

**Unitarian Universalist Society
Black Hawk County
Committee Reports**

2004 – 2005



Table of Contents

Adult Religious Education.....	4
Aesthetics.....	5
Building and Grounds.....	7
Caring	8
Children’s Religious Exploration.....	9
Committee on Ministry	10
Finance	10
Hospitality.....	15
Ministerial Search Committee.....	16
Music	18
Newsletter.....	19
Outreach.....	20
Social Action	22
Sunday Service – Program.....	23
Annual Report of the Minister	25
Appendix.....	29

Adult Religious Education

Members: Al Hays

Goals for '04-'05

During the 2004-2005 church year, the Adult Religious Education program adjusted well to the change in the Sunday schedule. Meeting space is a scarce resource in our building, and it has required some shuffling to accommodate all of the Middle Hour activities, as well as important music rehearsals. However, thanks to the patience and flexibility of everyone involved, we have made it work.

Adult RE runs from 10:15 until 11:05 AM every Sunday.

Accomplishments

Ongoing Adult RE programs include:

- Celebrating the Earth Centered holidays marking the quarters and cross quarters of the Earth's circle around the Sun. These are normally celebrated on the Sunday closest to the actual date of the holiday: Fall Equinox (Mabon); Halloween (Samhain); Winter Solstice; St. Brigid's Day (Imbolc); Spring Equinox; May Day (Beltane); Summer Solstice
- Conscious Living Circle - discussions and speakers related to more earth conscious living. first and third Sundays of every month.
- Theology Discussion Group - discussion of books raising important theological questions - second and fourth Sundays of every month.
- Social Action Sunday - discussions or speakers related to important social/political issues- normally the second

Sunday of the month, but rescheduled as needed.

- UU Family Values - discussions related to issues affecting UU families (and all families) - at least one Sunday a month, where it fits best into the schedule.
- UU Stories - individual members share their religious journeys, including what brought them here and their current spiritual perspectives. This series was revived this year as a way of celebrating our religious diversity.

Normally, we try to schedule no more than two choices on a Sunday - this insures decent attendance at each one. However, there are times when three sessions have been necessary to accommodate congregational issues and concerns

This year we experimented with a Sunday afternoon offering of a taped lecture series by Dr. Bart Ehrman entitled "Christianity from Jesus to Constantine." The group met to watch the series for about four Sundays, and then interest and attendance waned.

Goals for '05-'06: In the future, we will need to schedule more discussion and commentary by those knowledgeable about the topic, "Christianity from Jesus to Constantine."

The Adult RE program always welcomes topics, issues, and speakers suggested by members of the congregation. These can be entirely new programs, or they can be incorporated into one of the series mentioned above. We look forward to cooperating with our new minister next year to further enrich our program.

Chair for '05-'06: Al Hays

Submitted by Al Hays

Aesthetics Committee

Members: Rita Lynn, Mary Kay Madsen, and Mike Knapp.

Goals for '04-'05

- to assure an aesthetic appearance in and around the church building;
 - to act as a central control point when others are inclined to add/hang/change things, and
 - consult when others have aesthetic concerns.
-
- Accomplishments
 - arranged for framing of several pieces that were subsequently hung on the walls;
 - returned objects to the walls after they were removed for the foyer remodeling;
 - removed clutter from the walls throughout the building, and hung art work appropriately;
 - removed clutter from the foyer and tried to increase awareness of the need to keep the foyer neat;
 - arranged wall and table displays in the Fellowship Hall to reduce clutter;
-
- Chair for '05-'06: Since the committee has maintained an informal structure, chairpersonship for next year will likely evolve as issues are identified and committee members' commitments are taken into consideration, as was the case this year.
-
- Goals for '05-'06:
 - Ongoing issues include:the desire to somehow remove the water stains from the interior wood paneling

- soliciting ideas for the front ledge area, to accommodate the chalice and the candles for joys and concerns
- considering ideas for replacing the wooden sculpture in the courtyard
- providing input with regard to making a “home” for nametags in the foyer.

