



Cedar Valley UU

# 2023 Annual Report

Cedar Valley Unitarian Universalists

# 2023 Annual Report

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# 2023 Annual Meeting Agenda

May 21, 2023, 11:15 a.m.

Meeting to be held following Sunday's service, in the sanctuary at the CVUU building. An online attendance option through the Zoom platform will be available.

Call to Order

\*Approval of Agenda

\*Approval of Minutes from May 22, 2022 Annual Meeting

\*Election

- 2023-2024 Board
- 2023-2024 Nominating Committee
- 2023-2024 Budget

\*By-Law Change: See separate document

Article II Proposed Changes Straw Poll

Process to Select Beneficiaries of Social Action Plate Collections

Minister's Report

President's Report

CVUU Special Thank Yous

Passing the Baton

\*Action items

# 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes

Held May 22, 2022, 11:15 a.m., in-person and over Zoom

Stephenie Steege, Secretary

**Attendance:** 41 members attended (19 Sanctuary & 24 Zoom).

**Agenda:** By-law change removed from agenda due to it being a late addition that needs to be posted at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting. Remaining agenda stands as written.

**Approval of Minutes from the May 23, 2021 Annual Meeting:** Sheri Huber-Otting moves to pass as written. Jess Lieb seconds. Unanimously approved.

## **Election & Budget Vote Results – All passed**

- **Board elections:** Karen Impola moves that we vote on the proposed Board Nominees. Del Carpenter seconds. The votes for the new Board were counted.
  - In-person Votes: 18 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain; Online Votes: 19 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain;  
**Total Votes:** 37 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain for the following:
    - President – Sheri Huber-Otting (1<sup>st</sup> year)
    - Vice President – Karen Impola (1<sup>st</sup> year)
    - Finance – Mary Kay Madsen (2<sup>nd</sup> year)
    - Secretary – Rob Boody (1<sup>st</sup> year)
    - (Trustee) Social Action – Lizzy O’Loughlin (1<sup>st</sup> term, 1<sup>st</sup> year)
    - (Trustee) Building and Grounds – Dennis Harbaugh (1<sup>st</sup> term, 1<sup>st</sup> year)
    - (Trustee) Religious Education & Programs – Desiree Cunningham (1<sup>st</sup> term, 1<sup>st</sup> year)
    - (Trustee) Congregational Life – Stacey Bartz (2<sup>nd</sup> year of vacant position)
- **Nominating committee election:** The Nominating Committee moves to accept Michaela Rich for a second term on the Nominating Committee. Mandy Boody seconds. The votes were counted.
  - In-person Votes: 19 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain; Online Votes: 20 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain;  
**Total Votes:** 39 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain for the following:
    - Michaela Rich (2<sup>nd</sup> term, 1<sup>st</sup> year)
    - Existing members, not up for election: Floralyn Groff, Heather Flory
- **2022-2023 Budget:** The Finance Committee moves to accept that we vote on the proposed FY 2022-2023 budget. Lynn Brant seconds. The votes were counted.
  - In-person votes: 19 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain; Online Votes: 21 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain;  
**Total Votes:** 40 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain.

## **Process to Select Beneficiaries of Social Action Plate**

- Vote online for your favorite organizations by June 30th

**Minister's Report (Pastor Emma Peterson) – see report for details**

- Thanks and gratitude!

**President's Report (Karen Impola) – see report for details**

- Reflections on changes due to COVID
- Support of Pastor Emma as she continues her UUA credential requirements.
- Welcoming a new Coordinator of Children's Religious Education, Kate Dembinski.
- Thank yous

**Passing the Baton** – transfer of Presidential role from Karen Impola to Sheri Huber-Otting.

**CVUU Special Thank Yous** – Time spent recognizing many aspects of being part of the CVUU! Thank you to everyone.

**Adjourned** – Heather Flory moves to adjourn. Russ Campbell seconds. Unanimously approved.

# Minister's Report

Pastor Emma Peterson

Each spring, the CVUU gathers to review the year behind us, and prepare for the year ahead. In many ways, I consider this past church year to be one of healing. We have returned to the in-person company of one another, while remaining committed to sustaining virtual gathering space. This year has been full of joys, with a few sorrows. We lost two longtime members, Damon Gross and Donna Kroeger, in the summer of 2022. Our Beloved Community came together to recognize the lives of each of them, and we scattered Damon's ashes on our property. Our programs are flourishing, our committees are working diligently, and we've seen the resurrection of our children and yoUUth programming! We accomplished a historic stewardship campaign, ensuring equitable pay for our staff and minister. We've added sixteen new members to our rolls. And, this congregation ordained me as the Reverend Emma Peterson! We continue to journey alongside one another, building and sustaining this remarkable place. I am, as always, grateful and humbled to be this congregation's minister. Without further ado, here is my yearly list of gratitude.

## **Joys and Gratitudes:**

The Annual Report offers the minister an opportunity to express thanks and gratitude for the multitude of volunteers who shape, nurture, and sustain the CVUU. "Team work makes the dream work" is one of my favorite cliches for a reason – it is deeply true. From our paid staff, to the leadership of our Board, to the committees and task forces, to the thousands of small, collaborative gestures from so many people – the CVUU is the interdependent web incarnate. If you aren't already, I encourage you to get involved in the inner-workings of our congregation. Each of us is responsible for our collective thriving. Below are my thank-yous to the leadership of the CVUU. You make Church possible, and for that we are all deeply grateful.

## **Staff**

**Jess Lieb, Music Director:** Watching you work is such a joy. I get so excited every time you write yet another "Jess original." I know you've worked tremendously hard this year, from our holiday programming, to my ordination service. Your work is a ministry, through and through. Thank you for choosing this place, and for the ways you enrich and sustain our individual and collective spiritual growth. Thank you.

**Kat Beane Hanson, Office Administrator:** You. Are. A. Wizard. I will never cease to be in awe of the work you do. I have learned so much from you! You have strengthened and polished our organization. Thank you for your professionalism, attention to detail, and

abundantly positive attitude. I truly can't express with words how abundantly grateful I am (and we all are) for you! Thank you.

**Kate Flynn, Director of Children's RE:** Observing your work has been such a joy. Thank you for breathing life back into our children's programming, for building a stellar team of support, and for consistently demonstrating Good Church. I know you've poured your very Soul into this endeavor. What an honor to witness your unfolding formation. You have made this a better community, and I am so grateful. Thank you.

### **The Board**

**Sheri Huber-Otting, Board President:** Sheri, thank you for taking the plunge and agreeing to be our president this year! It has been a joy and a pleasure to work with you. Thank you.

**Thank you to all of the members of the CVUU Board:** Karen Impola, Vice President; Rob Boody, Secretary of the Board; Mary Kay Madsen, Finance liaison; Lizzy O'Loughlin, Social Action liaison; Desiree Cunningham, REAP liaison; Ken Taylor, RSC liaison; Floralyn Groff, Shared Ministry liaison; Dennis Harbaugh, Building and Grounds liaison, Stacey Bartz, Congregational Life liaison.

### **Newsletter**

**Gerry Chamberlin:** Gerry, you are the historical record keeper of our congregation. Your work is a remarkable service to this community, and I look forward to reading the newsletter each month. Thank you for your creativity, attention to detail, and love and care for the CVUU. If only we realized the many, many times your keen eye "saved the day." I hope you know how tremendously you have influenced and nurtured this community. Thank you.

### **Zoom Techs and Sanctuary Tech Team**

We continue to accomplish amazing technological feats! We grow in caliber on the daily, and I am so excited to see how we continue to sharpen our skills and delivery. I can confidently say we are in a league of our own. Amazing work! Thank you.

**Ken Taylor, Lead:** Ken, you literally built us an internet network from scratch. I can't begin to calculate the hours you've spent improving our congregation's technology. Thank you for your time, effort, and care for the CVUU. Thank you, also, for the ways you demonstrate "Good Church." You have shown me grace and persistence, and for that I thank you.

**Steve Chamberlin, Lead:** Steve, thank you for continuing to keep us all connected. Knowing you're at the helm of our Zoom team has relieved a lot of stress from my daily work. I so appreciate you! Thank you.

