

## The Rev. Amy Shaw

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**Last Updated:** April 4, 2023

# Experience & Preparation

**Preliminary Fellowship:** 2013

**Full Fellowship:** 2016

**Ordination:** N/A

**Seminary:** M.Div Meadville Lombard Theological School May 2013 (summa cum laude)

## Congregational Ministries Served:

2022- Now	Interim Minister	UU Congregation of Venice Inc.	Venice, FL
2019- 2022	Settled Minister	First Unitarian Church of Des Moines	Des Moines, IA
2013- 2019	Minister	Lake Country UU Church	Hartland, WI

## Other Ministries and Work Experience:

2015- Now	Good Officer	TRUUST	National
2018- Now	Regional Transition Specialist	Unitarian Universalist Association MidAmerica Region	MidAmerica Region, USA

## Other Education:

Clinical Pastoral Education, Good Samaritan Hospital, Cincinnati, OH, 2011

Completed: 1 Unit CPE

Graduate, Practical Nurse Program, Gateway College (No. KY Health Technology Center), Edgewood, KY, 1997

Certifications: Peripheral IV (Kentucky), NAPNES, PICC/Central Line Management (Indiana), Wound Management, Gerontology

B.A., English, Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights, KY, 1991

Focus: Pre-18th Century women writers

Minor: Women's Studies

Area of Concentration: Psychology

**Other noteworthy work experience outside of UU ministry:**

Adjunct Instructor, Surgical Technician and Medical Assistant Programs, 2008 to 2010, 2012 to 2013

American National University, Florence, KY

- Courses: Law and Ethics for Healthcare, Human Resources, Anatomy and Physiology, English and Business Writing, Intro to Psychology, Intro to Pharmacology

Charge Nurse, 2003 to 2009

Lincoln Crawford Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Walnut Hills, OH

- Nursing care and STNA management for 50 skilled care residents in a 100-bed facility

- Facility was one of 2 urban African-American nursing care facilities created during the civil war as homes for aged slaves. 100% of the residents, dietary, and floor staff were African American, and unit included Black Muslims, Hebrew Israelites/House of Israel, Muslims, and black separatists. Facility was chartered to support black organization, management, empowerment, culture, religion, and excellence

Assistant Director of Nursing, 2001 to 2003

Mason Christian Village Health Care Facility, Mason, OH

- Three nursing-deficiency-free Health Care Financing Administration surveys

- Recruitment, retention, discipline and management of 97 person staff team
- Staff continuing education program creation and provision to meet state and federal regulations, with 99% staff compliance
- Regulatory compliance and quality assurance for all direct care with systems creation as needed
- Case-Mix management, resulting in a 8.3% facility Case-Mix increase within 120 days of hire
- Supervised daily healthcare operations for 73 bed skilled nursing unit, 50 bed assisted care unit, 20 bed intermediate unit, 50 bed Memory care unit, 100 bed independent living apartments, and 50 neighboring independent living homes
- Liaison for Raymond Walters College of Nursing

Director of Health Care Services, 1999 to 2001

Zion Care Center, Inc., Cincinnati, OH

- Staff discipline and management for 40 person staff team
- Facility management for 50-bed skilled and semi-skilled nursing facility
- Systems creation and monitoring
- Policy and procedure development and implementation
- Staff education, continuing education program creation and program instruction
- Budget creation and compliance assurance with profit maximization
- RAI quality assurance

Director (Industry Consultant), June 1999 to June 2000

The Woods at Beechknoll, Beechknoll Community, Cincinnati, OH

- Management of a 100-bed independent living unit
- Direction of all facility programs to ensure maximum resident participation and benefit
- Direction and supervision of all contract and facility staffing
- Marketing program creation and implementation

- Budget preparation and compliance with profit maximization
- Vendor solicitation and acquisition
- Planned gift solicitation and giving program creation and implementation
- Achieved 27% increase in admissions within 90 days of hire

Assistant Director of Nursing, 1998 to 1999

Christian Care of Cincinnati, Inc., Finneytown, OH

- Achieved agency-free status within 90 days of hire
- Facility QA and QI tracking and resolution
- Plan of Correction creation and implementation
- Staff education, program creation and instruction
- Care Plan creation and modification for all residents
- Nursing budget implementation and assurance of compliance
- Resident crisis management
- Case-Mix management, resulting in a 12.5% facility Case-Mix increase within 90 days of hire
- Facility Marketing with 100% occupancy within 120 days of hire

