UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION

Southern Region

Announcing the 2017

Southern Unitarian Universalist Leadership Experience

March 15, 2017

Dear Congregational Leaders,

Please nominate your leaders for:

Southern Unitarian Universalist Leadership Experience (SUULE)
August 6-11, 2017 at Skelton 4H Center, Wirtz, VA

Leadership Experience (LE) is the most intensive leadership training available within the Southern Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association. It is an intense, week-long "experience" where congregational leaders dive deeply into both their own Unitarian Universalist faith and the congregational systems and dynamics that must be understood in order for leaders to support thriving congregations.

LE is an intense and deeply spiritual experience, which focuses on the presence and functioning of individual leaders. It is important that congregations be intentional about their recommendations and nominate teams of leaders both lay and ordained who are prepared to *hear* and *use* the language of faith, to experience *all* the sources of wisdom so important to Unitarian Universalism and to put systems thinking into practice. We incorporate multiple learning styles, including small group experiences, case studies, lectures, worship and spiritual practices. Our goal is for teams to value the LE's intentional leadership process and to recognize the vital connections between theological grounding, religious leadership, faith development, and the realization of beloved community. LE participation has often translated into tangible improvements in congregational health and vitality, and it can do the same for your congregation.

We have found there are certain congregational practices that will make a difference in how LE affects congregational health. Congregations which observe these practices find it is easier to integrate the knowledge and skills from the experience into the life of the congregation and, consequently, make positive changes possible.

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These include:

- Nominating teams of participants who are well grounded in the faith and its pluralistic reality. (***This is not an experience intended for people who are new to Unitarian Universalism!***)
- Nominating individuals who are or will be serving in significant leadership roles
- Nominating individuals who come ready and willing to be challenged
- Having an intentional way of choosing nominees
- Sending teams of leaders to LE for several years in a row

You may nominate solo participants only if your congregation has sent a team to an LE in the last two years; otherwise, participants must come in congregational teams of two or more.

We strive for LE to represent the best of Unitarian Universalist multi-generational and multi-cultural faith communities. Because diversity in leadership enriches our congregations, our future and our faith, we encourage you to consider diversity in your nominations, including age (youth 16 and older and young adult leaders), roles (lay and religious professionals), ethnicity, disability status, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Our LE site is ADA compliant.

Congregations needing financial assistance in order to send a team to LE might consider using faithify.org, "a crowdfunding web site where passionate people follow, share and fund UU ministries," to encourage contributions to their leadership teams.

What to expect from LE – Participants will be part of an intensive, challenging, and supportive learning environment. The daily program begins with morning worship and ends at about 9:00PM. There is a long midday break and other shorter breaks throughout the day. LE is a covenantal, multi-generational community. All participants and staff must consent to the behavioral covenant and must agree to abide by certain rules that apply to all multi-generational, regionally sponsored programs, such as no consumption of alcohol and no illegal drugs or sexualized behavior, as well as all policies and guidelines of our hosts, Skelton 4H Center, Wirtz, VA.

It is important that participants understand the community into which they are entering and the expectations of that community; therefore, please be sure all potential nominees receive a copy of this letter and the LE 2017 ***Participant Expectations*** and ***Covenant.***

In addition to the actual week of LE, we offer continuing support to congregational leaders following LE designed to assist them with their ongoing development and the process of putting the tools they gain from LE into practice.

We urge you to consider now which leaders would help your congregation benefit most from this experience and nominate them. We invite them to join us for a stimulating, challenging continuing education experience. This program qualifies for continuing education grants for professional ministry offered by the UUA. We look forward to meeting your team!

In Faith,
Your Leadership Experience Team

Contact Info, Process, and Fees

SUULE 2017 Contact Info	
For programming questions:	**For logistical questions:**
Kathy McGowan	Kathy Charles
Congregational Life Staff	Event Planner
518-859-9267	281-216-6999
kmcgowan@uua.org	kcharles@uua.org

Nomination Steps:

1. Congregational presidents, in consultation with their Boards will complete the LE Nomination Form and submit it online at the Southern Regional website at http://www.formdesk.com/UUASR/LE2017
2. Submission deadline is June 1st. Please nominate the congregational team and pay the $200 per nominee deposit; this fee is refundable only in the event your nominee is not accepted as a LE candidate.
3. We will announce the 2017 class by June 15th.
4. Final payment of all fees is due by July 1st.

FEE: $1,640 (per pair) for the first two participants and $670 for each additional team member, or $850 for a solo participant (only for congregations which have sent a team to an LE in the last 2 years). A non-refundable deposit of $200 per participant is due when the nominations are made. The balance is due by July 1st. The fee includes double occupancy rooms; very limited single occupancy lodging may be available for an additional charge.

2016 Leadership Experience Participant Expectations

The Leadership Experience is for congregational leaders including adults, young adults, youth 16 and older, ministers, DREs, and other staff. We encourage participation by teams that include a mix of diverse people in different roles.

Each participant is expected to meet these requirements:

1. **Is a member in good standing of a Unitarian Universalist congregation for *at least two years*** (or if youth, is at least 16 years old and active in their congregation for at least two years).

2. Has a basic understanding of the theology, principles, history and covenantal polity of Unitarian Universalism.

3. Is now or soon will be in a congregational leadership role, such as:
   - governing board
   - committee chair
   - Committee on Ministry or Leadership Development Committee
   - minister
   - staff: DRE, administrator, executive director, music director, etc.
   - youth leader

4. Is nominated by their congregational leadership.

5. Is committed to sharing information and the learning experience with other leaders in the congregation after attending LE.

6. Is able to practice self-discernment, including identifying the personal reasons for taking on a leadership role.
7. Consents to the 2017 Leadership Experience Participant Expectations and Covenant of Community included in this packet.
8. Will complete prerequisite work prior to the LE (see below).

Prerequisite:

- Healthy Leadership 101 on-line course: http://bit.ly/2pWkRpb

Recommended Reading/Viewing:

- Growing a Beloved Community: Twelve Hallmarks of a Healthy Congregation by Tom Owen-Towle
- The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business by Patrick Lencioni
- Love Is The Doctrine: UUASR event with Minns Lecturer Alice Blair Wesley: https://youtu.be/4HwC81pxMKI

2017 Leadership Experience

COVENANT OF COMMUNITY

With hope for a bright future - I come in trust.

With love in my heart for all of creation - I come in humility.

Seeking justice for all, marginalizing none - I come in open-mindedness.

With courage - I come willing to be transformed.

With great joy - I come to bind myself to you, so that together we can do what I cannot do alone.

You are coming into a long-standing community - much like when you join a new church. This covenant has been developed by the Leadership Experience communities from past years. It is the covenant we have today. From the experiences we share as an LE community, it will evolve. By agreeing to be on your congregational team you are agreeing to enter into and abide by this covenant.