

Leaders Guide

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to serve this spiritual community as a leader. You will likely have questions on how to carry out your responsibilities and to help your team with the mechanics of your work. We hope this guide, along with the information on the UUCF website (uucf.org) will answer most of your questions.

This guide is intended to serve as a general overview of information every leader at UUCF needs. When you have a question, turn to this guide first. If you can't find the answer, turn to whomever is the immediate leader of your area of ministry. If you are a committee member, ask the committee chair. If you are a committee chair ask the lay minister or professional minister who oversees your committee. If you are a lay minister, speak to the minister who oversees your lay ministry.

Welcome

Thank you so much for making the choice to serve as a leader at UUCF. This congregation could not exist without the energy, passion and dedication of leaders like you.

In answering the call to leadership, you will be digging deep into a lived experience of UUCF's vision: Grow, Connect and Serve. Serving, you will certainly do. We trust this role will also help you connect more deeply with others on your team and in the community. And we hope your leadership role will help you grow spiritually as well.

As you serve, please remember that you are not alone. We, your ministers, and the lay ministers of the congregation, are here to support you. Please call on us whenever you need us. May this be a joyous journey!

With appreciation,

Rev. David Miller

Mission

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax is a progressive religious congregation founded in 1955 whose **mission is to transform ourselves, our community and the world through acts of love and justice.**

Vision

Our vision is to **Grow. Connect. Serve.**

- We grow as individuals and as a community through worship, service, play and caring for one another, thereby deepening our appreciation of the gifts of life and love.
- We connect to and care for our families, our congregation and our community.
- We serve our world through our work and commitment.

Questions for Personal Reflection for Leaders (and groups)

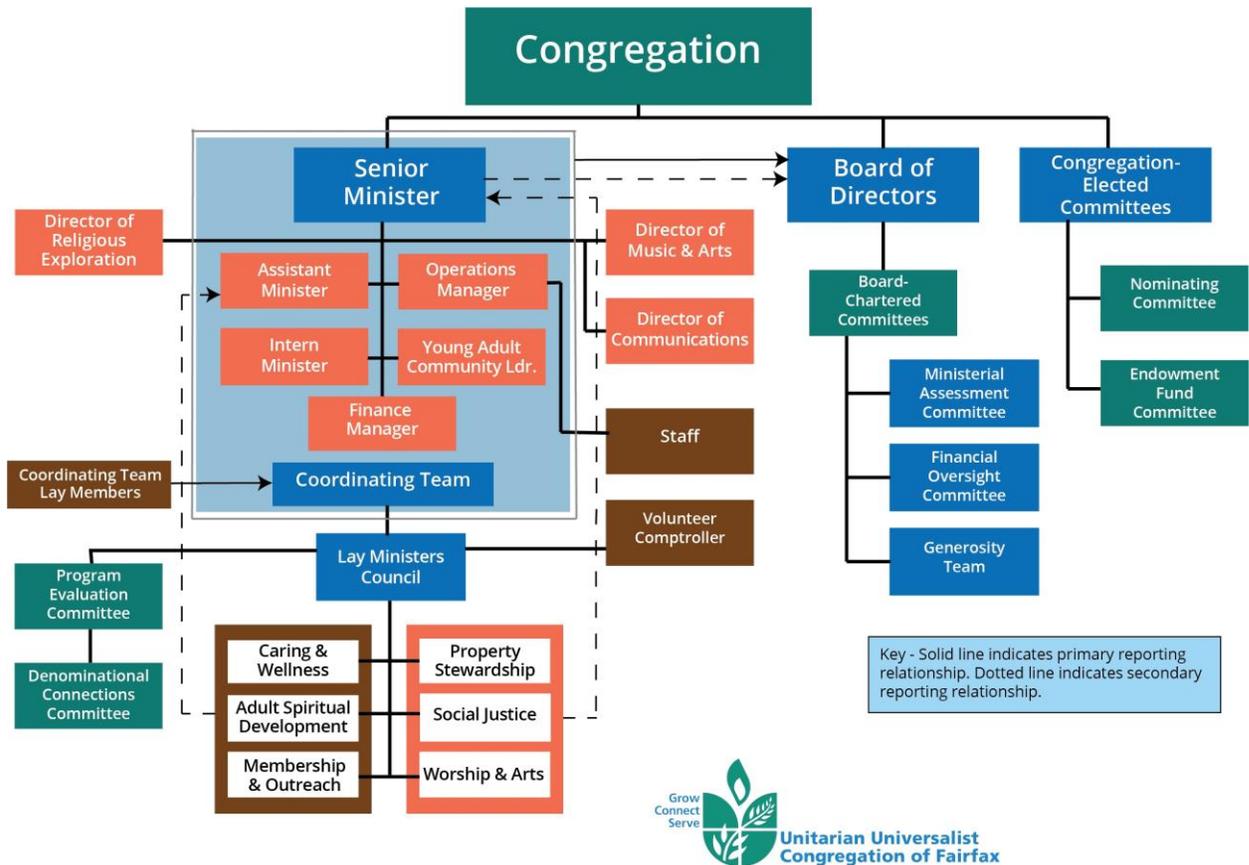
Reflection is a vital part of religious life. In our shared search for truth and meaning, it is important for us to reflect on the tasks we undertake at UUCF and how they relate to the mission of the congregation and our own growth and development. Below you will find a list of questions designed to assist you in that reflection. As leaders of the congregation, you are also a valuable part of its ministry, these questions are tools for you to assist in the growth and development of those who participate with you as you work together to transform ourselves, our community and the world through acts of love and justice.

