



An Audacious Opportunity

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte is seeking a second minister to join its now eight-member professional staff. Assessing both our history and our needs, with a heritage of all male ministers, we recognize our desire to welcome a woman as our new minister.

For the right minister, this position is unique. We want a partner in ministry for our current minister, our professional staff, our congregation, and our larger community. We are committed to exploring imaginatively the possibilities for this role. While we anticipate that this position will begin as a hire-to-call role with our current minister remaining as Chief of Staff for now, we expect rapid development and expansion with an imaginative array of possibilities in the near future. Most audaciously, we are quite open to the prospect of this role expanding into a co-ministry and even, in time, into the opportunity to be the lead minister of a large congregation.

To demonstrate our openness and imagination, we have no firmly fixed job description already in place. Rather, in conversation with our candidate, we anticipate developing an understanding of shared ministerial responsibilities that will meld the skills and experience of both of our ministers with the needs and opportunities present in our congregation and larger community.

To be sure, our new minister will offer creative worship experiences, challenging and comforting sermons, pastoral engagement and organizational leadership. The balance of the ways of engaging and particular areas of responsibility will be defined both at the outset and as the ministerial relationship develops and deepens.

Our ideal candidate will be a fellowshipped, ordained minister and will have experience in a large (550+) Unitarian Universalist congregation, preferably as a minister or ministerial intern. She/they will bring the perspective of a generation younger than our now-56-year-old minister.

However, what we're really looking for is beyond these basic demographic specifications. We seek a spiritually grounded minister able to function in a religiously diverse congregation and a passionate minister able to relate with compassion. We need a caring, discerning minister able to lead with both head and heart. To thrive, our new minister must be focused and organized, able to function in the fast pace and high demands of a large congregation. Our new minister must be able to identify particular areas of ministry for which she/they have demonstrated commitment and are developing recognized expertise. In return, we offer the opportunity for her/them to flourish in those areas.

Do you have imagination for ministerial engagement that you've not yet discovered and may not have thought possible? Are you open and flexible, able to change and develop as new opportunities and responsibilities emerge? Can you keep commitments while imagining new possibilities? If you are seeking something beyond a pre-determined definition of your ministry, if you are drawn to the possibilities inherent in a shared ministry, if you want to minister in a congregation and a city in which commitment to tradition is less valued than imagination about and effort toward a more hopeful future, we urge you to read further and to express your interest in and qualifications for joining our ministerial team.

Please send your expression of interest and personal information to search@uuccharlotte.org.

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte



The Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte was founded in 1947 and is the oldest Unitarian congregation in the state of North Carolina. Begun in a dramatically smaller and markedly more homogeneous city, much like our city, the congregation has grown and changed in the intervening decades. A nomadic congregation at the outset, we then built a small building on a busy street bisecting a close-in suburb before relocating in the early 1960s to our present location in a quiet, leafy suburban neighborhood within 10 minutes of downtown.

In our most recent certification with the UUA, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte certified at 688 members, making us one the of the top 25 congregations in the country by size. We have a professional staff of eight members (you can read their brief bios below). Last year we certified 221 in our Children and Youth Religious Education programming.

In 2005 the congregation transitioned to Policy Based Governance. Our nine-member Board of Trustees serves as our visionary leaders, defining and monitoring our progress toward our Ends. Our Senior Minister and Director of Administration serve as our Coordinating Team, responsible for directing the Means work of the congregation.

In June of 2016 the congregation voted to approve a bold new Vision (see below). This culminated a two-year process guided by a Vision Steering Team under the leadership of our Board. It describes the UCC congregation's desire for spiritual, social and environmental transformation. This Vision will offer direction to the work of the congregation within and beyond our walls for years to come. The Board has recently finalized an approach to first steps and is in the process of communicating our approach.



Our congregation gathers to worship in a contemporary, 250-seat sanctuary built in the early 1980s. Our experiences there are enhanced by a beautiful pipe organ and, more recently, are deepened by the capacity to project images onto a large screen at the front of the

room. Worshippers continue engaging socially in Freeman Hall, our social hall bearing the name of a now-deceased, long-serving minister emeritus, Rev. Dr. Sidney Freeman.

