

## RE Council Minutes December 15, 2017

**Attendees: Geri Knoebel, Mia Noren, Carol Cowan, Stirling Crow, Desiree Spielman, Benita Terrell, Nicia Rae. Callie Cone**

**Review of Minutes: November 2017 Minutes approved.**

Appreciation of Volunteer: We discussed giving a letter of appreciation to Megan and Mira for assisting with camp, Maker-space, and assisting with youth-trip planning. She's taught for years.

### Discussion

### RE Council Meeting Dates

- January 21, 2018 – no meeting
- February 18, 2018
- March 18, 2018
- April 15, 2018
- May 20, 2018
- June 17, 2018
- July 22, 2018
- August 19, 2018
- September 16, 2018
- October 21, 2018
- November 18, 2018
- December 16, 2018
- January 20, 2019 – no meeting

## Posting for YPC (Youth Programs Coordinator)

### Youth Programs Coordinator (YPC)

#### POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

(Part-time: 10 hours per week)

December 15, 2017

**First Unitarian Church seeks to fill the position of Youth Programs Coordinator. Please consider the job description below.**

**Position objective:** The role of the Youth Programs Coordinator is to develop and provide continuity in youth programming. The scope of this position includes a primary focus on participation in programming for youth in grades 6-12, or the equivalent.

The YPC supports the purpose and policies of First Unitarian, Albuquerque, and its religious education ministry.

The YPC workweek is 10 hours, including most Sundays.

### **Qualifications:**

- Professional or volunteer experience working with mid-high and high school aged youth in a religious or related setting. Good understanding of youth and adolescent development.
- Strong organizational and verbal and written communication skills including the ability to text and utilize existing and new media and social media.
- Must be able to work well in teams and with youth and adults who hold a variety of theological positions, and to possess relationship-building skills. Must understand and be able to articulate Unitarian Universalist values. An active member of First Unitarian preferred.
- A leader, who possesses the ability to be a consistent, positive and compassionate role model and mentor who maintains appropriate relationship boundaries.
- Become aware of and be in compliance with the Code of Ethics for adults working with youth in the UUA. (see attached)
- Demonstrate a full understanding of the concept of safe church as outlined in First Unitarian's policy manual, Section 6.0. <http://uuabq.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Policy-Manual-2017-08-23-w-coorections-for-Jane-1.pdf>
- Must be at least 25 years of age. A background check will be required for employment in this position.
- Possess a valid driver's license, insured, and with a good driving record. An MVD records check is required.
- Experience with special needs youth a plus.

### **Primary Duties:**

#### **General:**

- Ongoing learning and training is an expected part of this position.
- Schedule and attend regular planning and team building meetings with the Youth Advisors, ideally once per month.
- Support the visibility of youth programming in the congregation.
- Coach, mentor, and connect with individuals and families in ways that deepen and empower connections.
- Plan and participate in youth community-building events, immersion experiences, and programmatic events. Maintain connections between the youth groups.
- Help to form and participate in a Youth Adult Council (YAC) planning committee, which works to implement engaging programming. Programming should reflect and include components from the Web of Youth Ministry: Faith Exploration, Identity Formation, Covenantal Leadership, Multigenerational Relationships, Spiritual Development, Beloved Community, and Justice Making.
- Maintain awareness of district and cluster events and conferences, publicizing as needed. Participate as a sponsor or chaperone when reasonable and possible. Attend at least one youth con annually with youth group.
- Participate in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Coming of Age service and the 12<sup>th</sup> grade Bridging service each spring.

#### **Communication:**

- Develop a communication plan with the DRE, and maintain regular updates on events, classes, volunteers, and youth, and communication about any program needs.
- Maintain regular communication with other RE staff.

- Schedule weekly advisors for senior-high and mid-high groups. Maintain the schedule two months in advance, including advisors for each meeting, topics, and activities, and other information as appropriate. Distribute schedule.
- Help to maintain good contact information for youth and their families.
- Help to develop and maintain good systems of communication with youth and their families.

**With DRE:**

- Assist with recruitment and supervision of youth volunteers and advisors.
- Attend periodic RE Council meetings, when applicable.
- Participate in monthly First Unitarian staff meetings when able, and scheduled staff retreats.
- Meet with the DRE regarding the results of the work of YAC, and work together to implement their suggestions.

Compensation: This is an hourly position at a rate of \$10.15 per hour for 10 hours each week.

To apply:

- Please send a letter of interest and resume via email only to: [dre@uuabq.org](mailto:dre@uuabq.org).
- Please no phone calls or faxes.
- Application deadline: December 31, 2017
- Start date: Mid-January, 2018

**CODE OF ETHICS**

<https://www.uua.org/safe/children/appendices/23521.shtml>

**For Adults and Older Youth Working with Children and Youth**

Adults and older youth who are in leadership roles are in a position of stewardship and play a key role in fostering spiritual development of both individuals and the community. It is, therefore, especially important that those in leadership positions be well qualified to provide the special nurture, care, and support that will enable children and youth to develop a positive sense of self and a spirit of independence and responsibility.