Minimum Data Set Coordinator / Computer Systems Administrator, 1998 to 1998

Lakeside Place Nursing Home, Highland Heights, KY

- Supervision of MDS staff (3 RNs, 6 STNAs) within a 387-bed facility
- Resource Utilization Guide score creation for all potential admission candidates
- Admission determination for all potential patient admissions
- Decreased facility MDS non-compliance rate by 68% within 180 days of hire
- Creation of internal MDS electronic creation and submission policy and procedure systems and guidelines
- Initiation of electronic MDS generation and submission for all current patients, and maintenance of electronic system going forward

- Computer server administration and network maintenance including software and hardware installation, security systems management, and software vendor selection

### **Denominational and Community Activities:**

#### AWARDS and PRESENTATIONS

UUA Breakthrough Congregation Award, 2014-2015 (Church Growth)

Roberta Nelson Prize for Religious Education, Meadville Lombard Theological School, 2013

#### ACTIVITIES

Good Officer, Central Midwest District Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association  
2016 to present

Designated Good Officer, UUA, TrUUst, 2018 to present

Moderator, Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association (UUMA) Colleagues  
Facebook Group (1,012 members)

Sole Administrator and Moderator, Walls of Jericho Interfaith Clergy Social Justice  
Action Facebook Group (1,430 members)

Treasurer, Central Midwest District, Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association  
(UUMA), 2013 to 2015

Minister in Residence, Midwest UU Summer Assembly Trout Lodge, Potosi, MO,  
June 2013

Unitarian Universalist Association Central Midwest District Woman and Religion  
Committee, 2012-2014 term

## Background

### **Give a story that embodies your ministry:**

My ministry is a story of welcome.

In my ministry I try at all times to practice both radical inclusion and radical hospitality. That, of course, is easy to say, but not always so easy to define.

So what do I mean by “radical inclusion” and “radical hospitality”?

When we look at race, oppression, and culture, we often simplify the issue until it becomes this side and that. One or the other. Simple bridges between two sides are easy to build. A few boards, maybe a rope handhold, even a solitary plank. For more complex, or more dangerous, crossings, we can hire engineers and build elaborate edifices of steel and concrete.

But the gap remains, separating one side from the other. The water or wilder land where this becomes that, side A becomes side B, remains far away, and unexplored.

Unitarian Universalists like to build bridges.

We struggle to join white and black, rich and poor. We work to lay boards of understanding between Islam and Christianity, theist, deist, and humanist. We call for more bridge building through workshops, forums, and sermon after sermon.

Each bridge we build, each shortcut joining one defined side to another, carries us further from growth and transformation. Only by exploring the places the bridges cover, the lines where this and that overlap and slide, can we begin to build upward.

Any theology which is intended to simply link two groups relies on that one, dangerous, underlying principle: the idea that groups can be reduced to us and them. This type of binary division or dichotomy may be useful in some contexts, but for theological purposes reductionism can provide, at best, simplistic understanding of multifaceted groupings and, at worst, stereotypical avatars and tropes created to allow us to “solve” exactly the wrong problems. I seek to avoid the dichotomy, and instead create a dialectic which can expand vertically, a constructive theology predicated not on “how can all be welcome and supported in our current churches?” but instead on “What would church and ministry look like if all were welcome, and all were supported?”

Radical inclusion. The idea that all are welcome, all are a part, from the ground up. Radical hospitality. The idea that all are welcome to come in, even if they were not there at the beginning. The idea that you and I are equally host and hosted.

My ministry is based on this vision of a church and a movement where no one is excluded or oppressed. I am not doing the equivalent of inviting guests to my home, and making sure they have their favorite drinks and snacks- I am saying let

us build a house together, and some days you will cook and some days I will, and some days we will eat fusion cuisine.

Practically, this type of inclusiveness can be difficult for some, and requires considerable support. In a church, for example, where latecomers are officially seated only at certain points, it may feel strange to allow people to enter as they will- but requiring exact timing is a privileged position which assumes both white, middle-class perception of scheduling and an ability to own or control transportation. I attempt to remain aware at all times of the cultural, racial, and power-based assumptions which often underlie even these simple elements of ministry, and which by their very nature make “church” an us or them proposition.

