



Targeted Minister Success

Dec. 29, 2021

By Tom Miller

On Tuesday Dec 28, after a short and intense search, the Board voted unanimously to agree to a contract with two ministers who will share part-time responsibilities as our new Targeted Ministers. Their job will be to provide essential ministerial support for the next six months while we apply for and hopefully find an Interim Minister to start in July or August of 2022. The role of the interim minister will be to assist us in the discernment we need to get us ready to select our next Settled Minister to start in the Fall of 2024.

The new ministers are Rev. Gary Kowalski and Rev. Munro Sickafoose (see biographies below). Both currently live in Santa Fe and co-pastor the Taos UU congregation once a month each.

In the agreement with the Board, the ministers have agreed to work in the following ways:

Both Ministers will report to and be supervised by the Board. The Board will charge and staff a Targeted Ministers Coordinating Task Force of 4-7 members to meet at least monthly with both Ministers to provide coordination and guidance between the Ministers and the Congregation. The Targeted Ministers Coordinating Task Force will conduct a final evaluation of the co-ministry using tools jointly agreed upon between the Board and the Ministers.

Ministry is time intensive with widely varying hours. It is expected that, shared between the two ministers, this part-time ministry encompasses approximately a 2/3 FTE position. The expectation is that each Minister will be in residence 4-5 days per month, including at least one Sunday morning service. Specific work hours while in residence will be coordinated with the Board. The Ministers will have use of the office facilities in San Juan House. Each Minister will live-stream into the Sanctuary once per month to lead Sunday morning worship and to participate in the after-sermon reflection.

The Ministers have the following responsibility and authority regarding worship services: In collaboration with UUFD's Worship Arts Team, the Ministers will oversee, plan and deliver regular multiplatform Sunday worship services. One of the Ministers will lead or co-lead worship each Sunday, beginning January 16 and ending June 26, 2022, unless this agreement is changed or extended by mutual consent. Given no COVID restrictions, each minister will conduct one in-person service and one remote (Zoom) service per month. Specific dates, service content, COVID and weather contingencies will be coordinated with the Worship Arts Team.

Both Ministers will share responsibility for pastoral care and calling on parishioners in need. They will collaborate with and support the Caring Team to carry out pastoral care as appropriate.

Rev. Kowalski will be an ex officio, non-voting member of the Board and its committees and task forces. He is expected to consult with, advise and regularly bring to the attention of the Board matters significantly affecting the life, operation, and mission of the Congregation. He will also lead the staff by providing consultation, support, and supervision and by holding staff accountable per their job descriptions. He will hold regular staff meetings, scheduled as much as possible to match his time in residence, but also by Zoom when not in residence.

Rev. Sickafoose will provide leadership support and supervision and hold teams accountable. He will serve as an ex officio, non-voting member of the ministry teams, including Worship Arts, Arts & Aesthetics, Caring, Hospitality, and Social Responsibility & Justice and the Membership Committee. He will confer, as needed, with each team on how best to work together to serve the mission of the Congregation. In addition, he will provide support by collaborating with small group ministries including Covenant Groups, Sage Circle, and other spiritual support groups within the Congregation. Each Minister will lead online or in-person at least one small group to be determined in consultation with the congregation such as Bereavement Group, Dream Group, Spiritual Best Practices, or book discussions.

The Ministers will have use of the front of Columbine House for their residence when they are in Durango. We will provide donated furniture for their use. A temporary closure of the archway in the living room of Columbine will provide privacy for those in residence, while continuing to allow use of the back and basement (Youth Room) for Faith Formation. The closure will be able to be removed once the Targeted Ministry term is completed.

When not in residence, both Ministers will live-stream or phone into Board, committee, team, and small group ministries as needed or requested in consultation with the respective Board, Team or Committee leaders. The Ministers will inform the Congregation of times when appointments may be scheduled when they are in residence.

This is a new experience for us as a Fellowship and, as such, somewhat of an experiment. We welcome Rev. Gary and Rev. Munro and look forward to the learning and leadership they will bring to UUFD. Our flexibility and collaborative spirit will go a long way to making this Targeted Minister interim successful.

About Rev. Gary Kowalski

A graduate of Harvard College, Rev. Gary received his M.Div. from Harvard Divinity School, where he was also a Merrill Fellow. He has served congregations from New England to Tennessee and from the Northwest to North Carolina. In addition to his co-ministry in Taos, he has worked as a volunteer firefighter and emergency medical responder with Hondo Fire & Rescue in Santa Fe County.

He says: Spirituality for me means connection with a Reality larger than myself. I can find it in art and poetry, in nature, in camaraderie and friendship, and often even in church! As a Unitarian Universalist minister, I hope to help strengthen the community, where people can experience a little of the wonder, beauty, and mystery of living, without judgment or dogma. I want to walk with others who are trying to make a difference in the world. For me, it is a privilege to serve this amazing little gathering of thoughtful, principled individuals, where honest differences are respected—and where you don't have to believe to be loved or belong.



About Rev. Munro Sickafoose

Rev. Munro received his M.Div. from Starr King School for the Ministry and serves as a community minister with the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Santa Fe and as a consulting minister with the Unitarian Congregation of Taos since 2018. His ministry focuses on healing the human relationship with the Earth and preparing our communities for the many serious challenges we face in the decades ahead.

He was influenced by Buddhism and Daoism at an early age and has been deeply involved with the indigenous spiritual path known as the Red Road for many years. He trained as a wilderness rites-of-passage guide at the School of Lost Borders and has been leading groups and individuals in the wild since 1996. He trained at the Ojai Foundation as a facilitator in the Way of Council and has spent hundreds of hours in talking circles with people from all walks of life.

After attending the First Unitarian Church of Portland, where he and his wife Susanna were involved in teaching adult programs, Munro decided to pursue a Master of Divinity degree at Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, California. He graduated from Starr King in 2013 and was ordained as a Unitarian Universalist minister by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Santa Fe in April of 2016.

Rev. Munro is still an “Army brat,” having moved all over the United States and Europe while growing up. He attended high school in El Paso, Texas, and spent most of his adult life living in the Southwest – except for a few years on the West coast – before he and his wife Susanna moved to Santa Fe in 2012. They currently live in Chimayo, where they are learning how to steward a small piece of land during this era of climate change.

