



2026 Annual Report

Cedar Valley Unitarian Universalists

2026 Annual Report

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2026 Annual Meeting Agenda

May 17, 2026, 11:15 a.m.

Meeting to be held following the regular Sunday service, in the sanctuary at the CVUU building. An on-line attendance option through the [Zoom](#) platform will be available.

Call to Order

*Approval of Agenda

*Approval of Minutes from May 18, 2025 Annual Meeting

Election

*2026-2027 Board

*2026-2027 Lay Ministers

*2026-2027 Nominating Committee

*2026-27 Budget (FY2026: July 1-2026 – June 30, 2027)

*Bylaw amendment

Unsung UU Awards

Selection of Beneficiaries to Receive Monthly Social Action Collections

President's Report

Acknowledgments/Thank Yous

Meeting Adjourned

*Action items

2025 Annual Meeting Minutes

Held May 18, 2025, 11:15 a.m., in-person and over Zoom

Rob Boody, Secretary

Revised CVUU Annual Meeting Minutes—for 2nd Review

May 18, 2025 11:15 a.m. Sanctuary and Zoom

Attendance: Did anyone count? I didn't.

Zoom host: Karen Impola. Sanctuary Tech: Mandy Boody.

The meeting was called to order by President Hildebrandt at 11:27. Presence of a quorum was verified.

Agenda: It was moved by XX, seconded by Jill Miller, that the Agenda stand as written with the addition of voting on the commissioning of lay ministers and on By-Law changes. Motion passed.

Approval of Minutes from the 2024 Annual Meeting: A motion was made by Bill Brown, seconded by Curt Toppin, to accept the Minutes as written (in absentia), with them to be distributed electronically. Motion passed.

Elections

- **Board elections:** It was moved by Floralyn Groff and seconded by Shirley Whiteside, that we vote on the slate of Board Nominees (as nominated by the Nominating Committee and previously approved by the Board). Voting was unanimous in the affirmative.

Officers

- President – Carolyn Hildebrandt (2nd term)
- Vice President – Al Hays (1st term)
- Finance Director – Steve Chamberlin (1st term)
- Secretary – Jane Allen (1st term)

Trustees

- Congregational Life – Margie Miller (1st term, 1st year)
- Shared Ministry – Nancie Groszkruger (1st term, 1st year)
- Religious Services – Mandy Boody (1st term, 1st year)

For the congregations' information, the other three Trustees, who will continue to serve, are the following.

- (Trustee) Social Action – Lizzy O'Loughlin (2nd term, 2nd year)
- (Trustee) Building and Grounds – Open
- (Trustee) Religious Education & Programs – Curt Toppin (1st term, 1st year)

As outgoing Nominating Committee chair, Michaela Rich thanked those who have and will serve.

It was noted that we will be missing a Building and Grounds Liaison, as Steve Chamberlain is moving to serve as Financial Director.

It was noted that the Nominating Committee is missing a member as Michaela rotates off. Karen Impola then volunteered to serve.

Nominating Committee election: Voted for the new member only: Karen Impola. Moved by Bill Brown, second by XX. Vote was unanimous in favor.

Lay Ministers:

The President reported that the Board had approved the commissioning of two new Lay Ministers—Mandy Boody and Callie Amiday—and asked the Congregation for their approval. The commissioning service will be held next week.

It was asked what lay ministers do. They act as extension of the minister, helping with, or even performing funeral or wedding services if the pastor is unavailable. They also do other things to support the pastor and congregation. Previously, John Miller and Deblyn Russell have served. Deblyn moved recently. John continues to serve when available.

Al Hays moved to approve the commissioning of Mandy and Callie as proposed. Seconded by Steve Chamberlin. Motion carried.

Approval of the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget--Mike:

The Director of Finance explained the budget (please see the packet for more information). He also responded to several questions from the congregation.

The Finance Committee gave kudos to the Stewardship Committee for raising enough money to make the new budget possible.

The Finance Council moved that we accept the proposed FY 2026 (July 1 2025 through June 30 2026) budget. Bill Brown proposed an amendment that Mike and Mary Kay be

thanked in writing for all their work in Finance (more than 30 years' worth each). The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Bylaw Changes—Steve:

This was RE Article XII Fiscal Matters—see details in the packet.

Steve moved to adopt the revised By-Law, seconded by Curt Toppin. Approved unanimously.

ATF Report—Steve:

Please see the ATF report in the Annual Report (page15)

The ATF provided an historical overview of their work that began in April 2019. Besides the possibility of renovating our current building or buying the UCC as currently being explored, they have examined a variety of other options, both other churches as well as commercial buildings. These two remain our best options at this time.

“The ATF moves that it should continue coordinating discussions with the CFUCC, including scheduling one or more open houses of the UCC to give CVUU members a chance to tour the property, with the goal of having a detailed purchase proposal to present to the CVUU this summer for its consideration.” The motion was approved unanimously.

Process to Select Beneficiaries of Social Action Plate—Carolyn Hartsfield:

Vote for your favorite organizations between June 1 and June 29th.

How to vote—online (link will be sent) or by paper ballot (in the Fellowship Room).

President’s Report (Carolyn Hildebrandt) - see report for details

The congregation has been growing—congratulations! Congratulations also on money raised through the Pledge Campaign as well as Treats and Talents. We’ve been having fun Friday night meetings and other good events. Thanks to all! And thanks to Pastor Emma.

Pam Hays added: “And thanks to Carolyn as well!”

Adjournment: Moved and seconded to adjourn, approved by acclamation. Adjourned at 12:41pm.

Respectfully, Rob Boody, Secretary

Minister's Report

Pastor Emma Peterson

Beloveds,

I can't help but wonder if I will ever write another Annual Report where I do not feel compelled to begin by addressing "the unprecedented times in which we find ourselves." As I reflect on the past year, I am overwhelmed by our Beloved Community's response to the world in which we find ourselves. This year, we've consistently shown up in the public square to fight for Justice- at protests, city council meetings, and in State and Federal offices. Internally, we've determined a path forward that provides urgent accessibility for members of the CVUU. The purchase of our new building also makes space for the future congregation we envision- a thriving, radically welcoming place for Seekers of all stripes; a place where families can raise children with Love at the center; a beacon of inclusion for anyone who's ever been told they don't fit in.

Every year I am reminded how short a year really is. I often find myself scrambling at the end of the church year to check every box. Sometimes, a year passes and a few boxes remain unchecked. Not for lack of *wanting* to check every box, but because the Work of Church involves many unexpected pivots, challenges, and opportunities. This year is no different. We planned and carried out a remarkable church year. We've improved our communication, expanded our Children's Religious Education programming, and even purchased a new home. And we've also done much more than that- too much to cover in the Pastor's AR. There isn't a single Council at the CVUU that hasn't done something major this year, as this year's Annual Reports will tell you. Read each Report and let them inspire you, if you aren't already, to integrate all the more deeply into this Beloved Community.