Much of my own awareness has been informed by my own background; I was a Middle-Eastern and white child growing up in an all-white community, racially Jewish but attending an Anglican church. As an adult I spent a few years working as the Assistant Director of one of Ohio’s wealthiest, white, nursing care communities, and then followed this directly with seven years as a floor nurse at one of Ohio’s four entirely African-American, low-income, nursing centers. I am often amazed at the huge differences in cultural reality, and in the disparity in cultural norms.

Practically, this means that I must remain aware of the places where I must take the time to reimagine the shape of ministry. Are all my office hours between 7A and 3P? What about the people who work a first shift job? Do I have a quinceañera or a fiesta de quince service available, and does it reflect UU values, or will my congregant have to take their child to a local Catholic church? Do I take care to include meaningful worship experiences from multiple sources as a routine part of sacred services, or do I allow non-white cultures to be included only as virtual zoo exhibits (First Nations guests in full ceremonial clothing are brought in for drum circles on Earth Day, with a tipi, but drumming meditations are considered too loud for normal use, and the church can’t be sage smudged once a year because “it smells funny”).

Multi-cultural, multi-racial, and oppression free ministry requires a vision of the church as a place where all are welcome to be themselves, and a voice to share that vision. It requires construction of Unitarian Universalist events, which may feature pieces informed by many things, but which are emphatically not “our Hispanic Sunday,” “our First Nations service,” or “our service with that music black people like.”

My ministry strives to be authentic. To recognize privilege, to invite everyone to fully engage with the church and with me. To refuse to perpetuate a world of us and them. To truly be multicultural, multiracial, and oppression free, I believe I must always use a constructive approach- asking in every circumstance: “What do we believe about the nature of the universe? About the nature of humanity? How are we called to behave in the world? How do we approach the endings of life and of life situations? How do we gain understanding? What is the purpose of this ministry or event? What is the connection between freedom, respect, and justice related to this event?”

By answering these questions, and calling on others to answer them, I can find a common ground, a requirement to be provided to all. I can begin to build, and call others to build, in ways that recognize human needs, unbounded by divisions. My experience tells me that I can't fight racism, or mono-culturalism, or oppression, by encouraging patronage and allowing inclusion, but only by accepting that I do not have the authority to allow anything, and believing that together we can agree to grow.

### **Why are you seeking ministry now?**

I am seeking a new ministry because I am interested in an excited congregation who want to live into new ways of being in the world. I want to work with people who don't know the answers but who want to help discover the questions.

### **What ministry do you hope is ahead for you?**

I am seeking a church open to possibilities, willing to grow, and able to be excited about Unitarian Universalism. A congregation that seeks church health and vitality, and that welcomes transparency and enthusiasm. I want a ministry where laughter is welcome and joy is hoped for.

### **Describe your call to ministry. What life events have led you to this moment?**

In 2003, I was a well- paid, respected, and highly in demand Assistant Director of Nursing at a huge, wealthy, entirely white, nursing care complex. I specialized in creating systems which allowed facilities to function at peak efficiency, and with complete regulatory compliance. I loved my job, and often spent 60-70 hours a week either at a computer, or explaining my methodology while making large planned giving “asks” of major donors. I no longer saw actual patients.



On February 2nd, 2003, my beloved younger sister died, and I realized with shock that all of my goals of advancement, power, wealth, and recognition no longer seemed to have meaning or value. Twelve days after her death I approached the Director of a small nursing home, an entirely African-American home in the inner city, and I asked her if she would hire me as a floor nurse. Once hired, my one request was that I not be given any supervisory role, any management task, or any title other than nurse. My goal was to begin again, to learn to understand what was important in life, without concern for power or advancement.

I was there for over six years. I learned what the world looked like without privilege or control. I spoke to men and women who had marched in Selma, and who had stood with Fred Shuttlesworth and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Some had been the first- the first black female doctorate awarded by the University of Cincinnati, the first black RN supervisor at a Cincinnati hospital, the first black engineer to graduate from Xavier University. A 104 year-old had entered West Point in 1919- his father and one uncle had been born as slaves. A few were separatists, who openly refused to associate with anyone who identified as Caucasian.

The longer I remained, the more strongly I felt a call to help in healing the world of the brokenness which accompanies racism, oppression, and hatred. At first I responded in small ways- teaching a staff member basic investment strategy, helping another learn how to buy a house, working with patients to increase their reading skills, taking children and grandchildren of patients and staff alike for college tours (and helping them through the applications maze).