Submitted by Rita Lynn, Aesthetics Committee Representative

Building and Grounds Committee

Members: Roger & Cindy Hahn, Julie Fisher and Warren & Allaire George

Goals Accomplished:

- Entry remodeling finished
- Landscaping entry completed
- Shane room doors installed
- Minor repairs to exterior siding
- Parking lot resurfaced.
- Small repair to roof shingles.

Chair for '05-'06: Unless someone else really wants to, Roger Hahn will agree to be the chair again this next year.

Goals for '05-'06:

- Continue landscaping grounds
 - Trees need trimming - some need to be removed
 - Eliminate the large pile of brush
 - Planting additional shrubs, plants
- Possible roof reshingling. The roof of the classroom addition, as reported last fall, will need to be resingled

soon (possibly this summer). I have not yet had a chance to check its condition this spring. I will inform the board of my findings and recommendations as soon as possible.

- Replace the tile floor in the kitchen (and possibly some other minor sprucing up of the kitchen)
- Evaluation of heating and cooling. We currently have one furnace that is not working (it only heats the entry way and the two offices upstairs). With warm weather now here, I have put off having this repaired until we have the whole heating and cooling of the building reviewed. This furnace is not in great condition, and the furnace that heats the sanctuary is also rather old and inefficient. I plan on having one or two professionals advise us on what would be the best course of action. If one furnace needs to be replaced, perhaps we could replace both older furnaces with one more efficient one. I also want to get an estimate of what air conditioning would add to the cost. Add to this the possibility of perhaps someday expanding the building, and it gets quite complicated.
- Continue to monitor and repair as much as possible the siding of the building, which continues to deteriorate.

Submitted by Roger Hahn

Caring Committee

Members: Bob Robinson, Esther Kieffer, Betsy Brant, Cathy, Ryan, Marilyn Desmond, Mark Allstrom

Goals for '04-'05: Our goal is to keep informed of joys and concerns of congregation and passing it on to the members when

appropriate. We follow up with visits, cards, etc. The Caring Committee meets the 1st Sunday each month and keep in touch by E-mail. There are no problems.

Chair for '05-'06: Esther Kieffer

Goals for '05-'06: To continue connecting with people in a personal and meaningful manner.

Submitted by Esther Kieffer

Children's Religious Exploration

Members: Damon Gross (Chair), Chris Rediske, Juanita Williams, Dennis Smithe and Wayne Taylor

Goals for '04-'05

As our committee was re-activated mid-year, this report will necessarily be brief and perhaps incomplete. To my knowledge, we did not explicitly set goals, but there were implicit goals dictated by circumstances.

1. Elect a chair and establish a regular meeting schedule.
2. Alleviate the excessive overload that our RE Director was bearing.
3. Most importantly, appropriately staff our classes with lead-teachers and helpers..
4. Update the Coming of Age program.

Accomplishments

1. Damon Gross was elected as chair and regular meeting times have been scheduled.
2. Although no attempt was made to measure the RE Director's overload objectively, my subjective perception is that our RE Director is now less severely over-burdened than she was five or six months ago.

5. Our RE Director instituted a plan to modularize the content of our courses into 5-week units. In this way, the length of commitment involved in teaching would be shortened, enabling more people to serve. Result: more people have indeed been involved in teaching classes. This has probably been beneficial to the students, but recruiting teachers remains the major challenge of the committee.
6. Rewrote the Coming of Age program.

Goals for '05-'06: We have not yet set goals for the coming year but we intend to continue to provide a quality program.

Submitted by Damon Gross, Chair

Committee on Ministry

Members: Mark Allstrom, Lynn Brant, Sue Hill, Mary Kay Madsen, John Miller

Goals for '04-'05: The goal of the COM is to address issues relating to the overall ministry of the UUSBHC.