In years past, gratitude was the focus of my Annual Report. I'd list our Paid Staff and each Council and Committee, highlight a few accomplishments of the year, and express gratitude for their hard work. I remain profusely grateful for the tremendous work of our congregation's Staff and lay leadership. I try to express that gratitude consistently, publicly and privately. I'll use my few moments to speak at the Annual Meeting to express my thanks so that this space can focus on the events of the year. That said, please know that I recognize and appreciate your contributions to this Beloved Community. This is a Shared Ministry, indeed. Thank you for contributing to the sustainment and thriving of the CVUU.

Something shifted when I returned from vacation in July. After years spent discerning how to address the growing Accessibility needs of our congregation, we determined that

the purchase of the UCC church in Cedar Falls was our best path forward. This decision, if we are fortunate indeed, will outlive us all. What a remarkable privilege, to plant trees we'll never climb and dig wells we'll never drink from. Not that we won't get to enjoy the work of Transformation! We've got much work ahead of us, certainly. I think that is a joyful thing. I look forward to witnessing and companioning as the CVUU continues to envision a thriving future and an accessible present.

In the fall, the nonprofit Escucha Mi Voz invited me to join the team that plans and organizes demonstrations outside of Immigration Court in Cedar Rapids. What started as an opportunity for social witness evolved to include direct political action (like delivering a letter signed by over fifty Iowa clergy to Ashley Hinson, demanding she cease supporting the fascist immigration policies of our current Administration) and community education (like speaking with Iowa Public Television on issues facing immigrants in Iowa). As the year progressed, I participated in a sub-committee of the Cedar Valley Interfaith Council focused on connecting immigrant communities in Black Hawk County. In the spring, I facilitated a Legal Observer training in partnership with Indivisible of Black Hawk County. I am excited to continue to deepen my partnerships locally and state-wide as we confront Authoritarianism and strive to protect our neighbors.

In January, I answered the Call for Clergy Mobilization in Minneapolis. Joining over one thousand clergy from across the country, I learned in real time how Minneapolis was responding to occupation from the Federal Government. I experienced on the ground education about mutual aid, grass roots organizing, and effective protest. Witnessing one hundred of my Minnesotan clergy colleagues be arrested at the Minneapolis airport, in protest of the deportation flights departing from that city, will remain one of the most impactful experiences of my life. I am tremendously grateful for the support and encouragement of the CVUU as I have expanded my ministry in the public square to fight against tyranny.

I am expanding my skills when it comes to organizing and public witness. There have been a few pitfalls. In the spring, I was invited to attend a Gamaliel training. I left that training after two and a half days over concern about the ethics, methods, and non-transparency of the organization. Choosing to leave that training was one of the hardest choices I've ever made. I felt the harmful training methods being employed (tactics of humiliation, primarily) violated my own Ministerial Code of Conduct, and so I left. It wasn't a total waste of time, at least. It provided a solid networking opportunity, and once I was able to determine the theory the training was based on, I was able to do my own independent study that did prove fruitful. I share this experience in the effort of transparency and in the spirit of recognizing we still need to be careful in choosing who we partner with, even in dire times.

The springtime at the CVUU was filled with special worship services and celebrations. After a few years of hiatus, we brought back our Good Friday vesper service to the

highest attendance ever. We held our first ever Pet Blessing service in the CVUU parking lot. (Blessing Snakey the corn snake was a highlight of my year, truly.) And on April 19th we celebrated a co-worship service with the UCC in our new building. The reception that followed was one for the books. I envision years of joyous celebrations of all kinds there in the years to come. At last year's Annual Meeting, we Commissioned two new CVUU Lay Ministers, Callie Amiday and Mandy Joy. This year, Callie gave us three worship services and Mandy gave us two. Callie was a Worship Associate for eight services, and Mandy was a Worship Associate for nine services. Additionally, Mandy served as Sanctuary Tech for nine services. (For those counting, that means Mandy was on the CVUU Worship Team for TWENTY Sundays this year!) I am deeply grateful for their mutual ministries and look forward to witnessing how they evolve in the years to come.

On the Monday of Easter week, longtime members Bob Robinson and Kate Warhol both departed this earthly plane. I learned something new every time I visited Bob. I will miss his insight, progressive sensibility, and excellent storytelling. As Kate's obituary stated, in her prime, she out Martha'd Martha Stewart. I'll remember her elegance and poise, something I'll cultivate each time I wear one of her beautiful silk scarves I had the honor of "inheriting." Additionally, Christine Carpenter moved to the Pacific Northwest. Her and her late husband, Del, were longtime members of the CVUU who were integral in shaping and stewarding our Beloved Community. As we transition to our new space and begin a new chapter, I can't help but reflect on all those who filled our current home with the energy that flows throughout it. I hope we can find ways to continue to honor them, carrying their memories with us to our new space.

As we embark on this exciting new adventure, I implore you to consider how you might get involved in the transition. Our Steering Committee- tasked with facilitating our move- will commence in a few weeks' time. Consider joining that effort! Additionally, please consider participating in the many areas that are always in need of volunteers. Children's RE, hospitality, greeting, the Caring Connections Team are all great places to lend a hand. Consider joining or facilitating a Small Group. We are a growing congregation and programming is what helps build the relationships that keep people coming back. There are so many ways to get involved.

Thank you to everyone who keeps our community going. Some of your work is done quietly and with little fanfare, but that doesn't mean it isn't vital. It takes all of us to make the CVUU the special, sacred place that it is. I am grateful to be your minister every single day. I am amazed by this Beloved Community. I am proud of how welcoming we are, especially to Queer folks. I am encouraged by how doggedly we pursue Justice for All. I am overjoyed by the way we nurture and encourage our YoUUth. Most of all, I am moved by the Love we put at the Center of everything we do. At the CVUU, we Center Love in our Polity and Governance. We Center Love in our Worship and our Fellowship. And most importantly, we Center Love in our relationships within this Beloved

Community. I Love You and I Like You and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for All YoUU Do!

Respectfully Submitted, Pastor Emma Peterson

President's Report

Carolyn Hildebrandt, Board President

What a wonderful church year it has been! There have been so many positive changes that it is hard to decide where to begin!