But small ways did not seem to be enough. I began to argue with myself- I was already a Jew spending my time with Wiccans, after being raised by Anglicans. Was I really considering becoming a Unitarian Universalist? Had I lost my mind? The very thought of a call to ministry seemed overwhelming and frightening- how would anyone take me seriously? How could I just decide to do that?

I fought the call for years, following CLF online and at times attending local UU congregations, reading books and UU World, but refusing to allow my ego to push me up front again.

In March of 2009 I was finishing a nursing shift when an aide came in, screaming for help. A young black man was dying at the edge of our parking lot, after a shoot-out with a young drug dealer. Another nurse and I gathered what few supplies we had, and ran.

The man had been shot over and over, and we knew there was almost no chance. A neighbor stood in the street and told us he had called 911, but no one had come. I asked the aide to call again, and she did.

Awhile later, as we struggled to stop the hopeless bleeding, the aide called 911 again, and again.

Finally, with tears rolling down her face, she handed me the phone and said “Miss Amy, you try. You can sound white.”

I called, and a squad came within five minutes, accompanied by the police. The young man died while we waited. When the officers arrived, they greeted me, and one of them said to the black nurse with me, who was cradling the man in her arms, “Hey lady, get out of my crime scene.”

Without flinching she stared at him, and said, “Until five minutes ago your crime scene was someone’s child.”

I began to search actively for Unitarian Universalist seminaries the next day. I could not ignore the call any longer.

I also began to explore both the Torah and the New Testament, attempting to clarify for myself the basis of my call. I found myself drawn to the idea of tikkun ha olam, or healing the world, found in the Mishnah (a written redaction of the “Oral Torah”). It was a call to do good not for the sake of law, but because it increases social harmony, a call to social justice.

The more I read, the more I was drawn to read. I moved from Torah and Bible to the works attributed to the Ba’al Shem Tov. In the Tzava’at Harivash — The Testament of Rabbi Israel Ba’al Shem Tov translated to English- he explains that the whole universe and all its elements are manifestations of the Divine, or forms in which God self-reveals. All things, then, have the potential and duty to continue with God the ongoing acts of creation and rectification.

This was a call that I could truly answer. It allowed me to understand a world formed of interlinked elements, all equally valid and valuable, all Divine in origin and nature. The seven principles of Unitarian Universalism seemed to illuminate the theology of the Ba’al Shem Tov, putting a practical and specific face on the “how” element of world healing.

Going further, I found continued connection to both the work of existentialist Martin Buber, with his I-Thou construct which allowed one to glimpse the Divine through contact with another human, and with the words of the radical young Jewish rabbi

Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus's parable of the bags of gold, found in Matthew, includes this line: "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" (Matthew 25:40) To me, this seemed another piece of the same idea, the concept of all of humanity as a linked web, joined eternally to the Ultimate.

My theology is, as I am, a constructive work based on disparate elements, all woven into a working whole. I am called because I believe that the God of my understanding, HaShem, is always present, and that all things work toward a Divine Plan and contain a Divine spark. I am called because I cannot not be called and remain alive.

As a part of the Divine, each thing, each person or creature, compels me to have hope, and calls me to recognize the presence of HaShem in the world. I am called to work then at tikkun olam, repairing the world around me, in order to better reflect that divinity. I keep my hope alive awaiting goodness because I am actively working to restore that goodness in all things, which in turn restores my hope if it ever flags.

This connection with the Divine is not a one-way street, however, it is instead a broad avenue which flows with ceaseless bi-directional traffic. Each thing, each creature, impacts HaShem through presence and action just as HaShem impacts us. How extraordinary, how affirming, to realize that as I move within my world, the ripples of my motion weave throughout those created by HaShem. I do not know their impact points, nor can I see the results of the impacts, but I know they are there because I can see the impact points where HaShem's actions reach me in return.

I am a minister because, for me, the call to provide a lens for transformation and growth is the call to recognize shared Divinity, and to enable increasing harmony. I am called to heal because the Divine is called to heal, and we are one and the same.

I am called. I call myself. I am the call.

## Ministerial Roles & Functions

**Share your ministerial presence and leadership style:**

My leadership style is cooperative. My goal is to make sure that the power of the church comes from the ground up, through its people, and is shared across the life and body of the church. Organization and structure should be site appropriate and organic- never rigid or constraining. Because I have a strong ministerial presence, I work to make sure that all voices are heard, and I use my strength to welcome, rather than to exclude.

