

Timeline
UUFHC Program for Children & Youth
Approved by the RE Committee April 11, 2024

Directors 1992–2024 (½ to ¾ time)

- Kay Saucier 1992–1999
- Lisa Chenoweth 1999–2007
- April Fritz 2007–2013
- Margo Price 2013-2014
- Stephanie Kalka DRE thru 2014-June 2019
- Ann Dodd is Acting DRE from September 2019–March 2020
- Adena Danouf Interim DFF Summer 2020
- Jenn Blosser DFF September 2020-present

RE Committee Chairs 2019–2024

- Emily Whaley RE Chair 2019–2023
- Marc Petrequin RE Chair October 2023–present

Summary of Program Activities 2000–2024

Pre-2017 Summary of Program Activities

- In 2001 child enrollment reached 80+
- Between 2001–2017, some Sundays more than 50 children attending 6 different classes with 14 volunteers plus the DRE per Sunday
- RE appreciation Sunday acknowledged 40+ RE volunteers.
- Teacher volunteer recruitment and training in August and September
- Curriculum and teachers/assistants confirmed 6 mos in advance
- Official registration “Sundae Sunday” in September
- Childcare every Sunday and for special events

2017-2020 Summary of Program Activities

- In 2017 child enrollment at 40
- RE Committee began discussing challenges of decreasing attendance and volunteers
- RE Committee read “Death of Sunday School” (2019), which discussed national trends of declining participation
- Covid pandemic began March 2020

2020-2024 Summary of Activities

- Extensive Zoom Sunday programs and other events offered, sometimes in conjunction with other congregations
- Sharp decline in participation as children and youth tire of zooming
- In 2021, UUFHC summer camp for children and youth, entirely on zoom; other zoom summer camp programs offered jointly with other congregations

- During 2021-22, programming online continues
- Late Spring 2022, leaders discover that classrooms are seriously infected with mold
- Spring 2022, children return in-person; given activities in back of sanctuary during worship services
- UUFHC members express dissatisfaction with children in worship
- Summer Camp 2022, first post-pandemic in-person UUFHC summer camp; classrooms safe to use with fans and windows open in Summer 2022
- Classrooms safe to use by Summer 2023
- Summer Camp 2023, 12 participants and 17 volunteers
- Fall 2023-Spring 2024, 20 children enrolled

**Specifics of Program Activity
Pre-2017 to Spring 2024**

2000-2017

- Guest at your table
- Holiday Intergenerational Day
- Carol Sing
- RE Sunday
- Intergenerational (now All-Ages) Sundays
- pumpkin carving, scarecrow making
- Caroling at nursing homes
- picnics
- intergenerational balloon toss
- Christmas tree sales
- OWL
- Marches in DC
- Union Sunday annually in May (honored 1819 Channing sermon) in Baltimore
- Parent support group
- Soulful Sundown
- Summer game rooms (no formal RE program)
- Glow in the Dark Party
- Bridging Ceremony
- YRUU Halloween Party
- Valentine cakes
- COA fundraisers (car wash)
- COA worship service
- COA trip to Boston
- Youth attended CONs
- Youth sleepovers (now called lock-ins)
- Youth built picnic tables and BBQ grill, painted classroom murals, furniture projects
- YRUU worship service (now called youth-led worship service)
- Zip lining

- discussion and debate
- social justice projects
- Junior Youth Group Cabin Clean-up
- Youth served d'oeuvres at auction
- Youth-hosted congregation dinner
- Junior youth sleepovers (now combined with youth lock-in)

2018-19

- Activities during 2018-2019:
 - Parent support group
 - Pre-K-3rd grade children's worship
 - Grades 4&5 in separate class "Young Leaders"
 - Junior Youth Group grades 6-8
 - Youth Group grades 9-12
 - Cultural Camp k-5 morning camp (5th year of camp)
 - Glow in the dark party grades K-5
 - Sleepover for 2-5th grades
 - intergenerational day
 - COA
 - Sleepovers for older children
 - RE worship
 - Senior write-ups in Newsletter
 - Halloween Party
 - OWL
- Challenges: RE Committee began working on issue of declining numbers of volunteers and participants; read "The Death of Sunday School," which described the national decline in RE volunteers and enrollment of children and youth and suggested possible changes, including concept of "Faith Formation" and family-oriented programs