**Thank you to all Zoom Techs and Worship Techs:** Mike Knapp, Karen Impola, Dave Nation, Leigh Zeitz, Austin Evens, Bill Brown, Mandy Boody, Ken Taylor, and Nate Smith.

### **Stewardship Committee**

Remarkable. Historic. Miraculous, even? This year's Stewardship Campaign embodied the values of the CVUU. Thank you for your dedication, love, care, and commitment to the flourishing of the CVUU. Thank you to the members of this year's Stewardship team: Heather Flory, Michaela Rich, Karen Impola, and Mandy Boody.

### **Religious Services Council**

I am consistently amazed by the caliber of the RSC and the worship team. This year, for me, has been one of renewal, reawakening, and inspiration. Thank you all, for hours of rehearsals, your creative ideas, inspiring meetings, and creation of sacred space.

**Mandy Boody, Chair:** Your leadership has transformed this Council. I knew you'd have a knack for this work, but I continue to be amazed by your intelligence, eye for detail, creative spirit, and (lay) pastoral skills. You have settled my spirit, healed my heart, and helped me to calm my on-fire nervous system after three years of Pandemic Ministry. Working with you is always a joy. Thank you.

**Worship Team and Worship Associates:** Mandy Boody, Jess Lieb, John Miller, Dick Warhol, Ken Taylor, Kathi Bower, Karen Impola, Lynn Brant.

### **Social Action Council**

What a fun year! I am consistently impressed by this Council's dedication to Social Justice efforts, and I've enjoyed watching this Council evolve in its mission and approach. I am consistently impressed by the breadth of issues the Social Action Council brings to the attention of our members, and the creative ways you engage our membership. (The Penny Poll was especially fun!) Thank you!

**Austin Evens, Chair:** I've enjoyed witnessing your leadership so much. Thank you for all of the passion and lay leadership you've brought to the CVUU. Thank you.

**Thank you to all members of the Social Action Council:** Al Hays, Pam Hays, Lizzy O'Loughlin, Austin Evens, Priscilla Nieman, Carollyn Hartsfield, Sally Brown, Sheri Huber-Otting, Kathi Bower, Shirley Whiteside, Byron Plumley.

### **Shared Ministry Council**

I am deeply grateful for the work of the Shared Ministry Council. This is the Council that takes the pulse of the congregation, influences and supports healthy congregational culture,

mediates conflict when called to do so, trains church leaders, and encourages all of us to build Beloved Community. I am moved by the care the members of this Council demonstrate as they tend to our congregation, and personally indebted for their advocacy and protection of the health of the ministry. Thank you for your tremendously good and imperative work.

**Heather Flory, Chair:** I believe you've truly found your calling in chairing this Council. Thank you for your hours of work, and the many visible and invisible contributions you've made to ensuring the health of the CVUU. I learn from you each time we connect. I am so, so grateful for you. Thank you.

**Thank you to all members of the Shared Ministry Council:** Del Carpenter, Floralyn Groff, Pam Hays, Deb Kyler, Nancie Groszkruger.

### **Congregational Life**

I am so inspired by the creative work of this Council! The way you've collectively managed to sustain and nurture a welcoming environment, even as we've navigated multi-platform gathering, is a wonderful thing to witness. From hospitality, to marketing, to our Caring Team, Congregational Life keeps Good Church alive. Thank you, all, for your care and nurturing of our community as it grows.

**Juanita Williams, Chair:** Thank you for your leadership on this Council. Your enthusiasm and dedication to the CVUU are wonderful things to witness. Your ability to connect with people is truly a gift, and we are all so grateful you choose to share it with us! Thank you for your leadership on this Council, and for your presence in our congregation. Thank you for engaging volunteers, and making sure each visitor feels fully welcomed, whether they are online or in-person. I am so grateful for all you bring to the CVUU. Thank you.

**Thank you to all members of the Congregational Life Council:** Mica Lorenz, Mike Knapp, Dan Bower, Stacey Bartz, and Leigh Zeitz.

### **Building and Grounds**

Thank you for continuing to maintain and care for our building. Thank you for all you do to keep our building safe, clean, and well managed. Your work often occurs behind the scenes but does not go unnoticed. From the new window in my office door, to woobly railings, to big jobs like arranging to secure an outdoor staircase, the building would \*literally\* fall apart if it weren't for all of you. Thank you.

**Roger Hahn, Chair:** Roger, I'm sure there are countless projects you've completed without my awareness. Thank you for all of the ways you take care of our home!

**Thank you to all members of the Building and Grounds Council:** Dennis Harbaugh, Bill Brown, and Roger Hahn.

## **REAP Council**

It is a tremendous joy to see this Council reconvened. Thank you for never giving up on nurturing and supporting our children and yoUUth. The best is yet to come.

**Thank you to all members of the REAP Council:** Desiree Cunningham, Jeff Chapin, and Kelly Fischer.

## **Finance Council**

This is the Council that keeps our budget balanced and ensures the continued thriving and financial health of the CVUU. We've overcome challenges and met considerable goals. Thank you.

## **Personnel Council**

We were once a congregation with a minister and one or two very part-time staff. We are now a congregation with a full-time minister and three staff, two of whom are part-time benefitted. The work of this Council ensures the professionalism of the organization, and protects both the staff and the congregation. Thank you all for your support of our staff, your advocacy, and your care of the community.

**Karen Impola, Chair:** Thank you for your strong advocacy of our staff, as we continue to grow as a professional organization. Thank you.

**Thank you to all members of the Personnel Council:** Mike Knapp, Desiree Cunningham, Karen Impola.

## **Nominating Committee**

We've seen a lot of transition this year! Finding a new board president, and various shifts in leadership has meant challenging work for this group during an already challenging time. Thank you for your service to the CVUU!

**Thank you to all members of the Nominating Committee:** Heather Flory, Karen Impola, Floralyn Groff, and Michaela Rich.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

This year, our church theme was "New Growth from Deep Roots." We have truly embodied that theme. I am proud, I am awed, I am humbled. I cannot wait to see where we are going, as we continue to persist as a beacon of spiritually-centered, progressive, inclusive, justice-focused Beloved Community in the Cedar Valley. Iowa needs this place now more than ever. It is an honor to accompany you along the journey. Thank you. Amen and Blessed Be.

# President's Report

Sheri Huber-Otting

This past year has been busy for the CVUU Board of Trustees. We have worked on many items this year. Here I will highlight those of most importance. Individual council and committee reports will likely include more details about each item.

The Board developed the new theme for the year, New Growth from Deep Roots, and has used this theme throughout the year as an inspiration and directive for our actions.

The Board adopted a new memorial policy brought forth by the Building and Grounds Council. This policy covers what happens with undesignated memorial donations, cremation ashes, and bench, tree, and shrub requests.

The Board held many discussions about building security and adopted some new changes, including changing the locks and adopting a key issuance policy moving forward.

The Board and Finance Council handled the insurance claim for our building break-in last fall. I am very grateful to Mike Knapp and all who helped in this process.

The Board held a special congregational meeting to adopt the spirit of the 8<sup>th</sup> principle language brought forth by Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU).

The Board passed a motion to promote our CCRE Kate Flynn to DCRE with a pay raise that the position engenders. On that note, I have seen a steady increase in the number of youths attending the services, which is great to see, and Kate is doing a great job.

The Board members and their respective committees worked hard to identify needed changes in the bylaws and worked to pass them so they can be presented for a vote to the congregation at the annual meeting. These changes have been sent via email and will be available to view prior to the annual meeting.

The CVUU Board voted to charter the Boy Scout Troop 44. This charter enables the CVUU to use the Scouting program under adult leadership they approve of to accomplish its objectives and serve the organization's youth and families. Board Member Ken Taylor is our Chartered Organization Representative.

I appreciate the hard work of the Board and the committees this year, and I am hopeful for the future of the CVUU.

Proposed Bylaws Changes  
**Copied from the April 2023 Newsletter**

*Bylaw Changes Passed by the Board*

**[NOTE: all words struck out (~~word~~) are deletions, underlined are additions and all changes are shown in bold.]**

ARTICLE IX – DUTIES OF THE BOARD MEMBERS

Finance Director

The finance director **or Finance Council designee** shall **serve as a liaison to the Board.** **They will** report all income and expenses of the Congregation to the Board and the Congregation; and maintain financial records that represent the funds, property, or liabilities of the Congregation. The finance director shall serve as chair of the Finance Council; collect proposed budget requests from all councils and committees; submit a draft of the proposed operating budget to the Board; and submit a yearly financial report at the annual Congregational Meeting.