Both of our 2026-27 fund drives were a success! With the help of two anonymous donors, our New Home Fund Drive exceeded all expectations, making it possible to fill in a small gap in our Regular Pledge Drive as well. Due to the generosity of our members, we were able to fully fund our paid staff at recommended UUA levels and will also be able to provide them with a much-needed, two-week paid vacation during the last two weeks of July, 2026. The Treats and Talents Auction was also a success, bringing more money into our coffers and helping fill in our social calendars for the year!

Last year also marked the hiring of our new Music Director, Alan Beving, who will finish his master's degree in Choral Conducting at UNI this May. Under his direction, the CVUU choir rose from the ashes and sounds better than ever! Our Coordinator of Children's Religious Education, Ronan Parker, is building a strong foundation for our preschool and school-aged kids. It's fun to see them build community with each other!

Thanks to the work of the Accessibility Task Force, we bought the United Church of Christ building on University Avenue. It is bigger and more accessible than our current building and plans are underway to repair and renovate it for a possible move-in next fall. Our joint Home-coming, Home-going service in April was a fitting and inspiring ritual of transition. Led by Pastor Emma and Pastor Sue, it included elements from both faiths in a way that touched many people's hearts. The musical collaborations led by CVUU Music Director, Alan Beving and UCC's church organist and pianist Greg Meyer were inspiring as well. The ceremony was followed by an enormous potluck in our new Fellowship Hall!

CVUU members continue to work on social justice issues, locally, regionally, and nationally, especially with respect to supporting the Food Bank, No Kings Marches, Escucha Mi Voz, and working as Trained ICE Observers.

Other good news: our church is GROWING! We have many new members who are bringing fresh energy and ideas, just in time for our transition to the new church!

With many thanks to our hard-working Board Members: Al Hays (Vice President), Kat Beane Hansen (Secretary), Jared Blaylock (Buildings and Grounds), Steve Chamberlin (Finance), Nancie Groszkruger (Committee on Ministry), Mandy Joy (Religious

Services), Curt Toppin (Religious Education and Adult Programs), Congregational Life (Jill Miller), and Social Action (Lizzy O'Loughlin).

Communications Report

Leann Lockard, Office Administrator

2025 brought the completion of year one as your CVUU office administrator! It has brought all kinds of emotions, joys, and trials—and yet I look back on all of it with gratitude. Gratitude to those that supported me along the way, stepped in and did some of the work I didn't even know I was supposed to be doing, and most importantly, to all who gave me grace in my administrator position, as well as the numerous times that role was overshadowed by my currently chaotic season of life and motherhood. I could not be more grateful to support this community, and to in turn feel the love of this community as it supports me.

In my second year as CVUU admin, I found that I was able to “come into my own” in this role. I took the foundations laid before me by my predecessors and built up revamped and streamlined processes that worked better for me. Ultimately, I feel that these things offer a higher quality of support to the committees and councils that I work with.

This year I was able to use more of my work hours to assist Pastor Emma with her calendar and scheduling. It has been a learning experience for both of us, one that has brought many frustrations, and many laughs. Thank you all for working with us patiently as we continue to learn and tweak what best supports her needs, so that she can best support and serve the CVUU community.

In last year's annual report, I had a goal of growing and enhancing our online presence to increase congregation support as well as community outreach. Between having more time and ability to focus on things beyond the survival of daily tasks, and valuable feedback from the Congregational Life Council in December, I am pleased to say I have been able to cultivate a more productive social media marketing presence. Along with the input of Pastor Emma, the other staff members, and various councils and committees, I continue to reevaluate how our social media presence can grow and change, what tools are valuable or no longer valuable, and what new tools can be researched and implemented to enhance the digital reach of the CVUU.

The tech team has been very supportive in researching and finding the best tools to support my in-office and remote from home work hours. A new computer system has been purchased that will allow me to have access to most, if not all, of the digital information I need to do daily tasks during work from home days. We are researching tools that would also make it possible for me to be reached by the current CVUU phone number during my work hours even on the days I am working remotely from home. I

envision also researching the tools to use technology in enhancing our in-building marketing tools beyond the push-pin bulletin board so that the congregation is getting current and upcoming service information, upcoming event information, and upcoming calendar information in real-time as opposed to only when I am in building to create and switch out the printed sheets.

I was so thrilled to be able to attend the *Homegoing, Homecoming* transition service in April of 2026! It was wonderful to be part of that memorable experience, to see members excitement and passion for the opportunities the new building will cultivate for the CVUU, to meet many of you in person, and to hear Pastor Emma passionately speak on moving the CVUU forward towards its bright future.

I look forward to walking along side all of you in the huge changes this coming year will bring for the CVUU. It continues to be my privilege and honor to support you all. It brings me joy, hope, and healing to witness the way this community loves each other, and brings light and love to the Cedar Valley and beyond.

With gratitude, Office Administrator Leann

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 eight to fourteen sides per issue with the average being ten sides. This variation reflects the time of year and the number of activities happening 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,
- 3) 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, thirty to thirty-five copies are printed at Copyworks each issue. The distribution is as follows: one is saved for the Archives; three are for the staff; nine or ten are sent first class postage; 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. I monitor these two places weekly to be sure there are copies in each location.

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 in a timely manner. After picking copies up from Copyworks, there is stapling and folding for the copies to be left at the church. The post office doesn't allow staples, so those being mailed are folded and taped (four pieces on the three open sides); mailing labels are attached (provided by the CVUU office each issue), and stamps are added. Most months one first-class stamp is adequate, but weight is checked at the PO for newsletters that have six or more pages.

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 Leann 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, Leann 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 assists with computer problems, and lends advice as the need arises with any computer issues. He is my second set of eyes for proofing, and often helps with the folding of the paper copies.

Calendar: Leann Lockard

Each month, Leann 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! She 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 nine copies each issue at the first-class rate.

Copyworks: Mostly Brock, but occasionally another employee, sees 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 as I'm always working on a deadline!

Contributors: Without contributors (and some of them write every month!) we would have no newsletter! Articles mostly arrive via email which is preferred so that I have all information in one place. For the most part, members are conscientious about making the deadlines enabling me to keep on schedule, which is very much appreciated!

Building & Grounds Council Report

Jared Blaylock

Building and grounds had a fairly slow year. Not much active items and slowing down a bit looking forward to the new location. Below are a few of the regular tasks completed followed by **major repairs completed:**

- Coordinating yard work with volunteers
 - Assisted in work with the pollinator garden maintenance
 - Snow removal and ice prevention via service and shoveling
 - AC and heating maintenance
 - Light replacement and updates to LEDs when failing
- Repairs & updates here:**
- Roof caps were replaced early in the year when they blew off
 - Pothole repair recently in the parking lot
 - Future update: Three larger first aid kits are being added in the near future to the main floor restroom, the restroom near the stairs on the second level and to the kitchen. (these will follow us to the new building)
 - Future repair: Hail storms of recent days (4/14 - 4/15) lead to some roof damage, Quoting the repair is underway. All areas at risk are shored up in the meantime

The group is also looking forward to the new building with challenges, opportunities and room to grow. We are assisting where possible with quoting and planning repairs/updates to our new home. One known change is mowing; we are planning to transition to a service providing that for the new building rather than have it completed by volunteers.

