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*Note: I began the credentialing process before the Re-vision requirements were in place. Under the heading of UU History, I have included UU Polity as well. Two work products are included, as a way to show the added knowledge I received during the process of creating this portfolio.

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Competency - Administration

Part I – Overview

I have gained considerable knowledge of the workings of a Unitarian Universalist congregation. I realize that there are many similarities to running a small business, serving on boards and working for non-profit agencies. The power of a community working together for a common goal has been a foundation in each of these endeavors, and I am thrilled to be working in this denomination, fulfilling my vocation and ministry in the world.

For the past 15 years I have worked in our family's retail awards business. Working in this capacity has prepared me with many skills relating to the administration of a small business and those skills have transferred over to my work as a coordinator for religious education.

Having an organized office space and files helps me in my RE coordinator position. Understanding the importance of organizational skills, I created a file box with monthly lessons and resources for the volunteers to use in teaching. We have a well-organized supply closet allowing easy access to crafts, supplies and teaching reference notebook. It creates a more relaxed area for the adult and youth participants, and facilitates spontaneous activities as well as providing structure for a worshipping and learning environment.

Communication is vital to a healthy program, whether it is to express a thought or to publicize an event. One of my tasks as RE Coordinator has been to write articles and submit program schedules for our monthly newsletter and local newspaper. This aspect of my job has made me a more effective communicator, able to express myself and provide information to the Fellowship and the wider community. Through this work I am better able to stay on task and meet deadlines. In planning and implementing an adult religious exploration program, I submitted an article to the weekly newspaper and had seven people attend who had never been to the Fellowship before. It was a joy to know that what I had written was well received, enough to draw people in.

I feel proficient in encouraging others to succeed as well as keeping track of many details providing me with the skills to multitask and delegate responsibilities as

necessary. Organizing the caring committee in our congregation is one place I have felt successful in my endeavors to respond to a need and encourage others to get involved. We now have a growing, vital program serving the Fellowship's community.

As stated in my RE Coordinator job description, I am responsible for attending monthly Steering Committee meetings and reporting to the board on the status and activities of the lifespan religious exploration program. I submit and oversee a budget for the program at Pagosah UU Fellowship (PUUF). I provided the congregation with policies and procedures for child, youth and vulnerable adults safety and protection, which the fellowship's steering committee adopted in 2007. I see the importance of this element in a strong program. As a college student and through my work with the YMCA, I served as a volunteer to VICA (Volunteer in Child Assistance) and went through training as an advocate to families. Safety and protection issues were always paramount in responding to these families. Continuing with this practice I create forms for field trips, RE registration and evaluations, which help me fulfill this in my work as RE Coordinator. I obtained and regularly update my First Aid and CPR certification and encourage volunteers to do so as well.

I continue to learn and structure my personal and professional life, keeping it well balanced and fulfilling. It helps me to stay focused, organized and cared for while caring for others in my ministry.

PART II - Structured Learning Experience

Leading in Relationships in Religious Education - Online Course

November 15, 2009

Offered by: PNWD

Led by: Layne Richard-Hammock

Reflection: This online course was an outline of the information provided in the Administration Renaissance Module. It focused on aspects helpful for new DRE's covering the basics for administering a religious education program. Highlights of this training included volunteer and risk management.

Integration: The assumption that the role of a religious educator is grounded in relationship was key to understanding the workshop's theme. It is a reminder for me to continue to grow in communication skills, keeping in mind that the vision can be an ally when practicing right relationship. Points on communicating in a variety of ways, avoiding triangulation, and being aware of communication style helped me become responsive in my methods of communicating. I practice this by using different modes of communication depending on who I am communicating with and what I need to express. There are limits with each of the methods but understanding them helps create win-win situations. Another important tool is knowing where to go for support and encouragement. Colleagues are one of the best support systems since there is a shared understanding of the issues. I utilize time away with colleagues as a means of self care, and I provide space for check-in when conducting meetings with volunteers. Recruitment and delegating were both covered, again focusing on right relations. Being able to identify and assess risk is crucial in the administration of a strong program. Being prepared, training advisors and teachers and having procedures in place are necessary in any program of any size.

How to Build a Caring Community

May 9, 2009

Offered by: UU Fellowship of Durango

Led by: Rev. Elizabeth McMaster

Reflection: This workshop provided training in our Four Corner Cluster to Caring Committees of four congregations, which I helped organize. The objectives of the workshop were to provide an understanding of the purpose of a caring committee, ways to organize, and specifics about what a caring committee can and cannot do. I gained a deeper understanding of the many aspects that can be included as part of a caring ministry, and how to put those into action.

Integration: In my experience as a member of Unitarian Universalist congregations, and now as a religious educator, I am aware that the religious community serves as a source of support for its member and friends. Attending and working in this small, lay-led fellowship, I saw a need that was not being met within the congregation. Although friends cared for one another there was nothing formally set up for its members. I helped organize the fellowship's first Caring Network in our congregation. We now have a network of individuals willing to provide caring support to members and friends of PUUF. From this workshop we created a vision of what our Caring Network sees as its mission: to provide caring and concern for members and friends of the UU community. We are in the process of creating "Caring Slips" to help facilitate communication from those in need, and offer information through the newsletter, order of service and a brochure. It is also our plan to implement safety guidelines for the congregation through fire drills, emergency and first aid equipment. We hope to serve the community with resources and referrals as necessary for outside help, memorial services and financial counseling. I see this group being an integral part of our congregation's ministry to one another.

The Congregation as a Learning Community

April 25-26 2008

Offered by: MDD - Small Congregations Weekend

Led by: Alice Springer & Deborah Holder

Reflection: In the workshop I had the opportunity to hear and express issues directly related to small religious education programs. We were given practical information how to be prepared for families with children by having an *RE Box*, a new family information packet, and a religious education committee working to welcome families that come into the program. The overview of curricula was also very informative, with many resources given. Safety and risk management in congregations was an important aspect of discussion at the workshop. **Integration:** The “Who Does What” portion of the workshop helped me realize how important it is to have a supportive religious education committee working along side the director. With the help of the steering committee, I have begun the process of recruiting members for an RE Committee. I made a recommendation to the steering committee to add recruiting for the RE Committee to the job of the Nominating Committee. Once the committee is in place, one task will be to put together newcomer packets providing families with information about our lifespan religious education program. A highlight of the workshop for me was the statement that our congregations are centers to grow our values. Having this as a central theme, we focus on what values we share, which helps bridge the gap between generations, finding common ground.

Part II – Personal / Life Experience

Charter Board Member of the Southwest Organization for Sustainability (SOS)

2006 - Present

Reflection: This non-profit organization grew out of our UU Fellowship, yet it expanded in the community and continues to be a vital part of the increasing awareness of environmental sustainability. I have worked closely with others in creating programs to present to the wider community, writing articles for our local newspaper, fundraising and participating in SOS activities.

Integration: As a founding member of SOS, I continue to be involved with all the workings of the organization. Out of this work, I served as a volunteer setting up a local farmer's market, now in its third year. I worked with local county officials to implement an informational program on recycling with much community support. The result of this program is the Citizen's Recycling Advisory Panel (CRAP), now working to expand our county's waste and recycling program. Another aspect of my involvement has been a successful fundraiser selling reusable shopping bags. I created a logo to use for the organization, ordered bags using the logo, then sold them at our first farmer's market. I send out monthly e-news notices to our members and update the database as necessary. This work has been personally rewarding. Through my work with SOS I have gained experience writing articles, meeting deadlines, attending and facilitating meetings. I am more confident in my interactions with others, helping me articulate ideas, see projects through to completion, and organize my office space.

**Ways and Means Chair, High School Vocal Music and Drama Booster Clubs
2001 – 2003**

Reflection: As a parent volunteer, I served on several boards of my daughter's high school. I was the Ways and Means chairperson providing support to both the drama and vocal music departments. I organized fundraisers and kept records of individually raised funds for approximately 100 participants in the program at the high school.

Integration: Serving in this capacity I was able to use my knowledge of databases, keeping track of the many students in the program. It has been helpful in my work creating a spreadsheet of participants in the church program for all registered participants. Using email lists to send correspondence to the families in the program has also been important in improving my communication skills and helps facilitate participation. Our congregation is small and I do most of the teaching in our children's RE program, but I do schedule teachers and childcare personnel on an as-needed basis.

Part II - Related Professional Experience - non RE based

Trophies Tomorrow, Mission Viejo, CA; Pagosa Springs, CO

1994 - Present

Reflection: Working as office manager in a small retail business has been integrated in many parts of my life, from learning computer programs, office machines, budget, accounting and customer service. I know the importance of organizing and maintaining an office space to foster an efficient work environment.

Integration: Being an integral part of running a business is not something I ever pictured myself doing, yet it has been an experience that has prepared me for the varied aspects of being a religious education professional. The most important integration has been in learning to balance a busy professional life with my personal and family life. Finding that balance was not always easy, and through many trials and errors I have come to realize it's meaning within my work as a religious educator. Being aware of and responding to my physical and spiritual needs is a way of finding that balance, and I can in turn encourage others to do the same. In the past I have managed staff and provided support in many areas. One priority in my work is the recognition and acknowledgment of the work one is doing. Recognizing the many hours worked, and allowing space for time away has been a gift I give others and myself.

YMCA of Orange County, California

1990 – 1993

Reflection: I was involved with the YMCA since 1981 as camp counselor, after-school childcare staff, and preschool teacher. During my final years of employment with the YMCA, I held the position of site director in an after-school day camp setting. I gained valuable experience interacting with children, parents and staff.

Integration: As part of my job description as a site director I was responsible for working within a budget to implement a program for approximately 25 children. I bought items for arts and crafts, sports equipment and books. I supervised staff setting up our site location within a school classroom, decorating and designing a welcoming space. I organized all necessary paperwork on each child enrolled and communicated with parents regarding other matters relating to their child's enrollment, payment schedule and needs. This was an ongoing process throughout the year. I shopped weekly to provide healthy snacks, also within a budget. Planning daily activities and schedule for the site, and

providing monthly calendars to my supervisor and to the families was also an integral part of my position. Throughout my time as site director, I gained a great deal of confidence in my skills of planning and organizing. Creating this program from scratch was rewarding in that it was a fulfilling a need in that community.

Part II - Leadership Experience - RE based

Unitarian Universalist Church of South County, Mission Viejo, CA

Jr. High Youth Leader

2003 – 2004

Reflection: I served as a teacher and leader for the Jr. High group for two years. I made an effort to have a consistent meeting schedule to create continuity in the program, and to foster relationships within the small group. I helped plan activities specifically for the youth and chose curricula that they would be interested in.

Integration: One of the goals I had for this group was to keep them involved in the congregation. At this time the congregation was growing, yet there had not been a very strong youth program previously. I wanted to create a place for them that they would want to come back to. We started meeting weekly during regular religious education time, then expanded it into other activities including pizza parties and recreation. As a way to incorporate social action into the program we held car washes and bake sales raising money for those projects. This gave the youth an identity within the congregation and helped solidify the group. Organizing such events took the effort of many. I helped by selecting dates for events and clearing them with the church calendar. I made fliers and publicized events by mailing, emailing and making announcements as needed. We created a youth room, decorated by the group and found ways for them to be a vital part of congregational life.

Part III - WORK PRODUCTS

The following evaluation was part of our annual meeting and used as a tool for self evaluation in my role as RE Coordinator.

PUUF LIFE SPAN RE EVALUATION (3/2008)

In the hopes of building a community of life long learning, the Pagosah UU Fellowship would like feedback on the Religious Education (RE) Program offerings. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions. By evaluating the programs of religious education in our congregation we have the opportunity to put aside ideas that no longer work, test new ideas that might be a better fit, and re-design a program that fulfills our mission.

Please respond honestly and openly. Your answers will be kept confidential. If you would like to discuss any aspects of this evaluation further, please include your name.

