



April 2023 Newsletter



**Jean Eells, PhD: Changing
Narratives about Growing Food**

Thursday, April 13, 5 PM Pacific, 6 PM Mountain, 7 PM Central & 8 PM Eastern

The soil that we need to grow food and fiber is in more danger than people realize! The steady degradation of soil worldwide is almost invisible due to widespread practices of tillage that we now understand makes the life of the microbes that support plants very miserable. Who knew? Fortunately renewal and resilience is possible, necessary, and urgently needed.

Learn more and watch the webinar on UUJEC's [Facebook page live here](#), or [register for Zoom here](#).

Iowa UU Environmental Activism

Peoples UU Church of Cedar Rapids



Peter Mayer Concert

Peter Mayer comes to People's UU Church in Cedar Rapids on Saturday, April 15th at 7 pm for a concert to kick off Earth Week celebrations. Tickets are \$20 in advance, or \$25 at the door. Check the People's church website for details: <https://peoplesuu.org/>

Come on out Eastern Iowa UUs for a great concert!

IUUWAN Environmental Justice Team

To answer the question, "How can Iowa UUs work together to address environmental issues?" the Environmental Justice Team meets to work on Iowa's challenging environmental issues. The hope is to unite Iowa UUs and support each other's environmental activism. Presently, the focus of this group is on CO2 pipelines, water quality, and CAFOs. We meet at 7 pm on the fourth Sunday of the month. Contact Sally Hartman if you are interested (sallyahartman@hotmail.com).

ENVIRONMENTAL CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

UU Congregation of Quad Cities



The UU Congregation of the Quad Cities will be celebrating an Earth Week of events and activities. Their Earth Day service at 10 am on April 23rd will be followed by a UUCQC showcase. This will include tours of our grounds, which include a giving garden, pollinator garden, native prairie, butterfly garden, and compost area.

Indoors we will have tables about Terracycle, recycling, master gardening, growing pollinator flowers, and local environmental justice issues. We are also having an Earth Week activity for the Youth RE program. Each child will receive a bag full of activities they can complete each day during Earth Week.

UU Society of Coralville



CO2 Pipeline Opposition

Environmentalists from the UU Society in Coralville write letters to landowners under threat of losing their land due to eminent domain in the process of CO2 pipeline construction. These landowners live in rural areas without internet and do not have internet access. The letters inform the availability of legal representation, meeting information and landowner rights. UU Society members joined in the opposition by writing postcards to the Iowa Utilities Board.

The UU Society provides a vegan meal and programs on April 6 for a demonstration and discussion on reducing plastic use and on April 19 for a discussion on Paul Hawken's book *Regeneration: Ending the Climate Crisis in One Generation*.

The theme for the Earth Day Service at UU Society, *We Are Better Together*, celebrates how we learn from each other and grow our movement. Jessica Wiskus is our special guest speaker and a proponent of environmental activism. Green Sanctuary members and Rev. Diana Smith will also share stories and learnings. The April 23 service at 10 am will be a multiplatform service, in person, or tune into [YouTube Live here](#).

All are invited to an Earth Festival on Saturday, May 6th, 10 am- 3 pm. Workshops, activities for children, speakers, and food will be part of the festival. Local non-profits and others will share Information on such topics as nature, the earth, climate change, and the diversity of human life on earth. This will be a family friendly event, with a suggested donation of \$5 per person or \$10 per family.

First Unitarian Church of Des Moines



April starts with Pachamama Alliance – Iowa providing a forum on “How to Stay Awake Through Times of Change.” Pachamama Alliance – Iowa provides envisions a world working for everyone: an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling, socially just human presence on this planet. Based on Paul Hawken's work of *Regeneration* and putting life at the center of every action and decision, we plan to have attendees create their own punch lists, share them with each other and start a pathway to engage and support each other as we take action.

Starting on April 16th, Green Sanctuary Team will provide a five week in person class on the books *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer and *The Sustainable Soul: Reflections and Practices* by Rebecca James Hecking.

Janice Hawkins, a member of First Unitarian, and Pachamama Alliance -Iowa is working with Women's International League of Freedom and Des Moines Sustainability Task Force to implement a No Mow May action for the month of May. First Unitarian Endowment is providing \$1,800.00 to help support the educational effort, and invite members of First Unitarian to participate. The Mayor of Des Moines plans to sign the proclamation on Monday April 10th. Other members are providing support for the effort by learning about turf alternatives, and making Seed Bombs or Seed Balls of native grasses and finding them places for the seed bombs/ balls to germinate and grow.

Decorah UU



Members of Decorah UU plan to celebrate Earth Day April 23 with a trip to Cedar Rapids on April 22. They will take in the [Occupied Wounded Knee 1973 Exhibit](#) at the History Center in Cedar Rapids. After, they visit the NewBo City Market for lunch + the [Earth Day Eco Fest](#) with live music and booths. They may take a side trip to Option to the Cedar Rapids Public Library for the exhibit on Systemic Oppression in Our Schools.

Other Iowa UU News

League of Women Voters



Tamara Prenosil, from the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Dubuque and Mary Ellen Miller from the First Unitarian Church of Des Moines were instrumental in organizing a webinar that

called for activism in water protection. On April 3, the League of Women Voters Upper Mississippi River Region Inter League Organization held a webinar “Groundwater: Critical and Vulnerable.”

The webinar reported on two watersheds in the Driftless area, one in Iowa and one in Minnesota. The Iowa watershed includes Bloody Run Creek in northeast Iowa, one of Iowa’s 34 waterways designated as “Outstanding Iowa Waters.” A Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) housing 11,600 cattle has been built very close to the headwaters of Bloody Run creek in Karst topography. A lawsuit endorsed by several environmental groups regarding the DNR’s permitting process is ongoing.

In the Driftless area of Minnesota along the Mississippi, similar problems are occurring. The Karst bluffs have thin soil, creating a condition for water contamination. Drinking water quality has been significantly impacted by poor land use. Many wells have undrinkable water.

First Unitarian Church of Des Moines



First Unitarian Church of Des Moines has had the opportunity this past year of having Rev. Victoria Safford provide Transitional Interim Minister services to our congregation. As the UUA transitions into its desire of being a viable religion for the future, Rev. Safford has modeled and exemplified what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist that allows each of us to claim our own gifts, be in relationship with others, and then take action.

Also, First Unitarian’s [Progressive Voices Concerts](#) brings [Amilia K Spicer](#) on Earth Day, Saturday April 22, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. [Click here](#) for more information.



Cedar Valley UU Church



On Sunday, April 3, Emma Peterson was ordained at the Cedar Valley UU Church. Victoria Safford, of First Unitarian Church of Des Moines was a featured speaker, and other UU ministers were in attendance. A reception followed the ordination.

Reducing Multigenerational Poverty Through Sentencing Reform



Jared Trujillo, JD

Thursday, April 27

5 PM Pacific, 6 PM Mountain, 7 PM Central, 8 PM Eastern

The relationship between incarceration and poverty is circular, cyclical, and symbiotic – poverty is a cause of incarceration, and incarceration causes poverty. Shortly after culture shifting civil rights victories in the 1960's, states began enacting draconian sentencing laws that required

judges to sentence children and adults to longer periods of incarceration. See more and watch the webinar on UUJEC's [Facebook page live here](#), or register for [Zoom here](#).

To donate to IUUWAN, join one of IUUWAN's Action Teams (Environmental Justice, or Racial Justice, or LGBTQ+ Equality), or to see the latest Iowa UU News and Events, go to our [Homepage here](#).