**[Shared Ministry Council updates below for Article XI and XIV]**

ARTICLE XI - COUNCILS & COMMITTEES

A. Councils

6. Shared Ministry Council

The mission of the Shared Ministry Council is to enhance the overall quality of the shared ministry of the CVUU by working with the minister and the Congregation to collaborate and support each other in shared leadership. This includes having regular meetings with the minister, assessing the health of the Congregation through surveys or other means, resolving conflicts for members who cannot do so on their own, and facilitating opportunities for members to develop the necessary skills to participate in shared leadership (e.g.: any training needed to help resolve conflicts). **In addition, each year, the Shared Ministry Council will work with the minister, with input from the Religious Services Council chair and Board president, to review the relationship between the minister and congregation and discuss successes, challenges, and areas for future improvement.**

C. Advisory Committees

1. Ministerial Review Committee

**DELETE THIS SECTION – A special committee would no longer need to be formed each year. The review process would instead fall under the purview of the Shared Ministry Council. [subsequent sections to be renumbered]**

#### ARTICLE XIV – MINISTRY

##### A. Duties of the minister

The duties of the minister shall be as prescribed in a Ministerial Covenant that specifies the mutual expectations between the minister and the Congregation. Each year, the minister shall work with the ~~Ministerial Review Committee to review the minister's performance~~ **Shared Ministry Council to review the relationship between the minister and congregation** and discuss successes, challenges, and areas for future improvement. **In this collaborative annual conversation**, the minister will work with the ~~committee~~ **Shared Ministry Council** to set personal ministerial goals for the coming year and provide input on suggested updates to the Ministerial Covenant and compensation package (in coordination with the Finance Council) to reflect these goals. As part of this annual review process, once the updated ~~covenant~~ **addendum that is part of the agreement** is finalized and approved by the Board, the minister shall sign the updated ~~covenant~~ **addendum** together with the Board president. The minister shall be an ex-officio non-voting member of the Board and any other councils or committees.

**[Now we are back to other changes not from the SMC]**

#### ARTICLE XII – FISCAL MATTERS

##### E. Reallocation of Funds

In the event of an emergency or should a budgeted line item **in the general fund** exceed its authorized spending level, the Board may reallocate funds, as long as the total reallocation does not exceed five (5%) of the operating budget in any fiscal year.

##### H. **Audit Financial Review**

The general operational and endowment funds of the Congregation shall receive an annual financial review or limited audit. An objective person who is not a member of the Finance Council, and whenever possible, a nonmember shall perform the financial review or limited audit. The Finance Director shall arrange for the financial review or limited audit at the end of the fiscal year; and shall report to the Board and to the congregation at the next annual Congregational Meeting. The annual financial review or limited audit shall be available for inspection by members of the congregation.

#### ARTICLE XVII – AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be revised or amended by a majority vote of eligible members present at **any an annual or Special Congregational** meeting legally called for that purpose. These bylaws may not be amended in any manner that would exclude the Congregation from qualifying as an exempt corporation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or any corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Code.

#### ARTICLE XVIII – DISSOLUTION

Any action to dissolve this Congregation must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of eligible members present at a **Special Congregational** meeting legally called to specifically consider such action; notice shall have been given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws. In the case of dissolution of the Congregation, all of its property, real and personal, after paying all just claims upon it, shall be conveyed to and vested in the UUA, or its legal successor.

## Communications Report

Kat Beane Hanson, Office Administrator

Here are some ways I've been working on digital communications at the CVUU:

- Website – Thanks to the generosity of the Finance Council and Pastor Emma, I was able to enroll in a Web Development class online through Hawkeye Community College this year. As of this writing, the class is still ongoing, but I am learning a lot of useful skills that I hope to put into practice with the CVUU's website in the summer of 2023.
- Facebook Page – Our public Facebook page is like a bulletin board for the CVUU. Now that we've returned to having more activities in-person, I am grateful and excited to have more activities to promote. If you want me to promote your CVUU event, activity, or group, please let me know and we'll work together to make a social media campaign.
- Facebook Group – Our private Facebook group is a vital source of online community for our congregation. Though most of the actual content is driven by the members of the community, I have worked in collaboration with Pastor Emma to make sure the group remains a safe and secure place for people to share their content. I always encourage folks to promote their own CVUU activities there.
- Instagram – Our Instagram is a great way to show off our in-person events. When I have photos from our events, I post them there.
- Soul Matters Social Media Toolkit – This year, I purchased the social media toolkit that's developed as a companion to Soul Matters, and I've been posting weekly on our public-

facing Facebook and Instagram. These posts are popular, particularly on Instagram, and drive good engagement from our audience.

- YouTube – The messages from our Sunday services are distributed on this platform. We only have a handful of subscribers, but our most popular video this year got 66 views.
- Sunday Messages Podcast – I edit and host a podcast of messages from our Sunday services.
  - This year alone, our podcast has been downloaded more than 200 times.
  - The reach of our podcast is global – in addition to local listeners, our messages were heard in Germany, the UK, France, and Japan this year.
- Visitor and New Member Documents – I work with Congregational Life to make digital documents for visitors and new members.

I am continually looking for ways to grow and enhance our online presence. Ways I'm hoping to do more of that this year include the following:

- Upgrades to the CVUU website!
- Highlighting in-person activities on our social media platforms, especially photos from our events.
- I have several ideas for fun social media campaigns, and I'll need volunteers for this! Let me know if you'd like to be involved in a social media video series. I promise to make it fun!

Watch our website and social media platforms for these updates – and more!

If CVUU folks are looking for an easy way to help support this work, the easiest way is to **take pictures!** Getting together with your small group? Take a picture! Love the décor on Sunday morning? Take a picture! See some pollinator garden plants in bloom? Take a picture! Volunteering in the community with other UUs? Take a picture! Send your pictures to me via email at [office@cedarvalleyuu.org](mailto:office@cedarvalleyuu.org) or through Google Photos to [cedarvalleyuu@gmail.com](mailto:cedarvalleyuu@gmail.com) or however you can think to deliver them – Dropbox, other file sharing system, or if all else fails, bring me a flash drive. We all know a picture is worth a thousand words, and photos and videos get the best reach on social media. Let's be intentional this year about showing folks what fun, interesting, and meaningful time we spend together.

## Newsletter Report

### Gerry Chamberlin

The CVUU newsletter is published eleven times per year, with the summer months of June and July combined into one issue. The size ranges from seven to twelve sides per issue; this

variation reflects the time of year and the number of activities happening at the church in a given month.

We have several ways members/friends can choose to receive the newsletter/newsletter calendar. They can: 1) receive a paper copy via first class mail, 2) pick up a paper copy at the church, or 3) have the Office Administrator send PDFs to their Inbox, or 4) be notified by the Office Administrator via email when the files are available at the website; it's also available via a link at the end of the Weekly Updates. For members opting to pick up their paper copy at the church, the copies are there a day or two prior to the last Sunday of the month.

Currently, between twenty-five and thirty copies are printed at Copyworks each issue. The distribution is as follows: approximately ten are sent first class postage; one each goes to the Minister, Administrator and the DCRE; one is saved for the archives; the remainder are divided up at the CVUU between the acrylic holder on the north/entry wall, and a box on the table at the foot of the stairs in the Fellowship Hall.

*Members responsible for seeing to newsletter details and more –*

Editor: Gerry Chamberlin

Maintaining an on time schedule remains a high priority for me so that each issue is ready promptly. I spend many hours with editing, formatting, layout, and seeing that the final copy is to the printer. After picking copies up from Copyworks, there is stapling and folding for those copies to be left at the church. The post office hasn't allowed staples for several years, so those being mailed are folded and taped (four pieces on the three open sides); mailing labels are attached (provided by the office each issue), and stamps are added. Most months one first-class stamp is adequate, but weight is checked at the PO for issues that have six pages or more.

After the printing and prepping of the paper copies is complete, I make a PDF of that month's files (newsletter and calendar) to send to Kat for the website and to distribute via email to the membership.