**How do you function with church staff? What are your thoughts on staff relations and supervision?**

I believe strongly in shared vision and ministry, and I work cooperatively with staff. The structure of a church is like a stool, supported by the legs of Ministry, Education, Music, and Social Justice. All legs must be functional and equal in order for the church to be balanced. I am currently Chief of Staff, and I use that position to assure that all areas are heard and valued, rather than to annoy competent staff with unneeded and time wasting forced "supervisory" meetings. I meet bi-weekly with all staff to discuss ongoing concerns and events, upcoming services, and planned programs, and I meet weekly or more with staff as/if needed to discuss things specific to their areas.

Because I value our staff team, I provide my yearly service schedule, service topics, hymn choices, and special music ideas/requests/suggestions in August of each year (reserving the right to make changes to services more than 4 months away). I open it up then for each other staff member to weigh in on their ideas for these services, their possible contributions or needs, and what they might want the Worship Team to consider doing on my off Sundays. Often we work together for weeks on some services- planning education and music and worship around one another, and adding Social Justice work to support the whole.

I want to function as a resource and support, and, as needed, as a guide and leader. Paid staff and the minister are in an administrative but not pastoral relationship- I cannot be a personal minister to someone whose employment I can terminate or cause to be terminated.

**Regarding shared ministry what do you see as your work as minister? What do you see doing in partnership with the congregation? What do you see as the work of the congregation?**

The work of the minister is the work of helping the congregation to decide their destination. I hold the frame- they create the artwork with my support and guidance as needed.

Ministry is shared. It is not the job of the minister to do the work of the committees; I am not there to serve on the Leadership Committee, I am there to make sure the Leadership Committee has the skills and training they need to do their job well.

The minister empowers the people. The minister does not tell the people what to believe, but helps them to discover what they believe, and leads them to live in ways which illuminate their values.

It is the job of the congregation to tell me where they want to go- it is my job to help them to figure this out. It is the congregations job to drive the bus- it is my job to make sure they know how to get a bus, and that they know how to raise enough money to buy it. It is my job to tell them when the bus is going to break down. It is my job to remember that it is their bus, not mine, but to ride on it with them just the same.

**What role would you see yourself playing in the larger community?**

I am a prophetic voice, a leader, and an activist. I would be involved in representing UU values in the community, and in speaking for both myself and my church.

**How have you seen change happen in a congregation or community? What role would you see yourself playing in congregational change?**

I am responsible both for fostering organic change, and for helping the congregation to see the points where change should or should not be. I am responsible for helping the congregation make effective and healthy change, based on desire and need, rather than dysfunctional change based on fear or scarcity.

**Describe how you handle being in a conflicted situation:**

I talk.

I ask questions.

I begin by assuming the other person/people have good intent.

I talk some more.

I say yes if yes is possible.

I say no, and explain completely, if no is necessary.

I recognize that it is the people's church, and that the final say is that of the Board and the Congregation.

I don't take it personally.

**Tell a story that deepened your understanding of what ministry is:**

I was called by a congregant who was in a terrifying situation. Their partner had announced that they planned to kill themselves, and their partner too. They planned to do it in a way specific to their job, and had the things needed.

The person calling me was hiding in a room of the house, and their partner was outside weeping. They asked me to stay on the phone as they tried to run for the car to escape to the church. I did, and they made it past their partner and to me.

We talked and cried for several hours before I sent them to a friend's house, and called their partner.

I went to see them in a public park. We sat on a bench together. We talked, about fear and shame, and anger, and a sense of being lost. We talked about the help they needed, immediately, that night- an inpatient unit.

They turned to me and asked "Do you still love me, after what I did?"

I took their hand and we sat together, silently, for over an hour, as they cried.

They checked themselves in that night. They did what they were asked. They got help and took classes. They saw a doctor or three. They saved their relationship and turned it into something worth saving in the years since.

And a month after the original event they sent me a note that said "You saved two lives that night. When I thought I was all alone, that I had f'ed it up beyond fixing, you were there."

Ministry, cut to the bone. Pared away until only the essence remains.

When it was f'ed up beyond fixing, you were there.

