

**Director of Lifespan Religious Education
Unitarian Universalist Society
Coralville, IA
March 15, 2021**

Our initial review of applications will begin April 5, 2021 so applicants are encouraged to submit their materials by April 4; applications submitted later may be accepted. All interviews will be conducted online.

Please send a letter of interest, resume, and supporting materials to the DLRE Search Team at dlresearch@uusic.org. If you have questions about the position, please email Rev. Diana Smith at minister@uusic.org.

Position is Full-time; Salaried, Exempt | Start date Summer 2021

UUS is committed to following [UUA guidelines](#) for our size (Midsize II) and geindex (2). Level of experience and LREDA credentialing will affect salary. UUS provides benefits in accordance with UUA recommendations (see end of posting for details).

The Unitarian Universalist Society (UUS) seeks a Director of Lifespan Religious Education (DLRE) for our vibrant, engaged congregation of about 300 adult members and over 100 children and youth. The congregation has been growing new roots since moving to a new, green sanctuary on 8 acres of woodland in 2017. This position offers an opportunity to help our congregation re-envision our current religious education programs to create a more vibrant faith formation program that includes **lifespan faith development, family ministry and multigenerational programming**. We are looking for experienced candidates who can build on what continues to serve us well, adapt or let go of what is no longer working, and imagine with us to **envision and implement innovations** and changes that will allow us to thrive into the future. A year ago, toward the end of a two-year “Head-Heart-Mind” pilot RE program, UUS formally began comprehensive faith formation re-visioning. After re-visioning was delayed by the pandemic we’ve begun conversations again this winter/spring and look forward to continuing this work with our new DLRE, perhaps drawing on the experience of an interim DRE consultant.

Pre-pandemic, the religious education program included Sunday morning interactive, age-cohort classes for children, weekly or monthly youth groups, OWL, camp-based classes, adult faith formation programming offered by the DLRE in collaboration with other staff or by congregation members, and monthly all ages worship services. During the pandemic, we have successfully offered take home/mailed RE at home packets, monthly drive- or walk-through multigenerational activities, youth groups with another congregation, parent and caregiver

groups, monthly all ages worship services, and adult faith formation programming (the DLRE-led programs have focused on anti-racism work).

The DLRE will be the staff member with primary responsibility for developing spiritual and faith development programming for children, youth, adults, and families. The DLRE will collaborate with the minister, the Director of Congregational Life, and other staff to foster multigenerational engagement and deepen UU identity and values through age-group classes and multigenerational opportunities in worship and anti-racism, social, and environmental justice work.

The DLRE is supported by and supervises a quarter-time RE Assistant and Childcare Assistants (nursery or classroom). The DLRE will work closely with the Minister, who is also head of staff for UUS.

Essential Functions

- Collaborate with the Minister, Staff, Board of Trustees, and volunteers to establish and administer lifespan faith formation programs that promote, fulfill, and expand the Society's mission.
- Develop the necessary teams or task forces needed to carry out lifespan faith formation at UUS.
- Develop, lead, and manage procedures and processes to provide childcare and educational opportunities for children, youth, and adults at worship services and beyond. Administer programs for children and youth, including planning, ongoing evaluation, volunteer management (recruiting, orienting, supervising), and coordinating materials. Help administer programs for adults in order to explore topics such as spirituality, UU principles, and living our faith.
- Collaborate with the minister, worship associates, and other participants to develop and co-lead all ages worship services, stories/times for all ages, rites of passage for children and youth, and other aspects of the weekly worship service. Recruit, supervise and support the RE Assistant, paid childcare staff, and volunteers.
- Provide support for families through activities that connect families, and strengthen at-home faith development, particularly for children and youth.
- Develop and implement age-specific or multigenerational offerings that involve direct experience in nurturing and honoring the land, advocating or volunteering for social and racial justice, making music, fostering relationships, and creating meaning. Coordinate with other UUS committees/organizations/staff to plan and carry out church based events such as family walks on our trails, care for the land and social justice projects.

- Promote the faith formation opportunities of UUS both internally and externally. Work closely and collaboratively with staff and volunteers to communicate and share relevant faith formation information with members and friends.
- Participate actively in ongoing professional development through reflective reading, membership in the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA), and participation in related online, regional, and national workshops and meetings.