Monthly deadlines are always established ahead of time and published in each issue – on the calendar page and in the Newsletter Deadline article. There are e-mail addresses on the *calendar page* for contacting the Editor (newsletter items) and Office Administrator (Calendar/Order of Service items). At deadline time each month, Kat and I are in communication often to be sure that, to the best of our knowledge, information being sent out is correct and current.

Assistant Editor: Steve Chamberlin

Steve is my invaluable computer guru. Since December 2004, we have done the entire newsletter on the computer. He continues to assist with computer dilemmas/problems, lending advice as the need arises. He is a helpful "second set of eyes" for proofing, and often helps with the folding of the paper copies.

Calendar: Kat Beane Hanson

Each month, Kat sends me the calendar the day prior to the newsletter deadline. She collects Sunday service, committee meeting, and event information from committees/chairs and enters all of it into a computer calendar version that she emails to me (which becomes page two of the paper newsletter). This is no small task! Kat also updates the labels monthly and prints a copy for me at deadline time for mailing purposes.

First Class Postage (no Bulk Mail): Since August 2011 we have only used first class mail. Although it can vary a bit, most often we send ten copies each issue at the first-class rate.

Copyworks: Brock, and occasionally Kyle or Jon, see that the newsletter is printed and ready for me to pick up in a short turn-around time. They are very good to us in this respect, for which I am most grateful working on a deadline!

Contributors: Without contributors, we would have no newsletter! Articles are mostly sent to me via email. For the most part, members are conscientious about making the deadlines so that we are able to keep this publication on schedule, and that is much appreciated!

## Building & Grounds Council Report

Dennis Harbaugh, Board Trustee

Council Members: Roger Hahn, Bill Brown, Dennis Harbaugh (Board Liaison)

The Building & Grounds Council is responsible for maintaining the CVUU grounds, property, and building. During the past year, the Council:

- 1) Helped coordinate the CVUU response when our building was broken into, including cleaning up the broken glass, sealing up the broken window space, ordering and installing a replacement window, having all the outside door locks re-keyed, and identifying items which has been taken from the building.
- 2) Obtained bids, vetted, and signed a contract with a cleaning service to clean heavily-used parts of our building on an every-other-week basis upon our return to regular Sunday services following the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3) Temporarily repaired & stabilized the landing, railing, and steps outside the east balcony exit. Obtained estimates and received approval to have the stairs and landing rebuilt.
- 4) Composed a CVUU Memorial Policy, which was adopted by the Board. This policy includes a specific process for handling memorial donations, cremation ash wishes, and

a variety of requests for memorials on CVUU grounds. A policy amendment establishing a Memorial Plaque is being drafted.

- 5) Provided input to the Building Security Subcommittee, which is preparing a plan to increase the safety of our staff and security of our building.

### **Additional examples of the Council's ongoing work over the past 12 months:**

#### **Building**

- Dealt with frozen pipes in the Fellowship Hall, and provided a portable electric heater with an oil-based radiator for the Fellowship Hall bathroom to prevent future problems.
- Coordinated replacement of the broken, 26-year-old water heater.
- Fixed a leak in the nursery sink drain.
- Arranged to have the Pastor's office and Fellowship Hall fumigated after an outbreak of bugs.
- Repaired/replaced one of the black sliding panels above the Administrator's office window which had rotted out.
- Replaced the broken Fellowship Hall dehumidifier.
- Bill and Moria refinished, painted, and completed signage on the Fellowship Hall and Main Entrance doors; they also sanded, primed, and painted the door from the sanctuary balcony to the outside stairs.
- Ordered and installed a piece of tempered glass in Pastor Emma's office door.
- Changed some lights inside the building to LED for better energy efficiency.
- Changed the thermostats as necessary for each season. Replaced filters in the air purifiers and furnaces on a regular schedule, and changed batteries in the smoke detectors.
- Refastened a loose railing along the stairs to the upstairs classrooms.
- A screen and projector in the Fellowship Hall was set up to broadcast the Zoom version of each Sunday service in "real time," which allows those preparing for Coffee Hour to see and hear the service while working in the kitchen or Fellowship Hall.
- The Sound Board was rewired, labeled, and color coded. Ken Taylor wired the piano lapel mic so it doesn't require a stand, which allows the piano to be easily moved.

#### **Grounds**

- To improve safety lighting on the property had the yard light along the north side of the parking lot repaired, and added a motion-detector light outside the east Fellowship Hall entrance.
- Trimmed the bushes on the east side of the building, cut down volunteer trees on the property, and hauled this material, other clippings and brush to the yard waste center.
- Obtained estimates and hired a company to cut and remove dangerous tree limbs from CVUU grounds.

- Maintained the riding and push lawn mowers, recruited lawn mowing volunteers, and coordinated the lawn mowing schedule.
- Coordinated snow removal, shoveled sidewalks, and put down ice-melt when necessary.

### **Pollinator and Tree Committees**

The Pollinator and Tree Committees remained active. A sample of their activities:

- Maintained the pollinator garden.
- Mary Kay Madsen and Becca Good spread mulch around several trees on the grounds.
- Purchased 23-30 Prairie Dropseed plants to put around the Redbud trees at the front of the building.
- Hung 2 additional bird feeders.

## Accessibility Task Force (ATF) **Steve Chamberlin**

At the conclusion of the last ATF Annual Report (submitted for the 2021 report) it was stated that due to the priority at that time of dealing with the COVID-19 issues, "...the Board has decided that with an ATF recommendation ready to present, now would be a good time to pause the ATF for a while and allow all efforts to be directed at the redefinition of services and activities. This pause may be six months or more, but that will depend upon how well the transition goes."

The pause in the ATF activities lasted almost two years. However, at the March 2023 meeting, the Board unanimously agreed to ask the ATF to re-engage and continue its efforts where they left off.

Going forward, many steps need to be taken:

- Recruit new ATF team members (current members are myself, Roger Hahn, and Floralyn Groff);
- Re-engage with Mardy Holst (this may require some expenditure from the restricted donations);
- Assess if anything has changed since 2021 that would affect the plans;
- Present our status and the proposal to the congregation and solicit input for changes;
- Review and refine the proposal;
- Update cost estimates and get final approval from the congregation;
- Plan and execute a capital fund drive; and finally,
- Construction!

It is worth noting that during the pandemic, some members of the congregation have indicated their support for moving ahead on the ATF project, despite no formal plan yet being officially presented, by making unsolicited restricted donations intended to be used to address the accessibility issues. The donations thus far have totaled over \$90,000!

As stated at the end of the previous annual report before the effort was paused, and is as true now as it was then – “The ATF “Accessibility PLUS: A Future for ALL” proposal is exciting and will carry us all into the future, and at the appropriate time as determined by the Board, the ATF will be eager to present all the details and move forward with the enthusiastic support of the congregation!”

## Congregational Life Council Report

Juanita Williams

The Congregational Life Council promotes activities that contribute to the general health and spiritual growth of the congregation, including greeting, hospitality, marketing, membership, caring, and small groups. *Juanita Williams* served as the chair of the Congregational Life Council for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

- **Greeting:** The Greeting system has adapted again this year as in-person attendance at Sunday services has grown and we also maintained a strong virtual option. Jill Miller has taken on leadership of the Greeting process this year. She has helped recruit new greeters and helped set up multiple ways that Greeters can sign up to fill a spot in-person and/or virtually. She continues to be creative in her efforts to improve the Greeting process as well as help more people volunteer for the Greeting team. We have continued throughout the year to have a Greeter in-person as well as on Zoom. Both Greeters arrive 20 minutes early to greet and welcome everyone, with a special focus on newcomers and returning visitors. Again, the Zoom Greeter identifies any visitors and communicates with them in the chat, requesting contact information so we can follow-up with an email. Follow-up with in-person and/or Zoom visitors the next week includes a Welcome email including an electronic Visitor Information request form and CVUU brochure and a postcard is sent via snail mail. (As a reminder, the Visitor Information form helps us learn a little about the attendee and also add them to our mailing lists so they get the Weekly Update and Newsletter emailed to them). Dan Bower helped update the postcard we send to first-time visitors. In addition to a warm “glad you visited” message, the postcard also now includes the next date that a

returning visitor can attend a New to CVUU session to learn more about us. Kat has helped us update the CVUU documents given to visitors so they accurately reflect changes over the pandemic. Documentation of attendance has been enhanced this year so we can better track and follow-up with returning visitors and also members (and friends) who have attended infrequently.