The membership of the UCC is diverse in many ways. Many of us have moved to Charlotte from other (often colder) places. We come from many different backgrounds, perspectives and religions and we are home to many LGBTQ members. We are striving to become even more diverse, especially ethnically and racially. We are independent thinkers, rejecting the dogmas that play a prime role in many other faiths. We are intellectually curious and we love the arts, as reflected in the strong presence of music, visual arts and readings in our services. A lay leader participates in every service with a personal story which helps us learn about each other and appreciate our different perspectives.

Most members' first interaction with the UUCC is through a visit to one of our Sunday morning services. These services are carefully and creatively planned by our Minister, the week's Lay Service Leader and our Director of Music. Our minister's sermon, the lay leader's reflections, and the music, readings and visual arts displayed on a large screen in the sanctuary which contribute to a theme that will be woven throughout the service. The hymns sung by the congregation and the music performed by our choirs and guest musicians range from traditional to modern and include genres such as classical, folk, jazz, bluegrass and spirituals. Despite our relatively large size for a UU church, the congregation is a warm, welcoming and supportive community.

In addition to the Sunday services the UUCC offers a broad array of social and educational activities. These include a wide range of Adult Religious Education/Spiritual Development programming, and many Community Building opportunities. The congregation is passionate about social justice, having voted to focus our primary effort on the issue of homelessness and affordable housing a few years ago. Members of the congregation have joined with several community groups, hosted panel discussions, lectures and film showings about this issue and have involved various community groups and other faith organizations in these activities. We view ourselves as a "beacon of progressive thought and action" in the larger Charlotte community, and have engaged with our state's "Moral Monday" events and efforts to defeat the anti-marriage equality Amendment 1. Many of our members are active in their personal lives with organizations and efforts in the larger community committed to making Charlotte a more just and equitable place.



The UUCC is very family friendly, with Children and Youth Religious Education for kids from age three through high school. We offer Sunday morning programming, social opportunities, an extensive array of “Our Whole Lives” options, and a Coming of Age program for our teens that concludes with a heritage trip to Boston. One of the highlights of our worshipping year occurs on the first Sunday in June every year when our graduating high school seniors participate in the service, sharing about their experiences in the UUCC. They are full of passion and exuberance and they remind us of why we are drawn to the UUCC – it is a welcoming and supportive environment while at the same time being thought-provoking and challenging.

Our very highly regarded Open Door School is a preschool open to the community for nursery school from Monday to Friday. Its proud fifty-year history includes standing as the first integrated kindergarten in Charlotte at a time when public kindergarten was not a part of our local school district.

The City of Charlotte and Surrounding Region



Charlotte is North Carolina's largest city, the governmental seat of Mecklenburg County, the second-largest US banking center, an American Airlines hub and home to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte. Both the city and the metropolitan area populations are growing: Charlotte is the country's 17th largest city with a 2014 census population of nearly 810,000 and metropolitan area population of 2,400,000. Between 2014-15, nearly 20,000 new inhabitants moved to Charlotte and this trend is not slowing. Between 1990-2010 the foreign-born population increased from 3%-15%. Charlotte's racial composition is approximately 35% African American, 5% Asian, 48% Caucasian, and 12-15% Hispanic/Latino.

Charlotteans talk with pride about our climate and geography: four distinct but fairly mild seasons, growing conditions that support a renowned tree canopy, proximity to the mountains and the coast—both within 2-3 hours' drive—and expanding greenway and park systems. Other sources of city pride include the institutes of higher



learning, growing cultural and culinary arts scenes, professional sports teams and the ease of airline access to the rest of the world. Often newcomers comment that Charlotte is a professionally welcoming and friendly city.

However, not all is well in Charlotte, despite its relatively healthy economy, population growth and increasing urban sophistication. There is a dynamic and increasing tension between the elements of, on the one hand, a seemingly thriving New South city and, on the other, long-standing social, economic and opportunity divisions and disparities that frequently fall along racial lines. It is often cited that Charlotte's integration of public schools was peaceful and embraced by all groups. The well-documented re-segregation of the city's schools in recent years, however, begs the question as to why the touted commitment to integrated public schools has not been sustained.

The recent police shooting death of Keith Scott, an African American male, unleashed a firestorm of protest and long-simmering anger. Sadly, Charlotte ranks 50th out of the 50 largest U.S. cities in economic mobility. It remains to be seen to what extent the voices of the protesters and those, such as the Charlotte Clergy Coalition for Justice who have joined in solidarity with those voicing strong protest, will be heard and responded to in a meaningful way by city and governmental leaders.