**Tell about a mistake you've made in ministry and what you've learned from it:**

When I was a brand new minister I took on too much of the work of the congregation. It was time for Sharing the Ministry, our annual congregational committee sign ups. For two years I just did the large number of personalized sign up sheets for every committee and work group because I could do them quickly.

The 3rd year the committee that was supposed to be doing them actually had someone volunteer to do them. The day before they were needed one of the members, very angrily, came and asked me if I was going to check all of them. I said no. She was furious because the person doing them didn't know how to format them, and had spent two weeks doing a 1 hour job.

I asked the person triangulating if she had known about this, and she said yes. I asked why no one had asked for help previously and she said "Because we thought you were going to ask how we were doing so I told her not to! It's your fault!"

I learned to teach, rather than to rescue, and to be very VERY clear about when I would be checking in (or not) and how quickly to reach me if more help was needed!

**What needs do you have to strengthen your ministry and how might a congregation assist you in this?**

I am working hard to learn to take time away from the church- I love my work and I am working hard to hold myself to reasonable work/life boundaries. A congregation can assist me by understanding when I force myself to actually take my off day and by respecting my vacation and study leave time. It is too easy for me to say "oh sure!" when there is something interesting going on when I'm supposed to be taking a break!

**Describe briefly your ministerial approach to the following:**

- **Worship and preaching:**

I am a dynamic preacher who believes in well-organized, meaningful worship. I create informed Worship Arts teams, and collaborate with Music to bring transformational and well-planned worship to the church. I preach both academically and over music in a more theatrical style with equal ease.

- **Pastoral Care / spiritual guidance / counseling / home and hospital visitation:**

I was a nurse and nurse executive for 22 years before ministry, and I am comfortable in my role as a pastor and spiritual guide. Because I am not a licensed therapist, I will typically see a person only 3 times around a counseling issue before assisting them to find a professional resource. I am strongly competent in this area.

- **Children's religious education:**

RE is an important part of any church. I love working with children, and was the 2013 winner of the Roberta Nelson Prize for Religious Education.

I believe RE should be coordinated whenever possible, so that children and adults can talk together at night about what they have done, seen, and heard. I am a strong believer in multigenerational worship and events when possible, and in creating ways for young people to slowly assume adult roles in the church.

- **Youth work:**

The voices of youth are the lifeblood of today's church, not tomorrows. The youth should be asked how the church can assist them to serve on committees and the Board, and they should be encouraged to take their places as members. Youth should be heard, and their work respected. Their needs are not secondary, but are an essential part of the church.

- **Adult religious education:**

Mandatory for the health of a church.

Sundays allow us to approach a topic in a sacred way, as a call to transformation and growth in worship. The rest of the week allows us to approach more academically, in a factual way.

I preach on Sunday, we teach that next week, we engage in Social Justice soon afterwards. Topics are not done for the sake of talking, but as part of a comprehensive whole.

- **Incorporating music, the arts, and creativity into congregational life:**

I love using music and the arts as a part of congregational life. Music and art are sacred, and they belong in the church.



I work with my music staff to develop musical programming that illuminates the sermon topic, or vice versa. I have worked with my current team to create a ukulele band, a string band, our house band, and a rock combo- all of whom perform during services at times.

We use art projects when building with the hands will illustrate a topic better. In my services we have built pocket mandalas, decorated pumpkins, drawn shared pictures, made sand paintings and sacred chalk designs, and created a massive string art sculpture, all during services.

- **Community building / facilitation skills / coffee hour and social times:**

I am available for community building and social times because I do believe that they are an important part of the life of the community. I don't rely on the church to provide me with personal social activities, however, and I do not typically attend congregants' events which are private or not open to every member of the congregation

- **Committee / Task force work:**

I am always available to teach, help to create a plan or vision, provide guidance, or create a systemic structure or structures. It is my job as minister to see how the parts of the church work together, and to help each committee work right up to the edges of their area of responsibility. I am not called to do the work for a group, but to help them to visualize how the work can be done, and to learn how to do what it is they want to do

- **Leadership development:**

I am called as minister to help find and develop leaders across all areas of church life, so that the power and shared wisdom of the church remains balanced.

It is my job to help committees understand institutional memory, and the need for mentorship for those who come behind them.

- **Long range planning / mission / vision / covenant:**

A part of my call is to help a congregation to create and shape a vision, and then to plan how they will achieve it practically. It is my job to be sure that each member understands that we do this not through coercion, but through

covenant- we journey together by mutual agreement, we decide together how we will be together, and we hold one another accountable to that as we move forward.