- **Hospitality:** Linda Lechty has taken over leadership of Hospitality this past year, as Mica transitioned out of this role. As more people returned to in-person attendance, we needed to build back our coffee hour process. Our team has worked hard on this as we recognize it to be an important opportunity for visitors and members to interact and build community. Linda has helped recruit volunteers and set-up multiple systems for people to sign-up to help. She has overseen the stocking of kitchen supplies and made sure snacks were available each Sunday. Nate Smith has taken responsibility for coffee-making, and many others have helped support Linda in reactivating this vital part of our Sunday mornings.
- **Membership:** The Membership team ensures that guests, visitors, and new members are welcomed at the CVUU, and works with Shared Ministry Council to help new members get engaged and offered meaningful volunteer opportunities. Membership team members this year included: Dan Bower, Mica Lorenz, Jill Miller, Juanita Williams, and Leigh Zeitz. Stacey Bartz has been our liaison to the Board. Kat and Pastor Emma have offered input and helped promote continuity with the work of other related committees (i.e. Shared Ministry, Religious Services, and Social Action) to help us promote social interaction and connection at the CVUU. **Projects and Activities of the Membership Team included:**
  - **New to CVUU** sessions returned to in-person offerings this year. We planned and publicized 3 opportunities. These sessions include new attendees, as well as a few seasoned members to share a fuller picture of the makeup of the CVUU. The focus of each session is to help people get to know us and also for us to learn what newcomers are looking for in a “spiritual home.”
  - **I Want to be a Member** sessions transitioned back to in-person offerings this year. We offered 2 opportunities, and 16 people joined the CVUU since 2022! Welcome packets, a UU World magazine, a wooden name tag (made by Mica Lorenz) and a chalice (made by Pastor Emma) were given to new members when they signed the Membership Book.
  - Juanita coordinated the **“Meet the New Members”** project, which solicited a brief bio and picture from the new members to introduce the congregation to them. This was added to the Congregational Life monthly newsletter and also posted in the online CVUU Weekly Update.

- **Marketing:** The marketing efforts of the Membership and Marketing Committee help the congregation grow by promoting the CVUU to the larger community through the use of our website, social media, etc. Some of the accomplishments are listed below:
  - We initiated a “CVUU Elevator Speech” project and worked with Al Hays to help people write a short ditty about what they believe and why they value the CVUU. An Adult Forum on the topic, led by Al, assisted with this project.
  - We initiated and coordinated a “Bring a Friend to Church”/Welcome Back Sunday last fall. 77 people attended, including a few inactive members and newcomers.
  - Kat helped us complete the CVUU wallet/business card project.
  - Dan Bower oversaw the development and purchase of CVUU T-shirts.
  - Dan Bower and Kat have been working together to update the ICON system, in the hopes of increasing our ability to get helpful information out to our members and friends.
  - A Marketing subcommittee is developing an annual Strategic Plan that includes a calendar of CVUU dates to be aware of for outreach opportunities.
  - We adapted our Marketing strategies this year to include 2 ads in the W/CF Courier around Christmas and Easter.
  - Kat continues duties as our Webmaster, as well as our social media administrator.
- **Small groups** continue to thrive and expand and offer people opportunities to engage with others in like-minded activities.
  - We have included the current small group document to newcomers at the New to CVUU and I Want to be a Member sessions to help make them aware of the opportunities for connecting with CVUU folks with similar interests.
  - Many small groups transitioned back to in-person or hybrid. All of the groups have offered valuable opportunities to build relationships and socialize with others around shared interests.
  - Anyone interested in participating in a small group should look for the CVUU Open Groups handout in the CVUU foyer or Fellowship Hall, or view it online at <https://cedarvalleyuu.org/adult-programs/small-group-ministry/>.

## Finance Council Report

Mike Knapp

The 2022-2023 Finance Council is composed of Michael Knapp, Finance Director; Mary Kay Madsen, Endowments; Bill Brown, Collector; Jeanette Talbert, Treasurer; and David Steege and Rob Boody, At-Large Members.

## CVUU Fund Definitions

- **General Operating Funds:** General Operating funds are used to perform the usual and customary activities of the Society. Funding for the general operating budget comes primarily from the financial pledges obtained from the members and friends of the congregation during the annual Stewardship Campaign drive. Unspent general operational funds revert back to the general fund at the end of the fiscal year and are not carried over into the next unless encumbered for a specific purpose. The Board is required by CVUU bylaws to present a balanced budget to the congregation at each year's Annual Meeting for its approval and adoption.
- **Restricted Funds:** Restricted funds are those funds received and spent for a restricted purpose only (i.e., funds raised through donation for Pride Fest can only be spent for Pride Fest related expenses). Restricted funds are ongoing and do not revert back to the general fund if unspent at the end of the fiscal year. Restricted funds can only be released for general operational purposes upon release by the donor(s) or by its respective committee.
- **Capital Funds:** Capital funds are those funds designated for special projects, off budget purchases, or for costs associated with the maintenance or improvement of the property that do not fall within general operational funds or are not scheduled expenses within the Building Maintenance Reserve Fund. Funds available for such projects have been based upon donations or bequests received or through proceeds raised by special fundraising events for capital improvement projects.
- **Building Maintenance Reserve Fund (BMR):** The BMR contains those funds required for the scheduled purchase, repair or maintenance of the CVUU building, its equipment or grounds. Funding for the BMR is received from an annual allocation from the general operating budget to ensure its viability in meeting future facility related costs (furnace replacements, roof repair, parking lot repair, etc.) without holding special or emergency fundraising activities. This annual allocation is determined by direct allocation from the general fund. New facility expenses not presently a part of the Building Maintenance Reserve will be added to the schedule as those costs are incurred.

## FY2022 Financial Report

CVUU finances are tracked through IconCMO, a purchased church financial program. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022 (FY2022), the CVUU had total revenues of \$153,367 and expenditures of \$137,067, giving us a year end surplus of \$16,300 in the general operating fund. This surplus was due to staff vacancies and closure of the CVUU due to the COVID-19 pandemic during the fiscal year. Surplus funds were encumbered to fund FY23 operating budget, Minister's ordination costs, the expansion of the Director of Children's RE position costs, and other costs needed to enable the church building's readiness as we returned to in-person operations. We are currently in the fourth quarter of FY2023, the results of which will be shared with the congregation after June 30, 2023, when the current fiscal year ends.

### **FY22 Annual Fiscal Review**

Review of the FY22 financial income, expenditures, and investments for FY22 (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022) was conducted by David Steege and Rob Boody, two new additions to the Finance Council, using the UUA Financial Review guidelines. No irregularities were noted, though need for some written policies in the internal review report were noted (i.e. where check books are stored, where financial records are stored, etc.). These written policies and procedures are now being developed and will be put into place by the end of the current fiscal year.

### **FY2024 (July 2023-June 2024) Annual Pledge Campaign**

The FY24 Annual Pledge Campaign was composed of Heather Flory, Michaela Rich, Karen Impola, and Amanda Boody. This year’s theme was “New Growth from Deep Roots,” with a goal of raising \$206,550 in pledges to support the coming fiscal/program year. This pledge goal was set to support both our normal annual operating expenses, plus bring support of our Minister, two staff positions receiving benefits (Office Administrator and Director of Children’s RE), and our Music Director, in line with the new UUA Salary/Compensation guidelines. This year’s campaign was successful in raising approximately \$196,234 in direct pledges and \$6,700 in “one-time” only pledge increases for a campaign total of \$202,934, allowing us to reach both operational, minister and staff compensation goals!

<b>Pledge Year Analysis of Pledge Unit Giving</b>	<b>\$9,000+</b>	<b>\$4,500-\$8,999</b>	<b>\$2,501-\$4,499</b>	<b>\$1-\$2,500</b>
FY24 Pledge Units	5	9	15	63
% of Budget	28.8%	25.3%	24.8%	21.1%

Be sure to congratulate Heather Flory and her Stewardship team a pat on the back for a job well done when you see them!

