

UU Fellowship of Durango

Settled Minister

Durango, Colorado | Pacific Western Region

Regional Contact: Rev. Sarah Gibb Millspaugh | smillspaugh@uua.org

About UU Fellowship of Durango

Contact Methods

Website: <http://www.durangouu.org>

Meeting Address

419 San Juan Drive
Durango , CO 81301

Mailing Address

435 San Juan Dr
Durango, CO 81301-4854

This Congregation **has** a 501(c)(3) status of its own

Congregation Life

Describe your Congregation and its culture:

We see ourselves as the congregation of “YES,” meaning we lean toward figuring out how we can do what is needed and wanted in our Fellowship, even if it seems difficult. We don’t just show up for worship, but also for activities, events, services, workdays, and to help with tasks for our church and for our Four Corners community. We deeply care about each other and what is happening in each others’ lives throughout the week. We see each other at church and meetings, but also at the local grocery stores and shops. We like that. And we like each other and choose to spend time together outside of church, whether volunteering at the soup kitchen or food bank, skiing at Purgatory, hiking a local trail, or having dinner together on a Saturday night. In our 47 years as a lay-led Fellowship, we learned a great deal about what is important and meaningful to us

as a congregation and how to do it. We were delighted to invite our first ever Settled Minister, Rev. Katie Kandarian-Morris, to become part of the team in 2014, and now look forward to welcoming our next Settled Minister. We still want to have a significant role in shaping our future and how we get there. So shared ministry is a critically important feature to us.

We are diverse in education, professions both working and retired, socially liberal, financially varied, and we hold different religious traditions and beliefs. We do not have a dominant theology, and the mix of spiritual paths within the congregation includes humanism, agnosticism, atheism, rationalism, skepticism, earth-centered, mysticism, Buddhism and progressive Christianity. While the majority of our members are older and mostly white/non-Hispanic, we are striving to build a culture of diversity and multi-generation engagement. We are purposefully focusing our energy and resources toward attracting more children/youth and families to our church community and creating meaningful relationships and participation.

We aim to be a strongly intentional welcoming congregation where individuals are embraced for who they are. In opening each of our worship services, the Worship Associate proclaims, "The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Durango welcomes all people of good will - whatever your experiences and identities may be, your country of origin, your sexual orientation and gender identity, your abilities and disabilities, your racial and ethnic identity, your theological upbringing – YOU are welcome here, just as you are, because of who you are." In 2012, UUFD was officially named a Welcoming Congregation by the UUA. In 2019, we renewed our certification.

We also are committed to being conscious of our location and its history with Hispanic and Indigenous Peoples. We live and work and play on the ancestral land of the Utes, Jicarilla Apache, Pueblos, and the Hopi and Diné Nations. As we say in our Land Acknowledgment at each worship service, our use of and benefit from this land came at a dire cost to native nations.

Our congregation has many characteristics common to UU congregations. We are a mixture of long-term Durango and Four Corners area residents and new arrivals. Most of the latter selected Durango and the surrounding areas of Bayfield, Cortez, Mancos and Farmington as their retirement home. As is typical among Unitarian Universalist churches, our average adult education level is high, with many members and friends holding college and advanced degrees. Members of the fellowship value diversity, active and committed volunteerism, our welcoming friendliness, and our sense of community and social justice.

We are an active congregation with many interests, including traveling and outdoor activities. Opportunities in Durango for hiking, biking, rafting, fishing, skiing, boating and golfing abound. This makes for a full life but does have the downside that there may be a 30% absence on any one Sunday worship service.

We have a strong appreciation of music and the arts; our services include singing by members of our choir, accomplished musicians playing piano and other instruments, and occasional presentations by our Spirit Movers liturgical dance group. We offer 4 classical music recitals open to the public each year, and occasional jazz concerts. UUFD members are very active in the Durango arts community, as teachers, participant creators, board members, and patrons.

We are a multi-talented group of avid volunteers. Members are involved in numerous UUFD committees, teams, and task forces. We have steadily increased our focus on social justice issues so that about 10% of our overall budget funds those activities. Our growing level of justice and spiritual involvement in the area has helped us move toward our goal of being a center for liberal religion in the Four Corners region. On average, nearly 40% of the congregation is involved in some part of our social justice work, the largest area of participation.

Your Congregation's mission:

Love courageously. Inspire spiritual growth. Work for justice.

Describe and provide examples of how your Congregation lives its values:

We seek actions we can take that reflect and deepen our values. Some examples include:

Our congregation organized the 2023 Summer Series worship services around the proposed changes in Article II of the UUA bylaws. Each Sunday, a UUFD member shared perspectives through a homily on one of the values as described in the Article II proposed changes, with a time for reflection and discussion after the worship service. We are committed to learning and growing, especially with the emphasis on how to center love in all that we do.

In addition to shared worship experiences, we foster spiritual growth through our small group ministry program (Covenant Groups); book discussions (such as Buddhist Voices in UU, White Fragility); Sage Circle (conversations on topics related to aging and wisdom); adult learning and connection (for example the

series Exploring Geography of Grace: Circles of Trust), and our Faith Formation program for children, youth, and adults. We align worship and Faith Formation by using the Soul Matters curriculum themes in our services, Covenant groups, and our classes for children and youth.

We strive to be an inclusive, loving community, welcoming to people of all genders, races, economic circumstances, ages, sexual orientations, and abilities. Our LGBTQIA+ Team led congregational and community activities that resulted in our being granted a renewal of our Welcoming Congregation certification in 2019. We began a practice this year of inviting individuals and families of all ages and kinds in our congregation to take a turn lighting our chalice during worship services and saying words of their choosing. Our children and youth participate in multi-gen services and lead 2-3 worship services each year.

Under the umbrella of our Social Responsibility and Justice Coordinating Team, we have 5 social justice teams committed to specific areas of justice: Anti-Racism, Basic Needs, Environmental, Immigration, and LGBTQIA+. In addition, the SRJ Coordinating Team includes a member who is our liaison to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee so that we can stay informed of how to best support their efforts. Through these teams, you would find volunteers working collaboratively throughout our community in areas such as Manna soup kitchen, Durango Food Bank, Durango Adult Education Center, foster kids care backpack program, Compañeros Four Corners Immigrant Resource Center, San Juan Citizens Alliance, Four Corners Office for Resource Efficiency, Showing Up for Racial Justice, Days for Girls project for women, Four Corners Rainbow Youth Center, Four Corners Alliance for Diversity, Four Corners Support for Transgender people Allies and Relatives, and Fort Lewis College Grub Hub.

Each year, we select local non-profit organizations for Share the Plate donations, distributing approximately \$20,000 in collections over the year. We also budget and send funds to meet local and international crises through our Disaster Relief and Development Fund (\$8000), send \$1000 per year to the UUSC, and provide scholarships (\$1000) to nontraditional students through the Durango Adult Education Center. We make our facilities available at no cost to local nonprofits engaged in justice, such as the Southwest Grief Center and their annual Kids' Grief Camp, where kids can participate no matter their parents' financial means; the Suicide Survivors Group, the Days for Girls sewing project making reusable menstrual hygiene kits for women at the Mexican border, and the Durango Dementia Coalition. Our parking lot has hosted multiple food drives for Durango Food Bank and for the Navajo Nation.

We help sponsor, host, and/or show up for community events such as Transgender Day of Remembrance, PRIDE Festival, Earth Day Festival, Women's March, and Climate March.

Link to your Safe Congregation policy:

<http://durangouu.org/about-us/our-governance/board-policies/>

Worship service schedule:

Our services take place every Sunday at 10:00 am. During each service, there is a specific component for children that includes a story, after which children have the option of going to a Faith Formation activity or remaining for the rest of the service with their parents/caretakers. After the service, we typically have a social time followed by a reflection time with the minister or guest pulpit speaker on the topic of the service.

We meet throughout the summer. For about a decade, we have offered a 6-8 week uniquely- themed Sunday Sermon Series collaboratively developed by the Minister and the Worship Associate Team. When the Minister takes vacation or study leave, members of the congregation and community are prominently featured as pulpit guests.

We schedule special services at different times in the year as the minister deems appropriate. Some examples include our Christmas Eve multi-gen service, evening vespers, Lenten meditation service, Flower Communion, Water Communion, and Autumn holidays. In 2016 we had an open-to-the-community evening service of support for those in distress in response to the Presidential election outcome.

Personnel

Name	Position	Paid Hours per Week	Year Started
Barbara Coeyman	Interim Minister		2022

Name	Position	Paid Hours per Week	Year Started
Steven Govreau	President/Chair	Volunteer	2023
Nikki Bauer	Church Administrator	20	2023
Sharon Mignerey	Coordinator of Faith Formation	24	2022
Tricia Bayless	Finance Clerk	5	2017
Marilyn Garst	Pianist & Artistic Director	1.5	2015
Caesar Sanchez	Sexton	8	2012
Harrison Wendt	Youth Programming Coordinator	15	2022
Holly Quist	Music & Choir Director	19	2023

Additional personnel notes:

We have many volunteer lay leaders who serve on the Board of Trustees, teams and committees, including Worship Arts, Faith Formation, Caring, Hospitality, Social Responsibility and Justice, Membership, Nominating/Leadership, Buildings & Grounds, Personnel, Art and Aesthetics, Finance, Covid Advisory, Governance, Healthy Congregations, Legacy Fund, Risk Management, Stewardship, Communications, Transitions, Affinity Groups, and Four Corners Retreat.

Congregation History

Provide your Congregation's founding history:

In May 1967, 15 members of the Durango community, either Unitarians or people who thought like them, met with Unitarian minister Rev. Orloff W. Miller from Colorado Springs to talk about forming a Unitarian group in Durango. This resulted in the decision to apply to the Unitarian Universalist Association for a charter for the Durango Unitarian Fellowship. In September 1967, the charter

was granted. The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Durango, UUFD, became the chosen name.

For many years, the group held meetings once or twice monthly in members' homes. To accommodate a growing membership, in 1982 the fellowship acquired a house which for the next 17 years was known as the Unitarian House. Over the years, volunteer members renovated the whole house.