April-June 2019

- Stephanie Kalka's Annual Meeting report excerpt:
 - The RE Committee had two strategic planning retreats this past year as part of our effort to update the program to better meet the needs of our families.
 - Brenna Kupferman led us in visioning exercises and in realizing the RE Program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
 - RE Committee also talked about "what we would do if we could not fail" and went through the DRE task list line by line to see what could be delegated and what could be let go.
 - Brenna introduced us to several different organizational tools like Trello, Obvibase, and Last Pass, all of which RE Chair Emily Whaley implemented and found helpful.
 - RE Committee was able to lighten the Director's schedule for half the year and generated ideas for next year.
 - Stephanie Kalka resigned, last day being 9 June 2019

Summer 2019

- Anne Dodson brought on as Interim DRE
- RE Consultant hired with intent to help transition both the DRE position as well as the programming; provided exit interview with Stephanie. [can't find notes of this interview]

Fall 2019

- Committee focus was on classroom volunteers, plans for learning, OWL
- Committee discussed article "The Death of Sunday School," which summarized common challenges in programs for children and youth and made recommendations for changes, including changing name to "Faith Formation" with a focus on family ministry
- Committee recommended to Board to change committee name from Religious Education to Faith Formation; tabled.
- Classes (as noted in newsletter):
 - Pre-K-3 Picture Book UU
 - 4-5 Harry and UU
 - 6-8 D'Oh God
- RE Committee re-introduced proposal to change RE to Faith Formation

January 2020

Board voted to approve name change from Religious Education to Faith Formation (a bylaws change was needed but not accomplished; note Covid began in March 2020)

March 2020

- Covid begins—all in-person activities on hold
- First newsletter mention of name change (RE to Faith Formation)
- Interim DRE Anne Dodson left Director position
- Committee ordered subscription to Faith Rocket, the Church of the Larger Fellowship's religious education offering at the time to use during pandemic lockdown
- Interim DFF (Adena Dannouf) hired for Summer 2020

May 2020

Board announces "active search for new DFF (formally known as DRE)"

Summer 2020 (Adena Dannouf, Summer DFF)

- UUFHC hired Jenn Blosser with a Sept 2020 start date.
- Following Jenn's interview, in a [congregational] email [from Emily] dated 26 June 2020: "Katrina and I met with DFF Candidate Jenn Blosser today, and we both give her an enthusiastic two thumbs up. She is enthusiastic, friendly, and excited. ... [H]er vision of Faith Formation is in the direction in which the FF committee has been committed to moving - bringing in the UU values, principles, and resources; better engagement among the age groups (meaning more events and ways to get to know and grow with each other); and more interaction with the congregation."
- Activities in Summer 2020 (Zoom)

- Time for All Ages
- Pre-School story time
- Exploration Station
- Middle School group
- High School Group
- Parents Group
- Cooking Connection
- COA begins
- Jenn Blosser starts as DFF in September 2020
- Activities in Fall/Winter 2020
 - “Chalice Central” (on-demand, online UUFHC learning website & social media app)
 - Online “Friends-Giving”
 - “Stars & Snowflakes” holiday connection program

February–April 2021

- COVID restrictions still in place; no in-person activities for children and youth
- Faith Formation IEPs offered (“individual education program”-type conversations with parents so that DFF is aware of the needs of individual children)
- "Beloved Talents Show" (zoom) was a big hit.
- Newsletters lacks info on Faith Formation activities; leaders recall:
 - Chalice Central continues
 - COA continues; picnic at conclusion
 - “Parents and Caregivers as Sexuality Educators” to make up for having to halt OWL during the COVID lockdown
 - Planning for 2021 virtual UU summer camp, Univelarian University of Wizarding Arts, UUWA (pronounced "oo-wah" or "you-wah")
 - Faith Formation Family Fellowship Picnic
- April newsletter article envisions a post pandemic program, saying, “isn't it glorious to imagine the possibilities? Imagine the better program, the better world we can make for one another when we don't go “back to normal.”