### **CVUU Endowment Fund**

Endowment Funds are invested through the UUA Common Endowment Fund. The Endowment Fund (now combined with the Shane Fund) has appreciated in value this fiscal year to date by \$2,405.13, along with additional deposits of \$1,260.00 for a total increase in value of \$3,665.13 in 2023. Total Endowment Funds at the end of February is \$61,375.76.

### **FY23 Proposed Budget**

The following budget is proposed for the coming fiscal year (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024). This budget was presented in detail to the congregation during the Second Hour adult forum on Sunday, May 7, 2023. Costs are projected to increase due to 1) significant increases to Minister and staff compensation packages, 2) inclusion of funding for the purchase of a bi-weekly cleaning service, and 3) other increases to building costs.

Budget Category	Amount	Percent of Budget
<b>Revenue</b>		
Pledge Income	202,934	98%
Pledge Shortfall	-4,059	-2%
Other Revenues	8,351	4%
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$207,226</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Minister	91,637	44.2%
Staff	59,186	28.6%
Child Care	500	.2%
Affiliation Dues	9,222	4.5%
Building	23,577	11.4%
Building Maintenance Reserve (BMR)	7,253	3.5%
Operations	4,579	2.2%
Board/Councils	11,273	5.4%
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$207,226</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Religious Education & Programs (REAP) Council Report

Kate Flynn, Director of Children’s Religious Education

This year has been full of children’s religious education activities, and while most of them have been wildly successful, some of our results (but not our efforts!) have been less-than-stellar. That is how the courses of life, church, work and, most especially, the religious education of children tend to go, though. The victories have far outweighed any setbacks, and I am proud of the children’s religious education program we have been building – and continue to foster – together with everyone who call themselves a part of the Cedar Valley Unitarian Universalists.

The backbone of the CVUU RE program is our Sunday programming, which consists of a lesson from Soul Matters taught by me (Kate) while assisted by at least one other adult. Most Sundays, we have between three and five children, who usually range in age between five and ten years old. Each lesson begins with everyone introducing themselves, followed by an overview of the lesson, a story component (almost always in video format), follow-up questions and discussion, and then a craft or activity. Soul Matters is worth its weight in gold, and always offers relevant, diverse, and thought-provoking topics for our children to learn about.

In addition to leading children's religious education on almost every Sunday morning, I have also overseen or facilitated (or both!) a plethora of other activities, too. Camp Olympus, which ran from August 8 through August 12, 2022, was my magnum opus; I created, executed, and organized all sorts of volunteers to provide five full afternoons of Greek mythology-related games and crafts for a group of five brilliant, enthusiastic girls. It was only made possible because of the generous support from our entire congregation, and I am enormously proud of the camp we provided.

Heather Flory and I traveled to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from August 19-21, 2022, where we completed OWL training for grades 9-12. After a long weekend, jam-packed with lots of learning, we decided that given the outdated state of the OWL curricula and the time commitment required to put it on that, for now, the CVUU will not be providing OWL. Going forward, I would love to be certified for elementary-aged OWL, since that is the group that presently makes up our RE program.

October of 2022 was filled with teacher training (10/6) and the church's annual Trunk or Treat (10/30). The Trunk or Treat wasn't well-attended, but that happens sometimes! This upcoming year, with the help of Jeff Chapin, I am looking forward to doing something bigger (and better) to celebrate Halloween. Stay tuned!

On the topic of things that weren't well-attended, we attempted to restart the CVUU YoUUth Group on December 10, 2022, and nobody showed up. While this is unfortunate, I wasn't terribly surprised; congregations of all sorts are struggling to get youth into their buildings after an exhausting and traumatic pandemic experience, and I do not begrudge anyone – of any age! – who doesn't have the capacity for one more thing in their life right now. As it stands, the YoUUth Group is on ice and I am giving my time and energy to what is working, which is the five to ten year old age group that regularly attends on Sunday mornings.

Our music director, Jess Lieb, oversaw a wholesome and lovely church pageant on December 10, 2022, which included the participation of many members of the CVUU's CRE program. Pastor Emma and I played the role of co-narrators, and the feedback about this service was overwhelmingly positive.

I was promoted from CCRE to DCRE in February 2023! I had realistically been doing the work of a DCRE since I was hired, and so I appreciate the acknowledgement of my efforts via a title

upgrade and a raise. Also in February, we hosted a Valentine's Making Party (December 10, 2022), which was made possible (and therefore incredibly fun) due to an enormous amount of donated materials by our congregation. It was well-attended by UUs of all ages!

The final big activity of this year was the Easter egg hunt, which happened on April 8, 2023. A handful of dedicated volunteers came the afternoon before to help me fill the eggs, which we hid the next morning for the kids to find. A joyous, candy-filled time was had by all.

In addition to all the aforementioned activities, the REAP council began meeting regularly again! We met on November 29, February 28, March 21, and April 18, with plans to meet monthly going forward. Jeff Chapin, Desiree Cunningham, and Kelly Fischer have been invaluable and endlessly supportive of me through their dedicated service on the council. Their guidance, consultation, and words of affirmation have been invaluable, and I am profoundly grateful for their time and energy.

Overall, this last fiscal year has been one of meaningful and healthy growth for the CVUU's children's religious education program. It has been my honor and privilege to help foster and teach our fledgling UUs, with the help of lots of wonderful volunteers, the support of Pastor Emma and the staff, and the entire congregation. I am optimistic going into this next year, and I am grateful we have been successful so far; there was no guarantee this would work, and I am mindful of the amount of labor it has taken from all of us to resurrect this program. Thank you all, again and again, for your continued support.

## Religious Services Council Report

Mandy Boody

The high point of the year for the RSC was the Ordination Ceremony Service for Reverend Emma Peterson. No one had experience planning an Ordination Service, but there was no shortage of love and willingness in the RSC and almost half the congregation to come together and create a beautiful experience for Pastor Emma and ourselves. I couldn't track all the effort and donations, but of what I could note for the service was Jess Lieb's exceptional direction of the choir and Burning Heretics, amazing solos by Kat Beane Hanson, Nate Smith, and Bill Brown, Karen Impola just recovering from Covid doing a beautiful reading as well as all the support in planning she gave, Ken Taylor seamlessly taking care of the tech, and Dick Warhol who gave the Offering but even more, he listened and gave support and sanity to Pastor Emma and myself when we were in the final stages of planning. Exceptional time and resources were given by Gerry Chamberlin, Heather Flory, and Mike Knapp in planning the

party after. There were many greeters and helpers in the kitchen doing unseen work to make everything welcoming and warm.

This was a year of adjustment with a new Council chair. We continue to work on the flow of the service, considering feedback from the congregation, what topics would be needed or useful, and making adjustments to the Order of Service. We continue to think about how to make sure those on Zoom feel fully part of the service.

Jessica Lieb has provided special music most Sundays. They even wrote at least 2 original songs this year we've used in services. They patiently revived the choir after Covid and we've heard Burning Heretics several times. They found a way to have more variety than copyright allows over streaming by playing music before and after services that we don't stream, expanding the repertoire for themselves and other musicians – increasing their enjoyment and ours. They collaborate with others and lead well, such as with the Pageant and Christmas Eve service.

The tech team continues to reliably and helpfully collaborate with RSC in facilitating some of the best quality Zoom streaming of any church we are aware of, both sound and video quality. When there have been unexpected emergencies, illness, or need to be out of town, the tech team works well as a team and cover for each other. Ken Taylor leads that effort and maintains the computers and server, as well as being our liaison to the board, preaching a memorable sermon, and contributing useful ideas.

We improved communication between RSC and Adult (Al and Pam Hays) and Children (Kate Flynn) RE. We hope to do more to support each other, know what each other is planning, and help each other when we can.

Kat Beane Hanson is key to communication and operation of our services. She has been exceptional, competent, generous, and kind in her work as administrator (and on occasion musician).

