



Dear Ones,

A congregation's search for its next minister is a time of great anticipation and great anxiety, especially for the search team. There are so many unanswered questions! To help answer some of those questions, I prepared an extended resume for the search team's review.

As we are meeting in small groups to begin the ever unfolding process of getting to know each other, I am providing you with some of the materials that the search team reviewed prior to offering me the opportunity to serve the Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville. It is only fair that you know what they know.

I am so pleased to be serving UUCJ and I look forward to getting to know you on a deeper, more personal level.

Blessings,

Rev. Lee Anne

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Work Week: Sunday-Thursday
Friday: Sermon Preparation
Saturday: Sabbath
Office Hours: T,W,Th 2pm-6pm by Appointment

Biography



I was born in Norfolk, Virginia while my father was serving in the Navy. Until age 12, my family moved around frequently. I learned to be comfortable in new situations, to begin new relationships, to be adaptive to my surroundings, and to withhold immediate judgment of others. During my childhood, my parents, two younger sisters, and I lived in Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Indiana.

Then, we settled in the Northern Neck of Virginia, the ancestral home of my maternal ancestors, who arrived on the shores of Virginia in the mid 1600s. Long before that, the Northern Neck had been home to the many independent tribes or kingdoms that made up Powhatan's Confederation -- an alliance of Algonquian-speaking indigenous people.

I grew up in a family that values service to others over accumulation of wealth, which didn't mean that we were impoverished. It just meant that as a child my adult role models were teachers, ministers, and local politicians who stressed the importance of doing what good we can do to repair the world and made life decisions primarily on that basis.

My own passion for repairing the world first became evident in high school, when I advocated in our local newspaper and at school board meetings for changes in the public education system. While in college at William & Mary (where I earned a B.A. in English), I continued to advocate for positive change as the president of the student body and liaison (lobbyist) to the Virginia General Assembly. I am a member of Mortar Board, a national honor society that recognizes college seniors for their exemplary scholarship, leadership, and service.

Always one to speak out against injustices, no one in my family or friend group was surprised when I went to the University of Virginia's Law School (where I earned a J.D. in law). I am a member of Phi Delta Phi, an international legal honor society that celebrates academic excellence, professional ethics, and scholarship.

For most of the time that I was raising my daughter, I was a single parent. During that time, I managed my own law practice, which served individuals and small businesses. I prioritized involvement in my daughter's education -- volunteering as a room mother and chaperone. I was also active in the larger community -- serving as an officer on the boards of several non-profits and serving as an elected member of the White Stone Town Council.

In 2012, I began sporadically attending the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Rappahannock. Before long, I became a regular and then a regular presenter. Not too long after that, at their encouragement and with their support, I answered the call to ministry.

In 2014, I closed my law practice and went to seminary full time. I graduated in 2017 from Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, Virginia. I chose UPSem for two reasons. It provided a classical education during which I learned to read Hebrew and Greek, and learned to translate biblical texts in non-misogynistic ways. And, its proximity permitted me to continue to raise my daughter in the Northern Neck.

While at UPSem, I studied under two remarkable theologians. The Rev. Dr. Katie Cannon, of blessed memory, taught me about ethics and about what it was like to be the first black woman ordained in the Presbyterian church. The Rev. Dr. Frances Taylor Gench, an internationally acclaimed feminist biblical scholar, taught me that reading the bible in the original reveals strong, capable, and history-changing female role models that have been obscured by the mostly middle-aged white male biblical translators.

I am delighted to be a UU minister in preliminary fellowship with the UUMA. I look forward to supporting the spiritual journeys, social justice work, and community building activities of a UU congregation. My daughter is a student at the University of Virginia, and I am free to relocate.

Theology



My theology is informed by wisdom teachings from many diverse traditions. I was raised in the United Methodist Church, converted to Modern Orthodox Judaism as a young adult, and found my way to Unitarian Universalism in my forties. I also study ethics and philosophy. While I have deep roots in the Judeo-Christian tradition, they do not limit my ability to reach out to other religious and philosophical traditions for guidance and inspiration.

Unitarianism -- there is a creative life-giving spirit in the Universe. The Universe is governed by certain spiritual laws or truths, which when invoked may comfort and empower us.

Universalism -- Each of us is divinely inspired and each of us is a precious child of the Universe. Each of us is worthy of love and opportunities for redemption.

