



***UUFD mission: Love courageously. Inspire spiritual growth. Work for justice.***

Things to know: a message to Coordinator of Faith Formation applicants

## **Our Region**

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Durango campus is located in beautiful [Durango, Colorado](#), elevation 6,500 ft above sea level, and serves members and congregants throughout the [Four Corners](#) area. A small town of approx. 19,000, Durango serves as the economic hub of the Southwest Colorado region - so on a busy day with regional visitors and tourists enjoying our town, the size can more than double. In addition to a thriving music, art and theatre scene, Durango is a center for recreational pursuits of all kinds. The Animas River runs through town, providing an opportunity for fishing, boating, and long walks along the beloved [Animas River Trail](#). Durango is known for its [mountain biking community](#), and for the [ski resorts](#) nearby. Kayaking, river rafting, ice skating and ice hockey add to the choices for fun. Our community also benefits in so many ways from the presence of [Fort Lewis College](#), a small, public liberal arts college where students of color represent more than half the student body, and many educational events are open to the public. We like to say that we live where other people come for vacation - join us!

## **Our Congregation**

Our congregation was founded in 1967 with 15 members of the Durango community. Our lay-led congregation included a growing group of passionate and committed individuals and families and in 2013 we decided it was time for professional leadership. We brought in a Developmental Minister in 2014 who became our Settled Minister in 2016 until her retirement in 2021. Currently, we have a membership of 164, 15 enrolled youth, and an operating budget of \$292,895. Our property includes the Sanctuary, an Administrative and Fellowship Hall, and Columbine House for Faith Formation.

The majority of our members are older (55+) and we are mostly white/non-Hispanic. We are diverse in education and professions, working and retired, socially liberal, very diverse financially, and with many variations of religious tradition and belief. We enjoy spending time together both socially and in partnership on events supporting the church and the local community. We value diversity, active and committed volunteerism, our welcoming friendliness, and our sense of community and social justice.

## **Our Programs**

We have a strong Social Responsibility and Justice ministry with five teams focused on specific priorities: Basic Needs, Environmental Justice, Healing Racism, Immigration, and LGBTQIA+ Justice. We are a certified Welcoming Congregation and renewed our certification in 2019. An active Worship Team collaborates with the Minister and Music Coordinator to provide spiritually grounded and engaging worship services. We help sponsor, host, and/or show up for

community events such as Transgender Day of Remembrance, PRIDE, Earth Day, Women's March.

Our Faith Formation ministry helped grow our enrollment of children and youth from 29 in 2014 to 88 in 2019. Sunday attendance was variable, but averaged about 25 children and youth. We were excited about the infusion of young families into our congregation and the continually expanding program for children and youth. We were learning new ways to support and integrate their involvement in all aspects of our church life. We acquired new space, Columbine House, for Faith Formation classes, and the paid hours for the leader of Faith Formation grew from 10 to 15 and then to half-time. A FF Advisory Team recommended a future goal of hiring a full-time leader of Faith Formation.

The arrival of the pandemic had a significant impact on all aspects of congregational life. Worship services went to zoom only, no in-person classes or events were allowed. This most particularly had a negative impact on our children and youth who, after being on zoom every day for remote schooling, had no energy or interest in zoom Faith Formation. Valiant efforts were made to keep children and youth engaged through special mailings (e.g. Travelling Stuffedies, Book Boxes), *Taking Flight* online middle school level class, and at-home support but participation rapidly declined. In addition, we have had remote rather than on-site leadership of Faith Formation for 2 ½ years, which has had an additional negative impact on the connection of FF to the overall life of the congregation.

The re-vitalization of Faith Formation for our children and youth is a top priority for our Fellowship. As we have returned to in-person worship, while maintaining a zoom option, a few of our children and youth are returning to our in-person FF sessions. With the guidance and support of a new Coordinator of Faith Formation we want to boldly explore relevant and engaging options for FF programming, with a perspective of more fully integrating FF into all areas of church work and activities.

A commitment to lifespan faith formation through Adult Faith Formation will continue to be supported. In addition to ongoing Covenant groups and Affinity groups, we offer periodic classes on topics of interest to adults. We also look to collaboration of the Coordinator of Faith Formation with the Minister and the Worship Team to create worship services that foster spiritual growth and development.

## **Our Hope**

We are looking for a new Coordinator of Faith Formation who is passionate about supporting children, youth and adults in learning to live a life grounded in the ethics and principles of Unitarian Universalism. We hope for innovative thinking that engages us all in the work of Faith Formation. We hope for a friendly, approachable Coordinator who will help all ages re-build, re-invigorate and re-connect in powerful ways in our Faith Formation ministry.

Is this you? Please respond with a cover letter, resume, and completed applicant questions to Bonnie Miller at [yjmiller2@gmail.com](mailto:yjmiller2@gmail.com) by May 8, 2022.

Thank you for your interest,

The UUFD Search Team