For those of you with children in the CRE program, you may respond to the questions on this form. On side two of this form is a questionnaire for your child's responses. Please help your child answer the questions and add any information that helps us evaluate the program.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in this process.

Which RE program(s) did you or your family participate in at PUUF?

 A Chosen Faith study group Sharing Circle Book Group Children's Program

What were your hopes in participating in the RE program?

Were your hopes realized?

Definitely	Mostly	Somewhat	Not much	Not at all
5	4	3	2	1

Do you (or your child) have a greater understanding of Unitarian Universalism?

Definitely	Mostly	Somewhat	Not much	Not at all
5	4	3	2	1

Do you have a greater sense of community after being involved in the RE program?

Definitely	Mostly	Somewhat	Not much	Not at all
5	4	3	2	1

Do you feel free to share thoughts and ideas about the RE program? YES NO

Please share any comments to the following questions:
What aspects of the program do we do well?

What could we do better?

Please list any other programs you'd like to see offered at PUUF?

Would you be willing to pay a small supplies fee for RE? YES NO

(Optional) Name _____

RE PROGRAM EVALUATION FORM FOR CHILDREN

How old are you? _____ years old

I am a _____ girl _____ boy

How long have you attended PUUF children's program? _____ years _____ months

Is this the first church (fellowship) you've been to? _____ yes _____ no

About how often do you come on Sundays?

- _____ a couple times a year
- _____ once a month
- _____ twice a month
- _____ nearly every week

What three things do you like most about being a part of our Fellowship?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| _____ Religious Education lessons | _____ Singing in class |
| _____ Singing during the service | _____ Story for all ages (during service) |
| _____ Candles of joys and concerns | _____ Snack time |
| _____ Being with friends | _____ Multigenerational services |
| _____ Other (please specify) | _____ Creative (art) projects |

The best thing about this Fellowship is? _____

Additional Parent Comments:

Following is an oral report I gave at our annual pledge dinner in May 2009.

RE Annual Meeting Report 2009

Give me oil for my chalice, keep it burnin', burnin', burnin'.

Give me oil for my chalice I pray. Give me oil for my chalice,
keep it burnin', burnin', burnin'. Keep it burnin' 'til the break of day.

Sing for love, and sing for justice, sing for peace 'cause it's the UU way.

Sing for love, and sing, for justice, sing for peace 'cause it's the UU way.

I sing this song in the back room with the kids, and seems like there's a message in here for us too. We are here to vote on new leadership in our congregation and in our denomination, pass a budget, and reconfirm ourselves to the life of this fellowship.

So what is the life of our fellowship? We need oil for our chalice, that costs money – which sometimes we have, and sometimes we don't. Our affirmation speaks to the other life we have, and that is to sing for love, justice and peace.

The spirit of this fellowship is love, and service is it's law – this is our covenant with each other, to dwell together in peace, search for truth with love, and to help one another. Now with a message like that, I wonder sometimes why we are not growing by leaps and bounds. We have this amazing message of abundant hope, but are we ready to live from that abundance and fund it with our time, money and energy to carry that message to others? Normally this is the time when I give my religious exploration report, telling you about all the things we have done, maybe how many hours we have worked and volunteered here, how many children and youth have come through our doors this past year, and all of that may be important for you to know. But my personal covenant with you all started when I was fortunate enough to go to the Russell Lockwood Leadership School in 2005. Many of you probably don't even know what that is. It is a week-long, intensive retreat put on by our district to train lay leaders in our Mountain Desert congregations. It is not a cheap investment of time or money, but it changed my life. It lead me to the path of entering the credentialing program and becoming a religious education professional. I have found my ministry and am not shy about sharing the gospel of Unitarian Universalism. Of course this path isn't for everyone, but my hope is that this small fellowship will grow from my leadership and be a chalice with oil singing for love, justice and peace in Pagosa Springs.

Competency – Anti-oppression, Anti-racism, Multiculturalism

Part I – Overview

Building on the goal of *Beloved Community* in my work as a religious educator, understanding the cycles of socialization and liberation was a starting point in this transformational work. From the fear and ignorance of socialization, to the healing that happens through liberation, we can move out of the pain into self-love and ultimately wholeness in our communities as it relates to racism, classism and other forms of oppression. It can liberate both the oppressed and oppressor and is done by becoming aware and raising the consciousness within ourselves and others. Self-empowerment, education, and developing tools for reaching out are all ways to move forward in this work. The transformation begins to happen when we can embrace our ignorance and recognize that socialization has occurred throughout our lives. With a desire to learn through the process, we develop a deeper understanding of the behaviors that need to be challenged. This begins when we look within with honesty, ready to face those challenges and act to change the paradigm. As we begin to see others as extensions of ourselves, we chose how we want to be in relationship and begin to develop skills of empowerment.

As a student of deaf culture I became aware of audism, the discrimination of deaf and hard of hearing people. It is through an understanding of the deaf culture and the experience of living with a relative who was deaf that I began to feel comfortable in my interactions in the deaf community. I have been working with the leaders in my fellowship to encourage the use of a microphone during worship and gatherings. I make the point that by not using amplified sound we are discriminating against a population that may not speak up for themselves. This passive form of oppression can be remedied by simply using a microphone. This change will assist many in their ability to participate in our services more and it is the right thing to do. I see how this passive discrimination relates to other forms of oppression and multiculturalism. Having a support system is key to expanding our view of what is possible through dialogue. Through this support we build trust that can diminish barriers. It is in the willingness to reach out, beyond the fear and stereotypes, where we find the power to act for change. When we join with others

creating a collective energy towards transformative justice, the systems that had been in place change. Once this transformation begins, nothing is ever the same. With a variety of new tools, we, as individuals are different. The structure changes because we are no longer willing to stand aside when oppression is present. This new community, based in love, is strengthened and incorporated into every part of our daily life.

This work is ongoing and needs to be nurtured to succeed. As a leader in a congregation I find it imperative that this work begins within me. With continuing training in this area, I hope to gain knowledge and life experience in modeling positive behaviors and be a resource to those I work with.

This journey requires all our energy by breaking the patterns that no longer serve us. We can start a new cycle within and among our religious communities finding common ground with those beyond our walls and strive for justice, equity and wholeness.

Part II - Structured Learning Experience

Nurturing Community; Building Solidarity

Date: October 17, 2009

Offered by: Mountain Desert District Justice Ministries

Led by: Rev. Deborah Holder & Rev. Alicia Forde

Reflection: As a way to begin looking at the socialization and liberation process in a non-threatening environment, the workshop introduced a group exercise called *Forum Theater*. The participants were given a situation, and then asked to act out parts to deal with the issue. We then changed parts as we explored alternative ways to handle the situation. By processing the information as a group, we were presented with a learning opportunity through active participation. Offering the opportunity for people to behave or “act” differently than they normally would, guided the conversation and facilitated reflection.

Integration: Taking part in this workshop helped me understand how we are socialized by our rearing and the culture which we are a part of. All behaviors and attitudes are taught and can be liberated as we mature. We are no longer innocent but become responsible to take action. I have used this method dealing with certain issues in our youth group. I have presented scenarios to the youth with positive outcomes. On one occasion an email was sent by one of the youth to other members of the group. The email

contained racist remarks and although they were not original it was a chance to reread the content in the group and discuss its impact. *Forum Theater* is a powerful tool for inspired reflection and action when used for nurturing community, and I can use it as a tool in my interactions with youth and others.

Finding Hope Where Hope Is Hard to Find Workshop

Dates: July 10 - 12, 2009

Offered by: Four Corners UU Retreat, Vallecito, CO

Led by: Dr. Charlie Clements, President of UUSC

Reflection: This workshop was helpful in gaining a thorough understanding of the history and work of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). From its inception in 1940 with the American Unitarian Association to its current work in helping to preserve and archive that past, it is a story worth hearing and telling. The many stories shared by Dr. Clements were powerful and inspiring. The four areas of liberation theology were described with examples of the social justice work UUSC does.

Integration: I have participated in many UUSC programs, such as *Guest at Your Table*, *Justice Sunday* and *Equal Exchange Interfaith Coffee Program* as an individual and religious educator. I continue this work within my fellowship and use much of their material for the children's program. Hearing more about the history and upcoming PBS documentary about UUSC's history beginning in WWII, I have plans to facilitate a youth and adult religious education forum. Dr. Charlie Clements was an inspiration and we spoke afterwards about the issues surrounding torture and why it is imperative to discuss in a religious community. Using resources from Dr. Clements and the *National Religious Campaign Against Torture* I plan to hold a service with other faith communities in our area. This is an area of interest for me and I hope to continue including it as a major part of my work as a religious educator.

Building the Beloved Community: How do we talk about race, class and privilege

Date: January 23-25, 2009

Offered by: Mountain Desert District

Led by: Staff from Class Action, Rev. Nancy Bowen, Rev. Deborah Holder

Reflection: This weekend workshop was an intensive training that included group exercises to bring awareness of how racism and classism are a part of everyday life experiences. As part of the *Beloved Community* workshop we were given the opportunity to participate in exercises and discussions helping us understand our prejudices as they relate to race and class issues. I gained understanding of my own prejudices and a more complete view of this complex issue.

Integration: As part of our Coming of Age program at Pagosah UU Fellowship, I showed the short film, *Enough: A Kid's Perspective*, which was part of the workshop. After viewing the film with our youth group, I introduced questions relating to class and classism. It was an important task for the youth, introducing them to different perspectives on issues around class. I plan to lead a service incorporating the exercises used in the workshop where the participants will have an opportunity to talk openly about their experiences around race and class within the group. By attending this workshop I feel empowered to introduce the material and lead others in a discussion on this issue in a congregational setting.

Part III - WORK PRODUCTS

In planning summer activities I often use UUSC as a inspiration. Hearing Charlie Clements speak at a retreat was that inspiration for this article. Our attendance was low during this time, but the children and I had fun rolling pennies for justice, reading stories from the UUSC website about people's lives being changed because of the work they do.

August 2009 CRE Newsletter Article

Exploring Hope, Where Hope is Hard to Find will be the theme this month as we continue our exploration of the world. Focusing on the work Unitarian Universalists, and others, do with the

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), we will get to know our neighbors around the world. I am just back from an amazing time on the Pine River, and hearing about the work of the UUSC. I am fired up to share it in our summer activities for Children's Religious Exploration (CRE). Charlie Clements, CEO of UUSC shared story after story of the hope-filled, powerful work they do around the world. We will spend 3 of our weeks hearing about the four areas of focus UUSC uses in helping others:

Aug 2- **Annual PUUF Picnic** and fellowship sharing. (see front page calendar)

Aug 9 - **Economic Justice** - Coffee farmers getting a *fair trade* for their product.

Aug 16 -**Environmental Justice** - Enough clean water for EVERY PERSON.

Aug 23 - **Civil Liberties** - Universal rights, freedoms and protection for all.

We'll also cover **Human Rights in Humanitarian Crisis** - All people have an equal right to aid with dignity.

These are BIG undertakings, but UUSC *envision*s a world free from oppression and injustice, where all can realize their full human rights, putting into practice our first principle which affirms the inherent worth and dignity of every person. (from the UUSC website - uusc.org)

Below is a sermon I wrote, first given 1/18/09. I set a goal for myself to bring back some of what I learned at the 2008 LREDA Conference. I wanted to express my understanding and excitement about multigenerational congregations, and realizing I was to speak on MLK Jr. Sunday, I wanted to tie it together. This was the result.

The Old Sweatshirt, 7 Principles and Multigenerational Congregations

“But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.
Amos 5:24

I titled this morning’s talk - *Reflections of a Liberal Religious Educator*, and I have to say that this rather generic title came from a lack of inspiration at the moment it was due to our newsletter editor.

After attending the conference for liberal religious educators I made a promise to myself to write a Sunday program to share with you all. I was very excited about what I heard and learned at the conference and I wanted to share the good news.