Charlotte has also been embroiled in a battle with the state legislature's response to our City Council's passage of a comprehensive non-discrimination ordinance in February 2016. The ordinance expanded existing discrimination protections for race, age, religion and gender to include the LGBTQ community and specified that

transgender persons be able to use the bathroom of their sexual identity. The legislature's response was the now infamous "HB2", passed in a special 1-day legislative session in March 2016. We're proud that Charlotte's political leadership continues to hold firm in opposition to HB2.

Charlotte has a history of interfaith worship and social justice efforts, racially inclusive governmental leadership, a sense, perhaps mythical, that "we get along" here. But, clearly there is unrest and despair and a great need to deepen our conversations and connections across racial and economic lines and divides. We at the UUCC feel enlivened and challenged by the opportunities and amenities that are here and the work that is yet to be done.

From the Board of Trustees



Susan Cox, Co-Chair



Marsha Kelly, Co-Chair

Dear Potential UUC Minister,

The nine-member Board of Trustees of the congregation is enthusiastically awaiting your arrival. We think you will be coming into the life of our congregation at a truly compelling time in our history.

Two years ago the Board recognized the need for a longer range plan than the 5-year planning we had been doing in the past. A Vision Steering Team was created that spent 18 months listening, exploring, interviewing, and convening groups small and large to ultimately arrive at the 25 Year Vision which was approved by the congregation in June 2016.

The work of this year's Board has been to prioritize how and where to move the congregation forward with the initial steps toward the Vision. We believe, if done well, this Vision will transform us, our congregation, and potentially our community. It is an exciting time in the life of our congregation and we will welcome your new ideas and fresh perspectives.

We initially began this task believing the goal was to decide how to spread our message, to immediately find a community partner, and to engage in action right away. Instead, through a series of deeply searching and engaging conversations,

and after multiple hours of challenging our own assumptions, we began to understand that our spiritual transformation will need to begin with self-reflection, deep listening, and learning what we do not yet know. As a Policy Governance Board, it is our challenge to begin to lead the congregation toward its transformation. The attached document is our statement of purpose. We believe this journey will be exciting, scary, uncomfortable and ultimately gratifying. And did we mention how satisfying it will be to you to help lead this effort and watch us grow into our full potential?

We eagerly welcome the addition of a second minister to our community to guide and engage with us in this journey. You will be joining a great professional staff. They are talented, supportive and committed to our community. Every single staff person is highly competent and brings warmth and compassion to their work and our lives. There is no drama on this team.

We hope you find the possibility of working with us as exciting to you as you are to us. We think we are pretty special. And humble. Did we mention how lucky the person will be who gets this position? Please let our Minister Search Team know of your interest. We hope to meet you soon.

Warm Regards,
Susan Cox and Marsha Kelly, Co-Chairs, Board of Trustees

From our Minister



Jay Leach

Dear Colleague,

Thanks for your interest in our new position. As you can see, we're not approaching this search in any kind of traditional way. Our hopes and expectations just don't lend themselves to that kind of search. We're fairly convinced that this is a rather unorthodox opportunity requiring a more flexible and creative process.

I want us to have the opportunity to engage in dialogue. I'd like to talk with you about who this congregation is, who I am, what I think we need and the strengths I think I bring. But, it is every bit as important to me that you talk about who you are, your experiences in ministry, your strengths and your interests. If this is going to work, it will only be because we discover together a path toward sharing ministry here.

Ministry in this large congregation offers considerably more expansive opportunities and demands than may be present in other settings. Now, with our new Vision just underway and in a city and state with great need and possibility, together we will have a remarkable opportunity to participate in the work of transformative spirituality, transformative social justice work, and a transformative engagement with environmental justice.

If this doesn't seem more than a little daunting, you may not be understanding it. If it seems exciting, like the kind of challenge you've been hoping for, I do hope we'll hear from you soon.

While we'll ask for an official expression of your interest in responding to our Minister Search Team, I'm happy to talk with you as you seek to discern whether this is the right opportunity for you.

