



First Unitarian Universalist CONGREGATION OF ANN ARBOR

Dear Beloved Members & Friends of Our UUAA Community,

As we move deeper into our summer months, here in southeast Michigan, we hope that this communication finds you and your loved ones well.

This pandemic time has been one of deep reflection for many of us, around questions such as what it means to be human, how are we living our lives, who are we living and sharing our lives with, and how all that finds expression through relationships, community, and work. No doubt at least partially impacted by this, the U.S. job market is experiencing unprecedented shifts, with record high numbers of individuals leaving their jobs, leaving the work force, and/or desirous of finding or trying something different employment-wise.

UUAA does not exist separate from such broader societal trends, and what is happening in our nation also touches us. This summer our community will be going through multiple staffing transitions, each occurring for specific and individual reasons.

Our Music Ministries. As most of us are likely aware, our Director of Worship and Music, Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout, is moving to join the staff team at the First Universalist Church of Minneapolis, as of August 1, 2021, after fourteen years of accomplished service with UUAA. Typically, after such a length of deep and meaningful service, it is important for a community to create space and time for first celebrating the ministry that has been shared, as Dr. Rideout prepares to depart us. Then, it is important to allow time and space for grief; time for remembering the longer arc of our own history and identity; and, finally, taking the time to articulate our dreams and aspirations for our music ministries. These tasks are often referred to as "interim tasks," as they are what a community works through prior to entering a permanent hiring process. As such, for our music ministries, the 2021-2022 congregational year will be an "Acting/Interim" year.

What that will look like, from a practical perspective, is that UUAA will work with an Interim Music Consultant who will hold lead responsibility for guiding us through the "interim tasks" noted above. That consultant is Bailey Whiteman, a long-time Unitarian Universalist musician, D.C.-based, who serves in the leadership of



AUUMM (the Association of Unitarian Universalist Music Ministries - our national association of professional UU music leaders). We are quite fortunate to have someone as talented as Bailey companioning our community through this important interim work, which will commence on Sept. 1, 2021. We will be working with Bailey primarily virtually, though there will be at least one in-person weekend intensive.

Side by side with that interim work, UUAA will have a talented and skillful Acting Director of Music Ministries working with us on the ground, at UUAA. Joining our staff team, on Aug. 15, 2021, will be W. Carter Smith, a doctoral candidate in Choral Conducting at Michigan State University. In addition to coming highly recommended by MSU's faculty, UUAA's Music Ambassadors Team and our continuing music staff have had the opportunity to meet Carter in-person and participate in a 'mock' choir rehearsal; we were left impressed and very much looking forward to the year ahead! While Carter is joining us in an Acting capacity, as UUAA engages in important and necessary interim period tasks, he will be eligible to apply for the permanent position, provided that it is a mutually rewarding fit. We are planning for a permanent hire process and decision that would unfold over the spring of 2022.

Our Communications Ministries. Our community holds much gratitude and appreciation for Karishma (Kari) Gottfried, who has so ably guided and led our communications-related ministries this past year. As Kari now looks forward to a more typical undergraduate year, with her campus fully re-opening this fall, we offer her our love and gratitude as she shifts out of the Communications Ministry Specialist (CMS) role, effective June 1, 2021. Kari remains virtually with our community through August 15, 2021 as our Summer Student Intern, holding some communications-related responsibilities as Intern.

UUAA looks forward to welcoming a familiar face into the part-time CMS staff position: Rev. Amber Beland, who served this past year as Organizational Consultant Intern with our operations team, will assume the CMS role effective July 12, 2021. Simultaneous with this part-time staff role, Rev. Amber will also serve, in the congregational year ahead as Organizational Consultant Intern this time working with the governance side of our leadership, the Board of Trustees. We are delighted that UUAA can welcome Rev. Amber into these new roles.

Our Spiritual Growth and Development (SGD) Ministries UUAA has also been blessed by the many fine leaders who have contributed to guiding and leading our Spiritual Growth and Development (SGD) programming. This past year, Mark VanKempen served in the role of Director of SGD, following his successful leadership as Coordinator and youth group leader. For personal and professional reasons, Mark has chosen to resign his position with UUAA, effective June 30, 2021. Rest assured, Mark, Kate, and Isaac look forward to continuing to be an integral part of our UUAA congregational family, even as Mark shifts out of this



professional role.

As we extend our love and gratitude to Mark for his years of faithful service, we also look forward to welcoming one of UUAA's own into the role of Acting Director of Spiritual Growth and Development, Stella Anderson, effective July 12, 2021. Stella has served in UUAA's Coming of Age program as well as on the SGD Committee, and is excited to lead our SGD program in the year ahead. We thank Stella for stepping into this Acting position, as we plan on a permanent hire process and decision for the spring of 2022. As with our Acting position for music, our Acting Director of SGD will be eligible to apply for the permanent position, provided that it is a mutually rewarding fit.

Finally, our community wishes Sanne Krummel, our Lead Nursery Teacher, well as she retires from this role. Sanne has lent our community twelve years of service in this role, and many years of volunteer service before that, helping nurture and mentor the youngest ones in our midst. She also recently helped create the at-home activity bags that our families utilized during this past winter and spring. Sanne has been a gem, and we hold love and gratitude in our hearts for her many contributions.

Our Congregational Life Ministries. As QuianaDenae Perkins begins seminary studies this summer (congratulations, QuianaDenae!), some have wondered what that might mean for QuianaDenae's employment with UUAA. We are pleased to be able to share that QuianaDenae will continue her full-time role, and skillful leadership, at UUAA in the year ahead, in parallel with seminary.

Our Pastoral Care & Worship Ministries. We are also pleased to share that we will be increasing our professional staff support for pastoral care and worship. rev. theresa rohlick's position will move from being a one-third FTE (full-time equivalent) to being a half-time FTE, effective July 1, 2021. This means more professional support for community care and for our Sunday services, critical aspects of all that our community does together. In addition, rev. theresa will also continue her work as Director of the Chalice Bells. We welcome rev. theresa into this larger scope of professional responsibilities, with gratitude and joy.

As we transition from this pandemic-era, as we know it today, into whatever is emerging next, we will do so together, as a community grounded in love, committed to one another, and seeking to make the world a better place. The changes, challenges, and opportunities are many – as they have been at other times in our nation's history – and the vision and fortitude of our community is no less strong.

May we continue moving boldly ahead, even as we hold the tenderness of farewells and the warmth of our welcoming spirit at the forefront of this summer

season. Please stay tuned for upcoming opportunities to wish our departing staff well and to meet and welcome those who may be new.

With love and care,

Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti

Rev. Cassandra Hartley

Mr. Ed Lynn

Senior Minister

Executive Minister

Interim Administrator