In 1999, attendance averaged about 25, the maximum meeting space capacity, which negatively impacted ability to grow. In addition, there were financial reasons that made the Unitarian House unworkable, so it was sold. The congregation needed adequate space for increasing membership and a space where religious education for children and youth could be held. The decision was made to rent classroom space in the Smiley building, an old repurposed junior high school.

By 2005, continued growth made that space inadequate. A vacated Nazarene church with adjacent parsonage became available and was purchased by the congregation. We have been conducting services there since Christmas 2006. Over the years, significant renovations and improvements have been made to the facility, again primarily through the volunteer efforts of members. When the house next door to the church went for sale in 2017, 2 members of the congregation bought and donated it to the church. Now known as Columbine House, this facility was dedicated to Faith Formation classes and small group meetings and gatherings.

Pinesong Retreat, a very meaningful and greatly anticipated annual weekend event, became a major tradition in the late 80s. Typically held the weekend after July 4, starting in 1995 members Lois and Ken Carpenter began hosting the event at their beautiful Pinesong property on the Pine River just south of Vallecito Reservoir. A guest minister is invited for the weekend to present themed activities on Saturday and a vespers service on the Friday night before. Since UUFD became minister-led, our own minister conducts the worship service on Sunday morning. Many congregants from Durango and regional UU churches come Friday to camp and share fellowship throughout the weekend.

While Pinesong Retreat happens only once each year, it has more significance than might be assumed. Multi-generational relationships are developed, nourished and grown as we share extended time together in both learning and play. Shared meals are bonding experiences. Music and dancing are fun connections for all ages. Themes for the weekend are collaboratively chosen to fit

the congregation's interests and needs. For example, in 2022 the theme was "Connecting to Create the Environmental Future We Desire" to align with the ongoing work of our Environmental Justice Team with the congregation. In 2023 the theme was "Joy" to reflect and support our desire to celebrate fully being together again after Covid restrictions and our wish to elevate the importance of joyful experiences and connections.

Date founded: 9/1/1967

Describe important events in your Congregation's history:

UUFD history timeline

- 1967 UUFD chartered - for 15 years meets in peoples' homes
- 1980 Beginning of Children's Programming
- 1982 The Fellowship moves to the Unitarian House on 3rd Avenue
- 1986 First bylaws
- 1999 To accommodate growth, the Fellowship moves to the Smiley Building
- 2005 First part-time paid staff (DRE)
- 2006 Purchase and (ongoing) renovation of the current church property on San Juan Drive
- 2008 Congregational survey concludes that we aren't yet ready to look for a minister and to continue with lay-led services and programs
- 2011-12 Congregational survey indicates a priority to explore professional leadership in the form of the Fellowship's first minister
- 2012 Certified as Welcoming Congregation

Comprehensive congregational discernment process identified key areas for new minister focus

- Develop a shared leadership approach to fellowship, governance and ministry
- Continue exploration of individual spirituality
- Develop our pastoral care capacity and practice

- Enhance our Unitarian Universalist presence in the community
- Expand our social justice efforts

2013 Adopted Hotchkiss Governance Model

Board charges Ministerial Task Force (MTF) with conducting a search for a Developmental Minister and completes successful supplemental pledge canvass to ensure prospective candidates we have the resources to fully support (at least) a three year cost of ministry commitment.

2014 Ministerial Task Force completes intensive selection process with recommendation that the Board hire Rev. Katie Kandarian-Morris on an annually renewable three year contract. Rev. Katie begins her ministry in August.

2015 Named Breakthrough Congregation

Board begins Deep Chair meetings

Updated website

Developed Board Covenant and governance model

2016 After a series of cottage conversations, Rev. Katie installed as the Fellowship's first settled minister

2017 Acquisition of Columbine House and renovation including handicap-accessible restroom and code upgrades to allow use for Faith Formation

Renovation of upstairs of Bowman Hall (San Juan House) into Church Offices, allowing for renovation/expansion of Sanctuary

Replaced Sanctuary pews with chairs

Congregational Summit facilitated by Larry Peers leads to New Strategic Plan

Celebrated UUFD's 50th anniversary

Offered 7th-9th Grade OWL

Beloved Conversations weekend and follow-up series

2018 Facility expansion study completed after extensive discernment process; decision to build postponed

Review of Ministry completed

Internal expansion of Sanctuary to the rear, adding AV station

2019 Established Legacy Fund

Updated Strategic Plan

Renovation and Expansion of Chancel area including handicap access

Renewed certification as a Welcoming Congregation

2020 Zoom worship starts, and all group meetings are online

Solar panels installed on San Juan House and Sanctuary

Two EV chargers installed outside fellowship hall

Conducted very successful community Navajo Nation supply drive

12 sessions White Fragility discussion group

Housed and supported Cuban asylee family in Columbine House

On-line OWL course for grades 7th-9th

Active participation in UU the Vote and Vote Forward

2021 Added additional AV capability including projector to front wall

Established Healthy Congregation Committee (HCC)

Established new mission statement: Love courageously. Inspire spiritual growth.
Work for justice.

Reopened for in-person worship continuing on-line presence as well

HCC drafts Relational Covenant

Re-chartered Long-Term Fellowship Planning Task Force

Rev. Katie announces 12/31 retirement; Transitional Ministry Search Task Force chartered

HCC inaugurates small group listening circles

Rainbow flag and banner stolen; replaced; 83 community Pride flags give-away in response

2022 Board hired Revs. Gary Kowalski and Munro Sickafoose as part-time, co-

Targeted Ministers

Front rooms of Columbine House transformed into 1BR apartment to accommodate Targeted Ministers when in residence

Shut down in-person services again as Omicron raged

HCC conducted large circle zoom meeting

New Facilities planning task force chartered to focus on new fellowship hall

Healthy Congregation Committee leads congregational workshop

Congregation adopts Relational Covenant

Board of Trustees begins monthly Town Hall meetings

Reverend Barbara Coeyman becomes Interim Minister and moves into Columbine House

Transition Team established; leads Startup Workshop

2023 Minister and Transition Team begin monthly Town Hall meetings

Creation and display of UUFD history timeline in Sanctuary

Transition Team leads congregational sessions to make transition time most productive

Circles of Trust sessions are led by Rev. Barbara

Faith Formation leads OWL sessions for middle school youth

Paid off the remaining \$89,000 balance of the church's mortgage with earnings from endowment

Summer Worship series focuses on the values in the UUA Article II bylaws proposed changes

Ministerial Search Committee is selected and begins work

FROLIC auction fundraiser returns to support worthy fellowship capital projects

Ministerial History

Start	End	Position	Name	Job Title
2022	Now	Interim	Barbara Coeyman	Interim Minister
2022	2022	Contract	Gary Kowalski/Munro Sickafoose	Targeted Ministers
2021	2022	Other	Leah Ongiri	Family Minister, Faith Formation Coordinator
2016	2021	Called	Katie Kandarian	Settled Minister
2014	2016	Developmental	Katie Kandarian	Developmental Minister

Additional ministerial history notes:

For most of our history, we have been lay led. In 2013, after an in-depth discernment process, the members decided to invite a Developmental Minister. Rev. Katie Kandarian-Morris entered a 3- year annually renewable contract in 2014. It quickly became apparent that there was great value in having a permanent minister. After another careful discernment process, the members voted to call Rev. Katie to settled ministry in 2016.

Rev. Katie announced her retirement in September 2021, effective December 31. The Board immediately appointed a Transitional Minister Search Task Force (TMSTF) to enter the process to find a Targeted Minister to complete the church year. We hired two ministers from the region who agreed to split the 2/3 time position, each delivering one remote and one in-person sermon per month. When they were in residence, they performed other ministerial duties specified in their contract with the Board that they otherwise performed remotely. In addition, a part-time remote minister was hired as a short-term Family Minister Coordinator.

We created a one-bedroom apartment out of our Faith Formation house for the targeted ministers to use when they were in residence. This space is the current home of the Interim Minister. In 2022, after another search process, Rev. Barbara accepted the Interim Minister position. Now here we are, seeking a new minister to walk the path with us.

Describe any important Lay Leaders:

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Durango has adopted a shared ministry model using the Hotchkiss Model. In this system/structure Governance (Committees) fall under the leadership of the Board of Trustees, and Ministry (Teams) fall under the supervision of the Minister, with a few things falling in the overlapping middle where there is collaboration and mutual support and accountability (see Documents Packet for a visual of this model). We have a Leadership Council that meets quarterly. Team Leaders, Committee Chairs, the minister, staff and the Board of Trustees gather to cross-collaborate, provide leadership training and discuss relevant topics.

Governance

Board of Trustees

Buildings and Grounds

Finance

Legacy Fund

Governance

Healthy Congregations

IT

Leadership Dev./Nominating

Risk Management

Stewardship

Covid Advisory Task Force

Ministry

The Minister

Faith Formation

Music

Office Administration

Worship Arts

Social Responsibility and Justice

Caring

Membership

Personnel

Affinity Groups

Hospitality

Art & Aesthetics

Four Corners Retreat

Shared

Communications Committee

Personnel Committee

Transition Ministry Team

Membership & Finances

The data for the table below comes directly from the UUA's annual congregational certification.

Year	Total Pledge Income	Total Operating Expenses	Membership	Youth Enrollment	Avg. Attendance
2023*	\$299,554	\$287,160	150	25	
2022*	\$276,711	\$292,895	164	15	
2021	\$246,000	\$275,575	170	40	

Year	Total Pledge Income	Total Operating Expenses	Membership	Youth Enrollment	Avg. Attendance
2020	\$233,549	\$275,863	169	59	130
2019	\$215,845	\$276,866	154	88	140
2018	\$176,000	\$254,224	144	85	140
2017	\$170,000	\$223,834	127	85	130
2016	\$118,500	\$185,061	112	70	98
2015	\$104,000	\$101,880	107	52	91
2014	\$73,803	\$98,076	101	34	81

The following notes and/or explanations have been offered by the congregation:

Year	Note/Explanation
2023	<p>Our children and youth enrollment is increasing, currently 25 listed as enrolled, and 8-12 typically in attendance on Sundays. Our total worship attendance is averaging around 100.</p> <p>For the past 18 months, the average attendance has been 95-100 combined adults, children and youth, and online. For the 6 months before that, we were online only because of Covid and estimated that there were 70-80 people present on Zoom.</p>
2022	<p>All Years: Our Bylaws require the Board to recommend a balanced annual operating budget for adoption by members at the annual meeting. We have had Operating surpluses in each of the last five years, typically achieved by actual revenue being near budget, and actual spending being under budget.</p>

Demographics

What percentage of members do you estimate identify as people of color?