Accomplishments:

- addressed specific issues brought to us by individual members of the congregation
- met regularly during the first part of the year with the Director of RE to develop strategies to enhance children's RE, and revive the RE Committee and clarify its mission.
- supported Mark in his work at the UUSBHC and in his search for a new position

Goals/Chair for '05-'06: With a new minister, a new COM will be created. We anticipate that the new COM will be comprised of at least some, if not all, members of the current search committee.

Determining the exact composition of the Committee will be the prerogative of the new minister.

Submitted by Sue Hill

Finance Committee

Committee Members

Mike Knapp, Finance Director, Mary Kay Madsen, Stewardship Campaign Chair, Karen Kitchen, Treasurer, Dick Shane, Collector, Brittany Flokstra, Scrip goddess, Dennis Harbaugh, Endowment Chair, Pam Hays and Mica Lorenz, At-large representatives, Auditor: Vacant position.

Operational Funds

General operational funds are those annually budgeted funds required to perform the usual and customary activities of the Society. Total income of the Society for the period of July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2004 was \$69,097. Total expenses for the same period was \$62,272. All surplus funds were carried over into the current year to fund Search Committee expenses.

Capital Funds

Capital funds are those funds used for special projects (e.g., mortgage buy down, foyer/landscaping project, special off budget purchases). Capital funds are acquired through donations and profits raised through the sale of Scrip at the Society. Capital funds available to the Society as of June 30, 2004 totaled \$4,738.69. The value of Scrip inventory on hand was reported at \$1585.00.

Building Maintenance Reserve

The Building Maintenance Reserve contains those funds required for the scheduled purchase and repair of the Society's building, equipment and grounds. Funding for the Maintenance Reserve is included in the monthly operational budget. As of June 30, 2004, the Building Maintenance Reserve totaled \$14,172.53. An additional \$2,746 will be added to fund this year.

FY04 Audit

An audit of FY04's financial records has not been conducted to date, as Jeanette Gibson, who previously held this position on the Finance Committee, was unable to serve this year. A replacement volunteer has not been identified to date to replace her function on the committee. Individuals interested in serving in this capacity should contact any member of the Finance Committee.

Subcommittee Reports

FY06 Stewardship Campaign

The FY06 Stewardship subcommittee is chaired by Mary Kay Madsen. This year's pledge brochure was designed by Donna Davis. This year's campaign completes a two year plan to move our annual budget to a level capable of supporting professional ministry at UUA "Fair Compensation" guidelines. Last year's campaign resulted in a nearly 20% increase in giving levels from members, friends and associates. This year's campaign again utilized a Stewardship Dinner format, whereby Campaign volunteers hosted private dinners or brunches in their home for up to 10 individuals. Attendees were then given the opportunity to view a special campaign dvd and asked to make their annual pledge. This year's goal sought an additional 25% increase in giving. Of the 99 pledge units contacted, 79 have returned pledges to date totaling \$82,784. Based on the giving trends of the pledge

units still out, we are projecting that a total of \$86,124 will be raised through this year's Stewardship Campaign.

Scrip Program

The Scrip Subcommittee is chaired by Brittany Flokstra. Assisting her in Scrip sales are Kevin Stafsholt, Shanlee McNally, Karen Kitchen, Mary Kay Madsen and Mica Lorenz. Scrip sales continue to do well. This year's goal for Scrip sale profits has been set at \$1350. Total profit as of February of this year was at \$1009.80, well on its way to surpassing the \$1,350 sales profit goal set at the beginning of the year. Increased profits are attributable to increased awareness of the Scrip program by our members and expansion of Scrip sales to include more local merchants offering higher profit share.

Endowment Fund

The Endowment Fund Subcommittee is chaired by Dennis Harbaugh. Subcommittee members include Rich Winsor and Frank Olson. During the past year the Endowment Fund subcommittee has been developing an Endowment Fund Policy for the Society. This policy was reviewed and adopted by the Board at its February meeting. The Endowment Fund Policy includes a statement of purpose, outlines administration of the Fund, types of donations accepted, fund investment guidelines, use of endowment principal and interest, and other details. As adopted, this Policy takes precedence over previous gift or memorial policies. Bylaws revisions related to the establishment of this Endowment Fund will be presented at the Annual Meeting for review and approval by the membership.