- How often do I speak and how often do I listen?
- How do I understand the dynamics of privilege involved in our work? For example, am I coming from a place of doing “for” people or doing “with” people?
- Have I been challenged in this work, activity and/or event to move beyond the edges of my comfort, and if so, how, and if not, why?
- How has this work, activity and/or event had any impact on my sense of connection with things beyond myself or glimpsed something that feels holy or sacred however defined? What was that like?
- What about this work, activity and/or event reinforces my outlook/framework from which I think? What about it challenges it?
- Does this connect me to my deepest desire/inner voice/calling? If so, how; if not, why not?
- What has surprised me during the course of this work?
- Have I been changed in any way because of the work, activity and/or event I am doing?
- Does this work inspire me? If so, why; if not, why not?
- In what ways is the work, activity and/or event grounded in my religious beliefs and values?
- What story from my life and/or my faith tradition inspires or informs this work?

- Did I find joy in this work?
- Did I find hope in this work?

Where Do I Fit?

Below is the UUCF Organization Chart showing the relationships between committees, lay ministries, the Coordinating Team (CT) and the Board of Directors.



Major Responsibilities of a Leader

We hope you have had a chance to meet with the leader of your committee, the lay minister or the minister who will be providing guidance to you as you lead your team. It is useful to continue to meet with that leader to keep them informed of the work of your team and to coordinate your team's work with the efforts of other UUCF teams.

1. Controlling Documents

Charter

Does your team have a charter that describes your purpose, who you report to and any specifics on how you accomplish your goals? Does it have any standard operating procedures (SOP) or check sheets for doing specific tasks? It is useful to review these

documents annually with your team to keep them current and to use them as a way to educate your team on how to accomplish specific tasks.

Covenant

On June 2, 2019, the congregation voted at the Annual Meeting to adopt a Congregational Covenant of Right Relations. We suggest you share this covenant in all meetings and gatherings that you lead.

UUCF COVENANT OF RIGHT RELATIONS

We, the members and friends of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, seek to create an atmosphere of honesty, respect, trust, gratitude, forgiveness, acceptance, and loyalty within our congregation. Right relations are the foundation on which a safe and healthy congregation is based. To this end, we pledge to govern our actions and our speech by the spirit and letter of this covenant. We therefore promise to:

- Affirm and kindle the living spirit of which we are all a part.
- Listen with open hearts and open minds.
- Be present for each other in times of struggle and times of joy.
- Honor our commitments to ourselves and to each other.
- Give freely of our time, gifts, and financial support as we are able.
- Acknowledge, respect, and embrace our diverse experiences.
- Welcome, seek, and foster deeper connections through mutual care and inclusion.
- Be mindful of the impact of our interactions on others.
- Engage with one another directly, honestly, and respectfully.
- Acknowledge and accept our imperfections and begin again in love.

Group Covenants

Every member of every group arrives with their own unique expectations about what the group should be like. These expectations, whether large or small, can have a dramatic impact on whether the group is successful. Expectations of group members that are not expressed or not met can hold groups back.

That's why a group covenant is so important in building trust and community. It provides communication of standards and goals for everyone in the group, allowing members to have a shared vision and language, which leads to mutual accountability. A covenant not only helps clarify and unify members in their expectations, it also highlights the values and behaviors that are needed for a group to be successful.

Developing a Group Covenant

Because each small group is unique in its values and expectations, each small group's covenant will be unique. Based on Bill Donahue's book, "Leading Life-Changing Small

Groups," here are guidelines for developing a covenant.