5-9%

What percentage of members do you estimate identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ)?

5-9%

Please describe the gender makeup of your congregation

93 Women

46 Men

2 Non-binary

What number of staff (including full and part time) identify as people of color?

2

What number of people of color serve as leaders or chairs of your volunteer committees and program teams?

1

What number of your Board of Trustees identify as people of color?

0

What changes have you made in the last 3-5 years, if any, to include the racial and ethnic diversity of your congregational staff and volunteer leadership?

Our search for a new Coordinator of Faith Formation noted our liberal values and emphasis on inclusion and welcoming of all people.

In an effort to attract a greater diversity of congregants, who might then be encouraged into leadership positions, we are committed to engaging with organizations in our area who advocate for and support BIPOC and Latinx communities. Organizations we collaborate with include the Black Student Alliance of Durango High School, Compañeros Four Corners Immigrant Resource Center, Fort Lewis College, Southwest Movement for Black Lives, and Juneteenth.

We publicly display a transgender Pride flag at the entrance to the Sanctuary and

a banner on our outside north wall expressing inclusivity.

Accessibility

Is your Congregation's meeting space wheelchair accessible? Yes

Wheelchair accessibility details:

Sanctuary accessible, faith formation space accessible, fellowship space accessible, 3 restrooms accessible. Second floor administrative offices currently non-accessible.

Does your Congregation provide assisted listening systems? Yes

Assisted listening system details:

T-coil installed in Sanctuary, available for every event held there that requires amplified sound.

Describe other ways your congregation has dealt with accessibility:

Recent renovation of Sanctuary Chancel included wheelchair ramp.

Renovation of Columbine House (Faith Formation) included accessible restroom.

Resources & Programs

List the resources and programs your Congregation used or participated in during the past year:

- Recital Series
- Choir
- UU Service Committee
- Share the Plate
- Summer Worship Seminar Series
- Circle Suppers

- Welcoming Congregations
- Green Sanctuary
- Soul Matters curriculum for small group ministry
- Soul Matters themes for worship services
- Soul Matters themes for Faith Formation classes
- Tapestry of Faith curriculum for children/youth Faith Formation classes
- Far Fringe
- General Assembly
- Western Region consultant Rev. Sarah Gibbs-Milspaugh
- Transitions Office Program Manager Rev. Christine Purcell

Describe your religious educational programs:

Our religious education program, AKA "Faith Formation," is certainly an area where we hope to gain insight from a Settled Minister. A part-time Coordinator of Faith Formation and a part-time Youth Programming Coordinator work with members of the Faith Formation Team to develop and implement ideas and plans for our FF programming and activities. We draw from the Soul Matters and Tapestry of Faith curricula as we plan for Sunday classes for children and youth, as well as classes for adults at various times. We also make use of other UUA resources and offerings such as books selected for Common Read.

A priority within Faith Formation since Covid has been to rebuild our connection and participation of children and youth. From a high point in 2018 of approximately 75 enrolled children within the congregation, with an average attendance on Sundays of 25, we now have 25 children/youth enrolled with 8-12 children who attend somewhat regularly, but this is still inconsistent. On special occasions more attend, for example at the recent FF children/youth-led Day of the Dead worship service and Halloween party afterwards, we had 18 participate. Like many churches, Covid was a major cause for a decline in our enrollment as efforts to continue Faith Formation for children and youth in an online program were not successful. We are working to create a strong multi-generational approach to all that we do, whether in worship or social justice or social time so that families feel fully welcomed and included in the life of our church. We are

recently seeing more toddlers and preschoolers joining us on Sundays and this is encouraging.

Our adult FF was not as significantly impacted by Covid and with our Interim Minister and current FF staff and the multiple offerings provided, participation in classes and workshops has substantially increased.

The primary programs, curricula, activities and events in Faith Formation in the last year include:

Children/Youth Faith Formation

- Soul Matters Curriculum
- Tapestry of Faith
- Halloween Sanctuary Parade
- OWL for middle school youth
- Youth-led multi-generational worship services, including two plays
- Back-to-School Party
- Holiday Market
- Shoebox Ministry
- Easter Hunt food for Fort Lewis College Grub Hub
- 'Body Percussion' with UUFD choir
- 'Rainforest' Music for All Ages

Adult Faith Formation

- Adult Classes open to all members and friends: Circles of Trust: Geography of Grace; Buddhist Voices in Unitarian Universalism; Our Living UU History and Heritage; Trusting Change: Finding Our Way Through Personal and Global Transformation book study; On Repentance and Repair: Courage to Covenant common read book study.
- Covenant Groups (8)
- Nonviolent Communication Workshops (3)

Multi-generational

- Val Pals
- Ladies and Nonbinary Dance Night
- Periodic Family Breakfasts
- Four Corners Pinesong Retreat
- Holiday tree decorating, carol singing, ornament making
- Thanksgiving supper
- Potluck picnic, membership
- Pride Parade float building and riding and marching
- Snowdown Parade float building and riding and marching
- Fall Family Festival

Describe your youth and campus ministry programs:

Faith Formation staff are working toward establishing a stronger, more consistent youth group (middle/high school) identity and presence. Erratic attendance on Sundays has made regular provision of separate elementary age and secondary age children/youth classes difficult. We are exploring gatherings outside of Sunday services to build stronger connections, but family scheduling has been a challenge to date. The Faith Formation Team is in quest for creative alternatives that might better fit current trends and needs of middle and high school youth.

We also are striving to strengthen connections with Fort Lewis College and Durango High School, seeking to partner with them in shared priorities. We are supporters of DHS's Black Student Alliance. We've provided some financial assistance and join them each year in their annual fundraising and education dinner.

Multiple efforts have been made to build connections with Fort Lewis College, with mixed success. In the past, UUFD joined FLC in planning work to establish Indigenous People's Day programming, and we continue to support and advocate for their college campus activities. We had a panel of FLC students join us in worship as we learned more about gender and sexuality diversity; we regularly have a college music student as an intern with our choir. Some UUFD

members have volunteered at the college Gender and Sexuality Center (G-Spot) and the Black Student Union. Pre-Covid, we were working toward beginning a college group called "The CLUUB," where we could support students in learning about and living out Unitarian Universalism values. That effort has not restarted. In general, we have not found an effective way of bringing college students into the life of the church, and we need to consider more deeply how we might minister to and serve college age youth in our community.

Surrounding Community

Describe the character of the surrounding community, including population and demographics:

Durango is nestled in the San Juan Mountains in the Four Corners region of the Southwest United States, boasting stunning natural beauty and varied landscapes where the mountains meet the desert. The area experiences 4 seasons with ways to enjoy the outdoors year round.

The community and surrounding areas have an important influence from Tribal Nations including Hopi, Diné, Jicarilla Apache, and Ute. At Fort Lewis College, a majority minority school, any tribally enrolled indigenous student is granted free tuition in fulfillment of an existing treaty obligation.

With a population of 19,531, Durango area demographics include over 13% Hispanic and Latinx, almost 8% American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 1% each Black and Asian and 78% Anglo. The surrounding area of LaPlata county population is 56,607. The median age of residents of La Plata county is 38, and those under 25 years comprise 35% of the population, while those between 25 and 65 years are 55%; 10% of the population is 65 and older.

Durango and La Plata County are a mix of families, retirees, young adults and college students, as well as a combination of small city and rural landscape. The Animas River runs through town offering serene beauty and multigenerational activities. Vallecito Lake, Lemon Reservoir, Lake Nighthorse and several high mountain lakes and streams add to the options for fishing, kayaking and

swimming. Purgatory Resort is the local ski area, 30 miles north, with several other ski resorts within a day's drive. Opportunities for hiking, biking and camping abound, as well as paved ADA accessible trails, including one in the mountains.

The Durango 9-R School District includes 7 elementary schools, a K-8 charter school, 2 middle schools, and 2 high schools, and online and homeschool options. Durango also has a 4-8 grade charter school and a charter high school, a Preschool-grade 5 private Montessori school, and a private K-8 expeditionary learning school. Nearby Bayfield, Ignacio and Mancos operate their own/independent school districts.

Some photographs are included in the Documents Packet to help you get to know the uniqueness and beauty of the area. The following links will take you to some important sources for understanding our area:

Region 9 Economic Development: stats, graphs, charts and good information about jobs, income/salaries, industries in our region and more.

<https://www.region9edd.org/>

<https://www.region9edd.org/dashboards>

La Plata County, elevation 6,512, population 56,607, median household income of \$75,089 and the largest employment sectors in healthcare, retail, education, professional (scientific and technical) and accommodations and food service.

Durango

<https://www.durangogov.org/>

<https://www.durango.org/>

Durango's La Plata County Airport is served by United and American Airlines, offering multiple flights daily to Denver, Dallas, and Phoenix - as well as seasonal service to Houston and Los Angeles.

Fort Lewis College

<https://www.fortlewis.edu/>

Fort Lewis College, overlooking Durango, referred to as “Colorado’s Campus in the Sky” has a 3,300 student body and offers 40 programs of study as well as housing the Center for Southwest Studies museum. “From military outpost to Indian boarding school, rural high school to a public liberal arts college, we have played a part of Southwest Colorado and the Four Corners region for over a century.”