Humanist Compatible -- We express our divine natures by taking care of each other and the world in which we live. We have no assurance that there is a life after death, so we concentrate on this life. Much is wrong with the world and needs repair. We are responsible for making the repairs. As we go about repairing the world, bit by bit, we stay sane by asking the questions, "what is mine to do?" or, better yet, in community we ask "what is ours to do?" and then we do it.

Love -- is found in every living being and every caring act. I do not believe that I have the knowledge, intelligence, or experience necessary to limit Love. I respect the beliefs of others who find Love by following other paths and other traditions. I do not consider the method or the means, just the outcome. In fact, my spirit thrills when I find similar notions of

Love expressed across religious, philosophical, and ethical traditions.

I strive to embody Love and to be an agent for good in the world. As a UU minister, I seek to encourage and support those who are seeking to find meaning in their lives and to connect with others; and who, themselves, seek to embody Love and to be agents of good in the world.

Shared Ministry (within the Congregation)

“For all that is our life we sing our thanks and praise; for all life is a gift which we are called to use to build the common good and make our own days glad.” Hymn #128, *For All That Is Our Life*.

Ministry may be understood as our ongoing creative, restorative, and life affirming actions. Shared Ministry is the notion that all people are called to ministry. In a congregational setting, we work together to discover, develop, and utilize our respective gifts for the greater good.

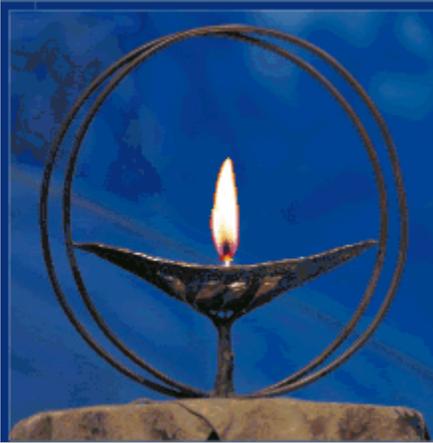
Shared ministry encompasses programs like pastoral care, religious education, worship, and outreach. It also encompasses our endeavors to heal a broken world through social justice and anti-oppression work. And, even more than our actions, shared ministry encompasses how we show up in the world -- such things as being respectful of others, saying a kind word, showing compassion, and being patient.

As a professional minister, I have chosen to center the work of ministry in my life and I am dedicated to the health and well-being of the members (and friends) of the congregation and to the congregation as a whole. As a UU minister, I am committed to walk with you as you explore life's questions, to challenge you to live into your values, and to comfort you in times of suffering.

I understand my primary roles to be facilitator and collaborator in chief. In those roles I am uniquely able to see the big picture -- which is helpful in avoiding unnecessary conflict or duplication in our efforts.

I thoroughly enjoy teaching and preaching and am always learning something new from those I serve. I am a perpetual student who enjoys sharing what I have learned with others in creative and thought-provoking ways.

Worship



Congregational worship happens when we come together to (1) bless each other with our presence; (2) honor the values we hold dear in gratitude; and (3) connect on an individual level with the message of the moment.

In any worship service, it is my hope and desire to create a seamless story or message through music, readings, artistic expression, and the sermon -- each element supporting the other.

I embrace the responsibility for choosing the topic of a service and leading the congregation. My default preaching style is best described as “teaching pastor.” Most of my sermons involve an illustrative story taken from scripture (Jewish, Christian, Muslim, or Buddhist), or folklore, or indigenous wisdom traditions, or philosophical schools, or even daily life.

Many of my sermons end with either a spiritual or practical challenge to the congregation, or a new vision of hope for the beloved community. Some of my sermons are focused on equipping the congregation for works of service through naming an injustice, exploring a spiritual understanding of it, and providing various ways to meet its challenges.

I also embrace the opportunity to share the creative process that results in the worship experience with the music director and the worship team, if there is one. I also enjoy lay involvement in leading worship services. I have been known to include the entire congregation in the worship service, and to be creative in the delivery of my sermons.

Although I like the use of monthly themes around which to organize worship services and adult education, I am always flexible and am committed to adjusting to meet the needs of the congregation at any given moment.

Pastoral Care



Pastor is a latin word meaning “shepherd” and relates to the care that shepherds gave to their flocks of sheep.

Traditionally, pastoral care was considered the job of the pastor or minister of a congregation. Today, pastoral care is a shared ministry and a strong pastoral care program is an essential part of community building.

When any of us are in distress, physically, mentally, spiritually, or materially, we must do what we can to alleviate the distress. It is important for the spiritual leader of a congregation to spend time with those in need of comfort. It is also vitally important that members of the congregation be trained to be spiritual companions for those in distress and for others to be willing to provide any practical assistance -- such as food, clothing, or transportation -- needed by the congregant in distress.

