

What is Faith Formation?

Faith Formation refers to all the ways in which this congregation supports and encourages its members to grow in our Unitarian Universalist faith – finding and creating meaning as individuals and in community.

Children’s religious education classes are an important part of faith formation, and these classes are an immediate focus of our work. But this term also includes adult programs, multigenerational worship and programming, social justice, and other ways in which faith formation happens here at SUUS.

We are choosing to use the term “faith formation” here as a way of keeping in mind the interconnectedness of all of these aspects of faith formation, as we contemplate new ways of meeting your faith formation needs.



What is the Faith Formation Team?

The SUUS Board has asked four SUUS members to come together as a team to guide the congregation in re-imagining faith formation. The Faith Formation Team will lead us in this process of learning, visioning, experimenting and transforming.

There are no experts on the Faith Formation Team. We do not know where our discernment will lead us. We are all learning together as we explore what is possible and how best to carry faith formation at SUUS into the future. We may end up doing something that looks similar to our current programming. Or we may decide to try something very different. This is a time of opportunity, with many options available to us.

We hope you will join with us!

Who is the Faith Formation Team?

Team members are Kathy Helmrich (chair), Benna Lehrer, Jere Arman and Jennifer Swenson, working with Rev. Jeanne Lloyd and Ann Kadlecsek (Transitional Director of Religious Education). Contact any team member with questions or ideas throughout the process.



Why now?

SUUS has offered wonderful children’s programming for a long time. The world is changing, however, and with it the needs of our families and volunteers. Many congregations, especially in New England, are finding that the old Sunday School model that used to work well for them is no longer the best fit for them. Some postpone exploring other models until their program is in crisis.

Although we are still providing quality Sunday School programming, we can see signs that this model is not serving us as well as it used to. Our goal this year is to re-evaluate our needs and explore other models so that we can make an intentional and gradual shift if needed.

This is a particularly good time for us to do this work, as we get ready to search for our next religious educator. Knowing more about the type of work we would like this person to do will help us to find someone who is well-suited to our changing needs.

What is changing?

Our goal is to adapt to ongoing changes in our congregation and the world around us. These changes are multi-faceted, and they show up here at SUUS in various ways, such as:

- Decreasing volunteer time – our children’s program is based on a model that requires more volunteer time than we now have.
- Inconsistent attendance for many children, which presents challenges for continuity and community building.
- Changing goals – many parents find that family time during the week is limited, and seek time together on Sunday morning.

What will we do this year?

This fall we will focus on visioning and learning about other ways to do faith formation. The Faith Formation Team will then propose a general direction for faith formation, and a new staff job description and volunteer structure. We then plan to oversee some experiments to try some different approaches. Through it all, there will be opportunities for everyone to participate and be heard.

Please participate! The changes we’re exploring will affect all of us. As we look to our future we want to serve all members of our community as we strive to fulfill our Vision.

Join us on Nov 18 for congregation-wide visioning!

SUUS Vision

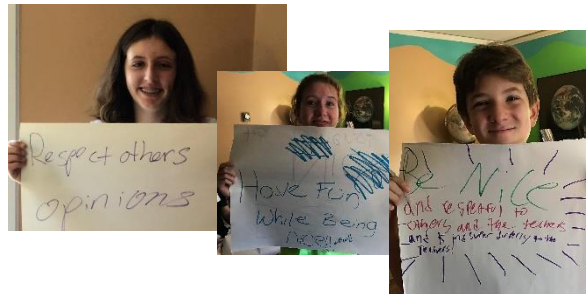
Guided by love, the Shoreline Unitarian Universalist Congregation

- nourishes spiritual growth
- works for justice and
- promotes peace

Mission Statement

Our Mission Statement: As a Welcoming Congregation dedicated to Love, Faith, Justice and Reason, the Shoreline Unitarian Universalist Society’s mission is to

- Nurture the spirit and enrich the mind;
- Foster a reverence for life in all of its complexity and mystery;
- Build a spiritual community dedicated to social, economic and environmental justice;
- Explore the search for truth by providing a safe space for the exchange of diverse perspectives;
- Inspire members, friends and our larger community to go forth and make the world a better place.



Shoreline Unitarian Universalist Society



The Future of Faith Formation