As the date got closer, I realized that this Sunday, Unitarian Universalists and many other religious communities celebrate the life and work of Martin Luther King Jr. I didn’t want the opportunity to go by without this acknowledgment. In a sermon written by Unitarian Universalist minister, John Parker Manwell, I read about the last days of Dr. King’s life. He was working on behalf of sanitation workers in Memphis, who were not being paid a living wage.

Hours before his assassination he gave a sermon entitled

“I’ve been to the Mountaintop” where towards the end of this speech he says, “but I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised land.”

Do you think Dr. King would call this coming Tuesday the Promised Land?

I don’t know, but I would bet that he might say we’re getting close.

I began to wonder how I would tie my reflections about multigenerational congregations in with MLK, the mountaintop and the promised land.

Yet it did occur to me that perhaps we are talking about the same thing.

If there is one thing I cherish about this faith called Unitarian Universalism is that it is always changing. It's an ever-revolving door we walk through to seek and tweak and decide, trying on new or different ways of being, seeing how they will fit. Let's look at this faith like an article of clothing. We have this really comfortable sweatshirt. It fits fine, a great color, but there are a few holes in it. Now, back to this ever-evolving faith. Some of those holes are big enough for someone to fall through, and we lose them. In another sermon by Dr. King, he spoke of Rip Van Winkle. The fact that he slept for 20 years wasn't the point of the story, but that as he traveled up the mountain where he went to sleep he passed a sign with a picture of King George III of England, but as he climbed down the mountain the same sign bore the likeness of George Washington. He had slept through a great revolution. But we ask, "why do things always have to change?"

William Sinkford, current president of the Unitarian Universalist Assoc. tells of a time early in our association's history when he felt marginalized and he left the denomination for several years.

And so we change. It is written into the bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Association of which we are a member, to reevaluate our seven principles periodically. A task force is formed and they begin by asking is anyone marginalized by this word, or that statement? Do these principles encompass every aspect of what we affirm and promote? Or, as the proposed changes state; honor and uphold.

This year at the 2009 General Assembly in Salt Lake City, we as an association of congregations will begin the "quote" process of reflection on the essence of what Unitarian Universalism stands for "unquote" says Rev. Barbara Child, project leader of the Commission on Appraisal.

And again we change.

In October I attended the Liberal Religious Educators Association Conference. Or LREDA. The title of the conference was:

Building a Multigenerational Faith: Creating Wholeness in our Congregations.

Since I began attending UU services, inter-generational has been used to describe the service where the children and youth come and stay through the service with the adults. They may have a part, as performers or readers, and will participate in rituals as in our

water communion or tree lighting service. Well, a new term has emerged, as it better describes the goal of our congregations. Multi-generational.

Here's some quick definitions: inter-generational is *being or occurring between* generations, whereas multi-generational is *of or relating to several generations*.

Seems simple enough - just change the word. So why all the hoopla?

I wonder, if Martin Luther King hadn't held onto his beliefs about justice for all, would we be inaugurating Barak Obama on Tuesday?

And so the word gets changed. But it is in these small changes that we create a new paradigm for looking at our congregation and the world.

I shared in my newsletter article about one of our youth asking why they don't have name badges like the adults. I had long thought that they too needed them to feel a part of this congregation, but never took steps to make it happen. That small act of having a name badge can help them feel welcome and a part of us.

And there it is. The them and us mentality. It comes up often in my own thoughts and speech. Dr. King's Mountaintop sermon was in preparation for a poor people's march on Washington, bringing together all the poor of the nation; whatever their color or ethnicity. There would be no us and them at the march.

Embracing a multigenerational concept brings a new sense of belonging to us and them. There are ways we share that are beneficial to all, and to the wider goals of why we come together in religious community. I have heard several people in this congregation say they don't know the children here.

We see one another on an almost weekly basis, but probably don't interact regularly. So how do we make the change to be a multi-generational congregation?

The first step in creating the space is to break the barriers that may exist. We may not even know what those barriers are but one way is to look at the assumptions you may make about a particular person or family. Age is not always an indication of where a person fits in. A 40 year old may fit well in a young adult group if they are unmarried without kids.

Older parents of young children may be dealing with aging parents, just as the empty-nesters are. So by looking past the assumptions and finding those who identify with more than one generation, we open up to see one another in a new way.

Recognition is another way of *seeing one another*. We have celebrated milestones for our youth. A couple of years ago we bridged two of them going off to college. We honored another at her Coming of Age ceremony last summer, and 4 or 5 others are on their way to that recognition in the spring. We transition them from one stage in their life into another, acknowledging them and their achievements up to that point. But what about the elders of our congregation? Are the transitions they feel any less important than those of childhood or youth? And still others who may be transitioning from a career into their retirement. Is that another milestone worth recognizing? What if we had a yearly celebration honoring our sages – the wise elders among us, of which we have several. Another RE director shared about her congregation who does what they call a Decades Service on the Sunday near New Years – where someone from each generation shares a bit of their hopes and dreams for the coming year. Think for a minute - what Marley or Will might say. Or for you younger members, what might Phyl, Tim or Norma say their hopes were. Could it be that by listening to one another in this way the door to a conversation would be opened, and we would be better for it? Like our plaque says: More Curiosity, Less Judgment.

The honoring and celebrating of one another is what makes this a religious community. When we go beyond relating to those other than in the circle of our daily life, we open up to a rich life of learning from a multigenerational perspective. By hearing the stories we begin to care for one another in a different way. Have you noticed when we stand in the closing circle the little ones singing with their whole hearts? We are so blessed to be able to share Unitarian Universalism with them. It is through these interactions that special bonds grow. Michelle Richards, my mentor and author of the book *Come into the Circle* quotes Catherine Stonehouse when talking about multigenerational congregations: “When children are included as respected, active participants in the community of faith, they draw us back into the story of our faith and help us reactivate our imaginations to experience the story anew.”

I think this works in both directions. The younger members of our fellowship would be enriched by hearing stories from the adults and elders. We recently added a *Sharing our Journeys* service, where 3 people from our congregation share themselves with us. It was well received, and folks are still talking about it and we'll continue these services throughout the year. Think about being one of those willing to share.

I heard about many fun and engaging ways to create this MG community at the conference. Ideas other churches and fellowships are using with success, like the secret valentine program or what about an all-fellowship Labor Day Work Party, where young and old come together to clean and spruce up our gathering space. Perhaps a social justice week, where everyone works on a project making a difference in the world. We could start a chalice lighter program – training the youth to light the chalice each Sunday, after gaining a deeper understanding of why we do so. Family Sings are another way of bridging the gap. We offer a time for a shared meal and joyous singing together with families of all types.

These are not extravagant activities requiring a lot of work or money, but they are important aspects to creating a place where everyone feels not only welcome but included and important. We have the ability to sew up a few holes in that sweatshirt.

And to close, the words of Martin Luther King Jr. once again find relevance:"

We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. For some strange reason I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be."

Thank you and blessed be.

Competency – Religious Education Program Resources

Part I – Overview

The more I read, the more I want to read. That statement sums up my experience in preparing for this competency in RE Resources. I have found it to be a most rewarding pursuit exploring the variety of information, and ways of getting it. The reading list for the credentialing program has served as a valuable tool and will continue to inform my reading for many years to come. Beginning at my congregation's bookshelf, I found several books relating to religious education in Unitarian Universalism, including *Essex Conversations* and *REACH Packets*. Moving from there to the broader on-line bookstore of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), The Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) and the UUA website, I have expanded my own bookshelf and add to a growing list of to-be-purchased books.

I taught and led children's worship years ago when Worship Web was just beginning. I now have a collection of stories from the Tapestry of Faith on-line resource for life-span learning. I plan to use this plethora of resources not only for RE curriculum, but to incorporate it into social action and multigenerational worship experience.

As I moved into the role of RE Coordinator I encouraged the fellowship to become members of the Church of the Larger Fellowship. It has been a very worthwhile investment for our children's religious exploration as well as adult groups. I have used the *RE Express* for over 2 years and can reuse many of the themes and ideas for worship in our congregation. I also use the archived resources available.

My mentor and colleagues in religious education have been amazing resources for information on worship ideas and materials, books, music, and the importance of self-care. I value the relationships I have and know they will serve a greater place as I grow in my profession as a religious educator. I feel very fortunate to serve in a district with a vibrant religious education component and hope to support its endeavors in the future especially with youth and young adults.

In expanding my knowledge of the resources available to the religious educator I am discovering the ever-changing ways of incorporating different modes of learning. I am rewarded with a greater sense of myself through worship, ritual, sharing and

integrating the “things” I learn. This self awareness informs my way of “doing” RE. It is being in relationship with those I interact with that is of utmost importance, whether it be children, youth or adults. Who I am instructs the form of teaching and it is in relationship that I find out who I am. Everything can be a lesson, and learning can take place anywhere. We have much available to us as religious educators in the way of resources, but I am finding that many times, I am my best resource.

Part II - Structured Learning Experiences

The Congregation as a Learning Community

April 25-26 2008

Offered by: MDD - Small Congregations Weekend

Led by: Alice Springer & Deborah Holder

Reflection: Creating a place where learning is a natural part of coming together was the basis of this workshop with an emphasis on the available resources and curricula to help foster a learning environment. Guidelines regarding safety for healthy religious communities were covered, as was information of how to prepare an RE Box for small congregations without a children’s program already in place.

Integration: The resources I received in this workshop have been valuable helping me make the most of the resources I have available through the district office, UUA and Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF). I am able to prepare volunteers to teach in a safe and inviting place. Because we are a small program, it has been helpful to know which particular curriculum is best for a multi-aged group. Having the district and CLF libraries available to us has been a great asset. The Fellowship has joined the Church of the Larger Fellowship and I have used its curricula extensively in both our adult and children’s RE programs. Using the outline from CLF has enriched the time spent with the children and youth. I am able to hand over the lessons with confidence, and our leaders have all the information they need to implement it into an engaging program. I began an adult RE program using the online courses available from CLF. This program has continued under the leadership of others within the congregation, and I have supervised this and other small groups in the Fellowship. Church of the Larger Fellowship lending library information was extremely helpful working with a limited budget.

Part III – Work Products

The following Bridging Ceremony is one we have done twice in our Fellowship. Before this time the congregation did not have any ceremony for those graduating and becoming young adults. The basic outline and much of the litany was taken from the above mentioned book.

BRIDGING CEREMONY

Call to Bridging: TODAY WE GATHER IN CELEBRATION OF OUR MULTIGENERATIONAL COMMUNITY AND TO HONOR (insert #) OF OUR YOUTH. WE GATHER TO AFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO THEM AND THEIR MINISTRIES IN THE WORLD, FOR SHE/HE/THEY IS/are OUR CHILD(REN) WHO HAS GROWN, OUR DAUGHTER, OUR SON, OUR GRANDCHILD(REN), OUR FRIEND. THEY ARE OUR PRESENT AND OUR FUTURE. AND SO WE GATHER HERE TO SHARE IN OUR LIVES; TO MINISTER TO EACH OTHER; TO TEACH; TO LEARN; TO LOVE.

Introductions of the bridging youth - (this can be done by parents, youth advisors, mentors, etc.)

Statements by the Bridging Youth

Ceremony:

In the Unitarian Universalist tradition a rose bud is given during our child dedications – The thorns are removed symbolizing the safety and protection that the congregation pledges to give that child.

As you transition from youth to the fuller responsibility of adulthood, you will have many decisions ahead of you. The way will not always be easy. You will encounter thorns. This rose, with all its thorns, is a symbol that the beauty of life also comes with pain.

This bridge is also a symbol. We are not pushing you off to see if you can fly, that we already know, but we will be holding out a hand to help you cross the bridge from youth to young adult. We will hold a space for you here, and in our hearts. In times of heartache we will be a place you can come home to, if not in the physical, then in spirit. We hope you think of us as a haven, and that fond memories will help you through difficult times. Our Unitarian Universalist faith does not answer all of your questions. In

fact it gives you the freedom to think and question, searching for your own truth and meaning. It does offer a community where religious freedom, justice, compassion and spiritual exploration are honored.

