

Unitarian Universalist Leadership Team Institute



PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

This is a partial listing of UULTI programs, teams and daily activities. The Program Design Team will be working over the next several months to make sure that this experience is one that will enrich, inspire and call you to action! Stay tuned for more details by checking back at www.murraygrove.org for updates on programming, staff and other important details.

TRACKS (areas of concentration)

Congregation Development and Growth

Do you want to:

- explore what constitutes “growth” in your congregations and/or UU community?
- develop strategies that will move you toward becoming a break-through congregation?
- transcend the plateau your congregation has maintained for decades?
- learn what is at the leading edge of change and how to address it?
- develop a holistic approach to development and growth?

Growing a UU congregation is not easy. It takes leadership, vision and strategy as well as expertise and faith. This Track, geared to both ministers and lay leaders, will explore in-depth paths to congregational vitality, health and growth.

Family Ministries

Do you want to:

- develop and maintain a *family lens* for congregational life to practice and sustain the families in your midst?
- promote the concept of intergenerational responsibility where people of all ages have relationships with others of different ages?
- empower families to share and live their Unitarian Universalist faith at home, and in their congregations and communities?

This Track invites lay leaders, ministers and religious educators to join together in addressing this exciting area of ministry. Too often it is assumed it is the responsibilities of DREs and RE Committees and yet membership, worship, fellowship, pastoral care growth and social justice have reason to be involved as well.

Governance

Do you want to:

- develop a better grasp of governance issues that challenge your congregation?
- have a better sense of possible governance structures and when changes in them and/or by-laws are needed, and what solutions might work best?
- find ways to strengthen your board and its leadership?
- explore how leadership and governance work together in shared ministry?

This Track will go into structure, roles/responsibilities, policy, procedure, decision making, communication, by-laws, ethical/legal issues and strategy and vision, which are all part of

governance. Congregational systems offer unique challenges and, with congregational polity, no two congregations are alike. However, there are some models and understandings that can help us anticipate and respond to these challenges. Moderators, congregational presidents and trustees are invited to explore ways to strengthen their own leadership and the health of their congregations.

Justice-Making

Do you:

- model what our faith asks of us in all you do?
- choose your priorities and mobilize efforts to address issues in a world with so much need?
- want to learn about and be inspired by examples of people and teams who have put their faith into action effectively?

We have many experienced social justice leaders in our congregations and many more who step forward for the first time to lead because of their new-found passion for an issue. Both can benefit from this track and from being in community with other congregational leaders.

Small Group Ministry

Do you want to:

- create avenues for connections?
- deepen your service in your UU congregation or community?
- learn how to involve everyone in the ministry of your congregation?
- develop systems whereby newcomers are easily incorporated into the on-going life of the congregation and community?
- strengthen the spiritual depth and resiliency in your congregation through on-going practice?

Small Group Ministry offers to congregations the means to deepen spiritual resources, expand a sense of ministry and strengthen congregational life! Nothing could be simpler than people gathered in a room to share their experience and to explore questions of faith, yet when Small Group Ministry is appropriately integrated into the life of a congregation surprising benefits accrue. Small Group Ministry can enrich individual lives, center a congregation and equip us to better fulfill our mission as a liberal religious presence in a world that needs what we have to offer!

LENSES (*specific leadership elements and perspectives that will be woven throughout the TRACKS and/or program*)

Congregations as Emotional Systems

Congregational leaders are the chief stewards for the life of the church. They are in a position to promote the well-being of the congregation. They set a mood and tone for the congregation. They are accountable for setting a direction, taking stands, staying connected to others, encouraging participation, and attending to the ongoing interplay of many conditions and forces. We know that emotionally healthy congregations are growing congregations. In many congregations, active members may identify that one of their fellow members presents an obstacle to growth or progress. They may then work to replace, transform or remove that member. Even if they succeed in that, they will later realize that they still have the same impediment to growth and progress because the congregational system was not changed. That's because, given the same system, the role of the difficult member remained and another member stepped in to fill it. In successful system analysis, the members of an emotional system - in this case, a congregation - are enabled to see how re-defining and changing the roles within the system can help them bring their actions into harmony with their goals and aspirations. Instead of focusing on one or two individuals within the group, the members analyze the roles of those who

participate in the active life of the congregation and determine, collegially, whether they are willing and able to change those roles to improve the relationships between them. When they do, they usually find that congregational life has become both less stressful and more productive.