Pastor Emma gave wonderful sermons, some educational, topical, spiritual, strengthening and loving. She did a series on the proposed 8<sup>th</sup> principle and the historic context. She preached on healing, loving ourselves and others, and seeing and standing up for others. Members of the congregation have referred to 2 of her sermons specifically several times – one delivered 11/27/22 about having an abundance mindset and another on 2/12/23 on the UU ethic of love. She demonstrates awareness of the congregation's many and varied beliefs and has preached sermons that bend toward Christianity, Paganism, Humanism, and other beliefs and has been good at modeling cultural awareness and respect. She continues to collaborate with members of the congregation to preach with her, which takes more energy and time than her sermons alone, but is important and rewarding to her and the congregation.

We had a few months where there were only 2 available to be Worship Associates. Karen Impola was generous with her time, talents, and supportive advice then. We would not have

done so well without that. She continues with her support and expertise in music, programming, and public speaking. She has calmly stepped in when others were gone or sick, and has been a steadfast and reassuring member of the worship team.

We had a goal of having enough Worship Associates so no one would need to do that role more than once a month. We have reached that goal now. Kathi Bower joined and is a natural at this and has enthusiasm and energy. Lynn Brant joined and gives a needed point of view to shake things up and not do everything the same all the time. He is willing to preach and has done so!

Dick Warhol had both Covid and brain surgery this year, and will have open heart surgery soon. But his calm, kind, and patient presence on the council has been vital and deeply appreciated. He plans to be the board liaison next year and will be an asset to the board.

We've also wanted to have more variety and interaction with Story for All Ages. Kelly Fischer just joined the council to periodically do Story for All Ages and give us ideas.

All the greeters and hospitality, while not on RSC, contribute to the success of our services by providing welcome and warmth.

The RSC thanks everyone who has been involved in our successful year of services!

**Members of the Religious Services Council:** Mandy Boody, Chair; Virginia Boody, Decoration Advice and Help; Kathi Bower (joined 2/23), Worship Associate; Lynn Brant (joined 3/23), Worship Associate for Alternative Services; Kelly Fischer (joined 5/23), Storyteller; Karen Impola, Worship Associate; Jessica Lieb, Music Director; Mary Kay Madsen (until 10/22), Worship Associate; Pastor Emma Peterson, Pastor; Ken Taylor, Board Liaison and Tech Leader; Richard Warhol, Worship Associate.

### **Sunday Service Specifics:**

Reverend Emma Peterson – By the end of June, Pastor Emma Peterson will have fulfilled 32 Sundays. One of those, she was on bereavement leave. 31 of those she was in the pulpit. Once she was in the pulpit over Zoom because her partner had Covid. 7 of the services, Pastor Emma collaborated with others to share the pulpit: Mandy Boody, Al Hays (twice), Kate Flynn and Jessica Lieb, John Miller, Lynn Brant, and the Stewardship Committee.

Religious Services Council – By the end of June, the RSC was responsible for 21 services. 1 video recorded sermon, Rev. Lisa Presley. 1 guest speaker over Zoom, Olivia Meikle. 1 in-person guest preacher, Rev. Carin Bringelson. 1 video compilation of people of color discussing the proposed 8<sup>th</sup> principle. Floralyn Groff and Karen Impola. Ken Taylor. Lynn Brant. Carla and Michael Fanelli. 12 services with multiple-member participation (Soul Matters, Discussions, Panels, etc.). 1 Ordination Service with the participation of several guest

Reverends and members of the congregation (Reverends: Johnny Janssen, Victoria Safford, Diana Smith, Micah Ma, Laurel Grey, Elizabeth Mount).

# Shared Ministry Council Report

Heather Flory

Shared ministry is the mutual responsibility that the congregation, the minister, and the professional staff share, committing them to work together to support and promote the growth and well-being of the CVUU congregation in all aspects of its community life.

The mission of the Shared Ministry Council (SMC) is to enhance the overall quality of the shared ministry of the CVUU by working with the minister and the Congregation to collaborate and support each other in shared leadership. This includes having regular meetings with the minister, assessing the health of the Congregation through surveys or other means, resolving conflicts for members who cannot do so on their own, and facilitating opportunities for members to develop the necessary skills to participate in shared leadership (e.g. any training needed to help resolve conflicts).

## **Council Members**

Members of the Shared Ministry Council this year included Heather Flory (chair), Floralyn Groff (Board liaison), Judith Harrington, Pam Hays, Del Carpenter, Debra Kyler, Nancie Groszkruger, and Pastor Emma Peterson.

Thank you to all members of the Shared Ministry Council! A special thank you to Judith, Pam, Floralyn, and Del, who have been on the Council with me since its inception in July 2019. Judith stepped down from the Council in December of 2022 and Pam plans to step down by the end of this fiscal year. We are excited to have the new energy of Debra, who joined the Council in December 2022, and Nancie, who joined the Council in April 2023. Also, special thanks to Judith and Debra, who took notes at our meetings, and Floralyn for continuing as the SMC Board liaison.

## **Accomplishments**

Here are some highlights of what we accomplished this year:

We collaborated with the Congregational Life Council on areas where our councils connect or overlap, e.g. small groups, social activities, and the new member welcome process.

- We continued our process to reach out to new members and have conversations with them to help them get involved in the shared ministry of the CVUU when they're ready. 16 new members have joined since summer 2022 (see the Congregational Life Council report for details).

We supported our minister in a variety of ways.

- We continued to support Pastor Emma through her Fellowshiping process, which culminated in her Ordination on April 2, 2023. The Shared Ministry Council led the party planning team, helped at the party, collaborated with the ceremony planning team, wrote communications, and coordinated the gifts of two stoles and a giant card for Pastor Emma.
- We helped with the Ministerial Review Committee (MRC) process. According to the current bylaws, the MRC is formed each year to collaborate with the minister to review the minister's and the congregation's performance and discuss successes, challenges, goals, and areas for future improvement. We proposed a bylaws change that will be voted on at this year's annual meeting to simplify the review process starting in FY24. (See the bylaws change information for details.)
- We helped keep track of Pastor Emma's vacation time, study leave, fellowshiping leave, and bereavement leave.

We supported our congregation in a variety of ways.

- We supported the Stewardship team in their goal to pay all employees of the CVUU equitably, and we worked with the Finance Council and Personnel Committee to determine the final wage amounts once the Stewardship campaign was complete. We are very excited that the CVUU will be able to pay our minister and staff equitably starting with FY24!
- It takes a beloved community to keep the CVUU running! Last fall, we developed a central page everyone can access to make it easy to figure out what help is needed, when, what each job involves, and how to sign up. A link to this page is provided in every Weekly Update, in the Links and Forms section. Help is regularly needed with hospitality, greeting, building and grounds, religious education for the kids, Sunday service tech team and worship associates, and singing in the choir.
- We worked with Pastor Emma, CVUU members, and the UUA as needed to address conflict and attempt to resolve it.
- We had interesting conversations on a variety of topics related to the general well-being of our congregation and our role as a council.
- We wrote many newsletter articles to help inform members about the role and accomplishments of the SMC, the minister, and the congregation:
  - CVUU Minister and Staff on Vacation July 18-31 (June/July 2022)
  - Shared Ministry Keeps the CVUU Running (Aug 2022)

- October 9 Adult Forum: CVUU Small Group Roundup (Oct 2022)
- CVUU Leadership Training (Oct 2022)
- Time at the CVUU and Away: Part of the UU Ministerial Agreement (Oct 2022; Jan 2023)
- Helping Out, Getting Involved, and Finding Your Place at the CVUU (Nov 2022)
- CVUU Councils and Committees 2022-2023 (Dec 2022)
- CVUU Conflict Resolution: 3-part series (Jan-Mar 2023)
- Why We Love the CVUU (Mar 2023/Stewardship)
- New Growth from Deep Roots: Growing Our Future at the CVUU (Mar 2023/Stewardship)
- Pastor Emma's Ordination Ceremony and Celebration 4/2/23 (April 2023)
- Cedar Valley Unitarian Universalists hold ordination ceremony (May 2023)
- Pastor Emma's Ordination: Many Thanks! (May 2023)
- Pastor Emma's Ordination and CVUU-Gifted Stoles (May 2023)

### **What's next?**

It takes the shared ministry of everyone in the congregation to make the CVUU work. Goals for next year include continuing to engage with new members to help them fully become involved with the CVUU; continuing to explore the role of the SMC, especially as it relates to the Congregational Life Council/Membership and Marketing; exploring training for SMC members and the congregation on conflict resolution; and continuing to support our minister and the congregation. For continued information from the Shared Ministry Council, see our regular contributions to the CVUU newsletter!