I encourage you to seek out a community or congregation where people are driven by a common goal of understanding our world in terms of compassion and hope. Listen carefully to the words spoken here now, by our youth, young adults, and the congregation. We are all transitioning today and we honor this sacred time with a moment of silence. Blessed Be.

Responsive Reading: (*print in order of service for all to join in.*)

(From Page 11 of Crossing the Bridge from Youth to young Adult)

SYMBOLIC CROSSING

CLOSING WORDS:

Go now in peace

Go now in quiet wisdom

Go forth into the world with kindness and love

The following sample story is an adaptation from S.M.I.L.Y.– Sensory Motor Integration & Learning with Yoga, routine #4, by April Merrilee. Each of the Seven Principles are connected to a different story from the book. It is an introduction to yoga in a child-friendly format and can also be used as an introduction to Eastern religions and their practice. I adapted the story and added the short explanation of how it connects to Principle #1.

Old Man Winter – The first Principle: affirming and promoting the inherent worth and dignity of every person. From a multigenerational perspective, we can see the seasons as a metaphor for a life span. Honoring each stage of life is another way to impress the worth and dignity of everyone. Each age has something to celebrate and respect. UU's do this by celebrating rituals such as child dedications, Coming of Age programs, Bridgings, Cronings and Sagings, etc. We can talk about the aging process, bridging the gap between the younger and older members of a congregation.

This story is about life and the seasons of the year. “Oooooohhh, brrrrr!”

Why does a person say that? “Oooohhh brrrrr!” That’s right, because they’re cold. When it’s cold outside, it snows in some places of the world. Maybe the wind blows and the trees freeze. When it’s cold like this, we say it’s winter. This is when people and animals like to be quiet and rest in the shelter of their homes. After winter, when it starts getting warmer, the plants grow and the flowers bloom. Then we say it is spring. After spring, the weather gets hot and the sun stays up for a long time after dinner, This is summer. We like summer to last a long time because it is so much fun. But after a while, the weather starts to cool down and we say it is fall or autumn. In the fall, the leaves on the trees change and make lots of beautiful and colorful patterns for us to enjoy. Then it gets cold again and we’re back to winter. So, we have spring, summer, fall and winter just like that. Did you know that these changes happen in people’s lives too? When we are babies, we are like the plants and the flowers, growing and blooming. Babies are like spring time. Older children, like you, are like summer time – lots of long, fun days. Some of us want to stay like children forever. Grown-ups are like fall, changing a lot and bringing many beautiful things into the world. And older people, especially very old people, are like winter. They are more quiet, and like to stay inside and rest. This is also a very special time of life, and can be a wonderful time of year too. We even have the perfect nickname for it: Old Man Winter. Old Man Winter is like the grandpa who brings us special surprises and lets us do extra fun stuff. Here are some fun things we can do when Old Man Winter pays us a visit. Reminding us that in all seasons of life we can connect to all that is special about each one!

(Introduction of the yoga poses to go along with the story. See book for details)

Snow – Tree – Wind – Snowman – Skate – Fire – Candle – Sled

Competency – Right Relations and Professional Ethics

Part I – Overview

“Relationships are all there is. Everything in the universe only exists because it is in relationship to everything else. Nothing exists in isolation.” This quote from *Turning to One Another* by Meg Wheatley is a starting point for how I practice right relations and ethics within the context of being a religious education professional. I also hope it is my credo for living my life with a purpose and promise of learning through those relationships in my life. As I understand “being in right relations” I hold the value of covenant in high regard. The promise made between those in relationship is what can inform how we behave in any given situation. When the covenantal relationship is compromised, it is possible to heal and move forward by recommitting to the promise made and applying the principles of restorative justice. Some situations are more serious, as in the case of sexual misconduct, and require a process of healing. This includes, but is not limited to, truthful acknowledgment of what has occurred, compassion towards all individuals involved, protection of the vulnerable, accountability of the perpetrator, and restoring balance to a wounded relationship. When the five preceding elements come together as a path to healing a final result occurs, creating space for moving forward into wholeness.

Dealing with conflict is never easy but gaining an understanding of the five stages of group development has helped me in my interactions in group settings. Adapted from *Pastor and Parish: A Systems Approach*, I am able to recognize the stages and respond accordingly to a situation. The first stage is *forming* where questioning and trust are two main components of the group. This stage is vital and forms the foundation for the group to bond, centered around a covenant. Next is *storming*, when the group becomes more honest and open, and is where common ground is discovered. Stages three and four are *norming* and *performing*. This is where the work gets done through cooperation, problem solving and intimacy. Finally comes *transformation*. In this stage the group has accomplished its goal based on a common vision. Through a process of reflection and closure a deeper learning occurs, both individually and collectively. This system of group development is but one way of practicing right relations.

By building on a foundation of shared vision through covenant, we can work towards balanced interactions in safe environments.

Throughout my years as a Unitarian Universalist I have come to realize the power in the idea of relationship based in covenant. The mission of living in right relation within our congregations can empower us to serve one another and envision a world community where every person is safe, honored and upheld. Having these benchmarks in place we are able to set the stage for spiritual growth and living intentional lives together.

Part II- Independent Study Experiences

Balancing Acts: Keeping Children Safe in Congregations – Online Course

Date: 3/10/08

Offered by: The New England Adolescent Research Institute

Led by: Online Course by Rev. Debra Haffner and Joan Tabachnick

Reflection: This online workshop gave a powerful introduction in bringing the awareness that sexual abuse exists in our congregations and lays out ways of preventing and dealing with it, if it occurs. It was specifically done for Unitarian Universalist congregations bringing in the aspects that every person is important and has worth, even those we find whose behavior is less than tolerable. An understanding of abuse from different perspectives was helpful in planning and implementing policies which help congregations be informed and prepared.

Integration: After taking and reviewing the information from this course I was able to articulate to our Steering Committee the need for a more comprehensive and educational component to our written policy. It has largely been my responsibility, as RE Coordinator, to implement programs into the workings of our fellowship for such purposes. I have taken the responsibility seriously and have made efforts to educate myself and the congregation in awareness and prevention around issues of abuse, safety and policy. Along with our written policy I created for this fellowship, we have a notebook of information about sexual abuse and the reporting requirements for the state. Each volunteer is given the opportunity to review its contents. We also practice the District and UUA Code of Ethics policy and keep copies on file. There are plans to provide a survivor service that would serve as a tool for healing as well as education for the community as a whole.

Part II - Personal / Life Experience

1981-1982

VICA (Volunteer in Child Assistance)

Orange County, CA

Reflection: As a college student I became aware of this county-run organization in need of volunteers. I attended trainings to assist families in the county system through the welfare department, child advocacy and teen mothers. It was an eye-opening experience, and a place I could help in a direct way. The trainings prepared the volunteers to deal with issues arising from family situations brought about by spousal and child abuse reported to the county agencies.

Integration: As a VICA volunteer I was assigned a family to assist in life skills, education and counseling. I accompanied clients going to court and served as a support to both parents and children. Through this experience I gained considerable understanding of the complex issues surrounding family dynamics when abuse is present. Education was a large part of this program and a goal of the program was to guide clients to a better understanding of themselves. The tools I used during my time as a volunteer have helped me when working with families in a congregational setting. The building of trust and confidentiality are cornerstones to positive relationships and guide me to be open and receptive to the needs of those who need a listening ear.

Part III - WORK PRODUCTS

The following is a safety document I created for the Pagosah Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. There was no such policy and I felt it imperative that one be in place.

Pagosah UU Fellowship Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adults Protection Requirements

Preamble:

The Pagosah Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (PUUF) recognizes the importance of creating an environment where children are safe from preventable accidents and abuse. We recognize that to adequately address the need for safe environments, some change and inconvenience will be incurred. We also recognize that institutions operating in the best possible manner, with all due concern, cannot guarantee an absolutely risk-free environment.

All PUUF members, visitors, children, volunteers and employees are expected to follow these requirements when supporting or participating in any PUUF sponsored event.

The requirements contain the following sections:

1. Screening and selection of workers with children and youth.
2. Supervision requirements
3. Procedures for reporting, response, removal of a teacher, leader, employee or disruptive child.
4. PUUF Code of Conduct for adults working with children and youth.

These requirements apply to all PUUF children's events and activities such as:

- * Children's Religious Education (CRE) classes and workshops.
- * CRE social events (on and off site)
- * CRE overnight events
- * CRE sponsored social action events
- * General childcare for PUUF events

Definitions

The term *parent* as used herein refers to a child's principal caregiver(s) or the person or persons who have brought the child to the service or function and who have authority, actual or ostensible, over the child. Such persons may include, but are not limited to, parents, guardians, relatives, foster parents, friends and grandparents.

(Note: This is to address the situation where the parent or "principal caregiver" is not the one who brings the child to the service, but wishes the child to participate in the activity. The term "ostensible authority" refers to someone who is believed by us to have such

authority even if, in actuality, he or she doesn't. Thus, someone who brings a child's friend to a service has the "ostensible authority" over that child even if the true parents do not know their child is attending CRE.)

SECTION ONE

1. Screening and selection of workers with children and youth

* Teachers or youth advisors must be a member or friend in good standing of this or another UU congregation for a minimum of three months, or be a professional employee of the fellowship. Advisors for high school youth must be at least 25 years old, advisors for middle school must be at least 21 years old, and all other teachers must be at least 16 years old.

* Caregivers supervising children at PUUF events must be at least 13 years old.

SECTION TWO

2. Supervision Requirements

It has been determined the below ratios are the maximum, and it is recommended a "floating adult" be available to step in and assist with activities if necessary. (The "floating adult" is usually the CRE Coordinator)

2.1 Pre-school care (Children aged 3-5 years. Ratio 6:1)

2.2 Primary group care (Children aged 6-8 years. Ratio 6:1)

2.3 Elementary group care (Children aged 9-11 years. Ratio 12:1)

2.4 Junior High group care (Children aged 12-14 years. Ratio 14:1)

2.5 Senior high group care (Children aged 15+ years. Ratio 16:1)

2.6 Childcare during non-CRE sponsored PUUF events (Ratio 6:1)

PUUF will provide childcare on request for school-aged children at most events.

The RE Coordinator will provide a list consisting of care-givers who are at least 13, and has a recommendation from a member or friend of PUUF.

2.7 Off- site social action activities

A minimum of two adults must accompany any group of children going off-site. Activity organizers need to ensure a 6:1 child/adult ratio.

2.8 Transportation to and from Fellowship events

It is the responsibility of parents to provide or organize safe transportation to and from PUUF events. If a child is riding in a vehicle other than the parent's vehicle, a permission slip must be signed by the parent(s) and be collected by the event organizer.

SECTION THREE

3. Procedures for reporting, response and removal of a teacher, leader, employee or disruptive child

3.1 PUUF Events

All persons affiliated with PUUF events who acquire knowledge or a reasonable suspicion that a youth or youths have been sexually molested or exploited, injured, or been the victim of significant objectionable conduct must immediately report the incident to the leader of the event, and the PUUF Steering Committee (SC) President. The Board is then responsible for taking appropriate actions.

3.2 Response to media inquiries

In the event there are media inquiries concerning an alleged incident of abuse relating to a PUUF event, or involving a PUUF member only, then a PUUF SC Member may speak for PUUF in response to media inquiries.

3.4 Removal of an adult advisor

Any person with concern about an adult shall immediately contact the PUUF SC President who will assess the situation and take immediate, precautionary measures to protect the safety of the child(ren) when he or she believes a volunteer, caregiver or staff member may have engaged in behavior harmful to children. Precautionary measures may include promptly relieving the affected worker from his or her work to the extent that it involves interaction with children. This removal will be done, pending a fair hearing as outlined below. The SC President will provide the affected worker or volunteer with an opportunity to know the charges against him or her. Whenever possible and without risk of further harm occurring, the affected worker or volunteer will be given an opportunity to know the evidence, and source thereof, supporting such charges, and the right to reply to or rebut such charges. After assessing the situation, the SC President will consult with the Steering Committee (unless there is good reason not to do so). If the SC President considers it appropriate he or she may also consult with the CRE Coordinator and/or the Chair of the CRE Committee. After consultation with the President and Steering Committee a decision will be made as to the action to be taken. The SC President will then inform the District Services Staff Group of UUA.