Lifespan Faith Development

For us as Unitarian Universalists, “faith” is an active dynamic phenomenon. Faith is a verb. Faith is a way of being in relation. Faith is a way of meaning-making:

We will:

- explore questions and ideas and possibilities - on matters abstract and concrete, profound and mundane.
- discover resources, insights, new perspectives and approaches.
- connect with one another as fellow seekers of all ages and members of a shared religious community.
- act to enhance the quality of life - for our family, our congregations, our wider community, our global village.

How does your:

- UU congregational involvement deepen and expand your faith development, your “inward springs” of clearer understanding?
- sense of compassionate, courageous creativity help you develop more effective, inclusive ways of creating community?

How do you:

- affirm and grow from diversities of perspective in your UU setting?
- find the courage to explore new paths and try out new approaches in your work for your church?

Multi-Culturalism

- In a world of blue and red states, of the radical right and far left, or fundamentalism and apathy; in a world where “the other” is distrusted and feared
- In a world in need of hope that beloved community can be made more real by human intention and conscious faithfulness
- In this world where Unitarian Universalists are called to affirm and promote respect, justice, inter-dependence and to honor many sources of wisdom and truth...

In this world, now is time for us to learn, LEAD and grow.

Shared Leadership

Do you:

- consider yourself a spiritually mature leader?
- know which leadership models, functions and styles are helpful in different situations?
- desire to develop the skills to handle some of the challenges of church and organizational leadership?
- want to discover how your self-differentiation affects your leadership?
- provide helpful, skilled leadership in your interactions with your community?

Shared leadership, like shared ministry, acknowledges our inter-connectedness and the power of collaboration. Knowing when to step forward and when to encourage others to do so, how to jointly shape vision or coordinate projects and how to be both team leader and team member require a spiritual maturity and skill set that is constantly being developed. Skills include interpersonal communications, group dynamics, facilitation, team building, non-judgmental communication, and role clarification.

UU Values and History (UU Story)

Our UU roots run deep in western culture. To know these roots makes us more effective as leaders in our congregations. This series of lectures/stories will ground and inspire you.

TEAMS

Covenant Groups: Daily meetings in small group ministry style “Covenant Groups” will allow Institute participants not only to learn and experience what these groups are all about, but to have the time to reflect and meet people from other Tracks and Home Teams.

Some thoughts about Covenant Groups from The Complete Guide to Small Group Ministry - Saving the World Ten At a Time, by Robert Hill, Skinner House Books, Boston.

“Covenant groups are a transformational practice through which we, with others, can discover our own underlying assumptions about reality and examine our ways of being, some of which have become so habitual that they seem to us just ‘the way things are.’

“The practice of Small Group Ministry does ask us to suspend judgment long enough to hear respectfully the understandings of others, even those vastly different from our own.”

“Covenant groups give us a way of structuring our interactions so that all of us, the quiet ones as well as the verbally quick, may be heard and made to feel a part of the whole. Any viable form of small group organization that produces mutual trust and service to others is a benefit to our faith.”

“Small Group Ministry asks us not only to attend to the stresses of getting through the day but also to covenant together to do what we can to make a positive difference. A faith statement is implied in those two purposes.”

Home Teams: You will have time each day to meet with your Home Team from your congregation or community. If you are the only leader attending the Institute a Home Team will be formed with others. Each Home Team will have an individual coach from among the Institute staff.

Role Teams: Each day you will have an opportunity to share a meal with someone who has the same or similar role as you do in a different congregation or community.

Worship: Each morning will begin with a worship service and in the evening the “learning” day will end with a vespers service.

Social Time: In the evening there will be space and time for socializing, singing, playing, walking, talking, dancing and other activities for fun and relaxation. Everyone will be asked to bring their favorite musical instruments and music, games, poetry and other fun things, so that it will be a glorious time for all!