As suggested in the Endowment Fund's Statement of Purpose, the Fund "offers an opportunity for members and friends to donate gifts or bequests...to the Society, confident in the assurance their donation will provide continuing and lasting support for the Society's mission, ministry and services."

At their February, 2005 meeting the Executive Board further amended and then approved the Endowment Fund Policy. The Policy includes a statement of purpose and outlines administration of the Fund, types of donations accepted, fund investment guidelines, use of endowment principal and interest, and other details. As adopted, this Policy takes precedence over previous gift or memorial policies. The Executive Board also recommended changes to current UUSBHC By-Laws in order to establish the Endowment Fund. If these changes are approved at the Annual Meeting, the Finance Committee will then appoint a 3-person Endowment Fund Subcommittee for the next fiscal year.

Treats and Talents Auction

Our Treats and Talents Auction, annual event held in November, raises funds to support the operational budget by auctioning off “treats or talents” donated by members, friends, associates and community donors. This year’s Treats and Talents Auction raised a net profit of \$3,784, and increase of \$1,386 over 2004’s event. Most items or events sold at the night of the auction are one-time events. Two of events sold at the auction have continued to provide additional income. Cellobration II, which took place April 10th, will generate additional income through ticket sales the day of the performance. The Texas Holdem Poker Tournament has turned into a repeating event, with the second tournament generating another \$120 in donations for the church. Additional tournaments will be held about every two months, and will hopefully generate \$600 to \$800 of additional revenue annually.

Current Fiscal Year Update

As of February 28, 2005, we have completed 66% of the current budget year. Income received to date is at \$51,581 or 61% of

budget. Expenses incurred to date are at \$49,734 or 52% of the budgeted amount for the year. Barring unforeseen expenses or drop in income, we are projecting an end-of-year surplus of approximately \$1,500. These funds are earmarked for carryover into the FY06 budget to support moving expenses associated with the calling of our new minister.

FY06 Proposed Budget

A proposed budget of \$100,196 will be presented for membership approval at the Annual Meeting. This budget meets our goals of supporting professional ministry at UUA “Fair Compensation” levels; meets our past pledge to restore UUA and Prairie Star District affiliation dues levels back to 100% level, and meets the activity levels requested by the standing committees of the Society. In order to accomplish these goals, and meet the one-time costs of settling a new minister, we are proposing a one-year only funding of the the Building Reserve Fund at a level of \$1,000 and the Leadership Development fund at a level of \$250.

Because we did not achieve our original pledge campaign goal for the year, we have removed \$2,000 originally designated in the FY06 budget for costs associated with the installation of the new minister. Any unspent funds from the current year’s Search Committee Budget will be encumbered for this purpose. Additional monies needed will be sought through special fundraising projects or year-end surplus funds exceeding current budget projections.

All unspent funds remaining at the end of the current fiscal year, except those already encumbered for specific projects will revert to the general fund surplus. Should the year-end surplus for FY05 exceed the projected amount of \$1500 included in the FY06 budget, it is recommended these funds be designated to the following three priorities:

- Restoration of Building Maintenance Reserve Fund to its annual level

- Restoration of the Leadership Development Fund to the \$500 level
- Installation costs for the new minister

Submitted by Mike Knapp

Hospitality Committee

Members: Esther Kieffer, Cindy Hahn, Allaire and Warren George, Louise Allstrom

Goal:

We use a voluntary sign up sheet, which is not working well.

Goals for '04-'05

Facilitate providing hospitality after the first service each Sunday.

Challenges

- The two services have caused some confusion about hospitality. We cannot expect someone to cover the kitchen from 9:30 til 1:00 P.M.
- Also new people do not have a opportunity for social time if they come to the second service.

Accomplishments

- We are continuing to upgrade the kitchen in keeping with being an enviromentally friendly church.
- A questionnaire about hospitality was distributed and assessed.
- Treats are now being provided by the committee to make hospitality more accessible for everyone as was indicated by our questionnaire.