The relationship between youth and their leaders must be one of mutual respect if positive potential is to be realized. There are no more important areas of growth than those of self-worth and the development of a healthy identity as a sexual being. Adults play a key role in assisting children and youth in these areas of growth. Wisdom dictates that children, youth, and adults suffer damaging effects when leaders become sexually involved with young persons in their care; therefore leaders will refrain from engaging in sexual, seductive, or erotic behavior with children and youth. Neither shall they sexually harass or engage in behavior with youth that constitutes verbal, emotional or physical abuse.

Leaders shall be informed of the code of ethics and agree to it before assuming their role. In cases of violation of this code, appropriate action will be taken.

I have read and understand the above statements of position, expectations, and actions.

Name (printed):

Name (signed):                      Date:

## **Youth Group Town Hall**

- This happened on 12/10/2017.
- This was a town hall meeting to discuss the overall status of the youth program

Things to consider doing right away:

- Have a youth-adult committed that plans out what they will do for the next 3 months.
- They would like to have an RE-only calendar (separate from the church calendar).
- They would like to have a monthly newsletter about the upcoming events in RE.

We did have an RE Google calendar. But no one was really in charge of that.

Mia will work with the new Youth Programs Coordinator will work to address the recommendations and get the program back on track.

Overall it was a successful meeting with a lot of information that was changed.

Portfolios

- Benita is back to help organize and build the Program Evaluation portfolio.
- Stirling will be stepping down as Recruitment chair in March due to his joining the board in February. He would like to stay on as Secretary and attend RE Council meetings to be aware of what is happening while being on the Board. He could be an advocate for RE.
- Social Justice Portfolio? Should we have a chair position for this. This position would be focused on the elementary students. Mia is recommending Kristen Ackerson-Wilson. Mia has reached out to her and she is interested. Mia and Geri will talk further to formalize this position and report back.

## **Chair Reports**

### **Geri Knoebel - RE Council Chair**

1. The RE Council will not be meeting in January because of conflicts with OWL. Our next meeting is February 18<sup>th</sup>.
2. Congregation conversations have started about different capital project ideas to honor our recently retired Senior Minister, Christine Robinson. This past Sunday was the first of three listening sessions being held to get feedback on three capital projects ideas which are:
  1. Remodel the Social Hall including the kitchen and adjacent areas. The need for a safe play area for kids was pointed out. (Now the kids 'play area is on the stage') (\$1M)
  2. Replace the Arnold/ Wesson, LaAmikoj meeting room wing and rebuild it larger (\$2M)
  3. Finish Sanctuary Project –chapel, music room and family room (\$1.5M)

The results of the listening sessions will be taken to the January 28th Annual Meeting and the Congregation for permission to do a professional estimate and design concepts.

1. We will be continuing last month's discussion about the Council Portfolios structure and adding a Social Justice Portfolio. I have extracted the portfolio descriptions and the notes from our November meeting minutes. This is a separate document entitled "RE Council Portfolio Review.
2. The RE Youth Group Town Hall was held December 10<sup>th</sup> and RE youth, parents, staff, and Council members participated in the discussions. Valuable insights were shared and are being evaluated. Some themes in the discussions included:
  1. Need to identify preferred communication methods and develop clear and consistent ways to communicate with participants
  2. Develop a RE calendar so that all level of activities are posted in one place (children, youth, parents, Council)
  3. Form Youth Advisors group to get together outside of training
  4. Alternate education and physical activity; be aware of learning styles
  5. Mid-high – restart sleepovers (didn't have last year because of security issues which have now been resolved);
  6. HS – send out readings for discussion ahead of time; have audio version
  7. November/ December – have event that both mid-high and HS work on together (Groundhog Day!!)
  8. Like social justice service like Roadrunner, idea "blessing bags"; want more social time; make sacred space.

### **Mia Noren, DRE**

1. I have been communicating about and hosting food banks for youth & their families- Last one on Dec 9 had four adults and four youth. This is part of picking up the responsibilities that Colin had.
2. RE Town Hall meeting for youth, parents & advisers was success! Many good ideas for re-visioning youth programming. About seven youth, three youth advisers, and 4 parents, plus Angela and I, attended.
3. Also have revised Youth Programs Coordinator job description to better fit the duties, hours & pay allotted.
4. Mia's 1<sup>st</sup> Messenger front page article in January Messenger. Put in a plug for teaching.
5. COA calendar finalized, & Lia Atherton added to team; hoping to provide more continuity in transition to HS Group.
6. OWL class calendar finalized, dates for new HS OWL finalized. Working with United Church of Christ on that.
7. Spring 2018 teacher recruitment underway. Trying to get four persons on each team, but will settle for three. Not much activity in the last couple of weeks. We still need a lot of people.
8. Had a cluster meeting with DRE from Los Alamos and new interim DRE from Santa Fe. Lots of good energy, and we are planning a southern cluster mid-hi retreat to take place in Santa Fe this March, probably 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>.