Accessibility Task Force (ATF)

Steve Chamberlin, Chair

The current membership of the ATF includes Steve Chamberlin, Chair; Roger Hahn, Co-chair; and members Margie Miller, Jill Miller, and Floralyn Groff.

At the 2025 Annual Meeting, the ATF team reported that with the possibility of purchasing the UCC property having arisen, regular monthly CVUU + UCC meetings

had started in January of '25 and had continued to that time. The congregation at that annual meeting supported the continued move in the direction of such a purchase.

In July, two open houses were held at the UCC church which allowed our congregants their first real tour and experience of being in the building. The organ was demonstrated and the UCC folks were very hospitable. In the following weeks, various groups toured specific parts of the facility to evaluate if any items on site might be useful to be included in such a purchase. A list was made and refined over a period of time.

Three "open mic" sessions were held to continue the open discussion of the purchase option. Support seemed solid amid much discussion. The UCC set a purchase price of \$520k for the property and items to be included, with a credit given of \$70k for future roof membrane replacement, for a net price of \$450k. A Special Congregational Meeting was held on November 9th to vote on a resolution to make an offer to purchase the UCC, and this passed 87 to 2. Such a purchase offer was drafted with the help of lawyers, presented to the UCC, and they voted to accept it on January 25th, '26. Leases were also agreed to that documented the continued use of the building by the UCC for a period after the closing for a nominal rent. Insurance and financing were arranged. A property closing was held on March 25th at the Beecher Law Offices, during which the purchase was finalized. We are now the owners of two church properties!

Architect Mardy Holst has again been engaged, this time to evaluate the possibility of revising the existing bathrooms in the corridor to become disable-accessible, and to consider possibilities to better connect the fellowship hall and the next room for overflow, meetings, forums, etc. He will also manage the digitizing of all the original drawings of the building.

Close to \$600k was raised for a New Home Fund during the capital fund drive in March to cover renovations we'd like to do. Quotes are being obtained for the immediate things that are thought to be necessary and an engineering consulting firm is likely to be contracted to guide us through the process of evaluating more major changes like the HVAC system.

A special afternoon service "Homegoing, Homecoming: A Ritual of Transition" was held on April 19th as a joint activity of the two congregations. It and the following potluck were well attended and much appreciated.

With the purchase of 9204 University Ave, the Accessibility Task Force feels it has delivered on its assignment of researching and recommending the best way for the CVUU to become fully accessible and thus fully welcoming to all, including the disabled. The group as it was formed will terminate, to be replaced by a larger task force composed of a larger cross-section of the congregation. This new group will be responsible for the specific planning and execution of renovations, the moving process, and the sale of the current building. The ATF appreciates all the support it has received over the seven years it has been working toward this goal. A number of people have

contributed directly to the task force by their membership on it or contributions of input and information. The efforts of all will be remembered.

Congregational Life Council Report

Jill Miller

Congregational Life Council promotes activities that contribute to the general health and spiritual growth of the congregation. Members of the Congregational Life Council this past year included Juanita Williams, Leigh Zeitz, Chelsea Toppin, Pastor Emma, and Jill Miller (Chair and Board Representative), as well as the numerous subgroups/committees/teams: Joanna Waggoner-Norquest (Greeting), Nick Reans (Hospitality), Stacey Bartz (Caring Connection Team), Kat Beane Hanson (Small Groups Coordinator), Nate Callahan/MaryKay Madsen (Buddhist Path), Gerry Chamberlin (Newsletter).

Thank you to all the members, leaders, their committees, team members, and countless volunteers for the incredible work everyone has done to promote and support our congregational life this past year. A special thanks goes to Juanita Williams (Congregational Life) and Carollyn Hartsfield (Caring Committee Team) who after years of dedicated leadership both took a step back and have become mentors extraordinaire.

Accomplishments:

Membership has grown to 147 active members, with many regular and contributing friends. Attendance at Sunday services continues to increase, with many returning visitors.

- CLC continues to support and develop opportunities for meaningful engagement among the congregation and also the community, supporting greeting and hospitality on Sundays, coordinating special events such as quarterly New to CVUU, and I Want to Be a Member sessions, coordinating the Fall 2025 Liturgical Year Kickoff with grilled burgers and hot dogs, potluck, music and games, organizing with the board the January Planning Retreat, working with our administrator to increase the CVUU social media presence, and organizing the Homegoing/Homecoming Potluck.
- We wrote newsletter articles to highlight new members, and to promote interdependence among the congregation.
- We collaborated with Shared Ministry where our councils overlap, e.g. Small groups, social activities and welcoming visitors and members. This resulted in the continuation of First Fridays Pizza and Fun, and the shared hosting of a variety of new drop-in small groups.

Exciting Times Ahead:

- CLC is busy exploring ways to continue to retain our members while also welcoming friends and visitors.
- CLC will be involved in sharing recommendations on use and organization of the new building to meet our future needs, wants, hopes and dreams.

Respectfully submitted, Jill Miller CLC Chair

Caring Connections

Stacey Bartz

The Caring Connections Team is a group of 9 individuals whose purpose is to provide support to members of our congregation in need of support. Stacey Bartz is the new lead for the team, taking over from Carollyn Hartsfield. Carollyn served this team well for many years and we appreciate her past service.

The Caring Team serves as a contact point in helping members of our community that be dealing with medical issues, loss of a loved one, or help when there is a loss of a member of the congregation. We cannot do any nursing duties.

Some of the ways we provide support is through phone calls, sending cards, visits, providing rides to appointments and help people connect with other members of our congregation that are willing to help out. The members of the Team take turns in being the contact person for the month.

Members of the CVUU congregation can sign up to be a Caring Connector helper on the Caring Connection Team section of the CVUU web site. People can sign up if they are willing to do things like provide rides, make visits, or even pet sitting.

We are always looking for new members for our team. We encourage anyone interested to attend one of our monthly meetings. They are on the 1st Saturday of the month at 10:30 AM in the Fellowship Hall at the CVUU, or feel free to contact Stacey Bartz directly.