- **Membership and membership growth:**

A minister is responsible for helping a church determine a working, welcoming, and practically effective path to membership, and a simple clean path out of membership. Growth is not for growth's sake, but an organic happening, never inflated or artificially reduced for financial reasons. At each step of growth you stabilize the church and its programs so that you can continue to grow, rather than shooting up and collapsing in on yourself.

- **Anti-oppression work:**

All work is anti-oppression work. This lens is on every ministerial action, and should be on every action of the church.

- **Social justice / social action:**

Social justice and action are directly linked with the work of RE and the pulpit. We preach it, we teach it, we do it. We use art and music to support the preaching, teaching, and action.

Social justice is in our DNA.

- **Interfaith / community work:**

We are called to work in the greater world, and it is the minister's job to demonstrate that work. The organizations chosen as partners should be chosen in collaboration with the congregation.

- **Denominational activities:**

It is the role of all churches and all ministers in our Association to be connected to and active in the Association. It exists to help us, and in return we share our knowledge and learnings with the greater whole.

- **Stewardship:**

The role of the minister is to make stewardship a normal part of church function- we learn to be generous because it is a part of our culture. We handle our bills responsibly because that is what responsible people do whenever possible

I believe in year round stewardship, also when possible, removing the pledge drive and making pledge and bill-paying a normal part of church life. At home not one of us requires costumes and dancing unicorns and signs and banners to remind us to pay the rent- this is 2022; let us focus on using online bill pay and going onward without spending huge amounts of church time handling the administrative side of fundraising and pledging. Talk about generosity as a way of life, don't use the church as a way to tell a captive audience that they need to give money. Everyone is capable of understanding that it is their church, and like their home it has bills.

I believe that it is the job of the minister to ensure that the financial affairs and stewardship of a congregation follow best practices and remain transparent. The minister must be informed about pledge levels (in order to better craft appropriate sermons and liturgy related to these areas as needed). Individual committee/circle/department budgets are best created by the committee or circle itself. I am flexible about the degree of involvement in stewardship, and will work well with multiple approaches- I am not strongly invested (outside of adhering to best practices) in any one approach.

At LCUUC I was able, with the support of an amazing Stewardship team, to lead the congregation to effective year round stewardship in my 3rd year. While I was there we had six years of balanced budgets and operating in the black, after 15 years of operating in the red.

In my current, much larger congregation, we are in our first year of year-round stewardship. We have added brunches and friendly gatherings to the process, in an effort to foster more congregational interaction.

- **Finances:**

The minister is called to make sure that the financial policies of the church are sound and healthy and that the Finance Committee is provided with all the help and guidance they need to make sound fiscal decisions for the church and to advise the Board and the congregation well. It is not the job of the minister to

force or coerce the church into any particular financial position, but to provide them with sound guidance and professional resources so that their decisions are well-informed.

### **How do you build trust with a congregation and individuals?**

You build trust by bringing your authentic self to the table over and over again. You listen. You accept the person or persons you meet as they are, without hidden agenda.

You do what you say you will do. You are clear about your intentions, your reasons, and your vision.

You honor the joys and concerns brought to you with confidentiality and love.

You keep before you always that this is the congregation of the people, and that their actions related to the church are not personally directed at you, but are a part of their own agency. You honor that agency by finding ways to help the congregation fulfill its vision.

You are there when needed.

### **Describe your theology and the role of the ministry in a congregation that has multiple theologies:**

I approach most things through constructive theology, and I am personally a Universalist Christian and mystic, inspired by Anglican liturgy and beliefs and by the Chassidic Jewish writings of the Ba'al Shem Tov. My belief is that the Divine is present in all things, and in all theologies, and that my responsibility is to appreciate and learn from any theology which might be presented to me.

My theology at its simplest is this- live so that others do not need to read your holy book or sources of wisdom. Live so that they can intuit your beliefs from observation of your life. Let your heart be the altar and keep the fire of commitment burning there. Cut away any hardness or coldness- let your heart be vulnerable. Love one another as you want to be loved.

My call in a congregation is to help each person to determine their own theology, and to allow them to explore how they feel they are called to live their values and beliefs in the world. Regardless of the theology, I can help them to explore what

they believe and how it is to be lived in order to be free from the weight of any wrong-doing in their own eyes.