## Social Action Council Report

Austin Evens

The CVUU Social Action Council has had an exciting year filled with new initiatives adding to our, already impressive, resume of work. Our group has grown in numbers and in energy. I think it is safe to say, the group is looking as strong as it had pre pandemic, but there is still a lot of work to do!

First, I would like to say "Thank you!" to all our members that continue to show up and support worthy causes. I want you all to know that I appreciate your acceptance of me as a leader and your flexibility as we navigate Zoom calls and last minute "Calls to action." Our current committee members include: Al Hays, Pam Hays, Lizzy O'Loughlin, Sally Browne, Carollyn

Hartsfield, Kathi Bower, and Priscilla Nieman. We have added Byron Plumley and Shirley Whiteside over the last year. Welcome, Byron and Shirley!

Next, I would like to highlight a few projects this group was able to accomplish, with support from the congregation:

1. Social Action Plate Collection – For another year, Sally and Carollyn coordinated this effort. The congregation was able to vote on 8 organizations that the CVUU was able to raise some extra money for. As always, we continued funding for Community Meals, the Little Food Pantry, and Guest at Your Table.
2. Cedar Valley Pridefest in downtown Waterloo – As expected, this event was a hit (even with some inclement weather)! Pridefest is special to our congregation and allows us to “Walk our Talk” as a Welcoming Congregation – open and supportive of the LGBTQIA+ community. The committee did a great job organizing this event, but the members of the CVUU are who make it possible. Thank you to everyone who helped in any way!
3. Mitten Tree – For another year, Moria Brown stepped up as a volunteer to oversee the mitten tree. The mitten tree proved to be successful collecting winter hats and gloves for children in need in the Waterloo and Cedar Falls Community School Districts. Thanks again, Moria!
4. Iowa UU Witness and Advocacy Network (a group that is dedicated to creating strong cooperative relationships among Iowa’s 14 UU congregations as a basis for education and action) – Al continues to be a board member and make sure the CVUU is represented among this group. In June of 2022, a few of us were able to attend a few weeks’ worth of networking training with Kirk Witzberger as a way to build some relationships within IUUWAN.
5. Little Food Pantry – Priscilla continues to keep our beloved CVUU food pantry stocked day in and day out. She has even successfully recruited Andrew Hughes to dedicate his time, as part of a Scouts service project, to build the CVUU a brand new Little Food Pantry. Andrew has submitted his plans to the committee and was given approval to move forward. Look for progress on this new pantry later this spring. A huge “Thank you!” to Priscilla and Andrew for their efforts this year!
6. Pam has continued to support the CVUU on the Cedar Valley Interfaith Alliance. The CVUU was able to set up a booth at a few of these events and I know many of us enjoyed a climate talk that was given over the winter.
7. The Pollinator garden has continued to be a success and will continue to be an important project for the CVUU.
8. Walking Our Talk (WOT) – This was an initiative dreamed up a little over a year ago by Lizzy as a way to encourage our members to get back out and support social justice causes after the pandemic. It proved to be a success. WOT ran from January 2022 to December 2022 with the congregation being split into two “teams” (everyone loves a little competition) and a record was kept for all the social action related events our

members attended or donated to. As a whole, the congregation recorded nearly 500 acts of social justice, I would call that a success! Thank you to all our members and to the social action council for supporting this project.

This list certainly isn't all encompassing of the work the Social Action Council has completed but it is a small glimpse into the great things that are happening at the CVUU. It has been a great year but the need for Social Action will never end. We won't let up anytime soon. The state of Iowa has a lot to fight for, and together, we've got this!

## Nominating Committee Report

Michaela Rich

The following Board positions are up for election for the 2023-2024 year. Each individual is eligible and willing to serve.

### Officers – one-year terms (3 terms max)

President – Dennis Harbaugh (1<sup>st</sup> term)

Vice President – Karen Impola (2<sup>nd</sup> term)

Finance – Mike Knapp (1<sup>st</sup> term)

Secretary – Rob Boody (2<sup>nd</sup> term)

### Trustees – two-year terms (2 terms max)

Congregational Life – Stacey Bartz (1<sup>st</sup> term, 1<sup>st</sup> year)

Religious Services – Dick Warhol (1<sup>st</sup> term, 1<sup>st</sup> year)

Shared Ministry – Floralyn Groff (2<sup>nd</sup> term, 1<sup>st</sup> year)

The trustee for Building and Grounds is completing a term started by another individual, a change which is approved by the Board. The position will be up for election in 2024-2025. Richard Henry is completing a term begun by Dennis Harbaugh, and is eligible and willing to serve.

### Trustees – two-year terms (2 terms max)

Building and Grounds – Richard Henry (2<sup>nd</sup> year of vacant position)

The following Board positions are not up for election in 2023-2024. Each individual is willing to continue serving in their capacity.

Trustees – two-year terms (2 terms max)

Social Action – Lizzy O’Loughlin (1<sup>st</sup> term, 2<sup>nd</sup> year)

Religious Education and Programs – Desiree Cunningham (1<sup>st</sup> term, 2<sup>nd</sup> year)

The following Nominating Committee position is up for election this year.

Advisory: Nominating Committee – three-year terms (2 terms max)

Margie Miller (1<sup>st</sup> term, 1<sup>st</sup> year)

The following Nominating Committee positions are not on the election cycle for the 2023-2024 year.

Advisory: Nominating Committee – three-year terms (2 terms max)

Heather Flory (1<sup>st</sup> term, 3<sup>rd</sup> year)

Michaela Rich (2<sup>nd</sup> term, 2<sup>nd</sup> year)

Thank you to all who serve as CVUU Board Members and Nominating Committee Members.

## Personnel Committee Report

Mike Knapp

### **Personnel Committee**

The Personnel Committee is composed of Karen Impola, Vice President/Chair; Michael Knapp, Finance; and Desiree Cunningham, At-Large. Pastor Emma participates on the Committee as the Immediate Supervisor of our three part-time employees, Kat Beane Hanson (Office Administrator), Kate TD Flynn (Director of Children’s RE), and Jessica Lieb (Music Director).

During the past year, the Personnel Committee has worked with Pastor Emma to monitor all three staff positions and work towards equity in the CVUU’s approach to our Personnel policies, staff supervision and our work environment.

### **Staff Evaluations**

All employees received an annual evaluation during the month of May. Results of their individual evaluations will be used to modify respective positions job descriptions and establish expectations for the coming year.

## **Annual Employment Agreements**

New annual employment agreements are developed for each staff member based upon their annual evaluations, work expectations, the wage/benefit packages approved at each year's Annual Meeting and are signed by both the employee and a representative of the Personnel Committee prior to the July 1<sup>st</sup> beginning of the new fiscal year.

## **Part-Time Employees and Benefits**

UUA Employee guidelines qualifies employees working 750 or more work hours within a program year to be eligible for benefits beyond wages. The CVUU now has two part-time employees, the Office Administrator and the Director of Children's RE, that now receive benefits in addition to their hourly wages. Benefits now eligible for these two positions to receive include:

- Health insurance
- Dental insurance
- Life insurance
- Long term disability insurance
- Vacation
- Sick leave

## **New UUA Wage and Compensation Guidelines**

The UUA unveiled new guidelines for wage and classification guidelines for UU congregations to use in determining how congregations compensated their employees. The revisions were introduced by the UUA as a guide to its affiliated congregations in providing a more equitable approach to compensation of their respective employees. The new guidelines included significant increase to staff positions that were expected to challenge UUA affiliated congregations with the assumption that it would take most congregations more than one year to reach. The Personnel Committee in conjunction with this year's Stewardship Campaign and the generosity of our congregation, were able to bring all three staff onto the new wage range continuum in one year, beginning in FY24 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024).

## **CVUU Personnel Policy Handbook**

The Personnel Committee will continue to review the CVUU's existing personnel policies during the coming year to bring them up to date, added new policies and clarifications needed to existing ones. The committee will continue to monitor the work environment going forward to ensure that the CVUU meets current employee and payroll legal requirements and that our work environment continues to reflect UUA's recommendations regarding employment, supervision, pay and compensation practices.