Million Dollar Highway:

<https://www.durango.com/million-dollar-highway/>

Purgatory

<https://www.purgatory.ski/>

Describe how your Congregation is known/perceived by the larger community:

The congregation is recognized as being active in social issues and a welcoming congregation. Different organizations in our community view our congregation as partners and supporters for justice work. We are called to help support, sponsor, advertise, and participate in various community events and activities, and we are sometimes asked to host gatherings in our facilities. We are referred to as the “yellow shirt” people. Some examples of our engagement include participation in the annual Women’s March (which was started by UUFD in 2016), Pride Parade, Juneteenth, Earth Day, vigils, Moms Demand Action, and Transgender Day of Remembrance.

Describe your Congregation's religious, political, and social context from a historical and current perspective.

The fellowship was founded by people of liberal faith, many of whom were faculty at Fort Lewis College. For most of our history, we were lay-led – 47 years. Accordingly, sermons tended toward the educational and intellectual. With the advent of settled ministry, the focus grew to have a stronger spiritual and social justice emphasis. Our level of commitment to social justice is a source of pride in our Fellowship. Additionally, as our membership increased, so did our presence

in the social justice aspects of community participation.

Congregational survey data show that 10.2% of the congregation have been members for more than 20 years. Another 25.5% have been members for 11-20 years. 10.2% have been members for less than 1 year, with just over half the congregation indicating they've been members for 3-10 years.

UUFDF has a history of success as a lay-led congregation. Under lay leadership, we reached many milestones together: growing membership, finding a physical church home with many renovations done by members, creating a vigorous religious education program, hiring part-time staff, building partnerships in the community, and several years ago calling our first Settled Minister. As a result, we are deeply invested in our shared spiritual community and wish to be in partnership with a minister who welcomes our continued desire to share in ministry, co-shaping our future, our priorities and our approaches to living out our mission.

We have always been a community that values connection among members, and that continues, though it was hampered by the restrictions COVID introduced. We are now meeting regularly in person for both worship and other meetings and activities. We provide a hybrid worship service to allow for remote participation, and committees and teams choose how and when to hold gatherings online or in person. Time together continues to be a high value, and members and friends seek opportunities to connect with each other in ways beyond worship services, such as camping, hiking, skiing, concerts.

La Plata County generally leans toward the Democratic party. The City of Durango is more strongly liberal with an active Democratic party, and the outlying rural areas tend to be more conservative and Republican. UUFDF Members lean strongly, though not exclusively, to the liberal side of the political spectrum.

Position Basics

Anticipated Start Date: August 2024

Term: N/A

Percent Time: 100% Time

Minimum Salary + Housing: \$77,000

Benefits: Self-employment offset tax; Retirement Plan; UUA Health Plan; Other Health Plan; Disability Coverage; Term Life Insurance; Dental; Professional Expense Allowance

Questionnaire

Description of minister's role in relation to other paid staff

The minister is head of staff and responsible for the development of equitable and appropriate policies and the supervision of staff. The minister may delegate supervision of individual staff members. The minister is responsible for ensuring appropriate management and supervision of staff, including development of appropriate policies and practices, maintenance of all personnel records, clear and accurate job descriptions, timely enrollment of eligible staff in offered benefit plans, annual compensation reviews, staff evaluations, and a dispute resolution process. The minister has authority to hire, discharge, change the compensation of Congregational staff or implement other major personnel-related changes in consultation with the Personnel Committee and the Board. The minister, in collaboration with congregational leaders, has primary responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the vision and the mission of the congregation.

The minister, as staff lead, will foster a collaborative environment among staff.

The minister will take care that staff roles and relationships are reviewed, discussed, and re-negotiated with clarity, respect, and honesty.

The minister will enter into covenant with the professionals on staff to delineate the goals and responsibilities of each as well as the areas to resolve any disagreements.

Our interim minister has devoted considerable time to developing systems related to staff hiring and supervision, which were missing or insufficient. Job descriptions have been created for all paid staff positions, and more clarity brought to systems for hiring and performance appraisal. There is still work to be done with setting evaluative tools in place and the intention is that in the coming year all systems are in place and ready to be implemented from the beginning of the liturgical year.

Primary areas of focus for the minister

There were 101 responses to the Congregational Survey question “Consider the following potential roles of our future minister. Select the top 5 roles you feel are most important for UUFD.” The following lists the percent of respondents who chose a role as one of their top five

- *Co-creating inspiring and challenging Sunday services 86.1%
- *Pastoral Role providing pastoral care and, by example, showing us how to care for one another 74.3%
- *Providing visible leadership in the local community 53.5%
- *Sharing the overall ministry with our congregation 49.5%
- *Encouraging social justice programs 48.5%
- *Prophetic Role – helping us imagine our future and inspiring us 46.5%
- *Supporting families and multi-generational ministries 45.5%
- *Supervising church staff 34.7%
- *Developing volunteers and lay leaders 28.7%
- *Teaching classes and leading workshops 18.8%

Desired strengths of the minister

As can be interpreted from the areas of focus most often cited by the congregation as primary for our minister, there are some skills sets and perspectives that are especially valuable. We see these areas as the most important strengths that we look for in our new minister:

- *Deep spirituality to undergird co-designing creative, relevant and authentic worship services and supporting visioning for our future
- *Highly developed relationship and communication skills that nourish caring connections within the congregation and the community
- *Shared leadership skills that promote ministerial-lay leader collaboration in helping our church live out our mission

Ongoing momentum we would like to continue

In reviewing the input from the congregation in both the Congregational Survey, Cottage Meetings and Focus Groups, there were a number of trends in our congregation that are seen as important to continue. These include:

- *Congregation and minister sharing power and decision-making in creating, sustaining and evolving our ministries
- *Rebuilding our Faith Formation program with increasing participation of children and youth
- *Expanding our partnership with other organizations and groups in the community involved in social justice.
- *Cherishing and honoring our culture of close friendships and relationships
- *Building and rebuilding trust and transparency among members of the congregation and with our leadership; learning to live out the meaning of covenant
- *Continuing learning from and making use of the support offered by our Healthy Congregation Committee

Programs and traditions we want to maintain

Responses to the Congregational Survey question “What is your favorite thing about our congregation?” provides good information about programs and traditions that are most highly valued. They include:

- *Maintain and grow our welcoming, warm, friendly culture and learn to be fully inclusive
- *Significant lay leadership
- *Commitment to spiritually and intellectually stimulating worship services
- *Commitment to social justice work and extensive volunteerism and engagement
- *Affinity groups (e.g. hiking, skiing, camping) and other opportunities for connections

*Multi-generational relationships, worship, activities and events

*Traditions such as Joys & Sorrows, Christmas Pageant, and the Pinesong Retreat

*Board of Trustees Town Hall meetings with latest news from Board meetings and other timely topics

Participation of children in the worship service, and the frequency of inter-generational services

Children and youth are with the congregation in worship service through the Time for All Ages, and then we sing them out to their Faith Formation classes. If they so choose, they can remain in the Sanctuary for worship with their parents/guardians. Children often join their parents, grandparents or guardians in lighting our chalice during worship.

The children and youth help lead 2-3 multigenerational worship services during the year. In addition, they remain in the Sanctuary for worship for other services as planned, typically 6-8 times per year including occasions such as Christmas Eve, Easter, Water Communion, Flower Ceremony, Child Dedication, and honoring those who have passed.

Traditional holiday services celebrated outside of Sunday morning

Christmas Eve and occasionally Wednesday beginning Lent. We periodically have held Seder Dinners to commence the festival of Passover. In the past, we joined other local churches in Wednesday evening interfaith service and soup suppers rotating among the churches during Lent.

Status of the congregation as a Welcoming Congregation

The congregation was certified originally as a Welcoming Congregation in 2012. We then recertified in 2019 under the new Five Practices of Welcome Renewal.

Status of the congregation as a Green Sanctuary congregation

The Environmental Justice Team has evaluated the “Green Sanctuary” criteria and processes and determined that our group, at least for the time being, will focus on actions that would decrease the environmental impacts of the UUFD facilities and fellowship rather than pursue “Green Sanctuary” certification. We

are taking many actions for 'greening' our church. A few highlights of actions over the past few years include:

1. installing solar electrical panels on the sanctuary and Bowman Hall.
2. installing level 2-EV charging stations available to the public at no charge.
3. conducting an energy audit on all buildings and taking steps recommended by the audit.
4. engaging in community educational programs.
5. working with youth to get them involved.

Status of the congregation as an Honor Congregation

UUFD is a 25+ Year Honor Congregation, the highest honor the UUA bestows.

Lessons the congregation has learned about nurturing ministers and ministry

We are still learning lessons about how we nurture ministers, separate from how we nurture ministries.

While nurturing a minister always involves mutual respect and appreciation, it also requires understanding a particular minister and what support looks like to that person. Our previous settled minister valued words and notes of acknowledgement for her contributions, celebrating some personal milestones, e.g. birthdays, together as a congregation, including her in communications about important experiences in our lives, recognizing impactful circumstances in her own life and accommodating them, giving her space to use her special strengths such as music and singing, and not expecting that all her time is our time. It also meant honoring boundaries, which we were sometimes uncertain about, such as in social situations.

Nurturing our many ministries is an ongoing commitment and while we sometimes slip into nonhelpful behaviors, we generally do positive work here. Committees and teams are committed to caring about each other as well as the tasks before them. We regularly do personal check-ins at the start of each meeting and light/extinguish a chalice to center our mission. We communicate with and collaborate with the minister on strategies to do our work well and support the efforts across the congregation. We recognize and express gratitude

to volunteers periodically during worship services. We also occasionally share information during worship services about different committees and teams and highlight their work.

How the congregation has evaluated its ministry and its history with ministers

In general, annual performance reviews were conducted with our called minister, Rev Katie Kandarian-Morris, through collaboration with the Board of Trustees. In 2018 & '19, UUFD conducted a Ministerial Review. A Task Force of 3 was formed to accomplish this review. The goals of the task force were:

1. To call attention to the mutual, relational nature of ministry and the respective responsibilities of all, including members of the congregation, who contribute to its' success;
2. To consider how we are doing and identify what is needed from each other and/or from outside resources to better accomplish our mission;
3. To help the minister and congregation to remain motivated, creative, and flexible; and
4. To recognize and celebrate our accomplishments toward achieving our mission.