9. Mia and Geri would also like to add stipulations on the Youth Advisors so that their terms don't last longer than the term of their groups. For example, the term of a HS youth person is 4 years. We want to leave the stipulation in place but if that person wants to continue in that position they can under Mia's discretion.
10. In February and March we will need to meet in different room (because of OWL).
11. The Board approved the expenditure of movie night. The Social Justice council wants to pay for it.

## **Stirling Crow - Recruitment**

We still need a number of teachers. We discussed this. Stirling needs to send out specific emails to parents who have not volunteered. We haven't had any responses to the email that was sent out.

Mia will send an email to the current teachers to remind them that they need to sign up again. After we get responses Stirling, Alana, and Mia will work to target specific parents.

### **Sent to RE families by Stirling and Mia**

Hello First UU Parents,

My name is Stirling Crow and I'm on the (RE) Religious Education Council at First Unitarian. I'm working with Mia Noren (our RE Director) and Alana Rodriguez (our RE Administrative Assistant) to try and fill positions for volunteers we need for our upcoming Spring session.

If you haven't already volunteered within RE this past year, We're asking for assistance with at least one of the upcoming events before May. RE can only happen with the cooperative involvement of our parents, and that's why we request a commitment of 16 hours from our families in the registration packet that we all filled out at the beginning of the year. It takes a village to raise a child, and we need every parent to contribute in some form for the RE program to have a meaningful impact on our little ones.

There are lots of different ways to volunteer! We're always in need of "floaters" that can step in and help teach a class (for either the 9:30 or 11:00 classes) in the event that a teacher has an emergency and can't come on Sunday mornings. Keep in mind you'd never be alone in a classroom - there are always two of us in class at one time. Also, the time involvement for a floater is the time that you would otherwise spend in church!

It's also nice to have a number of people sign up to teach. That way we can have teams of four, and any given Sunday two of the people in the team are teaching the class while the other two are enjoying the service. You can sign up for the classes that work with and around your schedule! Preparation for teaching involves reading the lessons ahead of time (which usually takes 10 minutes). Our

RE Aide (Brie-Anne) prepares the materials and everything is set up before you arrive. Easy peasy! Also, just like the floater positions, you'd never be teaching alone. There will always be another adult in the room either leading the lesson or assisting you (if you are leading).

On a personal note I'd like to share how teaching has really made me feel at home here at First Unitarian. I've taught in the Pre-K and K-1 classes. Teaching has given me the chance to meet many other parents and also get to know their kiddos. There are times when the kids in the class can surprise you with their insight and their viewpoints during the lessons. We recently had a class where our 4th and 5th graders shared poems they wrote and one of the RE teachers was brought to tears by the depth and kindness found in those poems.

If you are interested (and I hope you are!), below are the links for signing up...

Teaching Sign-Up Link:

- <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0a45aba729aafd0-201617>

Floater Sign-Up Link:

- <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0a45aba729aafd0-fall1>

I need to mention that all staff and volunteers that work with children undergo a background check at the church's expense. It's a matter of filling out a short form and turning it in to an R.E. staff person. Thank you for taking the time to read this email! Please consider finding an opportunity to volunteer so we can make this upcoming RE Spring session a great one for us and for our kids. It's worth it, and the kids love it when we are involved in their spiritual growth and education. Please feel free to contact myself, Mia, or Alana if you have any questions!

## **Future Dates**

- Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup> – no RE; no 9:30 a service; Worship service at 11:00 am (childcare for those 4 and younger); no RE 5:00 PM (Christmas Pageant) and 7:00 PM
- Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup> – All Ages Service, no RE (childcare for those 4 and younger)
- Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup> – 9:30 Coming of Age starts; 10:00 am – 11:30 am Teacher Training, Orientation Day (for both parents and kids) for 4th and 5th grade OWL.
- January 13 - 15th - MLK Weekend, Con in Denver
- Sunday, January 14<sup>th</sup> – RE Spring Session begins
- Sunday, January 21<sup>st</sup> – No RE Council meeting; K-1 OWL Orientation (Parents and Kids) - 12:30 to 1:30
- Sunday, January 28th - Annual Meeting (starts at 2:00 PM) - there will be childcare for the annual meeting
- Sunday, February 4th - New Member brunch
- Tuesday, February 6th - High School OWL Orientation (Adults and high schoolers)
- Sunday, February 11th - First Night of High School OWL
- Sunday, February 18, 2018 – RE Council meeting
- Sunday, April 29th - Coming of Age Service