It is understood that such action will be handled with due caution and discretion, and that The SC President has the full backing and support of the PUUF Steering Committee in implementing this policy. Because of potential exposure to charges of discrimination or other legal hazard, the SC and MDD District Staff shall be promptly advised of the circumstances surrounding any removal action under this policy.

3.5 Procedures for managing disruptive or dangerous behavior

(i) Disruptive behavior

If a child is behaving in a disruptive manner, and teachers have found that usual classroom behavior management strategies, such as positive reinforcement or verbal corrections are not effective, the teacher should inform the CRE Coordinator.

After observing the child's behavior the Coordinator should consult the parents and CRE teachers about effective strategies to manage the child's behavior in the CRE classes.

If, after behavior strategies are implemented, the child continues to behave in a disruptive manner, the CRE Coordinator should ask the child's parents to attend the CRE classes alongside the child, in order to manage their behavior.

If the child continues to behave in a disruptive manner, the CRE Coordinator will explore the possibility of meeting the child's religious education needs in another manner. If this proves impractical, the CRE Coordinator, in consultation with the CRE Committee Chair and the PUUF SC, should tell the parents that the child can no longer attend CRE sessions.

(ii) Dangerous or abusive behavior

In the event that any child in the PUUF classes or events is exhibiting behavior that is, in the opinion of the teachers or caregivers, endangering the child or any other child and cannot be reasonably controlled, the teachers or caregivers shall immediately send for the CRE Coordinator. The Coordinator will assess the situation with an option of asking the child's parent to immediately remove the child from the class or activity.

SECTION FOUR

4. PUUF code of conduct for adults working with children and youth

Adults and teens working with children and youth at PUUF events and activities are expected to have the best interests of children and youth at heart. People working with children and youth are expected to nurture the physical, emotional and spiritual growth by fostering an environment of kindness, trust, respect and fun. People working with children and youth are expected to follow this code of conduct.

Managing behavior issues: Ask for support from the CRE Coordinator if you are facing serious behavior issues with a child or group of children. Corporal punishment may NOT be used under any circumstances.

Teachers and caregivers of children of all ages are NOT responsible for:

- Changing infant's diapers
- Assisting a child in the bathroom
- Caring for seriously distressed children
- Caring for disruptive infants, children or youth
- Caring for sick or injured infants, children or youth

- Caring for children whose special needs mean the caregiver cannot satisfactorily care for other children present
- Caring for children who are endangering themselves or other children and cannot be reasonably controlled

Teachers and caregivers must immediately send for the CRE Coordinator or the child's parents should any of the above issues arise.

Parental handovers for under fives: At the end of classes or activities within the fellowship, teachers of children five years or under must ensure that the children are either picked up from the classroom by their parent or caregiver, or taken by an adult or responsible older child to their parents.

Release of over fives from classes: Children over the age of five may be released at the end of class to join their parents.

Friendship with children and youth: Although PUUF hopes that youth and adults will have a genuine fondness for one another, adults working with children should not develop "friendships" with children and youth. In the adult/youth relationship the adult must assume primary responsibility for maintaining appropriate boundaries in the relationship.

Adopted by the PUUF Steering Committee March 12, 2008

Competency – Volunteer Management

Part I – Overview

As I think of the business of managing volunteers what comes to mind is recognition. Working in the awards and recognition business for many years I have helped individuals and organizations find the “perfect” award for acknowledgment, appreciation or achievement. Being acknowledged is a human need and vital to the sustainability of volunteers, programs and personal growth. As a volunteer myself I know how good it feels to be recognized and honored for my work. This past year I was given the *Volunteer of the Year* award at my church, which came as a surprise since I am the only paid staff. When you validate people for who they are and value their work, they start on a path of continued development of self and leadership skills.

Volunteer retention is important as it directly impacts the quality of a program or the depth of work an organization does. Fostering a sense of belonging to a group is necessary for people to engage fully. Creativity flows from a place of connection to a vision or shared value, and people work hard for causes they believe in. Realizing that it takes many caring individuals to sustain meaning for ourselves and those we serve, we must have people willing to give of themselves with courage and compassion. Taking some time to do group-building activities is a powerful tool in forming and maintaining positive group dynamics. Productivity comes when everyone feels they have a part in a common goal, and is an important member of a team. I have had many experiences with non-competitive games during my tenure as a camp counselor and childcare director, and have used them in settings where the gathered participants do not know one another well, as well as in a group of friends. Having the opportunity to interact with your partners in a non-threatening environment eases tension and anxiety, which in turn fosters trust within the group. When building from a place of trust and shared vision, magic happens, people feel validated and affirmed. From this place, lives change and the world is better for it.

Serving as an RE teacher and youth leader as a volunteer I know the value of a “teachable/learnable” moment. Being presented with an opportunity to make a connection to a value or life lesson is a tremendous gift for both teacher and pupil. I make a point of recognizing these moments and think it is worth mentioning when fostering a

relationship between a volunteer and the task they undertake. When a learning moment arises it can be the process from which reflection, change and growth can all take place. If we, as leaders, have more faith in our people than they have in themselves, we will hear new voices, differing views and richer connections for all.

Part II - Structured Learning Experience

Care and Feeding of Volunteers; Toolbox Session

August 2005

Offered by: MDD at Russell Lockwood Leadership School (RLLS)

Led by: Gary Reser

Reflection: One important aspect of this session was to offer an overview of how group development works. This is helpful when working with a diverse group of people, especially volunteers. Grounding the group in some basic rules to begin any group process is important in forming relationship and connection within the group. When those involved know what is expected, they can be productive with a specific task, a long term project or committee work.

Integration: I have found that by creating a sacred connection to my work and my ministry I have a deeper experience in my interactions. When relating with any group I take care to make it a “holy moment.” Recognizing that this is different for everyone, I believe it is important to pause and remember why we are together. I attend board meetings as part of my position as RE Coordinator and I started lighting a chalice before the meetings. It is a practice that continues in that group. Finding ways to make committee work creative, fun and different is also helpful in supporting volunteers. Laughing and having fun together in a group eases stress making the experience enjoyable.

Leadership Development

August 2005

Offered by: MDD RLLS

Led by: Rev. Joan Van Becelaere

Reflection: This workshop was part of a larger, full-week experience at leadership school in the Mountain Desert District. I gained not only a basic understanding of leadership styles but insight as to how I personally could tap into my leadership abilities. Through small and large group settings I came away with a new perspective; seeing myself as lay leader within a congregation, with a ministry.

Integration: Attending this conference was a life-changing event for me. After attending leadership school, I entered the RE credentialing program. I have put into practice many of the foundational lessons I learned in the leadership development portion of the school. I see leadership possibilities as a ministry, filling a need for greater awareness of myself within the context of a congregation, a denomination and the world at large.

I began working with the children's program at my small fellowship, and have moved into a role of lifespan religious education coordinator, on my way to becoming a credentialed religious educator. I have facilitated several small groups, helping others start new groups. I created a bridging and coming of age program and ceremonies with mentors taking a leading role. My confidence in myself has grown and I see the importance of reflecting that for others I work with including children, youth and adults.

Part II – Personal / Life Experience

Charter Board Member of the Southwest Organization for Sustainability (SOS)

2006 - Present

Reflection: I have served as a volunteer member for three years, and help organize events with other volunteers. Through monthly meetings and events, I support other members and recruit volunteers as necessary. We are a non profit working with other organizations to bring awareness and visibility of environmental issues in our community.

Integration: Working in a volunteer capacity for a non profit is rewarding yet requires commitment to the goal of the organization. This is true for a religious community as

well. When supporting teachers and helpers for our children's program I make an effort to know what they hope to receive from serving. Listening to the needs and goals of those I work with helps us to better serve the participants. Recognition is also an integral part of supporting volunteers. As part of my service to SOS I ask for donations from local businesses, and publicize those businesses through our website and flyers to the community as a way of recognizing their donations. I send cards of gratitude and give recognition in our newsletter to teachers, helpers and to those who donate to our program.

**Ways and Means Chair, High School Vocal Music and Drama Booster Clubs
2001 – 2003**

Reflection: I served as fundraising chair for two school organizations and sat on both music and drama boards. While serving in this capacity I organized parent and student volunteers for rummage sales, car washes, candy and flower sales and auctions. I was responsible for record keeping and handling of monies, distribution of product, and communication with all involved from vendors to students.

Integration: Serving in this capacity helped me with organizing volunteer schedules and working in close cooperation with many youth, parents and faculty. I found it helpful to know the people I was working with. Serving as RE Coordinator, I planned activities so the children could get to know the elders of the congregation. We did a secret Valentine event over several weeks as a way to bridge the gap, and it helped create friendships as well as inform the members about multigenerational communities. From this I had several new volunteers for special activities with the children and youth. In planning activities I look for people with certain skills and match them with a specific task suited to their ability and interest. I find this a successful way to recruit volunteers as it fulfills the purpose of a desired goal. The individual feels honored in serving and the children seem more engaged with the attention they receive.

Part II - Professional Work/Leadership Experiences RE – Based

Reflection: Recruiting helpers for a multigenerational service was a fun way to get many congregants involved with the children's program for a month rehearsing, costume making and singing. 2009 will be the second year of organizing our water ceremony service this way.

Integration: I have been interested in providing ways for a multigenerational community to emerge within our congregation. Planning a service for the water communion is a great time to do this as we welcome members back from summer activities. By using drama and singing, we were able to get many involved who would otherwise not volunteer. The program was well received with those involved having an enjoyable experience. This will most likely be an annual event at Pagosah UU Fellowship. In keeping with the multigenerational attitude, the jr. high youth decided to put on a dance. I facilitated the planning by encouraging them to ask for volunteers to bring snacks, help decorate and bring music. This was another very successful event. The youth felt empowered and the attendees were impressed the youths abilities to pull it off. Again there is talk of making this an annual event around Valentine's Day.

Part III - WORK PRODUCTS

The following was a newsletter article in preparation for our 2008 water ceremony.

Musings from the Back Room

Sharing stories. Our ancestors gathered to tell stories, some tales over and over again because they believed that each time you hear a story you come as a different person. It was a way to gauge where they had been and where they were on life's path. It also helped the younger generation learn the stories of the past to pass them into the future. It's the same thing we do on Sunday mornings; come together to hear one another's stories. By telling and hearing stories, we honor our journeys and are witnesses to the journeys of others. The formal ritual of storytelling has been lost from our culture, but we can revive it by gathering with family and friends, giving ourselves the opportunity to draw ever closer in our shared human experience. We will put the art of storytelling into action for our water communion service on September 7.

During the month of August our children's program will be preparing for a performance of *The Woman Who Outshone the Sun*. This tale of Lucia Zenteno is part of the oral history of the Zapotec Indians of Oaxaca, Mexico. Through story and song we will share in this multigenerational service. We will need help from the congregation as cast, costumers, and directors for the 5 Sundays in August. Please share some time in the back room to bring this special presentation to fruition. Talk with De Anna or Sky for more information.

Aug 3 - The children and interested adults will hear the story, *The Woman Who Outshone the Sun*. We'll practice the songs in the play as part of our preparation.

Aug 10 & 17 - We will continue our work on the play preparing props and costumes. The characters include Lucia, an Iguana, Water, Fish, Otters and Townspeople. (If you have a talent for creativity, we could use you these days)

Aug 24 - This will be our first rehearsal day to put everything together for the performance. Make plans to be at the fellowship as we continue to work towards our goal for September 7.

