tam Prenosil became President-elect in February
- UUFD lent DACU six banquet tables for the Juneteenth event in Jackson Park on June 15 so DACU could garner interest in DACU activities and promote awareness of Homelessness.
- DACU purchased a loom to weave mats for homeless people and will let other congregations borrow it. All congregations were encouraged to ask members to start saving grocery bags which UUFD did.
- UUFD members participated in the October 22 event at Immanuel United Church of Christ where about 70 community members sorted, folded, cut, wove strips of plastic grocery bags to make mats.
- Promoted UUFD at the DACU annual picnic on August 27 at the Arboretum along with Protestant, Jewish, Muslim and Catholic denominations.
- Due to a decline in the number of members of the Crop Walk committee, there was not a Crop Walk event in Fall 2024. The Social Action Committee petitioned the UUFD Board to make a contribution to DACU so there will be a contribution to Church World Services from Dubuque this year.
- UUFD members were part of a planning committee to have an Interfaith Thanksgiving Service on the Sunday before Thanksgiving at Resurrection Church.
- Tam proposed publicizing a showing of ***Common Ground*** to DACU congregations since she purchased the DVD.
- Tam participated in the Dubuque Interfaith Green Coalition (DIGC) celebration of *Season of Creation* an annual global Christian celebration from September 1 to October 4 to care for our common home which is in response to Pope Francis's Laudato Si'. The DIGC meets in odd numbered months on the second Sunday in the afternoon.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP):

- Publicized events in the UUFD newsletter.
- Members attend the Freedom Fund Banquet every year. This Year the date is November 23 at noon at the Diamond Jo Casino
- There was no BBQ in DBQ this year because the organization was focused on celebrating the 35th anniversary of the group in Dubuque.

Jackson Park Neighborhood Association:

- Frank Ebersold represents the UUFD at the monthly meetings held at the Lacy Mansion and has helped with publicizing events

Other:

- Affixed a rainbow sticker to the UUFD outside sign to show we are welcoming congregation.
- Collaborated with the Dubuque Coalition for Non-Violence to promote and participate in the Die In event at Washington Park on September 25, 2024, with UUFD members depicted as splattered with blood for media coverage
- Promoted and attended the October 8, 2024 Human Trafficking event at University of Dubuque.
- Promoted an opportunity to write to Theisen's Home, Farm and Auto stores urging them to stops selling a Glock Trump Edition of a 9mm semi-automatic pistol
- Members participated in the Hunger Outreach program on September 25, 2024 at the Lacy Mansion in which about 175 cars drive through to pick up 10,000 pounds of food
- Participated in the City of Dubuque Adopt-a-Spot Program and cleaned Jackson Park on the last Sunday of the month from Spring through Fall
- Advertised the *Right to Read* event at Carnegie Stout Public Library on March 21, 2024
- Ordered and purchased (with contributions from the Membership and RE Committees) a pull-up banner to promote our church at events
- Tabling events: Pride on June 1 (rained), Juneteenth on June 15, Coalition for Non-Violence June 22 (rained), International Day of Peace at Loras College on September 19.
- Showed the documentary ***Common Ground*** on July 24 in the UUFD Fellowship Hall about sustainable agriculture and its potential to positively impact climate change, clean water initiatives and human health.

Respectfully submitted by Tam Prenosil, Chair

Teams and Work Groups

TEAMS

Communications Team

- **Members:** Cyndi Hartley, Facebook Coordinator and Newsletter Coordinator; Tom Griep, Alyssa Zasada, and RRS Stewart, Website Coordinators
- **Purpose:** To keep members, friends, our extended Fellowship network, and visitors informed of current information and events within the congregation, community, and UUA.

Historic District Coffee House Team

- **Members:** Art Roche and Karen Buechele, Stage Co-Hosts; RRS Stewart, Stage Manager
- **Purpose:** Provide an opportunity for musicians and performers at all levels to share their talents.

Leadership Team

- **Members:** Board of Trustees members, Committee chairs
- **Purpose:** Develop a shared understanding of purpose, priorities, and roles; work together to serve the congregation; collaborate when there may be opportunities to pool resources.

Music Team

- **Members:** Katie Heil, Maureen Leytem, Alyssa Zasada, Unitarian Universalist Ukulele Union (UUUU) members, Bob Dunn, Music Coordinator
- **Purpose:** Coordinate music for Sunday services; lead weekly UUUU sessions.

Tech Team

- **Members:** Frank Ebersold, Tom Griep, Katie Heil, RRS Stewart
- **Purpose:** Work with Program Committee members to prepare for Sunday services; assist participants with connecting; serve as host for services – run slides, manage mute/unmute status.

WORK GROUPS

Construction Oversight Work Group

- **Members:** Marian Maciej-Hiner and Jerry Guenther (co-leads), Linda Ressler, Joe Keyes, Frank Potter, RRS Stewart
- **Purpose:** Work with UUFD Board and historic renovation experts to fine-tune project plans, serve as primary contact. Determine relevant information for reports on financial and construction activity.

Fundraising Work Group

- **Members:** Katie Heil (lead), Calvin Gatch, Marian Maciej-Hiner, Wendy Woodhouse
- **Purpose:** Work with the UUFD Board and Finance Committee to coordinate and implement fundraising campaigns and projects to generate funds through grantwriting and solicitations.

Interior Design Work Group

- **Members:** Diane Baker and Gail Guenther (co-leads), Sandy Nickel, Julia Omarzu, Merilyn Tommaro, Sara Zaccaro
- **Purpose:** Work with the UUFD Board and Buildings & Grounds Committee to coordinate furnishings of the interior of the UUFD buildings in a functional, cost-effective, and aesthetic manner.

Board Elections

Thanks to **the Nominations Committee** for seeking candidates for the open Board positions – Amy Ressler, Chair; Wendy Woodhouse; and Jo Ellen Langerman. If there are no additional nominations from the floor, this Slate of Nominees will be presented at the Annual Meeting:

- **Treasurer for Two (2) Years:** Jerry Guenther
- **Trustee for Two (2) Years:** Gail Guenther
- **Trustee for One (1) Year:** Anne Benda

Statements of Interest from Nominees

Treasurer (2-year term)

- **Jerry Guenther:** In continuing to be your Treasurer, I can help provide continuity with the major projects already underway. It would also be gratifying to continue being a part of the Fellowship leadership during this exciting time.

Trustee (2-year term)

- **Gail Guenther**: If elected to serve on the UUFD Board, I look forward to sharing my time and talents with the fellowship that means so much to me.

Trustee (1-year term)

- **Anne Benda:** During covid I had a lot of time to be alone and think. I have always had a healthy sense of the brevity of life but the isolation turned my energy towards clarifying the future should I be fortunate to experience it. Searching out more fulfilling spiritual guidance and community, I found UU in Dubuque. It did not take me long to realize I found the place and people for me. There is still a lot for me to learn about our UU congregation. When I was asked to be on the Board, I questioned whether I could contribute as such a newcomer. I can promise I will prepare myself as best I can and commit myself to the tasks at hand. I am eager to learn. Mostly I look forward to having more interaction with the people of UU in new and meaningful ways. As a dear friend said when I questioned the fact I was still new “You won’t be after a year.”