The entire congregation was invited to contribute to the data gathering, and in the end, 79 members participated. A report was presented to the board with conclusions for all our ministry teams (Worship Arts, Social Justice, Caring, Hospitality and Faith Formation) on “what we are doing well” and “areas of improvement”. Feedback was also sought from new members.

In 2021 & 2022, after Rev Kandarian-Morris's resignation, UUFD's Healthy Congregations Committee conducted a series of congregation-wide workshops to collect feedback about our experience with a settled minister.

In July of 2022 at the completion of their 6-month terms, a Targeted Minister Evaluation was completed for Rev. Gary Kowalski and Rev. Munro Sickafoose.

In 2023, we completed the Interim Ministry Appraisal with our interim minister, Rev. Barbara Coeyman.

What cottage meetings and surveys tell about the congregation

Our Cottage Meetings and Focus Groups (a total of 88 participants) confirmed how deeply invested the congregation is in our Fellowship and its health and well-being. We are sincerely committed to our relationships with one another. We value close caring connections and sharing in each other's lives, and we seek a minister who is warm and caring and shares that value for relationships. People, relationships, friendship/community and welcoming/inclusion were consistently top ranked on the Congregational Survey among the favorite things about UUFD.

We want to be actively engaged in shaping our future and our practices in the Fellowship, sharing ministry and decisions with the minister. 97 responses were received on the Congregational Survey to the question, "Which of the following is more like your understanding of shared ministry?"

(a) As leader, the minister makes decisions in the area of ministry, and we all help to do the work of ministry. 14% chose this response.

(b) As leader, the minister includes others in making decisions, and we all help to do the work of ministry. 86% chose this response.

For the survey question "In shared ministry, it is important that lay leaders and congregants share decision-making power," congregants were asked to indicate if they strongly disagree, disagree, are neutral, agree, or strongly agree. There were 98 responses, 39.8% strongly agree and 41.8% agree, for an overall 81.6% of respondents agreeing with the importance of shared decision-making power.

We want to get better at acknowledging and working through conflicts and issues in their early stages so we can productively work through those challenges. Conflict is hard for us. We have grown in our understanding and skills for working through conflict through the support of our Healthy Congregation Committee, as well as recent work on covenant and its meaning and support for helpful and hopeful working together.

We are rebuilding after the trials of Covid and are intensely interested in developing practices in worship and Faith Formation and other areas that would attract younger families, children and youth, and greater diversity.

Working for social justice with partners in our community is a core part of our

identity, and we are committed to continuing this as a priority with our new minister. We are a justice-seeking people.

More information is available in the Cottage Meetings and Focus Groups Summary in the documents packet.

The work that the minister(s) is expected to do on their own

Ministerial responsibilities are noted in UUFD bylaws, the ministerial agreement, and the position description and are critical resources of information for the minister. Beyond those descriptions, we believe it is important that the minister stay in fellowship with the UUA, including any continuing education and participation required by the Association. Furthermore, we encourage periodic attendance at regional or national events such as GA, PWR Annual Meetings and trainings where the minister can connect with colleagues and bring back new learnings to the congregation. Given that UUFD is in a remote area, the closest professional clergy being in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Grand Junction and Los Alamos, it is important to us that the minister maintain healthy and supportive relationships with their colleagues virtually, through the UUMA, support groups, and locally with interfaith clergy.

We also encourage and support the minister in pursuing professional development opportunities that help them develop or sustain skills important to their ministerial responsibilities.

The work that the congregation is expected to do on their own

There are many Committees and Teams that are active in the UUFD. These groups have a chair or lead, and they all have their own covenant and charter. These groups work independently, except when their tasks overlap with other groups or the minister and staff. Needless to say, this is sometimes confusing. The BOT makes decisions independently, with some input from the minister, and brings them to the congregation in monthly Town Hall meetings.

The work of the congregation and minister(s) that is shared by both

UUFD utilizes the Hotchkiss Governance model (see Documents Packet and #38 in Questionnaire). The Board of Trustees has oversight of various committees and ad hoc task forces (such as Buildings & Grounds and Stewardship). The

minister has oversight of the staff and various ministry teams (such as Worship Arts and Faith Formation). In the middle, where the two overlap through “Collaboration, Consultation, Mutual Support and Accountability,” lie Communications Committee, Personnel Committee, and Transition Ministry Team.

In some respects, since all of us are responsible for the mission of our church, the congregation and the minister share in all the work. However, in the context of the Hotchkiss model, the minister more specifically shares responsibility and accountability with the Board for the "Governance" aspects of our mission, and the minister is primarily responsible for the "Ministry" aspects of our mission, sharing with staff and the congregation. The spirit of participative decision-making infuses the working out of this model.

Work of the congregation done by other staff

- The Music Director (19 hours per week) is responsible for preparations and leadership of the choir, working with the minister on music selection, and providing music during worship services.
- The Coordinator of Faith Formation (24 hours per week) and Youth Programming Coordinator (15 hours per week) are responsible to design and prepare curriculum and materials for classes for different ages, teach classes, collaborate with the minister on goals and priorities, and keep the congregation engaged and informed about Faith Formation.
- The sexton (8 hours per week) maintains basic cleanliness of all facilities.
- The Finance Clerk (5 hours per week) assures the counting, depositing and reporting of collections.
- The office administrator (20 hours per week) supports the clerical and administrative tasks of the minister and leaders, as well as manages church publications and scheduling and responding to community requests.
- The pianist (1.5 hours per week averaged) provides worship music approximately once per month.
- The AV tech (estimated 7 hours per week) is responsible for technology preparations and tasks before and during worship services.

All work is defined in position descriptions with work assignments managed by

the Head-of-Staff or designee.

Description of a typical Sunday at the congregation, including a typical Sunday worship service

The AV tech and the Hospitality team usually arrive at 8:30am, followed by the Worship Associate, to set up for the day's 10am service. Musicians arrive at 9am to run through service music, and the entire Worship Team usually does a talk-through of the service at approximately 9:15. Ushers, Welcome Station volunteers, Chalice Lighters, and other service volunteers arrive about 9:30 for last-minute set-up and instructions.

Pre-Service Gathering Music begins a couple minutes before 10am, so the service can begin on time at 10am. The service elements include the following: Welcome & Announcements, Land Acknowledgment, Sharing the Peace, Call to Worship, Affirmation of Faith with Chalice Lighting, Time for All Ages story/activity (usually led by the Faith Formation staff), Sharing of Joys & Concerns (lighting candles OR a stones in water ceremony), Prayer & Meditation, Offering, Reading, Sermon, Chalice Extinguishing, and Benediction. Music is supported with a pianist, led weekly by song leaders or monthly by the choir, enhanced bi-monthly with a liturgical dance team. There are occasional other guest musicians.

In the past, Worship Associates have participated in Opening Words, Readings, or Prayers/Meditations. Recently, the minister usually reads all of them.

After the service, there is a half-hour of social time, followed by a half-hour reflection back in the Sanctuary on the day's homily, unless there is a Minister/Transition Team Town Hall or a Town Hall meeting reporting on the latest Board of Trustees actions/business.

How the congregation defines good preaching and worship

From our fellowship's participation in the Cottage Meetings and Focus Groups, the MSC heard very clear ideas of what they would like to see in a worship service. We value a minister who inspires us with spiritual and soulful nourishment, who blends spiritual and intellectual development, is a leader who promotes and supports spiritual learning, and presents meaningful homilies and inspiring sermons related to current issues. We appreciate some times of joy, levity and humor during worship in addition to the serious and more somber worship experiences which our world seems to push us towards. Also, our fellowship is ready for some changes in worship around the music – more upbeat,

more contemporary, including but not limited to gospel music, a Bell Choir, Youth Choir, and other musical groups and instruments. In other words, we would like to create a spiritual experience not only through an inspiring sermon but also through the music, joy and humor.

Things a prospective minister should know about the theologies of the congregation, including where to find inspiration, comfort, and conflict

The Sanctuary has windows which represent different religious paths. We come from different religious and nonreligious backgrounds, primarily from various Christian denominations. A survey of the congregation a few years ago identified 3 clusters of theological exploration in the congregation: (1) humanism, agnosticism, rationalism, skepticism; (2) earth-centered religion, naturalistic theism and mysticism; and (3) progressive Christianity, theism in general and Buddhism. Reflections of the divine are heard in homilies, although the word “God” is usually accompanied by other expressions such as Higher Power, Spirit of Life, Spirit of Love, or God of many names or none. Silent reflection and the song “Spirit of Life” are part of every service. People find comfort in community, nature, social justice, and their own belief systems. Most of the services are diverse and rely on teachings from multiple spiritual practices. We hope that a believer and a nonbeliever would be comfortable, although we sometimes hear that the services are too Christian or not Christian enough.

Ways the congregation handles conflicted situations

After 47 years as a lay-led congregation and then 7 years of professional ministry, in the spring of 2021 UUFD created a Healthy Congregations Committee (HCC) to formalize a process for conflict resolution. This was in response to several factors: the usual array of pandemic stressors (isolation, loneliness, dearth of in-person congregational contact leading to frustrations being expressed more frequently in small-group ex parte conversations), the absence of a process for feedback on the work of the minister, and a feeling that the Board wasn't being sufficiently transparent. See Documents Packet “Covenants” for the original HCC charter.

The HCC has 5 members, including 2 co-chairs, and has been helpful in providing a conduit through which to address and resolve some conflicts, using the 4-step process in the UUFD Policy and Procedure for Healthy Communication and Conflict Resolution (also in Documents Packet):

1. Personal reflection
2. Speak directly with the person with whom you have the conflict
3. Seek the support of the HCC
4. Speak with the minister

HCC has led several workshops to help us create a Relational Covenant (see Documents Packet “Covenants”) and to help us learn what it means to be and stay in covenant with the minister and with each other. On the Congregational Survey, approximately 40% of the respondents indicated they believe we do a good job of having difficult conversations and staying in relationship, while about 38% are neutral. We see this as a positive sign, but we acknowledge the need to continue developing skills and procedures for dealing with conflict and building trust.