Thank you, Stacey Bartz

Finance Council Report

Steve Chamberlin, Finance Director

The 2025-2026 Finance Council is composed of Steve Chamberlin, Finance Director; Dick Warhol, Endowment Committee Chair; Bill Brown, Collector; and Rob Boody, Treasurer. Lawren Medhaug did serve as Bookkeeper for a time but is no longer doing so, with Rob Boody currently doing the bookkeeping.

Finance Turnover

Mike Knapp, Jeanette Talbert, and Mary Kay Madsen retired at the end of June 2025 from their previous roles in Finance. They have served the CVUU in the finance arena for many years, and their exemplary service to our congregation is greatly appreciated!

As the new Finance Director, my goals for the coming year and beyond include:

1. Continue our good track record of meeting our fundraising goals. We need to grow the congregation to do this.
2. Simplify the reporting of the church finances, reducing the detail and highlighting the important information and need for action.
3. Streamline and simplify the processes we use, especially expense reporting, recording, and data entry. Increase the use of electronic payment methods and scheduling of automated recurring payments, saving time and mailing costs.
4. Investigate possibilities of reducing the number of different systems we use. Consider ways in which some of these functions (donation management, online church directory, payroll, e.g.) can be served from within Icon, reducing the need to manage redundant data.

FY2025 Finances

CVUU finances are tracked through ICON a purchased church financial program. The FY25 year ended with revenues exceeding expenses by about \$35k. On the revenue side, although we were about \$10k, or 5% short of meeting our pledge goal, that was more than made up for by rent income and other areas that somewhat exceeded income expectations, for a net of revenue being about \$5k or 2% over budget. On the expense side, expenditures for non-minister staff came in about \$27k or 40% under budget, although \$8,725 of that was diverted to an "Admin Health Insurance" fund to defray the potential cost of a staff position becoming benefited. The net expenses were about \$34k or 14% under budget, leading to the \$35k end-of-year surplus.

Distribution of FY25 surplus: The recommendation from the Finance Council for the distribution of the operating surplus to the following restricted funds was approved by the Board (totals below are as of the date of the distribution):

- *Technology Fund* - \$4k. There is a near-term need for improved computers for staff, and improved camera and microphone setup for Zoom meetings. Total in fund after transfer was \$6,114
- *Unbudgeted Projects Fund* - \$9k. A desire for a professional marketing campaign would be supported by this, as well as other innovative growth ideas. Total in fund after transfer was \$17,000.
- *New Fund "Mid-Year Staff Costs Fund"* - \$6k. This would be used for Board-approved mid-year increases in staff hours that were not budgeted for, not increases in wage rates.

- *Building Maintenance Reserve Fund* - \$16k. This is for unbudgeted major maintenance needs and is intended to avoid the need for capital fund drives for maintenance. Total in fund after transfer was \$80,717.

FY2026 Finances YTD

Total revenue for the year so far is about \$26k above last year, with expenses running about \$31k ahead of last year. Our overall financial position for the General Fund is about \$74k in the black, which is \$4.5k behind last year at the same time. No concerning financial matters are noted.

2026 (FY2027) Annual Pledge Campaign

The 2026 Pledge Campaign team was composed of Jennifer Hopkins, Joanna Waggoner-Norquest, Sally Browne, and Seth Chadwick, assisted by Bill Brown and Steve and Gerry Chamberlin, and the Hopkins-Earle children Harper and Bellamy contributed art skills for the campaign graphics as well. For the first time ever, a dual campaign was conducted, raising pledges for the regular annual budget, but also providing an opportunity to raise capital for renovations to the new property, called our “New Home Fund”. The overall theme was “Our Incredible Journey – Supporting Our Present, Building Our Future”. A number of generous members stepped up to offer, for the first time in memory, matching challenge pledges for both campaigns. The annual match was a challenge for pledge increases and on-time submissions, and the capital match was an overall match. It was felt that these were influential in the campaign success.

The goal for the regular annual drive was set at \$232,500 in pledges to support the coming fiscal/program year, a 4.5% increase over last year’s pledges. This pledge goal was set to: continue to support our staff according to equitable guidelines, including a cost-of-living increase; extend the Music Director position to the full year vs. the half-year in the current budget; meet the rising cost of insurance; and increase support for our important engagement and hospitality initiatives. (The budget proposal did not include any extra costs associated with the new property, those will all be covered out of the New Home Fund.)

No specific goal was set for the capital “New Home Fund” drive, instead a list of renovation projects totaling about \$400k was posted with the mantra “the more we raise, the more we can do!” It was set as a one-year capital drive, with pledges to be paid by the end of June 2027.

When the “dust settled”, pledges for the annual campaign totaled about \$222k, and the pledges for the New Home Fund totaled about \$594k! This in total represents close to 3.7 times as much as we have ever raised in any previous year. Since the end of the campaign, recognizing the oft-stated priority of fully funding the annual operations, the people offering the capital pledge match requested that \$11k of that pledge be moved to the annual pledge category, making the proposed budget fully supported.

An analysis of this year's annual pledge campaign shows:

- 71 pledge units made a pledge by the close of the campaign. This is down from 81 last year. This is partly due to *previous pledgers moving away or likely being negatively impacted by changing medical or employment situations. The total of these losses is estimated to be about \$30k.*
- *Of the 71 units pledging, 46 units increased their pledge compared to last year, 6 were new pledgers, and 19 decreased their pledge or kept it the same as last year.*
- *The average pledge received was \$3,122, an increase of \$378 or 14% over last year. The median pledge was \$2,400, a \$900 increase over last year. This is especially significant in light of the fact that most of the pledgers also pledged to the capital campaign, so in general people did not lower their annual pledge in order to make a capital pledge (which had been a concern).*

An analysis of the capital "New Home" campaign shows:

- *55 pledge units made a pledge to the capital "New Home" campaign. This is greater than expected, which was thought might be about half of the annual pledgers.*
- *14 pledge units stepped up as major donors of \$10k or more.*
- *Over \$100k has already been collected against these capital pledges.*

CVUU Endowment Fund

The Endowment Fund Committee is composed of Chair Dick Warhol and members Dennis Harbaugh and Gerry Chamberlin. This committee monitors donations of memorials and bequests and thanks such donors. Endowment Funds are invested through the UUA Common Endowment Fund, which invests in socially responsible investments. During this year, the committee recommended, and the Board approved, making a loan of \$45k to the New Home Fund to assist in the UCC property acquisition. This will be repaid in the future such that the Endowment Fund will not have lost any potential gains. The Endowment Fund is currently at \$86,776 including the \$45k owed, and has appreciated in value this fiscal year to date by \$7,668, or 9.7%.