Aug 31- Our final Sunday to polish our singing and character parts, putting the finishing touches on the costumes and getting ready for a fun, multigenerational, interactive service.

The following appeared in the October newsletter, thanking all those who participated in the program.

A BIG Thank You – Muchas Gracias to Sky, Joan, Julie, Elizabeth and Tony for helping with our dramatic production during the Water Communion service. The volunteering of your time and effort are greatly appreciated. We couldn't have done it without your support. Thanks to the congregation for your role as supporting actors. Your enthusiasm made the day, and helped make it a memorable experience for all.

And finally to our cast; Marley, Sol, Desi, Ayriana, Demi, Dela and Molly – **You all are STARS!**

Thanks to each of you for an excellent performance. I am saying thank you!

With love and hugs, De Anna

This article appeared in our newsletter for June 2008.

Musings from the Back Room

“Children possess an innate spirituality and deep sense of wonder about the world, but without guidance and the opportunity to celebrate the greater mystery, their faith development may never reach its full potential.”

This statement comes from *Come into the Circle* by Michelle Richards. She also writes, “We may be their guides on their spiritual journeys....but if we allow ourselves to go along, we can reach greater spiritual insights of our own.”

I have had this experience over the years working with children sharing their wonder and possibilities. I see myself reflected back to me many times over through the child who is too shy to sing out or the one who can't bear to rip the paper but instead cuts it with scissors. The self conscience, perfectionist that I am goes along and recognizes the need for someone to take an interest and tell them it's alright. My work fulfills the part that says I may be able to make a small difference in the world through the life of a child. My hope is that some of you will step forward this summer to be a guide and take this opportunity to celebrate the greater mystery with the future generation of our Unitarian Universalist faith. If you have any interest in volunteering with our children's program, talk with me about it. This is the time. Ask yourself, "If not now, when? If not me, who?"

In fellowship and service, De Anna

Competency – Jewish and Christian Heritages

Part I – Overview

I came upon Unitarian Universalism with a desire to “search for truth and meaning” for myself. It is through learning, a foundation found in our 7 Principles, that started me on the path of embracing Unitarian Universalism. When I spoke about my faith in the not-so-distant past, it was through the lens of Christianity and its somewhat shameful tendencies of, “you are not enough.” Throughout my adult years as a Unitarian Universalist I have come to embrace my Christian heritage more and more. In my new understanding I speak to the message of hope and love drawn from the life of Jesus and his teachings. I learned much about Jesus’ life in many hours of Bible studies and classes, and realized the grace of this world is not to be forgotten, and yet because we forget, it is important to come together in community reminding one another that we are free and whole. When first attending a Unitarian Universalist church, I was drawn to a table where they were making sandwiches for people with AIDS. It is a simple act, but one I see as Christ-like. It speaks to the transformative justice that informs my work, which is about greeting the stranger at the door. In a recent talk by Reverend Nancy Crumbine she told of three things Unitarian Universalists do well. One of which was using authentic anger to teach about injustice, which is at the heart of our Unitarian Universalist movement. Using many of the stories from the Bible can help bring a common language to begin a conversation with others to bring about positive change in our world.

Tied into all religion is question and doubt. Stories from both the Old and New Testament are filled with characters questioning God. The early Christians, like Michael Servetus, spent much of their search in questioning the doctrines of the Church. It is in that questioning that Unitarians and Universalists found a savior and salvation to live out their faith doing justice, loving mercy and walking humbly with their God, as it says in Micah of the Old Testament. It is my own questioning and searching where I find the motivation to walk this path and share it with others. In celebrating an education that inspires us to respond with love and compassion, I continue to learn and grow from each experience. Within a community bound by covenant, we have a gospel to share where questions are encouraged and a life-long learning is modeled in a multigenerational community of searchers.

Part II - Academic Courses

Life of Christ I, Life of Christ II, Hebrew Literature

Date Completed: June 1982

Pacific Christian College (aka Hope University, Fullerton, CA)

Life and Literature of Old Testament

Date Completed: May 1983

Westmont College, Santa Barbara, CA

Reflection: It has been many years since taking a college course, but at the time these informed much of my life and understanding of Christian teachings and doctrine. I remember enjoying the learning process of studying the Bible as literature. I also remember being surprised by how many contradictions were in the Bible compared to what I was taught as a child. The instructors were helpful by allowing questions and offered some explanations in their teaching.

Integration: Besides hearing Bible stories in my Sunday school classes and attending church as an adolescent, these college courses were instrumental in forming how I view the Bible and it's Christian message. It is also where I began to question most of what I was learning. I have a strong understanding of many stories from the Bible, which I use in my work as a religious educator. Using the stories can help direct conversations from a moral perspective and gives them a context which is important in our society today. Many of those I work with, both children and adults, do not have a religious foundation, and the stories from the Bible are new to them. I believe that by having a basic understanding of the common stories they will be able to interact with others who come from that tradition. By having some knowledge of the language used in the Bible, it can open a conversation to find common ground.

Part II - Structured Learning Experiences

2009 UUA General Assembly

Date: 6/25/09

Offered by: LREDA Fahs Lecture, *Nurturing the Spiritual Imagination of Children*

Given by: Rabbi Sandy Sasso

Reflection: This lecture by Rabbi Sasso was inspiring and a confirmation of what draws me to this work. Drawing from the Jewish tradition of teaching through storytelling she explained that it is in telling the story and having the conversation that is important. Most children by the age of three have some concept of God, and by simplifying the language we can talk with them about spirituality.

Integration: I have taken to heart and practice many of the ideas presented by Rabbi Sasso. Most importantly, that there are some things too important to be interrupted, and time with children is one of them. I have restructured our “education” time with the children and youth to incorporate more quiet reflection and sharing, instead of only “teaching”. The sharing of stories goes both ways. When a child is sharing from their heart, I find that I slow down and find freedom in the listening. Giving up the structure and enjoying the moment is making a relaxed forum for finding teachable moments. Creating a time for ritual is also another important way of staying in the moment and allowing space for the holy to appear in connection to one another. Rabbi Sasso explained that rituals are essential in spiritual life, and I often draw from my experience as a child incorporating aspects of communion, prayer and singing into our worship time.

2008 LREDA Conference - Keynote Presentation, Embodying Wholeness

Date: October 24 - 27, 2008

Offered by: LREDA

Given by: Rebecca Parker

Reflection: This address, taken from Dr. Parker’s book, *Saving Paradise*, focused on aspects of a lifespan learning process of maturing in love from a multigenerational and multicultural perspective. I learned that the crucifixion was not the central theme of the early church, but rather Jesus’ life and ministry in this world. In one early painting that Dr. Parker noted, there were four rivers from the feet of Jesus. This water, flowing from the “One” is representative of the diversity and multiplicity of multiculturalism. Through

certain rituals and rites of passage in early Christianity we see a corresponding message for embracing a multigenerational element.

Integration: The understanding of Drs. Parker and Nakashima's research brought a deeper appreciation for the history of my Christian roots. I am better able to articulate my Unitarian and Universalists foundations within the context of the Christian message. The first Universalists believed that one sacrifice was enough and by understanding how Jesus lived, we can live fully here on Earth. The Unitarian Christians also embraced Jesus' justice work as evidenced through Rev. Theodore Parker's statement *that the moral universe bends towards justice*. Both of these aspirations take up the cause of "talking back to redemptive violence", Dr. Parker said in her talk. I find this statement at the root of how I am better able to discuss the transition from a more stringent Christianity to my Unitarian Universalist faith now. I feel comfortable using stories from the Bible to express ways in which I live. Seeing the Earth as paradise, as explained by Dr. Parker, was key in early representations of art and worship. I find a kinship in how I worship and honor the Earth, often including it when worshipping with children. I see the work of restoring the environment and transformative justice as cornerstones to what informs much of my life's path, and hearing about it from a Christian theologian was an experience that will continue to feed me.

PART III - WORK PRODUCT

This lesson plan was prepared to connect with our Jewish and Christian heritage. Following is the newsletter submission from the children's religious exploration schedule. While sharing the stories mentioned, the children and youth set up and served soup and bread to the congregation after the service. It has become a tradition in our Fellowship with different groups taking part in preparing and serving. The youth felt proud being the first to do this service. It connected a real experience for the children as they practiced compassion and hospitality towards others.

March 29: Hospitality

Welcoming strangers and inviting the hungry are both ways we practice hospitality. It is through these traditions we will hear stories from our Christian and Jewish heritage about acts of caring for one another. The story from the Jewish tradition, titled *The Two Brothers*, shows how the selfless act of helping another creates space for a sacred occurrence. And the story from the Bible, *The Prodigal Son*, Jesus tells of a father's compassion for his lost son. We will prepare and serve a meal for our fellowship brothers and sisters, practicing our UU religion that can change the world for the better.

Competency – Unitarian Universalist History & Polity

Part I - Overview

The more I learn about the roots of Unitarian Universalism, the more I am drawn to its openness to process and change in organizational structure as well as in our covenant. This ever-evolving affirmation in seeking and discovering, is what illumines my path, which in turn, informs how I minister in my role as a religious educator. I am aware of the heretical roots of our faith and am drawn to social justice issues. I appreciate and continue to learn about the historical aspects of both the Unitarians' and Universalists' work as social justice pioneers in the larger world, even as far back as Servetus and Castellio. It is this that draws us together, all on paths of differing beliefs, and which our history dictates is the way to salvation for all. We have a plaque on the wall of our fellowship that sums up the way we are together: *More Curiosity, Less Judgment*. It helps to know that the forbearers of this faith had to also step into that place of questioning, rather than insisting that "revelation is sealed."

The idea of congregational polity, taken from the Cambridge Platform, continues to inform us of the freedoms each congregation has; to embrace the covenant while still holding the theology they choose. Leading into the Civil War was the Transcendentalist movement opening the door for yet another new way of thinking. This widening view of life, as seen through our own experience, is embraced today as a source we draw from. As the move West began in America, so did the social justice issues which seemed to fit with the idea of Universalism, that all were worthy to be saved. The organization of the Universalist movement was slow, but necessary as they grew in numbers. Rooted in a structure similar to that of the United States government, social action was inseparable from living a life of good works in faith. The leaders and clergy of both traditions were informed by one another. The shifting theologies merged several times on varied subjects including the doctrine of the trinity, the freedom to search for individual truths, and working toward establishing the Kingdom of God.

Both Unitarianism and Universalism pulled away from the conservative Christian doctrine making way for a merger in 1959. The road to merge the two faiths was rocky,

yet after years of compromise and both parties being heard, we have a covenantal religious tradition based in the democratic process, with a mission of working for justice and equality, infused with love.

Coming back to the root of that mission is what helps me stay focused in the values I want to uphold in my life and in my work as a religious educator. I see the importance of a stated mission, keeping in mind that the covenant can be used as a verb, and a shared experience of the holy is a where conversations can begin. From this shared sense of values, transformation happens within ourselves, among us as Unitarian Universalists, and beyond our churches into the world.

PART II - Structured Learning Experience

UU University / Governance Track

June 25-26, 2009

Offered by: GA Planning Committee

Led by: Unity Consulting

Reflection: Within the context of policy governance this track of UU University began with some basic understanding of a structure to empower justice and holy work through our congregations. The Cambridge Platform was discussed as a foundation to this work of values, mission and end results. Assigning leadership accountability and evaluating the process were both covered. Hearing case studies and sample meeting formats of policy governance were included in the presentation.

Integration: This workshop began asking the question, “how can governance liberate the energy and creativity of Unitarian Universalist congregations to transform souls and bless the world?” This statement was integrated throughout the workshop, and helped to define the many aspects of the material covered. I was most impressed with the “nested bowls” concept of values, mission and ends as a way to inform the work we do in the world. The content of the workshop was beyond the scope of the small fellowship I now work with, yet I was inspired by the ideas it presented. I have been able to integrate much of the information in our steering committee’s work. They are now in the process of evaluating the mission statement and have a basic understanding of the nested bowls. I helped plan a service with the GA participants from our congregation, using what I

learned to tie it all together. I am interested in learning more about Policy Governance as it relates to the UUA, and the congregations that have adopted this format.