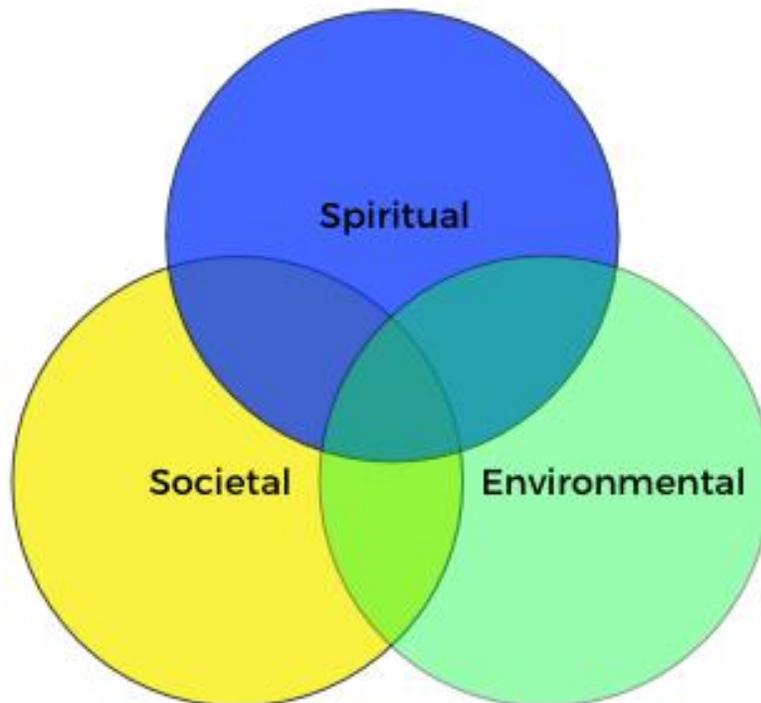
Regardless of whether you express interest here or not, I wish you well in the vitally important work in which we are both engaged.

Peace,
Jay Leach

UCC Vision Framework

*We are a loving, liberating religious community
inspiring spiritual, societal and environmental transformation
in the larger community, in our congregation,
and in the personal lives of children, youth, and adults.*

Our Dimensions of Transformation



Our spiritual transformation looks like this...

- We are a welcoming and joyful community, inspiring spiritual awareness and practices that cultivate meaning and connection.
- Our love and respect for the worth and dignity of every person creates a liberating environment that nurtures and challenges individuals, our congregation and the larger community to experience greater spiritual meaning and depth.
- We are known throughout the larger community for our open-mindedness, inclusivity and acceptance of and engagement with other spiritual communities and practices.
- Our spiritual awareness and practices are integral to our experience of societal and environmental transformation.

Our societal transformation looks like this...

- We inspire individuals, our congregation and the larger community to recognize and understand issues of systemic injustice and inequity.
- We challenge and empower our members to become actively invested in advancing justice and equity in the larger community.
- Our commitment to justice and equity results in deeper and more diverse connections within the larger community.
- Our efforts to create greater justice and equity are integral to our experience of spiritual and environmental transformation.

Our environmental transformation looks like this...

- We work to transform our relationship to the natural world and the web of life by calling individuals, our congregation and the larger community to environmental justice through sustainable policies and practices.
- We examine and alter our individual and congregational practices so that they enhance the health of the larger environment.
- As individuals and as a congregation, we model environmental stewardship.
- Our activities and practices to protect the environment and promote environmental justice are integral to our experience of spiritual and societal transformation.

The UCC Minister Selection Team

Meghan Beverley



After the birth of our second child and a recent move from the Midwest, my husband and I found our traditional Christian church resisting our request to have my sister and her partner be the godparents for our newborn. This was our catalyst to explore other faith options. We could no longer ignore what had been slowly bubbling to the surface. We absolutely needed to find a faith community that accepted all people no matter who they were or grew up to be. Ultimately, we fell into the Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte. It became a perfect fit for our family. We continue to be grateful for the support of this community.

Suzanne Clements



I first discovered the UCC congregation because my children attended Open Door School, a preschool program of the church. As my children began kindergarten and encountered some 6 year-old evangelists on the playground, my husband and I searched for a place that would provide my children with a personal context and working vocabulary of world religions. We found that the congregation and RE program at the UCC continued the philosophy of discovery learning that we loved at the preschool. Although at first we thought we were joining for our kids, we found a spiritual home that nourished our whole family.

Today, each member of my family would say something different about what engages us. My daughter would talk about the Coming of Age program and how it helped her articulate her personal credo. My son would tell you about the Cons

and how he has made friends from around the region. My husband would praise the adult education courses he has taken. Personally, I enjoy the hour a week that I try to be fully present and let the words and music of the Sunday service wash over me.