New Property Financing

The purchase of the new property at 9204 University Ave was financed by a mortgage at Veridian Credit Union for \$360k, plus \$90k from our New Home/ATF Fund ("NHF"). The mortgage will be paid monthly automatically from a Veridian account set up for that purpose and pre-loaded with funds from the NHF. It will be fully paid off as soon as the current property is sold. A new, insured money market account has been opened at Veridian to allow the NHF money to earn higher interest while still be accessible to pay renovation costs when needed. The current balance in the NHF is \$132k, with about \$490k in pledges yet to be paid into the fund over FY27.

New Property Accounting

Property-related expenses will be segregated, with all expenses for the current 3912 Cedar Heights property coming from the General Fund, and all related to 9204 University coming from the New Home Fund. This will allow meaningful tracking of usual expenses related to the budget, which is set up only for 3912. If 3912 is sold during the current FY, then “normal” expenses from 9204 may come from the General Fund, but extraordinary ones will still come out of the NHF. The FY2028 budget a year from now will be the first to fully reflect the 9204 operating expenses.

Religious Education & Programs (REAP) Council Report

Curt Toppin, REAP Council Board Representative
Ronan Parker, Director of Children’s Religious Education

Greetings from the REAP Council! It’s been a dynamic year as our youth programs continue to expand with new activities, dedicated staff, enthusiastic volunteers, and welcoming energy. We’ve truly enjoyed organizing and celebrating holiday events while creating an environment where young people can grow in knowledge, character, and compassion. The REAP Council remains committed to offering a safe, supportive space for youth learning and community connection.

Highlights from the Year

Throughout this year we’ve had a steady attendance of around 6 to 8 kids each Sunday and registered new kids into the program. We’ve offered several activities outside of our regular Sunday sessions as well. Old classics events like Trunk-or-Treat, Easter Egg Hunt, and Valentine’s party were all well attended with 26 egg hunters (doubling last year’s number!) and 18 people celebrating love with us. For the second year in a row, we took the kids out to see a Waterloo Black Hawks game with 21 people attending and some of the kids even got to interact with the team mascots! Ronan has been pivotal in brainstorming and organizing new events that hopefully turn into traditions in the coming years. Our Noon Years Eve party is shaping up to be a fun tradition with shorter term 1- and 5-year time capsule buckets for the kids to open in the near future, personally I’m looking forward to seeing our pre-teen crew open their bucket 5 years from now. We hosted a Dungeons & Dragons themed lock-in early in the church year with great attendance and great fun!

Looking towards future programming, we’re taking the first steps to bring the OWL (Our Whole Lives) sex education program back with our first trainees attending classes as this is being written (Shout out to Jeff Chapin!). This last year we’ve also tried to get the kids more active with the greater congregation by opening up events like Valentine’s Day party to everyone, planning Child-friendly services, and providing activities for kids

during First Friday dinners. (A Friday night meal where I can socialize without my 5-year-old tugging on my pant leg every 10 seconds! Where do I sign up?)

We want to give a big heartfelt shout out to all our volunteers that make all our activities possible. Firstly, to our dedicated REAP Council, Jeff Chapin, Callie Amiday and Curt Toppin who plan all the events and volunteer their time to almost all of them. To our nursery volunteers that enable our Sunday services to be a time of needed quiet reflection and community for parents of young children. Mike Knapp generously provides pizza for several of our events out his own pocket and Dennis Harbaugh for leading Sunday classes on occasion and taking some of the load from our wonderful Coordinator, Ronan.

Our Current Challenges

Our current space is quite limited and while our average of 6-8 kids on a Sunday is manageable when our full crew shows up, our space get very crowded. We're eagerly awaiting the move to the new church, so we won't have to bump elbows while doing crafts.

Much like last year, it continues to be a struggle to make the curriculum applicable and relevant to such a wide range of children. Our oldest regular kids are quickly going from pre-teen age to just plain teenagers and the gap is only widening as new younglings entire our fold. We desperately need more regular volunteers to enable splitting our group into two, so that our lessons for the older kids can have more depth and discussion that isn't currently possible when we have to simplify and explain so much for our 5-year-olds.

We're deeply grateful to our dedicated volunteers—our Children's Religious Education program wouldn't exist without their time, care, and commitment. Thanks to them, we can provide a safe, nurturing space for children to learn and grow. We appreciate you staying connected and look forward to another year of growth and achievement for our children.

Religious Services Council Report

Karen Impola

Much of the work of the Religious Services Council consists of showing up, week after week, and making a thing happen every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. We did that this year. We also met monthly to plan future services, and to discuss and refine our procedures. This is an ongoing task.

We've tweaked the process of creating the Order of Service so that it doesn't get finalized until after the Thursday run-through. Ideas often come up on Thursdays that improve the service, and it's great to have them reflected in the printed OS! We are

also, on an experimental basis, printing the OS/Bulletin in-house, now that we have a paper-folding machine. This also gives more flexibility in when this task can be done.

During FY26, we have had/will have a total of 56 services. That's 52 Sunday morning services, plus services on Christmas Eve and Good Friday, an afternoon service at the new building on April 19, and a pet blessing on April 24.

By the end of the fiscal year, Pastor Emma will have preached 30 sermons, plus two Sundays when she will be participating in General Assembly. This meets her contracted 30-35 sermons/Sundays. During the remaining Sundays, we had/will have 24 lay-led services and three services led by outside presenters. (Those numbers may change a little - June is not fully nailed down yet.)

During the second half of the year, we were delighted to bring Alan Beving on board as our Interim Music Director. Alan's flexibility and his skill in working with the choir have been especially appreciated, and we wish him well in his future endeavors.

For the coming year, we'd like to work on recruiting one or two more Sanctuary Techs and Worship Associates.

I (Karen) was gone for six weeks this winter, and I'd like to thank those who stepped up to do things that I normally do: Kathi Bower (chairing meetings), Mandy Boody (preparing Orders of Service) and Michaela Rich (preparing PowerPoint).

See you in church!

Karen Impola

Adult Forum Report

Pam Hays

Forum Presentations – September 2025 – May 2026

This year 18 forums on various topics were offered. Several addressed social issues, especially immigration. Ragina Grant informed us about the many steps needed to become a U.S. citizen. Dave Cushing talked about ways to have positive conversations about the topic with others. Dr. Jim Kenyon shared some of his experiences with immigrants.

Carol Tjaden informed the group about the work of the social justice group, Indivisible, and Cheryl Dargan reviewed the book, Thank You for Voting. Al Hays educated the group about possible upcoming state legislation and informed them about the best ways to communicate with legislators. At a different forum he addressed the age of responsibility in the criminal justice system.