Education and Experience

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent in education, child development, community development, social work or ministry related field preferred.
- Liberal Religious Educators Association credentialing, progress toward credentialing, or interest in engaging in credentialing.
- Knowledge of and commitment to liberal religion generally, and willingness to learn more about Unitarian Universalist principles, history, traditions, and current social justice concerns.
- Understanding of theories of learning and religious traditions. Interest in and commitment to the processes by which children and adults learn and grow.
- Program management or supervisory experience in a church, educational institution, other volunteer-management, or comparable setting. Strong leadership, planning, and program implementation skills.
- Strong writing, speaking, and other communication skills. Strong computer and digital communication skills.
- Strong interpersonal skills including personal warmth, approachability, effective listening, and compassion.
- Training in and understanding of anti-racism education and action within congregations and communities.
- The ability to comfortably engage with members and visitors of all ages and identities

Core Competencies

- **Mission Ownership:** Demonstrates understanding and full support of the mission, vision, values and beliefs of UUS. Selects and teaches curricula in a manner consistent with UUS's mission, values, and beliefs. Work professionally and in accordance with Unitarian Universalist Principles, the Society's Mission and Vision statements, and the Society's Policies and Bylaws.
- **Compassion and Care:** Maintains high standards of confidentiality and discretion. Exudes a natural sense of care for the well-being of others; responds with empathy to the life circumstances of others; demonstrates appropriate and bounded expressions of care. They will demonstrate the skills and temperament to provide care to children,

youth, and adults of all abilities along with an open heart and open mind toward families of all types, however they define themselves.

- **Educational Skills, Creativity, and Innovation:** Has training in child and human development, understands and keeps current on trends and best practices in religious education and lifespan faith development, as well as anti-racism and social justice, and communicates these to teachers, ministers, and congregational leaders. Generates new ideas for programs; makes new connections among existing ideas to create fresh approaches; adapts lessons or activities to adjust to the skill levels and abilities of participants; learns from mistakes; has good judgment about which creative ideas and suggestions will work.
- **Interpersonal Skills:** Demonstrates the ability to work with others and a participatory style for achieving goals. Engages in thoughtful listening; holds others accountable in a spirit of love. Demonstrates passion for religious education, children, and families; the ability to inspire others and to be self-motivated, as well as work in a staff team. Productively engages and resolves interpersonal conflict; overcomes personal bias to hear the ideas and concerns of another; can describe the perspective of another, even when he/she/they disagrees. Able to accept constructive criticism. Interacts positively with visitors, attendees, members, church leadership, staff, and others.
- **Communication Skills:** Is able to deliver a message clearly in a variety of settings; demonstrates communication styles appropriate to the situation at hand; adjusts the message, without losing the essence of the message, depending upon the circumstances and the listener. Is able to write clearly and succinctly; able to use computer programs relevant to the position (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Google Docs) as well as web-based training materials, able to provide communications in a timely manner.
- **Developing and Motivating Others:** Inspires trust and confidence from teachers, team members, parents and children. Creates a climate in which volunteers and youth helpers want to do their best; empowers volunteers and youth helpers; invites input and sharing in decision-making; makes volunteers and youth helpers feel that their contributions are important. Provides volunteers and youth helpers with challenging and stretching tasks; holds frequent developmental discussions; is aware of the developmental aspirations of volunteers and youth helpers; builds confidence and morale. Creates a fun and dynamic environment.
- **Management Skills:** Manages work time well without overworking; marshals resources (people, funding, materials) to get projects completed on time and successfully; keeps accurate records and a functional filing system, as well as successfully managing an annual budget.
- **Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Awareness and Skills:** Knowing that this work is always in-progress, continually develops and maintains awareness of equity and inclusion; can

apply a lens of power and privilege to issues that arise in their work with the congregation; demonstrates accountable engagement with diverse spiritual traditions and communities and is mindful of issues related to cultural misappropriation in their work with the congregation; ensures that processes and practices are adaptable to different needs, abilities, and ways of working, seeking support for this as appropriate. Practices personal stress reduction and spiritual growth work; works with a religious education mentor and actively seeks collegial connections.