Religious Heritage and Values

August 2005

Offered by: Mountain Desert District, Russell Lockwood Leadership School

Led by: Rev. Mike Tipton

Reflection: This section of leadership school focused on the history, polity and theology of Unitarian Universalism. There were five sessions during this week-long learning experience; the first being the historical theological roots, and if they have relevance today in our congregations. Next we focused on Unitarianism and Universalism separately, looking at covenants versus creeds, congregational polity and how we draw from the roots of both traditions. An overview of the UUA helped define our vision of truly living our Principles, where we are going as a denomination, and what are the ties that bind us together. We also spent time articulating our own definition of our faith through the lens of the liberal religious history.

Integration: The experience of attending leadership school and especially the UU history track, helped me understand the Christian roots on a more personal level. I appreciate and embrace the idea of congregational polity in the workings of the small fellowship I am a member of. As I moved into a leadership role in my congregation as RE Coordinator, I saw a need for a renewed sense of who we were. Because of these sessions I feel better equipped to help other members understand the reasons of being a member congregation of the UUA. Although there had been a mission statement in place, I have worked to bring it forward in our meetings and interactions, fostering a relationship between our coming together *as* a community and our ministry *in* the community. I lead a *New UU Primer* as an adult RE class with an emphasis on the covenantal foundation of Unitarian Universalism.

Part III - WORK PRODUCT

I was the service leader for this service. The participants were the 2009 General Assembly attendees from our congregation. I tied it together with thoughts from my own experience (in blue).

Order of Service **For Service Leaders**

OPENING CHIME

Begin 10:30

OPENING SONG

#361 Enter, Rejoice and Come In

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

THE TRIP WAS WORTH IT, AND THIS IS WHY

We all have something to share with you from our experience at General Assembly this past June in Salt Lake City where over 3500 UU's from children to youth to adult gathered in celebration, contemplation, education and communion. We hope you take a bit of the spirit of GA with you, come join with us as you hear our stories.

OPENING WORDS

Our tradition lives and breathes when we hear and let others tell their stories.

LIGHTING OF THE CHALICE

Words from The Rev. Dr. Randolph W.B. Becker Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Key West August 3, 2008

WORDS OF AFFIRMATION

JOYS AND CONCERNS

STORY FOR ALL AGES

HYMN

READING and SILENT MEDITATION

During this reading and reflection, I will share pieces of my experience in the Governance Track of UU University. My reason for taking this track was to help fulfill a portion of the Religious Education Credentialing Program requirements, I don't know that I received that – but what I did get were nuggets of inspiration and a desire to bring it here back to you all. The core question being asked in this track was – How can governance liberate the energy and creativity of UU congregations to transform and bless the world? Sit comfortably and you may choose to close your eyes. Take a deep breath, and be present here. Picture a beautiful, big bowl. Maybe it's one you have, or one you've seen somewhere or an imaginary bowl. This is your values bowl – What qualities does it contain that you'd like to see us carry forward into the future of this Fellowship? What are the values from within this fellowship? Resting inside this big, beautiful bowl is another, just as beautiful, but smaller. This is your missions bowl – and in it resides the differences we are here to make among us. What are those overarching differences you'd wish to make, and for whom? And again, another bowl, smaller still – this bowl contains the ENDS. Looking beyond, what specific, measurable differences do you imagine we can make, and for whom, from these bowls of values and mission? From these nested bowls comes a flame, like the one from our chalice – in which a holy conversation begins, and lights our way to a shared experience that transforms and blesses the world. And we'll close in silent reflection with one question – what is your job in this religious community?

PROGRAM

PAULINE: to speak about her experience as delegate and on plenary. From this place of nested bowls we look to Pauline to share from the plenary sessions of General Assembly. You could say this is the values bowl, where, from within the association- informs and articulates how we are working in the world and within our congregations. It is big business at it's best.

PHYL: to speak about a workshop she attended on Universalist history I attended a lecture by Rabbi Sandy Sasso, the second woman to become an ordained Rabbi, and the first Rabbi to become a mother. She said, “religion is the container for

spirituality.” And that “wrestling with faith is important, otherwise we will accept what is given to us.” We UU’s don’t usually have to worry about that – the accepting part that is, and Phyl will give us a glimpse into her understanding of the Universalist branch of our faith from a workshop she attended. She is a testament to our life-span religious education.

JESSIE: speaking on her experience of “the good life”

I also had the opportunity to hear the Rev. Dr. Nancy Crumbine, visiting associate professor of English at Dartmouth, and UU minister. She said one of the things UU’s do well is that we’re okay with not knowing, we love the questions, as much as the answers. Jessie attended several workshop that drew her in to asking, what is the good life, and how are we connected to the interdependent web? What’s not to love about those questions?

NORMA: speaking about her experience in the theology track

One definition of Theology is: rational inquiry into religious questions especially those posed by an organized religious community. Another statement Rabbi Sasso made was that by 3 years of age, concepts of God or theology begin to be formed. And she said there are two reasons we don’t talk to our kids about it. First, we think they’re too young and cannot begin to grasp the abstract thinking it requires. And second, we’re afraid children will ask questions we don’t know the answer to. Well, Norma took the plunge and took the theology track at UUU. She went with questions – let’s see if she found any answers for herself.

In the spirit of encouraging the conversation – because it’s not about the answers, it ‘s about having the conversation - Another nugget from the rabbi.

OFFERING

HYMN

EXTINGUISHING THE CHALICE and CLOSING WORDS

Rev Nancy Crumbine will have the last word:

It is dangerous to forget the grace of this world- and because we do forget,
It is so important to come together again. See you soon!

CALL IN CHILDREN

Please join us for refreshments and conversation after the service!

The following is an order of service from *A Chosen Faith* service led by an adult RE book study group. Several of us took part in the service, each taking a section of the book, and speaking to our experience and how it related to our own spiritual growth.

OPENING WORDS: De Anna

We come from many separate rooms to the place we gather today.

We bring within us our parents and grandparents and ancestors back to the dawn of humankind. We bring with us our memories of religious instruction, of choices, arguments and agreements. Some of us have left the religions of our youth, others have always been here.

We would remember whence we come, and how there comes to be a place for us here, and how we shall build the future together. Paul Sprecher

CHALICE LIGHTING: Joni Jill

WORDS OF AFFIRMATION: Joni Jill

JOYS & SORROWS: De Anna

May the joys and sorrows spoken here this morning, and those which remain unspoken be enfolded in the warmth of this community. And may that warmth extend in sympathy and compassion to all who are hurting in our wider world.

STORY FOR ALL AGES: De Anna

HYMN # 113 Where is our Holy Church?

READING # 468: De Anna

MOMENT OF SILENCE

INTRODUCTION: De Anna

The introduction of the book *A Chosen Faith* begins with Forrest Church, Minister of the Unitarian Church of All Souls in New York. He says all theology is autobiographical. So when he and Rev. John Buehrens, past president of the UUA, decided to write a history of Unitarian Universalism it came out as more of a dialog between the two. They share personal stories and draw on their experiences as ministers. In addition to our 7 Principles the covenant of our association refers to 6 sources of our faith. The living tradition we share draws from many sources:

Zoe will begin by reading excerpts from Part One of the book. We will then hear from Phyl Daleske, Pam Kircher, Carol Otis, Ed Funk and myself. Sit back, and listen to this introduction of Unitarian Universalism as seen through the eyes of the participants in *A Chosen Faith* Study Group.

Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions, which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

This is the sixth, and final source of the Purposes and Principles. It was added in 1995 after much debate.

Our Transcendentalists Unitarians, Emerson, Fuller and Thoreau would not have scoffed at adding it. Theirs was a liberal openness to hold what was good from the past and to meld it with new insights to formulate a new way of thinking.

Their theological vision of nature drew them out of the academic and gave us all a wider view for contemplation.

Forrest Church, in his chapter titled *For the Beauty of the Earth*, says that the idea that our sixth source was a latecomer doesn't make much sense. The concept that the Earth was sacred came before Judaism, Christianity and the other world religions. The realization that we are a part of – not apart from the ground of our being is what draws me to this particular source.

My theology is defined by my mindfulness of the divine in all things - the profound and the common. John Buehrens in his chapter entitled *Returning to the Springs* talks about his mentor Jake Trapp, a poet and Unitarian minister. Trapp writes:

The fresh mountain springs of religion are in the signing of poems,
in such feelings of wonder, of relatedness, of intimacy with all that lives.
Awe becomes reverence- Relatedness becomes community and communion.

I am amazed by this poem, but that doesn't surprise me. One of my favorite hymns is *Spirit of Life* by Carolyn McDade. She says she is a poet first, then a songwriter. I have sung with Carolyn in a group of women, and have found there a profound sense of community and communion.

At one of the events a couple years ago I had this experience that seems to bring it all together for me of how this source touches many of us.

We began to sing, and I had the thought, that if I ever ceased to stop and notice a rainbow, then I was surely finished here on this earth. I wrote this in my journal as we sang, just as we arrived at the final verse of the song:

*There is a bow within the rain
And it will come and bend again
And colors shine where we have been together*

I had no idea that that was the next line of the song, and yet in that moment, I knew that what I had thought and written was it.

That my connection with the Earth, Sky and all that surrounds me is the same connection I feel in a group of women singing together, and in this place, living my Chosen Faith.

Reverend Church says that anyone looking for the holy land might best begin with the Earth that sustains us. And I would have to agree with him. He goes on to say that symbols, metaphors and stories are the basic building blocks of religion. The early Pagan or Primitive religions are based on this. Primitive from the Latin meaning first, original, elemental. Their encounter with nature inspired both humility and awe. You would think an enlightened tradition such as ours would have graduated beyond superstitions of fearing the nature gods, and for many years we did. But in recent years, Unitarian Universalists have discovered that with each gain in scientific understanding we risk losing something more important, an intimate experience of the power and mystery of creation.

I end with a question posed by Saint Lawrence, Who should I adore? The creator or the creation? Past president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, and present Executive Director of Amnesty International, William Schultz answered this way: “Most Western religions have answered back, ‘Adore the Creator’ Then supplied an image – Zeus, Jehovah, Christ. But our answer is far different. The creation, surely, for whatever there be of the creator will be made manifest in her handiwork”

We are guided more by common values than common beliefs, and when Reverend John Buehrens was asked ‘why have faith?’ He answered: Faith is not about believing in some proposition in spite of the evidence – it is more about living with courage, gratitude and integrity in spite of life’s inevitable losses. I put it this way. My understanding of faith is the way I live out my personal spiritual practice. I encounter my faith when I am overcome with emotion; feeling fully grateful for a moment of clarity and connectedness with the world around me or with another person.

The connections I feel to these moments are what brings meaning to my life and carries me through times of despair.

Competency – Worship

Part I – Overview

Since my first experience with an integrated worship, I realized that being present in each worship experience, whether planning or participating, is an important aspect in connecting to the sacred. A desire for participants to feel drawn in and connected to themselves, with others, and to the spirit of life is what motivates me in worship planning. I have learned the importance of bonding with a group before planning a worship experience.

I first attended a worship workshop while serving as a volunteer youth advisor. The focus of the workshop was youth orientated with the adult leaders working with the youth in small groups. The integral part and most lasting experience for me was learning how important it is to empower the youth. By creating a space for open communication and respect for all involved, planning and implementing a worship service is affirming to those involved in the process and those experiencing the worship.

When planning a service, it is also important to know the group you are planning for. As part of my planning process I ask; “what do I want to say, to whom, and how do I want to say it.” I put this aspect into practice when I created an opening ceremony for one hundred women at a retreat. I incorporated a time for bonding, opening, affirming, stretching and deep sharing, as steps within the larger group, to help the participants develop connections with one another.