Another forum focus was on nature. Dan Cohen spoke on the intrinsic value of nature and Sally Browne and Donna Davis gave a presentation on gardening with native

plants. Stephenie Steege, Moria Brown and Elaine Hughes provided a multimedia presentation on their experiences creating gardens at their homes.

A few forums were more interactive. They included members sharing “The Best and Worst of Holiday Celebrations,” “Beyond the Back of our Heads,” Elevator Speeches, a talkback on the service which Dennis Harbaugh conducted on the Covenant, and “Elderspeak,” a presentation by Pam Hays on ageism practices, especially in medical settings. Karen Impola shared her experiences spending 7 weeks (in the winter) in Finland.

A representative from a local nonprofit, Retrieving Freedom, presented information about their organization which trains dogs to be companions to Veterans and also to children with medical challenges.

A big bonus this year was the Soul Matters program, which Kat Henson led monthly. This provided an opportunity for members to consider the month’s theme and share their thoughts about important topics such as “resilience.”

On fourteen different occasions, the time after the coffee hour was used for congregational meals, celebrations and discussions of important matters, such as the annual budget. We are always happy to have the “forum time” used for these important community building occasions.

Music Committee Report

Alan Beving, Interim Music Director

I have been serving as the Interim Music Director for the last 6 months. As music director, my primary responsibility is to supply music for our weekly Sunday services. To this end, I select hymns, music for prelude and postlude, and music for meditation. Each musical selection is chosen to fit within the differing themes of each service. I coordinate with each service’s preacher and worship associate to accommodate any music needs or special requests. Some of these special requests were the inclusion of specific hymns or songs, extra music for meditation, or to bring in special musical guests through our Guest Musician Program. In addition to the planning of each service, I am also responsible for leading the congregation in song from the piano as well as performing the aforementioned music for meditation and prelude.

My responsibilities also include coordinating with committees and other CVUU staff. I attend and provide input to the monthly Religious Services Council Meetings. I am present for Thursday service rehearsals to collaborate on the execution of each service. I also rehearse with any special musicians in addition to my own practice and preparations. On Sunday mornings, I arrive early to warm up, check sound, and wrap up any final preparations.

Perhaps the act that I am most proud of is the reinstatement of the CVUU Choir. When I was hired, my priority goal was to reestablish the choir as a regularly meeting ensemble for the musical expression of CVUU members. The CVUU Choir was first called together to provide special music for our Christmas Eve Service. I am happy to say that since then, the participation in choir has grown, and we have performed in multiple services since, with the most recent being the joint new home blessing service with the Cedar Falls United Church of Christ. The choir plans to continue bringing music into our services for the future to come.

Thank you to Carolyn Hildebrandt for her service as the volunteer Interim Music Director, previous to me. In her time as Music Director, Carolyn kept music ringing in our services while wearing many different hats. Thank you to the Religious Services Committee, Worship Associates, and Sanctuary Technicians for all of your work and collaboration with me in my role as music director. Thank you also to the members of the CVUU choir for their time and dedication to our music-making. I would also like to thank all the musicians who have joined our services to elevate our time together: Opal Utsler (voice), Susan Bullard (cello), Carolyn Hildebrandt (piano), and “Taylor and the Taylors”: Taylor Hansen (violin), Walker Taylor (violin), William Taylor (cello), and Wren Taylor (bass).

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.

Council Members

Members of the Shared Ministry Council this year included Heather Flory (co-chair), Nancie Groszkruger (co-chair and Board liaison), Debra Kyler, Floralyn Groff, Michaela Rich, David Nation, and Pastor Emma Peterson.

Thank you to all the members of the Shared Ministry Council! A special thank you to Nancie for being our SMC Board liaison and agreeing to be co-chair starting in August, to Debra, who took notes at our meetings, to Michaela and Dave for joining SMC this year and diving right in, and to Floralyn for continuing to serve on the council throughout her medical issues.

Accomplishments

Here are some highlights of what we accomplished this year:

- We supported our minister in a variety of ways.
 - We continued to support Pastor Emma in other areas of her ministry as needed, serving as a sounding board for her to express her personal ministerial challenges, concerns, and successes.
 - We collaborated with the Personnel Committee to submit a proposal to the Board to suggest that the CVUU and our minister and paid staff take a two-week summer break at the end of July each year, going forward. This proposal was approved by the Board at their April Board meeting.
 - We prepared a proposal to the Board to give Pastor Emma additional time off going forward, based on a recommendation from the UUA for all congregations to help decrease their minister's days worked and overall workload. This proposal will be voted on by the Board at the May meeting.
 - We started the CVUU's updated annual Ministerial Review process in April 2026, following the process outlined in the CVUU bylaws. According to the bylaws, each year, the SMC collaborates with the minister, with input from the current Board president and Religious Services Council chair, to review the minister's and the congregation's performance and discuss successes, challenges, goals, and areas for future improvement.
- We supported our congregation in a variety of ways.
 - We collaborated with Personnel Committee (as described above) and the Board to have the CVUU take a two-week summer break at the end of July each year.
 - 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 worked with Pastor Emma, CVUU members, and the UUA as needed to address conflict and attempt to resolve it.
 - We wrote newsletter articles to help inform members about opportunities to get involved at the CVUU.
- We collaborated with the Congregational Life Council on areas where our councils connect or overlap, e.g., small groups and social activities.
 - Kat Beane Hanson took the lead on small groups this year and tried a variety of drop-in groups with different focus areas and varying schedules. Thank you, Kat!

- Michaela Rich organized the First Friday Dinners throughout the fiscal year and added pizza! Thank you to Michaela and everyone who helped with First Fridays!
- See the Congregational Life Council report for additional information about engagement activities and all the great work they're doing to welcome visitors and new members to the CVUU.
- Thank you to Juanita Williams and Jill Miller for co-leading the Congregational Life Council again this year!

What's next?

It takes the shared ministry of everyone in the congregation to make the CVUU work. 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 Committee has had another great year! Our group has continued to bring strong energy to the Cedar Valley to encourage equality and justice for many causes including, but not limited to, Climate, LGBTQIA+, and Reproductive Justice. Many members fully engaged during a critical time to support immigrants and refugees after recent initiatives to deport people without full USA citizenship.

First, this was Lizzy's final year serving on the board. I think I speak for the entire group when I say thank you for your dedication over the last few years. Your leadership has been appreciated and we know you will continue to represent the CVUU fighting for social justice!