Job Conditions

Our building is currently closed with staff working primarily from home. We anticipate that after the building re-opens, the DLRE will work in the UUS office during the week with work from home also possible. Evening and weekend hours are often required with one Sunday off per month. This job is multifaceted and sometimes requires work under time pressure. However, the UUS staff culture emphasizes self-care and not over-working.

UUS Full-Time Benefits

More details available upon request.

- 2-4 weeks of vacation depending on years of service.
- 1 week of personal leave.
- 2 weeks of study leave.
- 9 holidays.
- Sick leave (6 hours per month, can accumulate and carry over up to 360 hours).
- 100% employee/75% family of the UUA Bronze health plan or the employee can apply that amount toward the Silver or Gold plans.
- 80% of the employee/50% family premium for UUA dental plan.
- 100% of the cost of UUA Long-term Disability insurance and term life insurance.
- UUS pays 10% of salary towards the UUA retirement plan once it meets qualifications.
- Professional expenses currently \$2400 per year.
- Sabbatical eligibility after 7 years of service.
- Paid parental leave available after 12 months of service. Bereavement leave available.

ABOUT OUR CONGREGATION

We are a welcoming spiritually diverse home. We act on our values to honor the Earth, advocate for racial and social justice, foster deep connections and embrace the ongoing quest for meaning. Our members are deeply committed to UUS and to one another. We exhibit a

strong culture of social justice action, liberal thinking, radical hospitality and sustainability efforts that is reflected in our members' activities in the congregation and in the greater community. We are diverse and pluralistic regarding our philosophical and theological beliefs and committed to inquiry and to learning from one another.

We trace our origins back to the founding of a small Unitarian congregation in 1841 in Iowa City. In 1888 Iowa City's Unitarian and Universalist churches merged. In 2015 we purchased eight acres of land in neighboring Coralville and moved to an awe-inspiring new Green Sanctuary certified church building in 2017. In 2019 there were 121 children and youth registered for RE and 103 in 2020. We have about 300 adult members.

ABOUT OUR LOCATION

The Iowa City/Coralville community, located in the rolling hills of eastern Iowa, includes value-driven academics, humanists, medical professionals, writers, students and serious readers of all ages, booksellers, librarians, teachers, farmers, artists, crafts persons and entrepreneurs. It is home to the University of Iowa, Kirkwood Community College, the University of Iowa Hospitals, Mercy Hospital, VA Health Care System, the Iowa Writers Workshop, world class research libraries, the Iowa Women's Archive, UI Senior College, the Oakdale correctional facility, and a significant number of people living below the poverty line.

With a population of 150,000, Johnson County is 76% white, 8% Asian, 7% Black and 6% Latino. Of those 25 and older, 60% hold a bachelor's degree or more. The unemployment rate is about 2%, median household income is just below \$60,000 but 28% of the population lives below the poverty line.

Our community is rich in the arts; home to the University of Iowa Writer's Workshop, multiple venues for live music and theater, the University Stanley Museum of Art, and many summer arts and music festivals. Outdoor recreation offerings include bike trails, local parks with pools, courts and hiking, the Iowa River, Lake Macbride and the Coralville Reservoir. The University provides Big Ten spectator sports including football, basketball, baseball, softball and field hockey. Iowa City frequently ranks among the best places to live because of the quality of life, health care, safety, public schools, arts and cost of living.

Iowa City has recently been ranked #2 of Best Places to Live (Livability), #19 of Best Places to Live (Money Magazine), #1 among Best Places to Retire (Money Magazine), #3 Best Place to Live in America (Outside Magazine); #5 of Best College Towns in America (Business Insider); #4 Best Place to Retire in the U.S. (NBC's Today Show), #5 of America's Healthiest Cities (24/7 Wall Street), and #7 of Top Cheap and Charming Places to Retire (MSN Money). Coralville has been named one of the Top Ten Places to Live for Under \$40,000 a Year (AARP Magazine). North

Liberty has been rated #36 among America's Best Places to Live (USA Today) and #75 of Best Places to Live (Money Magazine).