I am committed to participating in the shared ministry of pastoral care. At the same time, I believe that a significant aspect of the beloved community is the ability to share in taking care of each other. I am committed to facilitating regular training and to providing support to lay pastoral care providers.

Sometimes, the need for pastoral care goes beyond the need for one-on-one attention -- such as immediately after the 2016 and 2018 elections. At such times, a communal approach to caregiving is needed. I co-led two non-partisan vespers services on the Wednesday evening after each election, which gave people an opportunity to process any disappointment or emotional distress they felt arising from the outcomes of those elections.

Religious Exploration



Religious exploration is an important part of our Unitarian Universalist tradition. We come together as a community to support each other in our spiritual journeys -- regardless of age. A healthy religious exploration program strengthens the bonds between members of a religious community. Inspired religious exploration programs facilitate multi-generational learning, life experiences, and growth.

- **Children** are spiritual beings on their own spiritual journey. As the 19th century minister, William Ellery Channing said, "The great end of religious instruction is not to stamp our minds irresistibly upon the young, but to stir up their own [minds] . . . to touch inward springs." I am committed to providing safe and loving places for children to be inquisitive, and to support and encourage them as they seek their own answers through age appropriate modes of learning -- engaging minds, bodies, & spirits. I love hanging out with young children -- I learn so much!
- **Youth** are testing their limits and challenging existing value systems and institutions. They hold us accountable for applying spiritual principles to our daily lives. Providing Youth with opportunities to build community and strengthen relationships with peers is essential. Self-expression through art and music supports their journey. I incorporated all of this when teaching World Religions to the Youth during my ministry internship.

- **Adults** of all ages are on a faith journey throughout their lives. Religious exploration is a lifelong pursuit. Speakers and discussions may include a diverse array of topics, such as religious thought, spiritual practices, scientific understanding, philosophical perspectives, and various literary works. Classes may be taught by the minister, various staff members, invited outside speakers, and learned and experienced congregants. We all have something to offer and are all committed to supporting each others' spiritual journeys in whatever ways we can. One of my great joys is facilitating adult religious educational experiences.

SHARED MINISTRY (to the world)

“The central task of the religious community is to unveil the bonds that bind each to all. There is a connectedness, a relationship discovered amid the particulars of our own lives and the lives of others. Once felt, it inspires us to act for justice.

It is the church that assures us that we are not struggling for justice on our own, but as members of a larger community. The religious community is essential, for alone our vision is too narrow to see all that must be seen, and our strength too limited to do all that must be done. Together, our vision widens and our strength is renewed.” (Mark Morrison-Reed)

When we come together as a community to serve the needs of our community, it is important that we follow Rev. Joseph Tuckerman’s example. He lived in the late 1700s to early 1800s. During his studies at Harvard, Rev. Joseph sought more than book learning. He sought experiential learning. So, he supplemented his seminary education with deep discussions with people about their lived experience. After he became a minister, he sought to assist the poor in his community near Boston, MA.

After he researched what other religious organizations had done to help those who were impoverished -- what worked and what didn’t -- he discovered that much of the work of those organizations included certain negative assumptions about why the poor remain impoverished. True to his nature, he began having deep conversations with people living in poverty to discover what they experienced as barriers to success and how to help them overcome those barriers. His work has become the UU Urban Ministry

Today, when we consider the work that we want to do to dismantle racism and systems of oppression, we are admonished by Bryan Stevenson, a Black civil rights attorney and activist, “to get proximate to people who are suffering, to get closer to people who are excluded, to go into parts of the community that other people say you shouldn’t go to... you will discover something transformative. There is power in proximity.”

Hearing the same message from two very different sources makes that message all the more powerful. As Unitarian Universalists, we should heed their message, put on our walking shoes, meet people where they are, and invite them into relationship. Such is our shared ministry to the world.

Social Justice Work

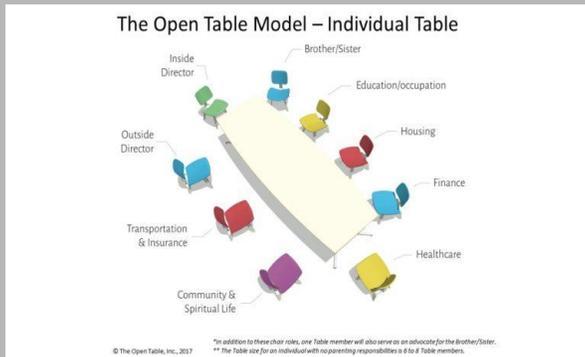
Camp Kekoka



Prior to heeding the call to ministry, I served on the renaissance board for what ultimately became Camp Kekoka, a YMCA sleepover camp situated along Antipoison Creek.