### **What questions do you hope our congregations are asking themselves and discussing?**

How are we called to be the church in the world?

What does radical and extravagant welcome look like?

How can worship, music, education, and social justice work together to call us to transformative action in the church and in the world?

How will our minister call us to heal the world?

How will our minister call us to heal and nurture ourselves?

### **How do you give and receive feedback?**

In many ways. Directly when possible. In writing when it is complex or when specifics are important. Immediately if needed. Supportively always. Honestly at all times, and tactfully unless it is impossible in the face of necessary honesty.

I take feedback in almost any form, and deeply appreciate it. I am comfortable with honest and constructive feedback in any form.

### **How do you suggest your ministry with the congregation is evaluated?**

Yearly, using an agreed upon metric which covers the areas agreed on as important or necessary, for the formal evaluation.

Daily/weekly/instant feedback is also always needed and welcomed.

Problems should never be a surprise- just as when I evaluate staff, I will never surprise them. Any issue large enough to go on an evaluation should NEVER be unmentioned until an eval. It should be discussed at the time, and ideas shared on how the issue should and will be corrected, if needed- or a decision reached about why the issue should not be corrected, and the proper involved people brought into the discussion about what is going on. Either way, the evaluation should reflect when the minister or staff member was told about the possible issue, what the remedies were agreed to be, and any progress or lack of progress towards those remedies noted.

### **What do you hope for the future of Unitarian Universalism?**

I hope that UUism can be a church without walls- moving out into the world to transform things for the better.

### **What else would you like to say about your ministry and ministry skills?**

I am a strong and gifted preacher, especially noted for my ability to present complex ideas in clear and novel ways. My children's stories are often self-authored, and have in the past moved some adults in the congregation to come forward to sit with the children during story time.

I have a sense of humor, and use it carefully to illuminate ideas, and explore truths (and am not above quoting Monty Python, Douglas Adams or Terry Pratchett). I believe in both radical inclusion and radical hospitality- we are all the host and the hosted, the giver and the taker. I believe in general that we are not the falling angel nor the rising ape, but something beautiful in between.

As a former nurse executive, I specialized in systems creation, policy and procedure creation, fund raising, and staff recruitment and retention. I am skilled at doing this work, and this has been reflected in my former congregation where pledging raised about \$90,000 in 5 years, and a Capital Campaign within that time raised over \$250,000 to add a new boiler, remodel the entry, add large windows to the building, completely redo the shingles and outer walls, and add new carpeting to the whole church.

We also were able, through in congregation donors, to remodel the sanctuary, build a new gender neutral bathroom, add a new large organ and organ speakers, add a 6' X 4' stained glass feature to the chancel, remodel the minister's office and add a new door and window, add a music office, and create a new sound booth. In the yard we added a lovely permanent fire pit and roofed wood rack, 6 heavy wood benches and re-landscaped the memorial garden- all of this without spending a cent of the church budget or pledge income. In my current congregation we have just finished raising \$400,000 to totally recreate our kitchen, turning it into a commercial kitchen, and we have added a new sound system.

## **Personal**

### **What should a congregation know about your family situation?**

I live with my beloved friends Nancy and Doug. I have 3 rotten cats and a lovely personal support system.

### **What should a congregation know about your health?**

I wear two hearing aids which you will never notice but which are very cool! I am medically stable and controlled, though I do have an auto-immune disorder called Lupus Anti-coagulant syndrome. It doesn't cause any real issues, though I do bruise easily, so kickboxing is a no for me.

### **How do you take care of yourself so that the congregation does not have to?**

I have a wonderful circle of friends near and far. I am a selling artist and writer in my spare time, and have quite a fun fan base for my writing. I belong to a group of religious practitioners who commit to praying daily and who meet weekly for prayer, fellowship, and worship on Sunday nights. I also belong to my local minister's support cluster.

### **How long do you hope your next ministry lasts? What's the minimum commitment you would make?**

Most UU ministries last 7 years, which is what I would try for at minimum in a called setting. I am currently excited by the idea of finding a great fit, no matter if it is called, interim, or developmental

## **Additional Information**

I love to laugh. In my spare time I write funny things about my very odd cat, and my last cat book made it onto the Amazon best seller list for a few weeks. I believe that humor is holy, and that sometimes it is the only thing that gets us through.