- The children are now joining us for hospitality as well.

Goals for '05-'06:

- Continue providing after the first service each Sunday.
- Increase the number of members involved in hospitality hosting.

Chair for '05-'06: Esther Kieffer

Submitted by Esther Kieffer

Ministerial Search Committee

Members: Lynn Brant, Jan Gallagher, Judith Harrington, Chair, Pam Hays, Carolyn Hildebrandt, Esther Kieffer, Shanlee McNally

Goal

The Ministerial Search Committee had one goal: to follow the UUA Settlement Office's with a sole purpose: to identify the minister who would be a "best fit," and bring that minister to you. We succeeded in reaching our goal! The Committee is grateful for your trust and support throughout this lengthy process.

Accomplishments

- Distributing a Congregational Survey to determine the congregation's views on church matters.
- Creating a lengthy Congregational Record, whose topics were provided by the Settlement Office.
- Posting the Record on a protected UUA website, available only to ministers curious about us.
- Preparing a Congregational Packet, with photographs of our congregation at worship, work, and play.
- Ministers attracted by our Record permitted us to view their Ministerial Records online.

- Ministers were contacted by phone, and we agreed to exchange packets.
- Arrangements were made for pre-candidates to conduct services in three other UU churches.
- The Committee carefully deliberated before selecting three highly qualified ministers.
- Pre-candidating weekends ran from mid-February through early March. Ministers were highly positive about the prospect of serving as our minister.
- Reverend Eva Cameron was invited to be our ministerial candidate. The Agreement (contract) was approved by the Board and Reverend Cameron the following week; Candidating Week was set to begin April 22nd.
- At the end of Candidating Week, a Congregational Meeting will occur, to vote whether to ratify the Committee's choice and extend the call to Reverend Cameron to become our next permanent minister.

Goals for '05-06: Upon settlement of a minister, this committee will be disbanded.

Submitted by Carolyn Hildebrandt

Music Committee

Members: Ute Brandenburg, Suzanne Bullard, Carolyn Hildebrandt (Chair), Karen Impola, Tim Purdum (Choir Director)

Goals for this year:

- Organize live music for the 11:15 Sunday Services and Christmas Eve Service
- Acquire choral music, new piano, and computer software
- Participate in fundraising and outreach

Accomplishments:

- Organized live music for the 11:15 Sunday Services and Christmas Eve Service
- Included 55 singers and musicians (see addendum)
- Purchased choral music for the UU Singers.
- Purchased software for the upstairs computer and used it to write musical arrangements.
- Received piano donation for the Shane Room.
- Held a luncheon to pay for the moving and tuning of the new piano.
- Tim Purdum released his new CD, *Songs of Faith and Love*--15% of sales at church go to the UUSBHC.
- Organized a UUSC benefit concert for Tsunami victims in collaboration with the Social Action Committee (April 6).
- Organized Cellobration II—a Treats and Talents Auction Item (April 10).
- Invited the Payne AME Choir to sing with the UU Singers (April 10).
- Performed background music for the 2005 Canvass DVD.
- Wrote an article for the Cedar Falls Times about the Midwinter Revels.
- Created a Music Bulletin Board for the Fellowship Hall.
- Visited other churches, participated in church music camps, conferences, and other professional development activities

Chair for '05-'06: Carolyn Hildebrandt

Goals for '05-'06: Same as this year

Submitted by Carolyn Hildebrandt

Newsletter Committee

Members: Gerry Chamberlin (Editor), Steve Chamberlin (Assistant Editor), Mica Lorenz (Calendar), Betsy Brant (Bulk Mail) and Contributors.

Goals for '04-'05

- Edit, print, assemble, publish and mail the UUSBHC newsletter eleven times per year.