Role of music and the arts in the life of the congregation

Musically, we use Song Leaders for the beginning of the service’s Gathering Hymns, as well as the Opening and Closing Hymns. They have traditionally been members of the choir, with occasional outside guests.

There are two service pianists who play for Sunday services, one is also currently the Music and Choir Director. The choir rehearses weekly for 90 minutes and sings for Sunday service approximately once per month, as well as holiday services. Smaller choir ensembles have also sung for our annual summer Pine Song retreat, as well as memorials or other events.

The past few years, we have hosted a popular Recital Series, directed by classical pianist/member Marilyn Garst, which has brought a variety of musicians in from the local and outside communities.

In addition to music, we also have an active liturgical dance team called the “Spirit Movers”, 6-10 members who take part in several services per year, as well as the Pine Song retreat and other events.

Our Chancel Guild and Arts & Aesthetic teams contribute to other art in our Sanctuary and Bowman Hall, with weekly flower and artistic arrangements; a series of colorful bulletin boards in Bowman Hall informing members and guests of our teams’ and committees’ roles; Sanctuary wall hangings and displays; and

occasional shows by members or other local artists, who are blessed with a rich variety of skill and talent.

The governing structure of the congregation and how the minister is a part of this structure

See UUFD Bylaws, Mission and Vision, Board Policy Manual, and UUFD Governance/Ministry Model. The model is characterized as a cooperative partnership among the congregation, the Board, and the minister to further our mission. Ministerial responsibilities and authorities are defined in the Bylaws, Ministerial Agreement, and the Board Policy Manual.

Through their work with the congregation, the Leadership/Nominating Committee develops a slate of Board of Trustees candidates to present for approval at the Congregation Annual Meeting. In the past (pre-Covid) they also hosted seminars and workshops on leadership development to encourage emerging leaders. General practice at this point involves current team and committee leaders nurturing and mentoring potential leaders who are serving on their team or committee.

Recent successful work of the congregation

We are deeply engaged in regrowing the participation of children and youth in our Faith Formation program. Pre-Covid, we typically had 25 children and youth coming to classes each Sunday. During Covid and online only services, while we attempted Zoom connections with our children and youth, all eventually dropped out. Once we finally were able to meet in person again, only a handful occasionally came to church, and often no children or youth were in attendance. Attendance now is still erratic, but we frequently have 8-12 children and youth present on a Sunday. During this last year, we were able to successfully hold an OWL class for 15 middle school students. We hosted multi-generational events that were well attended and revived some well-loved traditions such as Kids Holiday Shopping Mart, Val Pals, and Christmas Pageant. We are now providing Sunday Faith Formation classes for Toddler/Preschool, Elementary, and Middle/High School.

Our Social Responsibility and Justice outreach has continued with a robust involvement of volunteers despite significant leadership changes including the minister, 2 small group leaders who moved away, and the overall team leader

who stepped back after 8 years as team Coordinator. Our local community relies on us as partners in meeting the needs of individuals and families. We have groups who monthly serve at the Manna Soup Kitchen and Durango Food Bank; participate in the work of Days for Girls and Compañeros Four Corners Immigrant Resource Center; support the high school Black Student Alliance, Four Corners Rainbow Youth Center, San Juan Citizen's Alliance, and Four Corners Office for Resource Efficiency.

Under the leadership of our Environmental Justice Team, we continue to expand our prioritization of actions to address climate change. The 2022 Summer Worship Series was an 8-week series of environmentally focused Sunday Services on the topic of Climate Justice: Moving Toward Equity, Resilience, and Sustainability. The 2022 congregational Pinesong Retreat that kicked off the series included speakers from both the congregation and the Durango community. We also successfully co-hosted a community-wide showing of the film "Kiss the Earth" and led a special Earth Day worship service. UUFD has installed solar panels on our facility roofs, installed 2 EV charging stations, and is in the process of converting to a heat pump system for heating and cooling.

In 2021, the congregation established the Healthy Congregation Committee whose purpose is "...to help our congregation better understand the nature of conflict...learn to speak with each other directly and honestly from a position of respect, kindness and love...and seek counsel as needed." They are tasked with promoting and facilitating open and productive communication and addressing conflict. The HCC guided our congregation in 2022 in developing a Relational Covenant.

This year, the congregation paid off the mortgage on our Sanctuary, so we are now mortgage-free for all of our physical facilities. This is a reflection of our consistent fiscal responsibility over all the years of our existence.

The work within the congregation which is slow, stuck, or not attended to

SLOW: Like many churches across the interfaith spectrum, UUFD's children's and youth programming is still emerging from the pandemic. We are seeing a slow but steady rise in returning and visiting families. The FF Coordinators continue to work on growing volunteership in order to consistently provide classroom

offerings in appropriate age groupings: Toddler/Preschool, elementary level, and youth group for middle and high schoolers. The congregation continues to prioritize multigenerational relationships.

We are also slow in moving towards developing systems for carrying out the work of the church. As noted in the description of where we are "stuck," we tend to fall back on practices which worked well for us pre-minister and during the time we were a more Family size church.

STUCK: Since UUFD was lay-led for 47 years and with over 100 members, the Family size church systems are still familiar within the congregation. Though we are closer to Pastoral size or Program size (depending on what model you're looking at), we are still learning these systems.

NOT ATTENDED TO: The departure of the previous settled minister, Rev. Katie Kandarian-Morris, resulted in varying degrees of grief, loss, confusion, relief, and closure. There are unresolved feelings and support work is needed to bring everyone back into healthy relationship. There is covenant work scheduled for this winter, and the Healthy Congregation Committee and the Transition Team in partnership with the interim minister know this needs love.

Why people leave the congregation, and why new visitors do not return

While our Membership Team does not keep track of why folks leave the congregation (though exit interviews as a practice has been discussed with the MSC), there are varied relevant observations and opinions. Some individuals move away for family or health reasons, or find that their interests and values have changed and they seek something else. There are sometimes theological reasons people leave when they find they are not in sync with UUFD or Unitarian Universalism, such as feeling that we are too Christian, or they prefer lay-led. Some people felt excluded or unwelcomed, for example when people did not talk with them after church, at coffee hours, or during special events. This may be the flip side of the closeness and deep friendships among congregants that is otherwise an asset. A lot of members know each other and may forget to consistently include new people.

Others have left because they disagreed with leadership decisions, favoritism in committee/team choices, being turned off by transition work, personality conflicts

with the minister, lack of support for faith formation and other perceived issues. We have found no large reason that people leave or do not visit again. However, the Membership Team, staff and other leaders are always discussing how to improve on inclusivity and examining the intersections of welcoming. This work includes communications so new folks are aware of ways to get involved if that's what they're looking for, while also being sensitive not to overwhelm visitors with too much inquiry and attention.

How money is raised within the congregation

UUFD raises money in several ways, depending on the nature of the funds being solicited: annual operating budget, Share the Plate, facility remodeling efforts, capital fund, and Legacy Fund (endowment). We fund about 85% of the annual operating budget with a traditional annual pledge campaign in late winter, leading to a Celebration Sunday event in mid-March. The balance of operating income comes from non-pledge contributions, Sunday collection, interest and rentals, miscellaneous, and prior-year surpluses. Pledge cards continue to arrive well into April. Two times in the past decade, we've conducted supplemental pledge "asks," both successful in covering ~10% initial shortfalls. We give 100% of our First Sunday plate each quarter to local nonprofits chosen by our Social Responsibility and Justice Coordinating Team (\$20K annually). The Christmas Eve collection and certain private donations fund a Minister's Discretionary Fund ("MDF") used occasionally at the discretion of the minister to help members and friends with living and emergency expenses.

The most recent capital campaigns in the congregation

Since the \$1.04 million acquisition of our present church campus in 2007 (\$765K capital campaign plus \$275K mortgage), we've raised funds a number of times to remodel the chancel, expand seating capacity and create/equip A/V space in the rear of the Sanctuary, convert an on-site rental apartment into staff office space, and prepare a donated contiguous house first into Faith Formation classrooms (2017) and then (2021), in part, into a modest parsonage for Targeted and Interim Ministers. Short-term capital campaigns, together with funds from our Frolic auction and operating budget surpluses, funded these projects. In addition, most of the labor and many furnishings were donated by members and friends.

In 2018 we used money from our Frolic auction to prepare conceptual drawings for a new fellowship hall, contiguous to the Sanctuary, that would replace Bowman Hall, our current fellowship space. When we decide to move forward on

this project, a capital campaign will be required to supplement funds on hand.

Debt and reserves that the congregation has

In Spring 2023, the congregation voted to use endowment earnings to retire the remaining \$90,000 church mortgage. The church now has no debt and pays off credit card charges each month.

As for reserves, we have a \$607,000 Legacy Fund (endowment) and a \$543,000 Capital Fund balance. We also maintain a \$15,000 operating reserve that's been used only once in the past 8 years and subsequently replenished; a \$36,000 reserve for ministerial search and relocation expense; a \$26,000 contingency reserve to help fund upcoming major maintenance items (painting; HVAC upgrades before too long); and about \$30K total in several smaller self-funding activities.

How the congregation feels about its stewardship

Our members and friends are an economically diverse group. We have a handful of older major supporters on the top end, a decent cohort in the middle, and a longer list of both regular and casual attendees who are raising families, working multiple jobs, or otherwise living on modest incomes. Some members find the language and giving levels in the UUA Fair-Share Giving Guide to be offensive and have recommended that Stewardship discontinue its use. We need to be more sensitive around expectations about giving and practices around stewardship. There is also concern in the fellowship about the ages of our major donors and the impact when they are no longer members due to relocation or death. Still, overall, our members and friends have been very responsive to pledge and other campaign drives.

Role of the minister(s) in stewardship

Our fellowship was lay-led for the first 80% of its existence, with professional leadership commencing in 2014. Our first settled minister had a practice of interviewing all new members, impressing on them responsibilities to - among other things - offer financial support. Throughout the church year, she would touch on the topics of generosity and gratitude. During our annual pledge campaigns, she would coordinate with our Stewardship Chair and campaign co-chairs, offer pertinent sermons, and encourage testimonials from members.