- The covenant's values need to be generated by the group, not imposed by the leader. Get everyone's opinions and then give them time (maybe even as much as a month) to think about them before agreeing to them.
- Be sure that expectations are clear, not ambiguous or open to interpretation. A covenant should be in writing. Group covenants should always be in the form of "we" statements.
- Each person must affirm the covenant. Ask that everyone sign their names on the covenant to show their commitment.
- Covenants should be reaffirmed or reinterpreted on a periodic basis so that members are reminded and/or clarified about group expectations ... and can reaffirm their commitment to one another.
- Covenants should be created around logistics and values that support group goals and purposes. Logistics include how often the group will meet and where, attendance expectations and who will handle different needs. Values include confidentiality, authenticity, transparency, acceptance and invitation.

Sample Covenants

Sample #1

We value our time together as a group and therefore:

- Commit to attend the meetings.
- Start and stop meetings on time.

We value our privacy and therefore:

- Keep personal information strictly confidential.
- Share ideas outside the group only without attribution.

We value each other's contributions to our discussions and therefore:

- Encourage and allow all to contribute equally.
- Listen to all contributions.
- Try to use only "I" statements.
- Treat each other with respect, caring and kindness.
- Keep discussions on topic.

We value our values and therefore covenant to abide by them.

Sample #2

- We each have the right to pass.
- What is shared here stays here (confidentiality).
- We will share time equally.
- We will be attentive listeners and not interrupt each other.

- We will not use this group as a therapy session.
- We will respect diversity and value our differences.
- We will remain quiet until all have finished their reflections.
- We will value all questions.
- We will start and end on time.
- Anyone is free to take a time out from any of the exercises.

Sample #3

We, the members of this group, make the following covenant with one another:

- We will take responsibility for own spiritual development and respect the spiritual journeys of others.
- We will participate in this group for at least 6 months and attend regularly.
- We will honor each others' boundaries and our own.
- We will listen deeply to one another and give each person equal time.
- We will not disclose confidential information shared by other group members unless we have clear permission.
- We will commit to addressing and resolving conflicts in a respectful way.
- We will encourage others to share their concerns and express their wishes.

2. Obtaining a Meeting Space

You can get a room scheduled for your team, either on a continuing basis or as needed, by contacting Administrative Coordinator Mary Foster at uucf@uucf.org. There are some days of the week where meeting space is at a premium so work with Mary and your team to find the best date and time for your meetings. Most likely your meeting will be held in the Program Building. There is a listing on the main entry doors to the Program Building that shows what meeting is held in which room. Mary can also schedule general purpose rooms (the Sanctuary, the Chapel, the Library and the Commons fellowship area) if you have no A/V or special set up needs. If you have A/V or special set-up requests, you must fill out the Event Request Form, uucf.org/event-form. Please ensure that you ask for space as soon as you know you have a need for a room, as some spaces are in high demand.

Please leave the table and chairs as they were when you came in, return A/V equipment where you got it and turn out the lights. The doors leading out of the Program Building will automatically lock at a time set by the CT.

3. Coordinating Special Events

If your team or group wishes to hold a special event at UUCF, such as a film, musical performance, dinner or other social event, there are a few important steps to take. If it is to be a fundraiser, you must receive permission ahead of time from the CT. Reserve space using the Event Request Form (uucf.org/event-form) as soon as possible but at least 2 weeks before your event. If A/V can be arranged for your event, the cost is \$35 an hour.

4. Sending out communications on group events

If your team is holding an event that you wish to open to all of UUCF and need to advertise, please send your announcement information to the Communications Specialist Sarah Creel, communications@uucf.org. She will work with you to place your information in the Thursday morning weekly announcements and/or in the Order of Service. There are space limitations in the Order of Service, so you may have to have a small version of your announcement for that.

Announcements from the pulpit may be requested from the ministers. Time for announcements from the pulpit is limited, so not all requests can be accommodated. Pulpit announcements are limited to those that serve the mission of the congregation. Contact the ministers with your request for a pulpit announcement by the Wednesday before the service when you wish your announcement to occur. Please send them an email with the words to be spoken and keep it as brief as possible.

If your group wants to post a flyer around UUCF, please send a PDF of the flyer to Mary Lareau, mlareau@uucf.org, and Mary Foster, uucf@uucf.org, who will post your flyer in the appropriate bulletin boards around campus. Please do not post flyers on your own without sharing them with the staff listed above.