Accomplishments

- Beginning with the December 2004 issue, thanks to Steve, we are now doing the entire newsletter on the computer. (Gerry formatted the front page with the logos, etc. on the computer so we could avoid having to do the old-fashioned “cut and paste”.)
- Our newsletters have usually been three to five sides printed per issue. In the last year, while preparing for a new minister, we’ve typically printed eight to ten sides each issue.
- Recently we added e-mail addresses to that page for newsletter and calendar items as well as for the Sunday bulletin.

Goals for '05-'06:

- Continue to provide an informative and timely newsletter for UUSBHC.

Chair for '05-'06: Gerry Chamberlin

Submitted by Gerry Chamberlin

Outreach Committee

Members: Mica Lorenz Co-Chair, Donna Kroeger Co-Chair
Karen Miller, Cindi Boyd, Jan Gallagher and Damon Gross

Goals for '04-'05

- Recruit ushers from general membership to greet members, returning visitors and distribute bulletins.
- Have 2 greeters each Sunday for greeting new visitors.
- Get contact information from visitors.
- Contact new visitors in week after visit.
- See that all visitors are approached during coffee hour and at other events and made to feel welcome.
- Be pro-active with press relations and attempt to get something into the paper each quarter.
- Keep brochure rack stocked.
- Find a permanent home for the nametags.
- Develop a visitor's brochure and information.
- Produce a membership directory.

Accomplishments

- A new membership directory was distributed.
- Karen Miller recruited ushers for each Sunday Service.
- 2 Members of the Outreach committee greeted new visitors at each service. We also stay in the area before the 2nd hour to direct people to the RE classes.
- A visitor brochure was designed by Jan Gallagher and an information card was developed to get contact information and information on how visitors heard about us.
- We ordered pencils that say Unitarian Universalist for visitors.
- All returning visitors were provided with temporary nametags.
- We believe that all visitors were made to feel welcome.
- A new name tag holder has been constructed and donated by Damon Gross.
- Brochures from the UUA are prominently displayed at the visitor's table.

- Visitors who indicated interest were added to the newsletter mailing list.
- Donna Kroeger sent postcards to visitors each week.
- Several articles have been printed in the Cedar Falls and Waterloo papers.
- We have kept stats on attendance of visitors and attendance at Sunday services.
- We held 4 new UU sessions and had an ingathering of new members in Oct. We will be having new UU sessions in April and May and another in gathering May 22, 2005.
- We currently have 115 members including 4 who joined in October.
- We recommended a by-law addition to clarify the process for calculating the official membership number.
- So far this program year (through March 30th) we have had 70 visitors of whom 22 have returned several times.
- Our average attendance on Sunday (Aug 22nd - March 30th) has been 77. The 9 AM service attendance average has been 21. The 11:15 service average has been 56.
- The summer attendance July 1 – Aug 15 was an average of 33.

Goals for '05-'06:

Chair for '05-'06: Mica Lorenz. The following members have agreed to continue their membership: Donna Kroeger, Jan Gallagher, Cindi Boyd, and Karen Miller

Submitted by Mica Lorenz

Social Action Committee

Members: Louise Allstrom, Mark Allstrom, Katie Birchard, Bill Chene, Eileen Dare, Laura Kaplan, Donna Davis, Al Hays, Janice Judisch, Mike Knapp, Mica Lorenz, Mary Kay Madsen, Margie Miller, Janet Parrish, Dick Shane, Vivian Shane

Goals for '04-'05

- Continue recurring activities such as *Crop Walk*, *Mitten Tree*, and *Guest at Your Table*
- Establish regular meetings, and continue email correspondence to the Social Action Committee members
- Design and sell a UUSBHC t-shirt to wear when involved in social action activities
- Determine a new Social Action Project for 2004-2005

Accomplishments

- In 2004 we became a *welcoming congregation*
- Many ongoing and recurring projects were continued from previous years: CROP walk, guest at your table, mitten tree, food pantry weekly donations, community meals, etc.
- *An Alternative Giving Fair* was held in December
- A new UUSBHC t-shirt was designed and made available for purchase by Uus
- A Tsunami Relief fundraising concert was held April 6th. \$530 has been donated so far.
- The Social action project fund was allocated to two projects: continued preparation for the UU cable access show, and the *Bright Moves* mentoring program.