Camp Kekoka provides week-long camp programs throughout the summer focusing on a set of core values, outdoor adventuring, and personal growth.

Open Table



During my internship at First UU of Richmond, Virginia, I facilitated the adoption of an Open Table program, which creates a committed support system for a person moving from a state of dependence to empowered independence through an emphasis on personal connection. We utilized this highly effective model for young adults aging out of foster care.

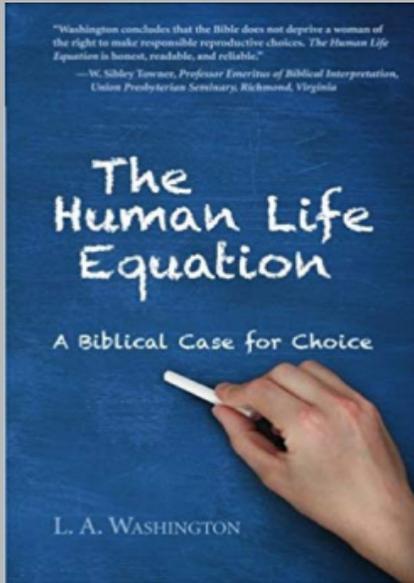
Women's Marches



Like hundreds of thousands of other women (and a fair number of men), my daughter and I felt a deep need to make our bodies count by joining in the 2017 Women's March.

So, I took her and three of her high school friends to Washington, D.C. We marched and we chanted and we marched and we chanted again and again and again. Since then, we have participated in several yearly state and local women's marches. This picture is from a sister march in support of women's reproductive rights held in Richmond, Virginia.

Publication



Have you ever wondered whether the Bible really has something relevant to add to the abortion debate? I declare that yes, it does, but not what we have been led to believe.

Forget what you think you know about the Bible and abortion. In this essay, I introduce you to the human life equation -- the Bible's perspective of when human life begins. I take you on a logical and well-reasoned journey through the many verses of the Bible that support the notion that human life begins at birth.

I further show that the human life equation is consistent with modern medicine's understanding of the physiological change a fetus undergoes in order to survive as a newborn.

Racial Justice Work

Charlottesville, Virginia Counter-Protest



In August 2017, local Charlottesville clergy, aware of planned protests against the removal of a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee from a local park, put out a call to all clergy to counter-protest.

Though I was just an intern at the time, my daughter and I responded to the call. We provided physical and emotional support to counter-protesters and escorted people of color to their cars while groups of white nationalists roamed the streets.

Richmond's Robert E. Lee Statue

Throughout the Summer of 2020, people around the country gathered to protest the Police's unnecessary use of deadly force against people of color. In Richmond, Virginia, people also protested against the huge statues honoring Confederate officers which line Monument Avenue -- a major thoroughfare in the city.



Several times, my daughter and I made the 3 hour round trip to participate in protest marches. What you see here is a picture I took of the largest of the monuments -- Robert E. Lee. You can read some of the protest messages painted on the monument's huge pedestal.

When you look down toward the bottom left, you can just barely make out flowers and a white placard that honors a person recently killed by police violence against people of color. Each of the 17 placards contains the person's picture, name, and the circumstances of their death.

The statue has finally been removed.

ORGANIZATIONAL Development and Administration



Each staff member, whether paid or volunteer, should have a clearly defined area of primary responsibility and authority, which should be respected by the staff and all members of the congregation.

At the same time, each staff member, myself included, should be willing to jump into any project or event, as appropriate and as needed.

My goal is for those who work in any capacity for the congregation to be well-suited for their work and for them to find their work meaningful. I advocate for training for staff (myself included) and volunteers. I also invite both staff and volunteers to stretch themselves through the acquisition of new skills and the acceptance of new responsibilities.

I am always appreciative of the work done by others on behalf of the congregation. I strive for staff members to feel well-supported and to have the resources they need to do their jobs well. I encourage staff to let me know what obstacles they face in doing their jobs and what solutions they recommend.

To advance my effectiveness as a minister, I have taken several UUA sponsored courses and workshops on good governance, congregational systems, and conflict resolution.