If your team has a "page" on the UUCF website, please review it occasionally to ensure that the information is up to date. If you need to revise your page, please contact Communications Director Mary Lareau, mlareau@uucf.org, for assistance. She can also help you with any major communications items such as brochures and logos. We ask that you contact Mary Lareau before using the UUCF logo on your materials. If you wish to invite surrounding UU congregations to an event your team is managing, you should contact Rev. Megan Foley (mfoley@uua.org), UUCF's primary UUA contact.

Several UUCF groups have Meetup accounts that enable UUCF to announce events to groups with specific interests. Groups that already have accounts have established Meetup administrators who can post group events. Those groups that don't already have Meetup accounts and wish to use Meetups to promote their events should contact Mary Lareau for assistance.

Patch is the local newspaper that allows us to advertise UUCF events to the surrounding community. Those wishing to place announcements in the Patch should contact Mary Lareau to ensure we do not duplicate announcements.

If your group wants to have a display in the Fellowship Area after services, please prepare your display and then put it up on one of the tables prior to the start of service. Please restrict the display size to one of the small 2'x4' tables to allow as many as possible to have space. If there are no tables available, please ask the staff person on duty to get you a table. Displays can be stored in the closet in the Partner Church Lounge when not in use. Please remove any outdated or unused displays. To maintain

quiet in the Commons during services, please do not set up displays during services. In the fall there is a "Get Connected Fair" where committees can have a display to show their work and to recruit new members.

5. Materials

If you need items copied, you may use the copy machines in the Program and Administration buildings. If you need other materials, please call the UUCF office and talk with a member of the staff about your specific needs.

6. Funds for expenses

Occasionally you will need to spend money to buy materials, services or food for events your team will manage. Please establish with your guiding leader if your team has a budget for its expenses. If someone on your team buys an item, they can be reimbursed by completing the online reimbursement form (uucf.org/reimbursement-forms). Receipts need to be submitted in a separate email. Track your team's expenses throughout the year and if you need additional funding, please talk with your guiding leader.

If your team is holding an event where funds will be collected (either ticket sales, donations for entry to the event or donations for refreshments), please ensure that two people count the collected funds. One of the event organizers needs to report and turn in the cash collections to the UUCF office. To do this, go to uucf.org/reimbursement-forms and fill out the form under the heading "Cash collection at events." Funds and the form should be placed in the slot box in the Partner Church Room closet in the Sanctuary building.

If you need to find out what funds are left in a line item or custodial account please send an email to UUCF's Finance Manager, Gayathri Tillekeratne at gayathri@uucf.org

Please keep in mind that when we are spending UUCF funds we are spending other people's money. Doing that responsibly requires that we do it carefully. For significant expenditures, for example, please explore competitive sources to be sure you get what you need at the most favorable price. If you are managing an event that both spends and raises funds, keep income and expenditures separate so that they may be properly accounted for in the UUCF accounting system. That is, turn in all receipts to the Finance Manager with information about their source and the account into which they should be placed. And either request advance payment for anticipated expenses or spend your own money to make purchases and request reimbursement afterward. Never reimburse yourself or others by directly using receipts as, again, all funds need to be accounted for in the UUCF financial management system.

Finally, when making purchases for UUCF use, remember that the congregation is a tax-exempt organization. To make tax-exempt purchases you will need to get a Commonwealth of Virginia Sales and Use Tax Certificate of Exemption from the UUCF office staff. It is also worth remembering that, for the same reason, any goods donated by vendors will also create charitable deductions for the vendor. And for any discount

from fair market value, generally, retail prices may also be reported to the IRS by the vendor as a charitable contribution. So please ask vendors for discounts! Unfortunately, this only applies to material goods; labor costs, no matter how deeply discounted, may not be used as charitable exemptions.

Helpful Documents

Besides this Leader's Guide and the information on the UUCF website, here are several documents that explain how UUCF is organized and how it operates:

[Governance Manual](#) - This document contains the current UUCF mission and vision, CT responsibilities and limitations, various policies including financial policies. It describes how strategic planning is done and the relationship between the board, the CT and the congregation.

[Ends](#) - Under policy-based governance the board is responsible for articulating the vision of the congregation through ends statements.

[Bylaws](#) - The bylaws are the rules established by an organization or community to regulate itself. They include a description of the Nominating Committee and the Endowment Committee.

[Strategic Plan](#) - The goals and strategic plans that serve the ends.

[Policies](#) - All current policies are listed on the UUCF website. Such policies include weather cancelations, use of alcohol on UUCF property and renting UUCF facilities, to name a few.

[Information About the Use and Care of the Program Building](#) - This document was prepared by the director of religious exploration and provides useful information on the Program Building, especially as it related to RE activities.