Chairs for '05-'06: Eileen Dare and Laura Kaplan

Goals for 2005-2006

- Continue recurring activities as determined by the chair(s)

- Continue holding meetings and communicating additional social action opportunities with committee members by e-mail
- Begin filming the cable access show
- Implement new social action projects to support anti-harassment of LGBT in the school systems, and to help pass the Waterloo human rights anti-discrimination policy amendment to include sexual orientation.

Submitted by Heather Flory

Sunday Service – Program Committee

Members: John Miller, Brittany Flokstra, Donnna Davis, **Error! Reference source not found., Error! Reference source not found.,** Del Carpenter

Goals for '04-'05

Accomplishments

The Sunday Service Committee has had a busy and exciting year experimenting with new and different formats during Mark Alstrom's interim with us. We started last summer with sermon-centered services rather than the lay led shorter services followed by a discussion that had been done in the past. We coordinated with the Outreach Committee in welcoming new people during the summer months, as many people use the summer to look for new church homes or are new to the area.

Starting in August, we began two services with the understanding that the Sunday Service Committee would evaluate the results in November and report to the board. Two services were successful in alleviating the crowded conditions, which was one of the reasons that prompted us try this approach, along with offering an alternative format and time-frame to members of our congregation. In November the committee recommended to the board that we

continue with two services throughout the entire year. The Sunday Service Committee would like to thank all those that made this experiment possible. It took the efforts of many committees and individuals to make two services happen. We are grateful to everyone involved.

The Sunday Service Committee began closer coordination with both the Music and the Outreach Committees. This coordination has enhanced our services and we look forward to continued coordination.

Chair for '05-'06: John Miller

Goals for '05-'06:

We are now embarking on a new adventure. With the Search Committee recommending that we hire Eva Cameron, things will again be changing. We plan to meet with her during candidating week and look forward to working with her, should she be called to be our minister.

Finally, we want to express our appreciation to Mark Allstrom for all the leadership, knowledge and skills that he has brought to our congregation during his time with us. He has given us new and innovative ideas and has encouraged us to challenge some of the traditions that we have thought sacred. We will be forever grateful to his leadership and willingness to assist us during his time here.

Submitted by The Sunday Service Committee

Annual Report of the Minister

To the Unitarian Universalist Society of Black Hawk County

By Mark Allstrom

March 31, 2005

Worship: I presided over six Sunday services after the 2004 Annual Meeting (April 18) and before our Summer Services began (June 27). Since I was not taking my vacation until January, I preached for most of our summer services (six of the eight) and in so doing experimented in making them “more like normal services” and less like discussions, that is, complete with sermon, meditation and music. However we did include discussion portions which were more familiar summer fare. The format of these services then served as the model for the 9am services which began with the new church year on August 22.

But early on I felt preaching the same sermon for the two services was a hindrance. Personally, I felt bored doing the same sermon twice, but also preaching two different sermons allowed for a wider exploration of topics and eventually seemed to help create a varied atmosphere in the two services. I also found I could experiment with delivery styles. I started preaching different sermons on September 5 (although on September 12 and October 24, the topics were important enough to warrant using the same sermon twice).

From August 22 through December 26, I led 24 Sunday services at UUSBHC on 13 Sundays and one (with the help of the Sunday Services Committee) on Christmas Eve. I also preached at the Decorah Fellowship on December 5.

During my vacation I spoke at the Unitarian Church of South Australia, the Shady Grove Unitarian Chapel and the Ullet Road (Liverpool) Unitarian Church. I also preached at the Kensington (London) church on April 18, 2004.

I resumed here on February 6 and between then and the writing of this report, I preached 12 sermons over six Sundays. So between April 18, 2004 and April 17, 2005 Annual Meetings (including the next four sermons over the three Sundays before the Annual Meeting), I will have preached 52 times at UUSBHC over 34 Sundays and six times at other times or locations. I also participated in two flower communions, two New Member Welcoming services, two naming ceremonies, two union services, four weddings (one in Australia), and two memorial services.