The ten largest pledges within the congregation

The 10 largest pledges for FY24 total \$166,980, comprising 51% of the church's gross pledges, and ranging from \$36,000 down to \$8,080. UUFD has 99 pledging households this fiscal year.

What a prospective minister should know about the building and grounds for the congregation

UUFD has a beautiful campus nestled in the town of Durango, located in a residential neighborhood, across the street from Needham Elementary School. There are 3 non-contiguous buildings: the Sanctuary (including one classroom and solar panels!), a fellowship hall (Bowman Hall) with administrative offices above (San Juan House), plus a house known as Columbine House, that houses Faith Formation. Currently, half of this space is a temporary minister's quarters. This house was acquired in early 2017. In 2018-2019, with increased attendance, UUFD remodeled part of the sanctuary to increase seating capacity by 40%, expanded the chancel, added an ADA ramp onto the chancel, and built an AV control area.

During this time of growth, UUFD consulted with an architect, who drafted 2 plans for expansion for the future. The most pressing issue is the size of Bowman Hall, which is small relative to the size of the congregation. The Bowmans were one of UUFD's founding members.

During Covid when the congregation was not meeting in person, Columbine House was also not being used for Faith Formation classes. Our Immigration Team made a recommendation, which was supported by our BOT, that we allow a Cuban asylee family to live in the house until they were able to move into their own apartment. They lived in Columbine for about 6 months, rent and utility free. Once our settled minister retired, we had need of temporary housing for 2 part-time targeted ministers who shared leading our congregation and who alternated times being in Durango. To accommodate, Columbine House was divided into a one-bedroom apartment section and a classroom section. We then needed to continue making housing available to the interim minister for the two-year transition duration, so the divided house arrangement remained. Currently, Faith Formation is using the classroom section each Sunday, with the anticipation that the full house will again be made available for their use.

The condition of the buildings and grounds

The condition of the UUFD buildings is generally good. Several years ago, solar panels were installed on the Sanctuary building as well on the Bowman Hall/San Juan house. Two electric vehicle charging stations were installed, and a gas-fired water heater in Bowman Hall was changed to electric. Currently, an effort is underway to change the Sanctuary building gas-fired heat system to electric heat pumps as part of our goal to be more environmentally responsible.

The grounds were landscaped years ago, and the impressive gardens are maintained by substantial volunteer care from the congregation. The landscaping includes a patio with sun shades adjacent to the Sanctuary used for fellowship time/coffee hour during good weather. Current Frolic funds are earmarked for a future memorial garden. Snow removal is shared with volunteers and a plow company which does the parking lot when significant snow falls. The grounds are well kept by the sexton and experienced volunteers.

Bowman Hall/San Juan House is in need of repainting, which is scheduled to be completed this Fall. In the future, the parking lot will need to be repaved, but that is on hold until potential plans for building construction are fully considered. If we move forward with building a new fellowship hall, a capital campaign will be needed to supplement existing capital funds.

Expectations of the congregation for a minister(s) around pastoral care / spiritual guidance / counseling / home and hospital visitation

UUFD is very fortunate to have an active Caring Team whose members serve a vital role meeting the needs of those in the Fellowship who need extra care and concern. The Caring Team has various point people who are responsible for providing meals for those who are ill, or recovering from surgery, or other reasons. There is also a transportation chair who takes care of any need for a ride to a doctor's appointment or to any appointment to which they do not have transportation. There are even a few drivers who will take a congregant out of state, if needed. In addition, there are chairs for sending cards, making phone or in-person calls, visiting people in rehab centers or in the hospital and generally responding to needs. This team serves as additional help for a minister. The minister is the point person for spiritual guidance and counseling, and for many, the person someone in the hospital would want to see or to talk with. Our new

minister will be well-supported and most welcomed for those needing and wanting a trained professional to be with them during hard times.

Expectations the congregation has for a minister(s) around children and adult religious education

The primary expectation of the minister is to collaborate with the Coordinator of Faith Formation and the Faith Formation Team on the development and implementation of religious education practices and priorities so that FF is well integrated into the life of our church community. While it is not necessary that the minister teach classes for children or adults, we expect the minister to be knowledgeable about the classes and to make some personal connection, especially with the children. We hope the minister will be excited by the potential of religious education to enliven and enrich us all and will help us to create innovative opportunities for all ages.

Expectations the congregation has for a minister(s) around community building / facilitation skills / coffee hour and social times

Community building within the congregation and in the wider community is very important. We would like a minister who is committed to social justice work and will represent us in the wider community. We would like a minister who has the interpersonal skills to help us further our efforts to come together with all our differences and build the congregation for the future. The ability to facilitate thoughtful conversations when needed to support teams/committees/BOT would be an important skill for the minister to offer.

Our congregation enjoys being social with one another and we want to get better at helping new people feel welcomed into our community. We would appreciate the minister's observations and suggestions on consistently communicating and acting with inclusivity. Our previous minister greeted people before and after the service, and met with anyone with potential interest in joining our fellowship. She also visited with different people during our social time after worship services and encouraged us to be aware of new people and reach out to them with conversation and connection.

Expectations the congregation has for a minister(s) around committee / task force work

Under our current shared governance model, the minister provides oversight for

some team, committee and task force work, the Board for others, and minister and Board share oversight for others (see Governance/Ministry Model diagram in Documents Packet). UUFD members are expected to chair, populate, and carry out the work of most teams, committees, and task forces. At mutually agreeable times during and between meetings of these entities, the minister is expected to be available for consultation, to provide context, and to suggest other resources or new/alternative approaches to issues being addressed.

Expectations the congregation has for a minister(s) around leadership development

In the past, we focused on Leadership Development within our congregation, but currently it isn't being given much attention. Our interim minister has contributed with some recent leadership discussions at our Leadership Council Meetings. We recognize the value of developing our lay leaders, especially to prepare them for bigger roles, such as a Board member. We would like a minister who can support this type of development.

Drawing from the Congregational Survey question – Consider the following potential roles of our future minister, select the top five you feel are most important for UUFD – several of the top roles selected were related to leadership.

- 75% (#2) of respondents selected Pastoral Care and how to care for one another. UUFD has had a strong lay-led Caring Team for many years which was enhanced with the leadership of our former minister. Members will expect a new minister to contribute to the ongoing growth and development of our Caring Team.
- 54% selected (#3) Visible leadership in the local community as the third most important attribute. We currently have a strong presence in our community and have benefited from our previous minister's involvement. We seek a minister who can enhance our community outreach and hopefully attract younger congregants.
- 47% indicated that Prophetic Role: Helps us to imagine our future and inspires us was the 6th most important role. We are looking for someone that helps us shift our focus to a more strategic and visionary view.

Lastly, the topic of problem solving was a major theme from our Cottage Meetings and Focus Groups. We would appreciate the support and leadership of a minister in helping us to develop better ways to work toward resolution of challenges.

Expectations the congregation has for a minister(s) around membership and membership growth

The congregation wants to attract more young families, and more diversity, to the fellowship and would like a minister who can support and guide us in this effort. We want to grow in understanding of who we are and our mission as well as size. This collaborative effort means working well with the Membership Team, but also the Board of Trustees, and the general congregation so that we can all do our part.

Expectations the congregation has for a minister(s) around staff relations and supervision

UUFD's Governance and Ministry model assigns the minister as Supervisor of Staff. The current staff value deep collaboration with the minister and mutual support as they consider how to lead in their particular areas of responsibility. The minister needs to model how to work together in covenant and mutual trust is critical - where staff know that the minister is invested in and cares about their success, respects them, and mentors them. The ability to recognize and appreciate staff efforts and contributions is important. The minister would bring personal warmth and caring to a professional relationship.

The importance of the minister's role in staff reviews and accountability, as well as hiring, is also recognized. The minister is expected to use a fair and consistent system of doing performance reviews with staff with the intention to support staff in growing their skills and abilities. Hiring of staff is done in consultation with the Personnel Committee and the Board of Trustees and with careful consideration of the impact of hiring and personnel changes.

Characteristics which are valued by staff and the congregation include:

- Strong emphasis on cooperation and collaboration
- Supportive mindset that encourages growth and development
- Appreciation for a fun and friendly atmosphere while working hard
- Strong communications skills

- Respect for working boundaries
- Appropriate flexibility to accommodate special needs or issues

Expectations the congregation has for a minister(s) around anti-oppression work / social justice / social action

While we have a long history of social responsibility and justice work, we have a long way to go in carrying out our mission to work for justice. We are better at showing up for social justice events such as marches and vigils and to volunteer and partner with local agencies such as Manna Soup Kitchen, Durango Food Bank, and others. It is much harder to face the personal work of making our biases and prejudices visible and then to take action. We seek a minister who is able to engage our congregation in this work, seeing it as an opportunity to learn about what we know and don't know and celebrate that, a minister who is willing to risk saying what is uncomfortable, with genuine love and care, so that we can awake to our ignorance or tendencies to look at what is convenient, rather than what is hard or harmful.

We particularly hope for a minister who centers anti-oppression work in all facets of their ministry – not just worship services, but also how they manage and support staff, how they work with lay-led social justice teams like our Anti-Racism Team and LGBTQIA+ Team, and how they connect and collaborate in the wider Four Corners area, such as with regional tribal communities, Black-led organizations, or the local Rainbow Youth Center. We need a minister who is confident in leading us in this area, but who also models taking responsibility for mistakes, helping us to learn to do the same.

The seriousness of this work can result in heaviness and discouragement and desire to turn away. But we believe that there is potential for feelings of joy, resilience, power, and even humor in authentic anti-oppression work, and we look for a minister who shares that view and can help us to make it so.

Expectations the congregation has for a minister(s) around interfaith / community work

UUFD would be both supportive and pleased to have our new minister be a part of an area Interfaith Council. Our previous settled minister was part of such a group which met periodically to talk about faith work and issues in our community. A memorable event which the Interfaith Group sponsored during

Lent for a couple of years involved various churches rotating holding a service and light meal at their respective church on Wednesday evenings with all churches' congregants participating. We welcome these area connections. However, the Interfaith Council has not been active since Covid, and the minister leading the group, Pastor Jeff at the Summit Church, was on Sabbatical. He recently returned, and the hope is he will reinvigorate this important group.