[Contact Information](#) – Go to the UUCF staff page on the website for links to contact the staff, UUCF board members, UUCF CT members and UUCF lay ministers.

Miscellaneous

- Under Events on the UUCF website you'll find a calendar of events you can click on to see if there are other major events at a time you wish to hold your event. If you have reserved a room, your event should show up on the calendar, which is useful for new members.
- If your group will be participating in an event off campus and wants to use the UUCF banner, please contact the CT to request this.
- If your team wishes to state a position on behalf of UUCF, please work with your guiding leader to ensure that what you specifically state is an accurate reflection of UUCF's mission, vision and values. Please read the policy on [Taking Public Positions on Social Justice issues](#) and the policy on [Representing UUCF to the Public/Other Organizations](#) before taking any public stand or representing UUCF. Other useful documents to consult include congregational resolutions and UUCF annual reports (held in the Library of the

Administration Building).

- Emergencies - In each room on campus, there is an emergency and evacuation plan to show you how to safely leave the building if there is a fire or other emergency. The address of UUCF is posted so that you can contact 911 if the emergency is severe. On the doors to the Program Building, there is a contact number to call if there is an emergency at UUCF (this goes to UUCF's Director of Operations Bill Brabrand. In each building, there is also a first-aid kit for minor medical issues.
- UUCF's Program Building is a nut-free zone due to some children and youth being allergic to nuts. Please do not serve food that contains nuts in the Program Building. Do not leave alcoholic beverages on UUCF property and ensure that an appropriate adult supervises the serving of alcohol at all times.
- Questions sometimes arise around social justice work and the IRS rules governing the non-profit status of congregations. The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) provides guidance on this, which can be helpful for leaders to review. You can find detailed information about this on the UUA website at <http://www.uua.org/action/realrules>

Reference Materials

Organization

In 2005, UUCF adopted a policy-based governance structure based on the Policy Governance[®] model developed by John Carver. The principal goals of UUCF's governance include:

- Establishing clear lines of authority for and among the board, ministers, paid staff and lay leaders;
- Empowering the staff and lay leaders to carry out their activities without unnecessary oversight by the board; and
- Developing clear performance expectations and processes for evaluating these persons' or entities' success in meeting those expectations.

UUCF's governance structure has the following essential characteristics:

- The board delegates authority over day-to-day operations to a Coordinating Team (CT), composed of the two ministers, the director of administration and two lay members appointed by the board.
- The board makes decisions on major matters that affect the long-term well being of the congregation, but does not directly participate in management of day-to-day operations. Its primary activities include communicating with the congregation, envisioning ways to enlarge or strengthen congregational programs, articulating that vision into **ends** that guide the work of congregational leadership and systematically evaluating the performance of the ministers, the CT, the committees that carry out UUCF programs and the board itself.
- The ministers, staff and lay leaders are given freedom to accomplish their goals without having to obtain prior approval of specific plans so long as they operate within the framework of their position descriptions, charters, budgets and written policies adopted

by the board or the CT. All, however, are accountable to the board or the CT to accomplish their tasks, and their performance is reviewed on a regular basis.

Our Denomination

UUCF is a member congregation of the UUA. The 1000+ member congregations of the UUA provide the financial resources for the UUA. Congregations vote for the leaders of the UUA, who oversee the central staff and resources. The UUA supports congregations in their work by training ministers, publishing books and the UU World magazine, providing religious education curricula, offering shared services, coordinating social justice activities and more.

The UUA is divided into five regions with dedicated staff in each region. UUCF is part of the Central East Region (CER). Each region is further divided into clusters of congregations that are geographically linked. UUCF is part of the Northern Virginia Cluster of Congregations (NOVA Cluster). Each cluster has a primary contact on the CER staff. UUCF's primary contact is Rev. Megan Foley, mfoley@uua.org

The primary contact is the staff person who knows UUCF and is the first person to contact when the congregation needs assistance from the UUA. The primary contact either provides the needed services or arranges for someone else on the CER staff or UUA staff to do so.

CER provides assistance to the congregation for special circumstances, such as ministerial transition as well as providing trainings and workshops on a regular basis. Online leadership training is provided by the [UU Leadership Institute](#).

The UUA holds a yearly General Assembly (GA) at the end of June. GA is held in a different city each year at a convention center. Delegates from the member congregations gather along with ministers and other professional staff and the UUA staff for 5 days of worship, learning, workshops, social justice witness, networking and conducting the business of the association.

UUCF's [Denominational Connections Committee](#) - is a resource for any questions having to do with GA and the denomination.