

**The Task Force to Explore Ordaining Leia
Questions from Congregation Conversation, November 17, 2019**

What is the process for ordaining a minister in our church?

First, the task force will provide a comprehensive report and recommendation to the Board for consideration. Then, the board affirms and recommends ordination to the congregation. The congregation then votes on ordination. It is important to note that only church members would be able to vote. If it is important to you to be able to vote, you must formalize your membership, by signing the book, at least 30 days before the congregation meeting.

Would Leia's job description change? In other words, would she have more responsibilities along the lines of a lead/called minister, with some faith development responsibilities going to Caroline?

Yes, Leia's job description would change to reflect that she is one of our ordained clergy. By ordaining her, we are acknowledging and formalizing the ways in which she already serves as one of our ministers: preaching, teaching, administration and pastoral care. Leia's job description would be updated to match what she is already doing. The RE Assistant would continue to work with Leia, the RE Committee and other volunteers to implement our congregation's RE program.

How can Leia do any additional tasks? She is already swamped with work!

Leia has already taken on additional tasks through the years above and beyond her current job description. Ordaining her would acknowledge and be an active of support for her leadership and ministry with us.

We have attended TJMC for the past two years. We've been highly active with the RE program with our 2 boys ages 4 and 7. Leia has made us feel so welcome. Our kids love her, and they know she loves them. Q: Who will lead children's worship if Leia takes on this new role?

Leia would continue to lead Children's Worship and remain integrally involved in our congregation's faith development programs.

Does Leia want to deliver "mature audience" sermons as distinct from intergenerational services?

Leia is a skilled worship leader and would be delighted to weave worship and preach on Sunday's that are not multigenerational services.

Help me imagine worship with 2.5 ministers:

One Sunday/month – Alex

One Sunday/month multigenerational – Leia + settled minister (or Leia and worship weaver or settled minister and worship weaver)

2-3 remaining Sundays - ?? Settled minister, Leia or guest speaker—it would depend on the month and the needs of the congregation

If/when Leia leaves this position, are we setting up ourselves to have an ordained Minister of Faith Development in perpetuity?

No. The congregation's leadership with input from the congregation would decide about the future staffing when those needs arise.

If Leia would be ordained, why would she not be recognized by UU Ministry? Simply because she is ordained for TJMC only? How is this different from a settled minister?

There are two kinds of ordained ministers in Unitarian Universalist congregations:

- Fellowshiped ministers who obtain a master's degree in divinity, meet the criteria listed by the UUA and are ordained by a congregation.
- Ministers ordained to the ministry by a particular congregation are not recognized by the UUA fellowshiped UU Ministers.

We would ordain Leia as the second kind of minister.

Leia would not be our settled minister. Settled ministers are "called" by a congregation via a congregational vote to be the settled minister. Leia can be ordained by our congregation and serve as one of our ministers without being one of our settled ministers.

Did ordaining a minister from within a congregation actually predate the formal fellowshiping requirements of the UUA?

Yes. Fellowshiping ministers with standard requirements set by the UUA is relatively new. We are trying to pin down when fellowshiping began.

When would Leia expect to receive full minister's pay? How much would that pay be? Answer was too general for me – as given in the meeting 11/17

The UUA Fair Compensation Salary Recommendations for Leia as our Director of Faith Development with 27 years of experience are similar to those for an Assistant Minister. Sadly, all our staff are paid significantly less than the recommendations and Leia is paid nearly \$10K less than the Fair Compensation salary recommendation. We are committed to providing all our staff with equitable pay and benefits, and our plans to move out of our current financial stress will reflect that goal. As our congregation moves forward with long range planning, we expect that all our staff will be compensated at the recommended levels.

The recommendation for the full minister's pay is similar to the recommendation for the Director of Faith Development with 27 years of experience. We hope to meet the UUA Fair Compensation Salary Recommendations for all our staff as soon as possible.

A number of years ago we looked at Leia's salary and made a big adjustment up. How did we since then fall so far behind?!

We have had so many financial struggles, we have not prioritized staff salary and benefits. We do not meet the UUA Fair Compensation Recommendations for any of our staff.

Would you repeat what the process is for ordaining Leia? When can this happen?

We hope to hear from anyone in the congregation who has additional questions. Please contact Pam McIntire (pem3xe@pmcintire.com) if you have particular questions you would like answered or if you would like to meet for a conversation. We will answer questions at a Congregation Conversation in January and bring a proposal to the church Board soon thereafter. Upon the Board's affirmation and approval, we would then bring the proposal to ordain Leia to the congregation for a vote.

Will there be a special celebration to announce Leia's ordination?

We would certainly have a celebration!! And the ceremony of ordination would be a special service open to all with a reception following.

One of my concerns is the concept of shared leadership. While I think this works fine for Sunday services, it does not work well for administrative tasks or building services or who handles day to day concerns as to how we show ourselves to our members and the community. At times it has seemed that no one is in charge. How does Leia see this concern?

Ordaining Leia is not the same as determining the structure of leadership in our church.

It is critically important that administrative tasks, building services and day to day concerns are handled effectively and efficiently. Currently, the Director of Administration and Finance, Sean Skally, is responsible for many of the building services and administrative tasks and by all reports he is doing an excellent job! As our only full time senior staff, Leia has been handling many of the additional administrative tasks and day to day concerns.

We envision a leadership model in which all staff work cooperatively with each other, contributing their expertise and experience to the mission of the church. Each staff position has clear areas of responsibility to ensure efficient functioning of the church.

It is the hope of many that our ministry would be based on professional collaboration instead of a traditional hierarchical model. We expect that our ministers will be steadfast in their commitment to all areas of functioning of the church. We trust that our ministers will work as the professionals that they are. Leia maintains very high professional standards. She has worked extremely hard over the many decades of service to our church to lead collaboratively and with integrity.

What happens to the Triune model?

The term Triune model is so emotionally laden at this point that we do not want to go forward with that nomenclature. We envision a system of leadership in which ministers and staff work cooperatively with each staff member having clear areas of responsibility and accountability.

What are the risks of not ordaining Leia? What are the risks of employing someone who acts as a minister but not formally recognizing or compensating?

Thank you for asking this important question. Over many years, Leia has taken on administrative, pastoral, and leadership far beyond her role as the Director of Faith Development. To ask her to continue without fully recognizing her contributions and her role as a minister in our congregation would be, at the very least, disheartening. We strive to live our UU values in part by honoring and celebrating those who lead with wisdom and loving commitment. In ordaining Leia we would be not only recognizing her as a minister in our church, we would be demonstrating our own commitment to being the wise and caring congregation we are.