David Duvall



I first came to the Unitarian Universalist community six years ago, by way of Live Oak in the Northwest suburbs of Austin, Texas. At that time, my wife Karen and I (raised and married in the Catholic faith) were seeking deeper meaning in our lives and a new spiritual path. By comparison, Live Oak is a small congregation, but there we found a great openness to diverse thoughts and opinions as well as a near expectation for them to be expressed.

Fortuity brought us to Charlotte in 2013. We quickly set out to discover a UU community and discovered the UUCC. The vibrancy and size, yet warmth, of the community were immediately apparent. The spirit of the congregation and the thought provoking content, generated and shared under Jay Leach's leadership, are thoroughly captivating and inspiring.

The sophisticated music and vast expansion of adult programs are other rich dimensions that, when combined, provide a tapestry of experiences that are soul stirring. From week to week, my sense of purpose and belonging are freshly renewed. The UUCC has spawned my spiritual awakening, and I am proud and privileged to call it my community of faith and spiritual home.

Lauren Hood



My husband and I moved to Charlotte in 2008, and having previously belonged to a Unitarian Universalist church quickly found our way to the UUC. We were immediately impressed with the size of the congregation and the breadth of its programming compared to our previous experience. What ultimately convinced us that this would be our spiritual home was attending a service in which the congregation's high school seniors spoke authentically and passionately about how their UUC membership had shaped their minds and spirits. My husband and I hope to see our sons up there some day speaking with such conviction about their beliefs and commitments.

We were welcomed into the UUC community with open arms. I was raised in a conservative Jewish household, and consider Jewish culture a part of my heritage. I am grateful that the UUC enables me to embrace that part of myself and simultaneously nurture my personal spiritual growth. We are active members of the parental support group, and have also found opportunities to apply our individual passions and skills through a variety of congregational programs and committees.

Laurie O'Sullivan



My husband Mike and I moved to Charlotte from a NJ suburb of NYC about 8 years ago after becoming empty-nesters. At first we visited quite a few traditional protestant churches because we belonged to a liberal protestant church in New Jersey and had never visited a Unitarian Church before. In Charlotte the traditional churches all seemed too large and too bible-centric for us. Then we visited the UUC and though it took us several years to officially become members, we decided pretty

quickly not to visit any more churches. We both enjoy the Sunday services – they are spiritually satisfying and thought provoking, and the music and visual arts enhance the theme. We almost always have something to talk about afterward relating to the sermon. We have also enjoyed getting to know our fellow UUCC members, through participating in various activities sponsored by the UUCC such as the outdoor adventure group, investment group, film nights and various social justice activities. The UUCC is important to me for the intellectual, spiritual and artistic component as well as the wonderful friends we have made here.

Laurie Reed



I am among a minority of UU's who did not migrate from another faith tradition to find Unitarian Universalism. My parents befriended a small band of progressives in a conservative, predominantly Catholic area of northern Maryland and helped to found a UU fellowship there in the late 1950's. I have never felt pulled towards more mainstream religious groups, but throughout my life I have felt a need to be engaged with my faith and seek out the UU community in the various places I have lived across the U.S.

The UUCC has been my spiritual home since moving to Charlotte in 1984. In those early years of my involvement I was glad, as a newcomer to the South, just to have a place where I could engage without the concern I frequently felt in professional and social situations to keep my more liberal social and religious views tucked away. I sometimes felt inspired by the services but as often I wasn't. My late husband and I were committed, however, to providing our children a spiritual foundation and were grateful for the strong youth programming at the UUCC. Now, the UUCC is far more than a personal sanctuary: It is a place where I am uplifted and spiritually and morally challenged to be my best self, to connect and engage within and beyond the walls of the church in ways that reflect the principles we espouse. Being a UU continues to be an integral part of my identity; I am a proud UUCC member because of the wonderful community that comprises

it and our collective commitment to be a positive force in the larger Charlotte community.

Randy Whitt



I grew up in Radford, Virginia and attended the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Radford from early childhood and into college. I was very active at the Christian Church, and I have great memories from those years. Sometime toward the end of college (1968) and my service in the Army in Viet Nam, and my own readjustment to the changing world, I noticed that I, too, was changing, and I was becoming a Unitarian Universalist, but I did not know it.