I would like to say 'Thank You!' to all our members that continue to show up and support worthy causes. This is the fourth year you have allowed Lizzy and me to lead the CVUU social action committee. I appreciate all the support from committee members, staff and congregants. Our current committee members include: Al Hays, Pam Hays, Lizzy O'Loughlin, Sally Brown, Carolyn Hartsfield, Kathi Bower, Priscilla Nieman, Byron Plumley, Shirley Whiteside, Mollie Wallsteadt and Rosa Torres. It is truly a wonderful group. We are always looking to add to our roster so please reach out if you would like to join us!

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 Carolyn coordinated this effort to provide financial support for local causes. The congregation was able to vote on eight organizations that the CVUU was able to raise funds for: Americans for Independent Living, Planned Parenthood of the North Central

States, Iowa Safe Schools, Black Hawk Grundy Mental Health Fund, Iowa Abortion Access Fund, NE Iowa Food Bank, Cedar Valley Victims Resource Coalition, 1619 Freedom School, and House of Hope. As always, we continued funding for Community Meals and Guest at Your Table.

2. Cedar Valley PrideFest in downtown Waterloo - As always, this event was excellent! Pridefest is special to our congregation and allows us to show up for the community 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 UU are who make it possible. The CVUU is a long-standing supporter of Pridefest and one of a small number of religious groups that continues to support this great event. Thank you to everyone who helped in any way!
3. NE Iowa Food Bank - A dedicated group, led by Margie Miller, volunteers monthly with the Food Bank of Northeast Iowa. The group spends a Saturday and helps fulfill needs of the Food Bank to help those in the community. Thanks, Margie, for leading the charge!
4. The 'Toilet-Tree' - For the second year, around the holiday season, members of our committee, Kathi, Mollie and Pam, collected toiletry items for those in need. These items were donated to the ACE-SAP free clinic. Thank you to those who organized the tree and to those who donated items!
5. 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) - Byron and Shirley continue to represent the CVUU. This group continues to connect UU congregations around the state for education, advocacy and the occasion book read. Thank you, Byron and Shirley!
6. The Little Food Pantry - The CVUU little food pantry looked a little different this year. Congregants have continued to fill the pantry or shop for groceries when time allows. Though it may not be as consistent as it has been in years past, it continues to connect us with our neighbors. Thank you to everyone who has filled the pantry, shopped or donated food this year!
7. A few members, including Pam and Byron, have continued to represent the CVUU on the Cedar Valley Interfaith Alliance. This is a great organization that brings together many leaders within faith organizations in our area for political discussions, climate debates and many other educational topics. This group continues to bring diverse groups together for critical conversations during a time when it is needed most.
8. The Pollinator Garden has continued to be a success and will continue to be an important project for the CVUU. The garden continues to thrive with many native plants. The garden is an excellent representation of UU values and brings together groups to discuss all things nature. Thank you to Sally and Donna for their continued support!

9. Cedar Valley Advocates for Immigrants and Refugees Rights - Pastor Emma, Molly, Rosa, Byron and Shirley have been active with this group. It is a critical time in history for immigrants and refugees in the United States. With government crack downs all around the country, this area needs the support of everyone willing to get involved. Many members travel to Cedar Rapids to support immigrants attending hearings.
10. The CVUU members continue to show presence at local community events and organizations. This year, members were present at the NAACP dinner, MLK Banquet, Voters' Rights March in Lincoln Park, Waterloo City Council Meetings, Cedar Falls City Council Meetings, Planned Parenthood Day on the Hill, local school board meetings, North End Culture Fest, Cedar Falls Human Rights Campaign meetings, and No Kings protests in Waterloo. There have been many 'pop up' protests against the current climate that is propagating hateful rhetoric in politics. The CVUU continues to have many members showing support at these events.

This list certainly isn't all encompassing of the work the Social Action committee has completed, but it is a small glimpse into the great things that are happening at the CVUU. It continues to be a difficult time with the current political climate within our country. Policies being pushed by the current administration continue to go against the beliefs of the CVUU. We have members of our congregation that are being marginalized and bullied because of the way they dress, talk or identify. Now, maybe more than ever, we need to stand up for our beliefs and push back against the bullies. We won't let up anytime soon. The state of Iowa has a lot to fight for, and together with our beloved community, we can do this! Let's continue to make good trouble.

Nominating Committee Report

Margie Miller

The following Board positions are up for election for the 2026-2027 year. Each individual is eligible and willing to serve.

Officers – one-year terms (3 terms max)

President – Carolyn Hildebrandt (3rd term)

Vice President – Al Hays (2nd term)

Secretary - Kat Beane Hanson (1st term)

Finance – Steve Chamberlin (2nd term)

Trustees – two-year terms (2 terms max)

Social Action – Carollyn Hartsfield (1st term, 1st year)

Congregational Life – Jill Miller (1st term, 1st year)

REAP – Curt Toppin (1st term, 1st year)

The following are continuing their terms on the Board:

Building and Grounds – Jared Blaylock (1st term, 2nd year)
Religious Services – Mandy Boody (1st term, 2nd year)
Shared Ministry – Nancie Groszkruger (1st term, 2nd year)

Nominating Committee – up for election (3 year terms, 2 terms max)
Jen Hopkins (1st term, 1st year)
NomCom continuing term
Karen Impola (1st term, 2nd year)
Linda Lechty (1st term, 2nd year)

Thanks to all who serve as CVUU Board Members and Nominating Committee Members!

Personnel Committee Report

Al Hays, Vice President

The Vice President of the congregation is also the chair of the Personnel Committee. In that capacity, he has worked closely with the Finance Director to ensure that staff members record their hours and get paid properly for their time. Personnel management is handled through I-solve, a consulting and managing company.

The Personnel Committee consists of the Vice President, the Finance Director, and an at-large member. Pastor Emma is an ex-officio member of that committee. The committee has met with her on a regular basis to discuss issues arising from staff supervision, although the ultimate responsibility for staff is here, as supervisor.

In the late fall of 2025, the congregation was finally able to hire an interim Music Director, after many months of advertising the position. In November, 2025, we hired Alan Beving, a graduate student in choral music at UNI. It was understood that his position would be temporary, since he would be finishing his coursework in May. After he completes his duties on May 31, the committee will continue to actively search for a Music Director, hopefully someone who can make a longer-term commitment to the position. With Board approval, we raised the hourly wage and increased the hours from 8 to 12 per week, in order to make the position more attractive.

In the spring, the Personnel Committee Worked together with the Shared Ministry Council to draft a proposal for a 2-week congregational shut down during July. During this shutdown, all congregational activities will cease, except for emergencies that might arise. This will give the minister, staff and volunteers rest and recuperation time before we begin the new church year. The dates were set for the last two full weeks in July. The Board approved this proposal at its April, 2026 meeting.

Respectfully submitted, R. Allen Hays, Vice President