Using ritual continues to be a main theme running through my worship planning process. It can prepare people for worship and create a special worship space. I include elements for the five senses so participants can encounter different ways of worship. For those who may be differently-abled with sight or sound, this can enhance their experience.

I have also planned and led several services in my role as religious education coordinator at the Pagosah UU Fellowship. They include a Bridging Ceremony for two youth upon high school graduation, and Coming of Age services for youth transitioning from middle school to high school. I planned multigenerational worship services for Flower Communion, Water Ceremony, Easter and Christmas services. All these services were well received by the congregation, and I have been asked to implement future

services involving the children and youth of the fellowship. I am called upon to be a storyteller for all ages, and plan to continue formal training in this capacity. I serve as a mentor to the few youth we serve, and encourage their participation in helping to plan and serving as leaders during Sunday services.

Because worship is an important part of my spirituality, I make an effort to create a sacred place for others to have a welcoming, positive and lasting experience.

Part II - Structured Learning Experiences

Developing Children's and Youth Worship

Date: February 28, 2009

Offered by: Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Durango

Led by: Keeley Sorokti

Reflection: This workshop focused on training those who may be working with children and youth through worship. It offered an overview of why it is important for children to worship. Specifics about the how, when and where worship will take place, within a specific setting, was covered for the individual fellowships attending.

Integration: Attending this workshop helped me focus on the connections that are made by a positive worship experience, most importantly for children. I put this new awareness to use in my small, one-room RE setting. In the process of preparing the space, a floor lamp is used instead of the over-head lights making the space inviting. We also have soft music playing as they enter and often use incense fulfilling a sensory element. The children and youth then make an altar using the "worship box" items. This creates a feeling of ownership for the group and they cooperate together doing it. This has helped ground the group in a transformed environment. Recently I have been adjusting the program to fit the needs of those attending that day, recognizing the differences in the way people learn. By using many of the ideas presented in the workshop I have "let go" of certain expectations and now make it a goal to create a memorable, pleasing experience in community, rather than forcing an activity that may or may not connect to the sacred.

Community Workshop**Date: October 26, 2008****Offered by: LREDA Conference****Led by: Jennifer Nichols-Payne and Amanda Robinson**

Reflection: As part of the LREDA Conference, this community-centered workshop focused on how to build multigenerational congregations with aspects for worship. It was stated that worshipping together creates an atmosphere for a multigenerational community, and that church is often the only place people of different ages gather and interact. Many examples of services and activities were discussed, along with the definitions of learning styles. These have been helpful to me when planning a multi-aged worship setting.

Integration: As part of my integrating this conference, I presented a sermon about multigenerational congregations and have incorporated many of the ideas presented into the workings of our worship. For the past two years our Water Communion has been a multigenerational service, with a multi-aged group participating in a play together. They rehearse, plan costumes, sets and practice songs, which has brought many together that would not have otherwise interacted. I see the importance of bringing people together for a common purpose, and know that it is in the process where connections happen and not necessarily in the finished product. Our *Guest at your Table (GAYT)* service, close to Thanksgiving, is also multigenerational. This year we are developing an *Offerings* worship service where families share a reading or poem, offer a food item for the local food bank and hear about *GAYT*. This is an annual event along with an all-fellowship potluck, creating a day of community within the context of worshipping together.

Spiritual Development Workshop on Worship**Date: Spring 2002****Offered by: PSWD****Led by: UUA Facilitators**

Reflection: The focus of this workshop was how the youth of the district could play an integral part in their congregations by planning worship services that include and interest them. Learning different styles of worship and creating a safe worship experience were covered through the Five Steps of Community Building. Learning how to facilitate a worship planning meeting was another part of the training. Incorporating the *five-sense*

concept to worship planning was also part of the training. Our small group created a bond, an aspect I believe is important when working with youth, children and adults.

Integration: As a result of attending this workshop, I helped plan a youth worship service in my volunteer capacity as a Jr. High leader at the UU Church of South County in Mission Viejo, CA using the format presented at the workshop. The resources given at this workshop have been helpful in my work with all ages. I planned a multigenerational service in my role as RE Coordinator for Pagosah Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. I recruited volunteers to work with the youth and children, including them in the planning process. We used the circle format for this service, introducing the participants to a new worship experience. Each person was included within the circle as we created the design of a web in the center. The circle worship was new for the congregation, and it was well received. We changed many aspects of the “normal” worship experience, and by combining it with some of the standard parts of our service, we created familiarity. Having a simple theme when planning multigenerational worship is important, helping us center our goals and even the youngest child could grasp the concept.

Part II - Personal / Life Experience

PSWD Women’s Annual Retreat

May 2005

Reflection: For several years I attended a women’s retreat taking part in many rituals and celebrations regarding women’s life experiences and milestones. After a less-than-dynamic experience at one retreat, several friends and I decided to volunteer as organizers for the next event.

Integration: One aspect to a moving experience is having a powerful opening and closing ritual or marking. My goal in taking on the planning of this portion of the retreat was to commemorate the experience each of us would have. I solicited several women who would bring components that could help us center as a group and individually. I gathered objects, found readings and songs to implement into the worship aspect. I used the five steps of community building to create a space for the participants to be involved to the level they chose. It also set the tone for the remainder of the retreat. A meditation was incorporated into the service and each woman left with a small stone given to her by

another. This helped facilitate connections with self and others and participants shared their gratitude for the touching and powerful opening. I was very conscience and engaged in my process of putting this service together. I now realize being mindful about the experience helped me realize that when a service is well planned and the leader is comfortable with the elements, it can be a wonderful experience for all involved.

Part II - Professional Work / Leadership Experience

Worship Lay Leader Training

Date: February 1, 2009

Reflection: I helped plan and facilitate this workshop for Pagosah UU Fellowship. Our group of five met several times collecting materials from other congregations' service leader trainings, combining it with much of the resource material from my experience at Russell Lockwood Leadership School (RLLS). We had 10 adults and 2 youth attend with great results to restructure our morning worship experience. We covered the nuts and bolts of the service leader's duties including guiding the speakers to be informed about the UUA, and our fellowship.

Integration: The process of putting together this workshop brought many aspects forward for exploration of not only how we "do" worship, but *what* is worship. It came to the attention of the committee that congregants wanted a deeper experience when they came to church, and by incorporating a more structured format we have achieved that in certain ways. Since the time of the workshop, we have continued our efforts by reevaluating and making changes where it deems necessary. The committee is now working on language regarding how we use the word *worship*. We are also creating policies and guidelines for our Sunday Speakers. It has been a joy to watch the transformation of Sunday morning worship in the five years I have been involved with this Fellowship. The dialog continues to be lively and informative as we move into an exploration of who we are as a religious community. The plan is to include a mentoring program for youth involvement in helping with service leader duties.

Lifespan Learning Adult Study Group
A Chosen Faith, An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism
January 2008

Reflection: As part of my role as Lifespan RE Coordinator, I facilitated a small group using the book *A Chosen Faith*, using the course outline from the Church of the Larger Fellowship as a tool for discussion. As a result of this seven-session group, the participants planned a worship service focusing on each of the seven sections of the book. I planned and led the service with the group participants as the speakers.

Integration Leading this discussion group was a new experience for me. The participants continued their work throughout the sessions, and offered encouraging feedback to me as a facilitator. They responded to the call of planning a worship service for the Fellowship, and it was well received. I was encouraging in my support to those that felt uncertain about speaking in front of people, and it helped them realize a new potential in themselves. Since then, several of the participants helped facilitate another *A Chosen Faith* small group. I feel more confident leading others and moving them from a small group setting to leadership in the larger fellowship, able to express themselves and their chosen faith.

Part III - WORK PRODUCTS

The following is an outline for a Service Lay -Leader Training I helped plan and facilitate.

Pagosah Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Lay Leader Training
February 1, 2009 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

- I. Opening – Gathering Circle
 - A. What is your reason for coming to this workshop?

- II. Worship – What is it and why do we do it?
 - A. Controversy surrounding the word.
 1. Oxford definition: 1) Homage paid to a deity. 2) Acts, rites, ceremonies of worship
 2. Origin of the word in old English *weothscrippen*, meaning to ascribe worth to something, to shape thing of worth
 - B. See *The Philosophy of Common Worship*
 - C. See *Goals of Worship*
 - D. See poem *To Worship*
 - E. See *Gifts of Worship*
 - F. Question:
 1. Is there value to using the word *Worship* considering the controversy?

- III. How can the service leader contribute to this sense of worship?
 - A. Questions:
 1. What does it feel like when worship works
 2. When worship doesn't work for you, what has happened or not happened?
 - B. Sets the tone for the entire service.
 - C. Nuts and Bolts
 1. Order of Service
 2. Practical Advice
 3. Avoiding common foibles
 4. Resources

The most important advice: Trust yourself. You know so much

**This is the order of service for a multigenerational Earth Day Service
I planned, organized and led.**

ORDER OF SERVICE/ EARTH DAY PROGRAM

APRIL 22, 2007

PRELUDE

OPENING SONG

We Gather Together (#349)

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS – (De Anna & Children)

Chorus: Al, la la, la, la Al le lu ia, Al, la, la, la, la Al le,lu, ia (repeat)

Shake, shake a hand, shake a hand next to you,
shake, shake a hand and sing La La....repeat

Chorus

Pat, pat a back, pat a back next to you....

Chorus

Hug, hug a friend, hug a friend next to you...

Chorus

OPENING WORDS

Words by: Rev. Marge Keip

As surely as we belong to this universe. . . to this Earth. . . We belong together. We join here to transcend the isolated self, to reconnect, to come to know ourselves. To be at home, here on this Earth, on this planet, sustained by the sun, awed by the stars, linked with each other. Come Let Us Worship Together.

LIGHTING OF THE CHALICE

WORDS OF AFFIRMATION

We gather this morning as people of faith

With joys and sorrows, gifts and needs

We light this beacon of hope, sign of our quest for truth and meaning,

In celebration of the life we share together.

JOYS & CONCERNS – With Pine Cones (Our J & C this morning will be done as the children do in the back room. Instead of lighting a candle, as you come forward to share, pick a pinecone from the bowl and place it in the empty bowl)

HYMN - *All Creatures of the Earth and Sky* (#204 verses: 1, 3, 4)

MEDITATION - #492 *Fragile and Rooted* – by Carolyn Owen-Towle

PROGRAM: *Tikkun Olam: Repair of the World* by Naomi Newman

Presenters: Will Smock-Egan Solomon Gabel, Becca McTeague,

Emma McTeague, Desi Pastin, Demi Pastin, Della Pastin,

Elan Ramirez, Avery Eagle Ramirez.

(At this point in the service the children and youth preformed a dance as the story was read)

HYMN - *Morning has Broken* (#38)

OFFERING

Celebrating the Web of Life - #551 Earth Teach Me – from the Ute Indians of the South West United States.

(since this service was done in a circle, as the youth read, a ball of yarn was tossed around the congregants, while creating a web design in the center.)

7 PRINCIPLES SONG (*To the tune of Do Re Me*)

One, Each person is important
Two, Be kind in all you do
Three, We're free to learn together
Four, And search for what is true
Five, All people need a voice
Six, Build a fair and peaceful world
Seven, We care for Earth's life boat.
That will bring us back to me and UU.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Blessed: A Litany, by Carolyn McDade & Mary Casey
Blessed the universe, long, unbroken story, spirit in all things. Blessed the Earth dance, born of burning, turning day to night to dawn, around the ancient sun. Blessed the sea and sky – stars and rain that wash each soul in reverence and guide us home. Blessed all who buzz and hiss, talk, croak and warble- All who push roots and shout green. Blessed all who pass breath between them. Blessed all that struggle for their right to be - that within each that will not lie down- that sings the song its heart must sing. Blessed the elders who call us deep. Blessed the young who deepen. Blessed the generations who love this world, faithful to its wonder. Blessed all who choose to live whole and free, grateful among the Blessed.

CIRCLE SONG

Go now in peace.

****Please join us for a special snack and gift made by the children after the service!*