My wife, Barbara, and I were married in 1974 at a Presbyterian church, but we both struggled with the traditional language recommended by the minister. The minister obliged but was not pleased with our more liberal views. We realized around 1980 when our daughter was three years old that we wanted a religious education for her, and something more for us. I first attended the Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte in 1980, and have never strayed after joining in 1981.

Since joining the UUCC I have been very active in various leadership roles. I served as Finance Director, senior high teacher, mentor, president of the UUCC board, clerk of the UUCC board, long range planning, Memorial Endowment board, and in addition to my current role on the second minister search team I also serve on the UUCC Finance team. I have also served on the UU District Board and the Mountain Camp and Conference Center Board.

I keep coming to the UUCC because of thoughtful, purposeful and thematic services, and a truly loving community. I am encouraged by the open minded, caring and fair minded congregation. The adult education and Children and Youth Religious Education programs are exceptional and after 36 years at the UUCC, it all still feels fresh.

The UUCC Professional Staff

Kathleen Carpenter, Director of Religious Education for Children and Youth



I have been serving this congregation as its Director of Religious Education for Children and Youth for almost 25 years. I wouldn't still be here if I didn't love this job, this congregation, and this city. Having been active in my profession at the cluster, (now defunct) district, and continental levels from the very beginning, I have observed first and secondhand many other UU congregations – their staffing, governance, worship, programming. And I return to our congregation every time amazed at how well our staff and lay leadership function, in relationship with each other and in commitment to our mission.

Should you join us at the UUCC, you will find yourself on one of the best staff teams anywhere: creative, collaborative, vision-oriented - with darned nice people to boot!

The CYRE Program I direct is one of our denomination's largest with over 200 children and youth. We offer all four non-adult levels of the Our Whole Lives (OWL) program, a biannual Coming of Age program for our high school teens, and a variety of special events. As our congregation has moved more toward thematic programming, so has our children's program with classes and events focusing on the three annual all-congregation themes. The CYRE team's current focus is assessing Sunday morning programming and reviewing various models like workshop rotation and SpiritJam for possible change in 2017-18.

I grew up as an Army brat, living mostly here in the southeast but also California, Alaska, and South Korea. My nomadic childhood contributed to my desire to provide a stable childhood home for my own children (and to my love of travel, but that's another paragraph!). When we moved here in 1980, my husband and I knew nothing about Charlotte other than it offered us both job opportunities. We were thrilled to find a city with beautiful neighborhoods, a diverse population (that has become incredibly more diverse in the last three decades) and

wonderfully welcoming residents – most of whom are “from somewhere else.” Charlotte and her residents aren’t perfect but I truly believe in the positive potential of both.

Kelly Greene, Membership Coordinator



I was raised in a black Episcopalian church in Buffalo and became UU in the '90s. In pursuit of more sunshine, a better job and cheaper higher education, I moved to Charlotte in 1997. It took several years and a work schedule change for me to become a member of our congregation in 2008. Soon after, I started attending worship, participating in adult programming, volunteering with social justice projects, mentoring and advising youth, then serving on our Board of Trustees. In 2014, I became our first Membership Coordinator. In this role, my responsibilities include visitors, new members, volunteer coordination and stewardship. I get to care about people, help them learn about us, get to know them, and help them connect with what might be meaningful for them. I love my job.

What I appreciate most about Charlotte is that there are so many ways to get involved in the community. For those interested in working for justice, there are many passionate partners and lots of ways to help move things forward. On most days, it seems, I can join a gathering of people coming together for good, and most of the time I spot UUs there. My congregation fills me with the strength, love and sense of purpose to try to make our community and this congregation the best possible places to grow.

John Herrick, Director of Music



I was born in San Jose, California, and moved to the western suburbs of Philadelphia at age two. Ten years ago, and following 44 years of living in and around Philadelphia, I moved to Charlotte to be with my partner, Michael. I joined the UUCC staff in 2007.

As Director of Music, I'm responsible for music in worship services, including special services beyond Sunday mornings. I work with our volunteer musicians, supervise Music Program staff, support the Music Team, Worship Team and Stewardship Team, actively participate in core staff activities, such as staff meetings and Soundings editorial board meetings, and coordinate summer services when the senior minister is away.

The two aspects of my job that I find the most engaging are planning services and working with our volunteer musicians.