We also welcome opportunities to learn about and honor other faith traditions through our own gatherings. For example, UUFD has hosted Seder Dinners at our Fellowship Hall with an average of 50 congregants participating. We did a book study on Buddhist voices in Unitarian Universalism, and we've had pulpit speakers share their Buddhist faith and practices.

As for a new minister working in the community – absolutely yes. We value showing up at parades which highlight social justice, women's rights, LGBTQIA+ rights, Black Lives Matter events, immigrant rights, and anything in the area which works for more social justice. Our settled minister was sometimes invited to be a speaker at community events, like the Women's March or a Fort Lewis College panel on economic justice. However, we at UUFD are mindful that our new minister will have limited time, especially the first year. Our hope is that as soon as it is possible, our new minister will become involved in helping build and support an area Interfaith Council, as well as to participate in local events which help highlight that UUFD "walks their talk."

Expectations the congregation has for a minister(s) around denominational activities

Some in the congregation question the larger UUA aspects of our faith, worried that UUA may try to dominate our fellowship from afar. We need to understand and better address this perception. That being said, we recognize, and have benefited from, the resources of UUA. We believe it is important that our minister have a mutually supportive relationship with UUA and its departments and branches. As the minister's interests and time permits, we would expect that they are involved in some roles or events within our denomination and that we should support that.

Any expectations there might be about a minister's family and personal life

We at UUFD value our minister as a person with life outside of their ministry to us.

While we want our minister to be available for emergencies that might arise, we also want our minister to find a balance between church life/work/family/recreation. We hope our new minister will take advantage of our beautiful area to get away from church responsibilities to hike, bike, swim, ski, walk, whatever gives them pleasure. It will be up to both the fellowship not to infringe on the minister's "off duty" time, and the minister to set appropriate boundaries. We hope to urge our new minister to work to find that balance as they settle into life in Durango and with the UUFD.

Expectations the congregation has for a minister(s) around other areas not already addressed above

Our current fellowship space, Bowman Hall, is small and can no longer comfortably accommodate congregants for winter social time and other events. Over the last several years, we have had off-and-on discussions about building a new fellowship hall, including some conceptual design drawings. We would look to our new minister for perspective and guidance once we resume discernment about this project.

How trust is built between the congregation and the minister

The interim minister has provided forthright sermons and workshops highlighting and experiencing pathways to trust. The most formal and effective was the program called "Circles of Trust" that was attended by about 20 congregants. She has also formally and informally brought to our attention the specific history of patterns and unhealthy UUFD communication habits leading to broken trust.

One issue which is a source of some mistrust in the congregation is around what it means to be in "shared ministry." Lack of common understanding about expectations among congregants and congregant-minister contributes to a level of mistrust about who is heard, who is not, and what role congregants have in the direction and decisions in our fellowship. Because UUFD has had only 1 settled minister in its 50+ year existence, there has not been much opportunity for all to experience the role of a professional minister. The congregation is now actively working on becoming more aware of the meaning of shared ministry and the implications for our work together and with a minister.

An additional trust factor, in some realms of congregational knowledge, is a lack of understanding of the value of the UUA in providing support not only for and from the minister, but also for the congregation as a whole, rather than a

perception that the UUA is somehow dictating or dominating our congregation.

We recognize that no one strategy or plan is going to build trust in itself. It is something we do together through living out our day-to-day experiences in faithful covenant with each other and learning that we can count on that. When a minister is comfortable with transparency and with hearing and considering new ideas or ones that differ from their own, that adds to the sense of connection and trust. When the congregation maintains a fair and open mind to new ideas or different perspectives that the minister offers, that also builds trust. We value what we've learned through our HCC about the importance of open and honest and respectful communication with each other as a foundation for mutual trust.

One mistake a minister could make that would seriously affect the ministry

While there were varied responses on the Congregational Survey about actions that a minister might take that would be contentious, there is only 1 mistake that would seriously affect the ministry: not being honest or comporting themselves ethically.

How has your ministry changed since COVID began? Where do you see decline? What have you let go of? Where do you see fresh energy?

As with many churches, Covid had a profound impact in our church and our ministry, some of it for the good and some not.

As we previously stated in response to the question about describing our religious education program, and question #24 about our recent successes, we did lose some people during the times that we were totally remote for worship and no meetings or gatherings were permitted. While some people have returned to our fellowship, some have not. This is most especially true with our children and youth.

We developed a whole new skill set in learning how to gather over Zoom. While we would not have chosen remote over in-person, we now appreciate the ability to connect remotely. People who are traveling or are ill can still join us for worship services, or for team and committee meetings. New people have a safe/non-identified opportunity to check us out. We appreciate this way of keeping connections with people when in-person isn't a viable choice. We also have learned the value of incorporating videos and images into our worship services. This has the downside, however, of requiring more technical expertise

and we found we needed a part-time IT support person as we don't have enough volunteers with this level of expertise.

We haven't let go of much due to Covid. The congregation and its Board, teams, and committees did creative things to get around Covid restrictions. Some things which we had to let go of, such as Circle Suppers in members' homes, have returned. However, there is clearly some fatigue that still discomforts us from those difficult times. Patience is a little thinner. We haven't directly addressed the question of "what is it time to let go of?"

There is fresh energy for opportunities to collaborate with a minister to explore and create new ways of worshipping together that are deeply meaningful and spiritually nourishing with diverse practices. We seek to support and create joyful connections, even as we deal with the griefs and struggles of a complex and sometimes painful world.

Have you passed the Eighth Principle, or is the congregation in process of moving to a congregational vote?

The UUFD Anti-Racism Team (ART) definitely supports the idea of UUFD considering a vote for the 8th Principle, but respectfully recommended delaying bringing that to a vote with the congregation at this time. Given the much-needed focus on our ministerial search and our momentum through this transition period, ART (a) does not want to take attention away from the search - we recognize congregants only have so much time and attention, and this is a critical time; and (b) would not want to bring the 8th Principle to the congregation without proper education efforts and engagement - we would not want an approval of the 8th Principle to be a veritable 'box-checking' process. We welcome the new minister's guidance about how to proceed in light of the work being done on the revision to Article II of the UUA bylaws.

How is trust in your congregation right now?

The MSC has identified trust as a key success factor that needs to be built mutually with our new minister. In the past, there have been issues with trust in our fellowship, sometimes between the Board of Trustees and some congregants, sometimes between the minister and some congregants. We recognize trust as our needed foundation for future success.

The Board has been intent on a much higher level of communication, hosting

monthly “town hall” meetings with the congregation to report the activity resulting from the most recent Board of Trustees meeting. Naming the intention of a high level of transparency has helped. There is a noticeable evolution of building trust as the intentional opportunities to be heard have been offered. The presence of the HCC has made a palpable difference in formal and informal conversation and more transparent and honest airing with individuals and different realms of leadership. A recent and dramatic break in covenant and display of upheaval amongst leadership left a significant rift in trust, though this occurred with a relatively small number of congregants. Due to some of the players taking ownership of pieces of the break in public, there has been some guarded movement toward resolution. This has also been supported by the involvement of the HCC with the guidance of the resolution policy and procedure. It is important to note that the majority of the membership does not seem to be aware of the precarious nature of trust-building.

Great attention is being given to surfacing and exploring what expectations exist in the congregation about sharing ministry among ourselves and with our minister. There are some in the congregation who do not fully trust that a minister will get to know us, hear our hopes and dreams and wishes, but will instead want to make all the decisions based on what they think is “best.” As we are working on bringing these concerns into direct conversations and considerations of what we understand is hoped for in shared ministry, and a commitment to communicate that fully in discussions with potential ministerial candidates, mistrust seems to be diminishing.

How did the last ministry end (or how is it ending)? How is the congregation doing with this time of transition?

The congregation has been through multiple transitions in a short time. After the resignation of our settled minister, Rev. Katie Kandarian-Morris, in the middle of a liturgical year, we welcomed two targeted co-ministers from New Mexico. Rev. Gary Kowalski and Rev. Munroe Sickafoose joined us for 6 months, leading us into the current interim time with Rev. Barbara Coeyman, now in our second year. The congregation has also experienced resignations, terminations and the recent death of a former staff person in this same time period.

Across faiths, Covid caused tremendous disruption, and UUFD is no exception. There are many ways we are still emerging. There is residual unease from the departure of our settled minister including division around the leaving and

disconnection resulting from a lack of collective processing. The effects range from deeply grieving the loss of the minister to a relief from an approach that felt overbearing. These emotions are slowly emerging, and intentional work is being done to bring the congregation together

Interim periods are always hard and, by design, full of change. However, the combination of so many changes in ministers in a short period, each with different leadership styles, and changes to our traditions and practices, has been de-stabilizing and difficult for some. While we recognize that the transition period is intended to “unstick” and explore new options, some people have experienced the changes as a message that we were “wrong” in the way we were doing things. We are growing in our understanding of the purpose of transition time, and we are getting clearer about what values, priorities and practices we hold dear and where we welcome even greater changes. We are feeling less adrift and becoming stronger and more optimistic in our sense of ourselves as a spiritual community with a bright future ahead.

How is technology currently used in your congregation and what are the expectations of the minister around that?

Technology is used to enhance our worship services and to provide the option of remote participation both in worship services and assorted church meetings. Worship services rely heavily on a variety of audio and visual systems that allow display of videos and images in the Sanctuary, enhanced sound including a hearing loop system for hearing-impaired, and the ability to livestream project a remote speaker/presenter. In addition, the Fellowship has several monitors in various church spaces to allow in-person groups to meet via Zoom with remote participants and to make possible projection of images, charts and graphs for shared viewing as needed.

We recently created a Google Drive filing system for digital recordkeeping across church teams, committees and the Board and administration.

The role of the minister is to understand, and help us understand, how IT technologies could be used to improve our worship experience and to reach more people.

Questions the congregation would have liked to have been asked which were not included here

NONE