May 2021

Following on-going conversation about plans for the program, then called Faith Formation, RE Committee presented plans to the Board

Summer 2021

- UUFHC and 20 other UU congregations across the US and Canada join together for a virtual summer camp, Univelarian University of Wizarding Arts (with 6 UUFHC children)
- Virtual camp was organized by Jenn Blosser and 5 other religious educators Jenn recruited to create the program for UU kids.

Fall 2021

- September 2021: classes were still on Zoom because Board determined indoor classes unwise until children under 12 can be vaccinated
- December 2021: Given the challenges (few volunteers, spotty attendance, desire for more engagement with adult congregation), RE Chair Emily Whaley and DFF proposed for the future an approach of all-ages worship and 2nd hour classes (a model other UU congregations have experimented with); discussion of this proposal continued through May 2022 but UUFHC did not adopt this approach.

Spring-Summer 2022

- Extreme mold issues in RE classrooms required massive clean-up efforts before rooms could be used for in-person programming; clean-up was a slow process
- A small team of volunteers dedicated weeks to getting moldy and damp furniture, rugs, and other room decor removed; sanitizing everything in the rooms (including walls); and creating homemade air purifiers for the heavily used rooms. On several days the work crew wore masks, had windows open, and invested in tons of DampRid to keep the rooms as dry as possible.
- UUFHC summer camp held both indoors and outdoors following the clean-up
- Congregational concerns over:
 - Having kids in service (while classrooms still not usable)
 - No YRUU (now commonly called Youth Group) due to lack of volunteers
- Council on Ministry hosts summer meeting without DFF or RE Committee Chair; concerns were discussed (July 2022)
- Continued attempts to engage congregation in FF process and RE committee

Fall 2022

- Despite recruitment efforts, new volunteers attend only a handful of committee meetings; most meetings with only DFF, one parent, and RE Chair
- Children returned to the classrooms for Sunday programming following additional cleanup work.
- Painted mural in former nursery was damaged by mold; room re-painted
- The program implemented themed rooms based on names and ideas the children generated.
- Began student-led, choice-based activities with the goal of helping children feel a sense of belonging in the program, ownership of their classrooms, and agency
- The number of adult leaders was very low, 2-3 volunteers plus DFF

Spring 2023

- Coming of Age, facilitated by Jenn & Erica Bertoli for 3 youth; curriculum was modified from its prior form to fit in a shorter timeline with fewer volunteers; required less of a commitment from youth and their families; made a second-hour program because of shortage of RE volunteers
- Board adopts Safe Congregation Policy (revised slightly in October 2023)

Summer 2023

- Summer camp had 11 participants (13 registered, but two couldn't attend due to illness and family complications) and 17 youth and adult volunteers.
- Classrooms fully available

AUGUST 2023:

Rev. Jaye began as interim minister

Fall 2023:

- RE Committee reconstituted with additional members
- Curriculum planned to match worship themes with 1-2 classes each Sunday
- RE Committee determined specific topics for each Sunday; DFF created lesson plans and activities drawn from UU and related religious education resources
- Retreat with RE Committee showed desire for more multigenerational engagement.
- Rev. Jaye & Jenn Blosser began planning monthly all-ages services with content truly for all ages, based on Erika Hewett design.
- First intentionally planned all-ages services Nov. 19 and December 25
- Board agrees first project of interim ministry will be congregational Faithful Conversations to set vision for the program for children & youth
- Committee begins working on factual timeline of the program
- In December, Committee sets topics for each Sunday through June 30
- Committee and DFF agree goal is to have specific plans for 2024-25 before June 30, 2024

January–March 2024

- Curriculum continues as in Fall 2023
- Children & youth make and wear stoles to January 14 MLK service, in which they participate
- Stole rack placed in lobby holds stoles for children and youth (including visitors) attending an all-ages worship service
- Committee meets twice to discuss fact timeline for the program in anticipation of Faithful Conversations visioning process
- Faithful Conversations Feb-March (about 55 participants)
- Faithful Conversations Workshop on the Program for Children and Youth scheduled for 10:00 am Saturday, April 27
- Youth Lock-In (ages 10-up) in January to plan the youth-led service
- Youth-Led worship service Feb. 11 with eleven youth leaders
- All-Ages worship service March 17 with youth participants
- Workshop with Rev. Ginger Luke March 23 on leading a program for children and youth and post-pandemic changes (16 members attend)