Due to scheduling conflicts, I urged naming two members of the congregation as marriage celebrants to cover weddings to which the professional minister could not commit. John Miller and Sue Hill were so named in December.

I am very grateful for all the help people put in, especially with the changes necessitated by the change to the two services format and especially for those who volunteered to lead and/or organize services with me or in my absence.

We will return to a one-service format after Memorial Day weekend because we suspect attendances will drop then. I think it worked well and it relieved the seating capacity problem. I do not know if the new minister will want to continue it. It will be up to her and the Sunday Services Committee. But I count as one of the great successes of the last year that this congregation was flexible enough to experiment with it.

Adult Religious Education: The Adult RE this church offers is one of the best programs I've seen and I was pleased to participate in it with three UU History conversations and workshops on Assimilation and on Outreach. I also spoke once with the Youth Group.

Conferences and Colleagues: I attended the British Unitarian conference in Chester and the Prairie Star District meeting in Kansas City. I also attended two district UU Ministers Association meetings and four meetings with the Iowa Cluster of UU Ministers.

Committees: I met with the following committees: Outreach (2), Social Action (3), Caring (4), Search (2), Sunday Services (7), RE (3), COM (6), and joint meetings of COM and RE and of COM and Board. From August through December the DRE participated in COM meetings. I am pleased with the RE Committee reorganization. The cable-TV Social Action project will begin soon. I am very grateful to all those who worked on these and the other committees of this church.

Pastoral: I made 25 Hospital visits, 91 pastoral visits and 84 social visits.

Miscellaneous: I gave a presentation at the Cedar Falls Museum and at the Kiwanis group.

I involved myself in the geo-index debate with the district's consultant because I thought it reflected poorly and unjustly on this congregation. But I was very pleased in how the Search Committee and the Board created a very positive outcome.

Suggestions: I am pleased that the church seems to demonstrate more flexibility with less anxiety than what I found at first. The willingness to experiment will be vital when the new minister arrives.

I think we were able to improve our image in the district and, by extension, in the denomination. In so doing I believe we demonstrated the value of continually setting goals beyond what we have already achieved. But I am concerned there's still not much participation in district and denominational activities. I think the "road trips" that the Allstroms and Zeitzes went on were productive on a variety of levels and I was pleased that five or six of us appeared at the Kansas City District meeting and. But I don't believe anyone went to the 2005 district meeting. Also there is an excellent opportunity for training and connecting with other congregations at the district's annual leadership school (and, I believe, some funding available as well), yet there's been no interest. I know people are busy but a congregation which wants

to be involved in denominational activities would arrange the means.

I am concerned that the right hand sometimes doesn't know or doesn't care what the left-hand is doing. This is a matter of sharing information but also a matter of consistently and intentionally tying programs and approaches together. In a larger church this might be done with the Committee Council. As it is, it is done through the Board. It is my opinion it is not necessarily the Board's job and keeping tabs on what the committees do consumes a lot of Board time as it threatens to rob the committees of the responsibility to do their assigned jobs which in turn hinders their enthusiasm. Yet there needs to be a clear way of the committees to tie their various programs together.

While the RE program has achieved a lot in the last year or two, especially in organizing itself, there could be problems in the future. It is organized well; I'm just concerned the ongoing volunteerism is tenuous. This is strange to me because the congregation generally affirms its commitment to its youth and children's programs, yet volunteerism and enthusiasm for these programs seems lacking at times.

I suggest that the Board organize and utilize the archives better. Sometimes there's confusion or, simply, ignorance concerning your past.

I suggest the Board and committees engage in conflict management. I sense sometimes that people don't know how conflicts get out of hand and how they can so easily contribute to that.

I suggest that the minister not be expected to take out the garbage and I am concerned that lights and heaters are sometimes left on and the door sometimes left open overnight.

I suggest that a long-term goal be established of hiring an Administrative Assistant.