What I like most about living in Charlotte are the long fall and spring seasons and the size of our city. It's large enough to offer substantial cultural opportunities, but doesn't feel overwhelming.

Alesia M. Hutto, Office Administrator



I am originally from Augusta, Georgia. I am recently married with two step-children. In addition to Georgia I have also lived in Alabama and South Carolina before settling into Charlotte and starting a job with the Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte (UUCC) in 2005.

As an Office Administrator, I provide administrative support though helping with communications, facility usage, finance, website maintenance and much more. I also work directly with UUCC and Open Door School staff members assisting with various needs and

requests. I enjoy working with this wonderful supportive staff who is dedicated to each other and the congregation.

The UUCC is a warm, thriving congregation who not only support social justice initiatives in the city through protests, marches and forums; they are also dedicated within the walls of the church with a great congregational care team and a large volunteer support system. Charlotte has a thriving economy, fantastic art scene, beautiful weather and of course the mountains!

This vibrant city has not only provided a wonderful career, but also a great quality of life.

Martha Kniseley, Adult Programming Coordinator



I grew up in Oak Ridge, Tennessee where my family was very active in the Unitarian Church. It wasn't long after I moved to Charlotte as a young adult that I joined the UUCC. My own children were the beneficiaries of the invaluable CYRE programming lead by Kathleen Carpenter. While working in the Charlotte community as an educator, I held several leadership positions at the UUCC and experienced difficult transitions that come with a membership spanning 30 years. It was the arrival of our current minister, Jay Leach, that reinvigorated our congregation and my own personal commitment to Unitarian Universalism. While Charlotte was supposed to be a stop on the way to somewhere else, I found much to keep me here: the bonds that were created within this congregation and my neighborhood, the rich music and art scene, and easy access to waterways and mountains.

I joined the staff as the Adult Programming Coordinator in December 2013. I serve as staff liaison for three teams: Adult Religious Education & Spiritual Development (ARESD), Community Building and Congregational Care. I am also working with Doug Swaim as we put together the Environmental Transformation

Team in response to our new Vision. During the past year, I created a new Small Group Ministry Steering Team, in an effort to re-start our Discovery Circles. I'm thrilled to witness the impact of these small groups on the life of our congregation. As I work with our staff and volunteers, I am excited to offer more learning opportunities for our members that will build better understanding for our work outside of these walls in the larger Charlotte community.

Belinda Parry, Administrative Assistant



I support the Children and Youth Religious Education program and assist with financials, communication, and anything else I can. The description for this role when I was hired in 2011 included the apt phrase "...an increasing number of unpredicted tasks." As a member of the staff, I particularly enjoy being able to work closely with thoughtful and talented colleagues and volunteers. As a church member, I appreciate the many opportunities available to meet and really connect with other church members and visitors. I moved to Charlotte in 1993 to be close to my mother. I have two talented, bright daughters and am grateful for the magnet school program here that is allowing them to grow and learn on paths that interest and challenge them.

Doug Swaim, Director of Administration



I grew up in small town North Carolina and have roots in the state going back several generations. I love our geography and climate and always miss the landscapes and seasons when I'm away for any extended time. I've had mini-careers doing historic preservation work and building houses. I was drawn to the adventure of a changing Central Europe after the Wall came down and lived and worked in former Czechoslovakia for most of the 1990s, marrying and

starting a family while there. My kids are now 21 and 23, my daughter a pre-med senior at UNC-Chapel Hill and her older brother back in Prague putting a recent business degree to work.

Charlotte is a city of great neighborhoods and – regardless of recent headlines – a wonderful place to raise a family. It’s a city experiencing rapid growth, benefitting from good planning decisions made decades ago but still trying to find its identity and soul. As you’ll hear again and again, there’s high tension between country club progressives and activists demanding real effort on difficult issues.

My daughter and I embarked on a deliberate search for a faith home while she was in junior high school. We joined the UUCC in 2010. Three years later, when the Director of Administration position came open, I put my name in the hat, and I started working here in June 2013. The job overflows the standard bucket of administrative responsibilities, and I like that. In addition to finance and administration, I’m currently planning dance opportunities, developing a course that examines “the Common Good” through inaugural addresses and helping to start a new team devoted to “environmental transformation.” It is a pleasure and an honor to work with such talented, committed colleagues on the professional staff. Under Jay’s leadership, we are constantly both challenged and supported.