

Minister's Report
KUUF Annual Meeting
June 11, 2023
Submitted by Stacy Craig

Reflection: A Look Back at Where We've Been

In summer 2022, I reached out to Phil Lund at the Mid America UUA office to inquire about ministerial opportunities. He gave me a list of fellowships and after some internet research, I called the one that felt like the best fit, the Keweenaw UU Fellowship. I learned about the Dream Team model of ministry under development and my enthusiasm grew. KUUF's board asked what could I contribute that would complement this model. In addition to leading worship, we brainstormed how my training in the six areas of Unitarian Universalism ministry could serve the fellowship. These areas include:

- Worship and Rites of Passage
- Pastoral Care and Presence
- Lifespan Spiritual Development
- Social Justice in the Public Square
- Administration
- Serves the Larger UU Faith
- Leads Faith into the Future

In conversation with the Board, we explored how a remote, parttime minister could contribute to KUUF's mission in these various areas. There was optimism and resonance, but also a desire not to take on too much given that there are very few precedents for this model of ministry. I signed a contract for quarter-time ministry from Sept. 2022 – Aug. 2023, that includes being in person one weekend/ month and working remotely throughout the month. Offering or supporting UU specific rituals and ceremonies, partnering in pastoral care, delivering COVID-conscious lifespan faith development programs, connecting the fellowship with UU resources and movements, and supporting the Dream Team and Worship Committee are part of the expectations of this contract. Here is a summary of what transpired in the past 10 months:

- Worship and Rites of Passage
 - Planned and delivered 9 worship services in person and 1 online service, including UU Ceremonies of Water Service, Service of the Ancestors, Christmas Day Service (online), Sacred Season of Activism (Earth Day focused services), Flower Communion, and New Member Ceremony. Planning underway for Child Dedication service in August.
 - Attended all Worship Committee meetings
 - Supported Dream Team members with coordination and communication around themes and special services, attended their services and forums when able, and helped coordinate tech check ins before services
- Lifespan faith development and pastoral care
 - Coordinated small group programs and opportunities that touch on multiple areas of ministry including pastoral care, lifespan spiritual development, and facilitating UU faith connections:

- Soul Matters Sharing Circles is dedicated to adult spiritual development, but also provide safe spaces for peer to peer sharing and support related to pastoral care and presence. Two groups (one in person and one online) are held each month.
 - All About Love Book Group provided opportunities to explore ideas and definitions about love, reflect on our own journeys with being loved and loving, as well as discuss what love as the center of governance means as it relates to the upcoming bylaws revisions in Article II of the Unitarian Universalist Association.
 - All Ages Outdoor Religious Education events, including The Night Tree in December and making/walking the spiral of greens in January provided multigenerational engagement and spiritual practices in spaces that were at lower risk for COVID.
 - Holding small group dinners in coordination with Pastoral Care Staff, Heidi Bresnahan, to help facilitate connection, build relationships, and share in the holiest of communions, the potluck.
- Social justice and the public square engagement required some creativity to do remotely. Highlights include:
 - Developing a relationship with the Daily Mining Gazette to provide a monthly article for the Faith pages
 - Presenting over ZOOM at the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition annual conference
 - Attending Pride in Houghton and other community events when they coincide with in person visits
- Administration is often ‘behind the scenes’ and has included
 - Sharing best practices, research, and perspectives regarding leadership, philanthropy, and new models of ministry with the KUUF board in monthly reports
 - Participating in stewardship initiatives as appropriate, such as offering an ‘auction sermon’ at the annual fundraiser
 - Meeting 1:1 with the Board president each month
 - Connecting and clarifying resources and opportunities with broader UU community, such as co-presenting on Dream Team model of ministry at Mid America UUA conference on part time ministry in May 2023.
 - Coordinating with various committees and individuals around ideas and services

Overall, I’m a bit in awe of how dedicated KUUF volunteers are, and I attribute the accomplishments of this model to the partnership and support of those committees and individuals!! Some of the personal challenges of this past year include trying to balance multiple ministry positions and their various deadlines, the carbon footprint of travel, requirements of being a newly Fellowshiped minister, and challenges to caring for family while traveling. Sometimes it is a stretch, but it is working, better than I imagined, and I’m willing to continue with KUUF should the fellowship want to extend my contract.

What’s to come...

Each month, I provide a summary such as the one below to the KUUF board so there is transparency in what I’m planning, how I am spending my KUUF hours, and opportunities for direction/feedback:

- June 19-25 attending UUMA Ministry Days and UUA General Assembly (virtually)

- July Houghton Travel (Saturday, July 1 – Monday, July 3)
 - Coordinating outdoor service for July 2 at Chutes and Ladders Pavilion
 - Enneagram Learning Community Facilitation
 - 1:1 Pastoral Care Visits
 - Outdoor hike/gathering (details TBD)
 - Office Hours
- Reading/Study Week: July 21-28 (on call for emergencies only)
- August Houghton Travel (Saturday, Aug. 5-Tuesday, Aug. 8)
 - Final in-person Houghton service and visit under existing 1-year contract.
 - Worship service with child dedication ceremony
 - In conjunction with Worship Committee, coordinating event for ministry team, staff, and volunteers to celebrate and commemorate unique ministry partnership's 1-year anniversary
 - Outdoor religious education program focused on young children in conjunction with RE Committee
 - 1:1 Pastoral Care visits
- Vacation: Aug. 20-25 (camping in remote area--unavailable at this time)

Updates from the Unitarian Universalist Association

Congregational Polity is a specific form of church governance, organized at the level of the individual church or congregation where the highest level of decision-making happens within the church, not within an ecclesiastical body (such as bishops, presbyters or district staff). In addition to Unitarian Universalism, United Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, Baptist and Reformed Judaism all have some version of congregational polity. The **Unitarian Universalist Association** (UUA) is the U.S. national, nonprofit organization which is funded by congregations to provide support, solidarity, and resources that come back to congregations and that amplify what an individual congregation can do. Each year, delegates from UU fellowships and congregations represent their community by voting and participating at the national gathering of the UUA called **General Assembly** (GA). ****This year, KUUF is eligible to send 2 delegates. Both spots are still open.****

Three big votes are happening at GA this year (June 21-25, virtual or in person in Pittsburg, PA)

- President of the UUA
- Divestment from fossil fuels (KUUF helped get this issue on the agenda by signing a petition in Sept. 2022)
- Bylaws revision of Article II

As a noncreedal, living tradition, UU reflects on and adapts how it articulates its purpose. **Article II** is the section of bylaws that includes *principles and sources* which was last revised in the 1980s. Calls to add an eighth principle of antiracism and other suggested revisions to the principles and sources prompted the UUA to commission a study group to review Article II. The proposed revisions reflect years of study and feedback, which have resulted in a 26-page Study Report:

<https://www.uua.org/files/2023-02/article-II-study-report-2021-23.pdf> A graphic depicting the changes has been produced:



At this year's GA, we will be voting on these recommendations. If the resolution passes this year, it will be on the voting docket again in 2024, as a resolution must pass 2 years in a row for bylaws changes to occur.

How does this impact KUUF? Through the delegate process, we have the opportunity to help shape the national movement of Unitarian Universalism. How would you like your delegates to vote?

If Article II changes pass 2-years in a row, KUUF has the opportunity to accept and integrate this language locally and move towards a governance that explicitly centers love as an organizational structure.