

Iowa Lakes Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (ILUUF)
Midwest Region
Part-time Contract Minister Position

June 2023

TO APPLY: Please send a Cover Letter and Resume to ILUUF at: iowalakesuuf@gmail.com with the subject "MINISTER APPLICATION."

WEBSITE: www.uuokoboji.com

MAILING ADDRESS: Iowa Lakes Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
PO Box 93
Okoboji, Iowa 51355

Our congregation and its culture:

We have approximately 30 members. During the school year, our Sunday in-person attendance is 10 - 20, and another 5 – 8 join on ZOOM. The Lakes area population surges during the summer and we see in-person attendance increase to 20 -25 with no change in ZOOM attendees. Before the pandemic, our attendance was higher.

We have two families with children. Excluding them, the average age of our members would be over 62 years old.

We share social time before and after our bi-monthly services. We recognize that everyone is different and deserves a voice and respect. Our strengths are tolerance and a progressive attitude, which can be difficult to find in northwest Iowa.

The ILUUF Mission Statement:

We are a welcoming and inclusive community. Celebrating life, we strive to inform ourselves and our larger community of our religious history and the value of independent thinking. Together we support one another, encourage religious inquiry, nurture spiritual and intellectual growth, and work for social justice.

How we live our values:

Currently, we have a variety of outside speakers that present topical, controversial, and insightful sermons and programs. Examples include the Iowa Underground Railroad, racial inequity, and what it's like to be living in Iowa as a member of the LGBTQ community.

We support local charities and an international student with a fund drive and general budget allocation as part of our social concerns work.

Service Schedule:

We meet on the second and fourth Sundays of the month, January – November, and the second Sunday in December in a sunny meeting room space we rent from Arrowwood Resort, a local hotel and

Page 2 ILUUF Contract Minister Position

conference center. We have social time from 10:30 AM to 11:00 AM, a one-hour service, and Lunch Bunch for those that can attend. Music is provided at the beginning and end of the service.

Currently, our program committee (two volunteers) coordinates the Sunday services, identifies speakers and topics, schedules speakers, and arranges for lodging. Speakers usually have a thirty-to-forty-minute message and allow time for questions. Our speakers receive a fee, mileage, meals, and overnight lodging if needed. In 2023 we have contracted with a retired minister for one Sunday a month.

Our service is advertised in local papers, emailed to members and friends, on our website and is posted on Facebook.

ILUUF Personnel

We do not have any ILUUF personnel or paid staff. We have a one-year contract with a minister to present one service per month.

ILUUF History

The ILUUF started with an informal meeting of seven like-minded friends in the spring of 2004. In the summer of 2004, we were recognized as a new Fellowship by the Prairie States District of the UUA. We held an organizational meeting on September 12, 2004, and formed the Iowa Lakes Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. We had 20 – 30 adults and 5 – 8 children attend our bi-monthly meetings held at Arrowwood Resort since December 11, 2005. Our annual budget in 2005 was approximately \$12,000.00. In 2006, we had 31 signatures in our Membership book.

Ministerial History

We had a part-time minister in July 2006 that presented a successful series on “Building Your Own Theology”. Since that time, we have had ministers and theologians from various faiths present messages to our group. In 2022 we contracted with a UU minister to run our services one Sunday a month. When she moved, we contracted with another minister to provide services one Sunday a month. We have never had a minister to run all our ILUUF services. During a recent grassroots strategic planning process, hiring a minister was identified as a high priority by our congregation.

MEMBERSHIP & FINANCES

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Total Income</u> | <u>Total Expenses</u> | <u>Net</u> | <u>**Membership</u> |
|-------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------|---------------------|
| 2023* | 10,300.00 | 19,010.00 | (8,710.00) | 30 |
| 2022 | 12,163.33 | 15,011.50 | (2,848.17) | 35 |
| 2021 | 16,252.61 | 18,689.73 | (2,437.12) | 35 |
| 2020 | 17,951.95 | 14,971.44 | 2,980.51 | 35 |
| 2019 | 22,897.11 | 22,438.59 | 458.52 | 40 |

*Budget

**Membership – approximate

DEMOGRAPHICS

Northwest Iowa’s year-round demographic is 97% white, and our congregation is no different. We are approximately 55% female and 45% male.

What percentage of members do you estimate identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ)?

We do not solicit this data from our membership, although we do have members of our Fellowship that identify as LGBTQ.

What changes have you made in the 3-5 years, if any, to include racial and ethnic diversity of your congregational staff and volunteer leadership?

Racial equity is valued by our congregation. We have hosted diverse speakers and addressed topics of diversity in our sermons. We have not made a focused effort to expand the diversity of our staff as we have no staff currently.

Accessibility

Our meeting room at Arrowwood Resort is wheelchair accessible.

Resources and Programs

We are a volunteer Fellowship. Our Program Committee has contracted with a temporary minister to provide one service each month, contact members, and provide pastoral care and support as needed.

Our Social Justice Committee communicates with area charities and is active in IUUWAN. The committee keeps our congregation informed on issues of social concern and provides recommendations to the ILUUF Board on monetary support.

Resources and Programs, cont.

We include a children's book at each service but do not have a religious education program currently.

SURROUNDING COMMUNITY

Describe the character of the surrounding community, including population and demographics:

The ILUUF is in the Iowa Great Lakes Region of northwest Iowa. Our congregation draws from a multi-county radius surrounding the Iowa Great Lakes Region. The combined population of these towns is approximately 11,000 year-round residents. Northwest Iowa is recognized as one of the most conservative areas in a conservative state, yet our position as a summer tourist and summer-resident community draws a more diverse crowd who live all over the world. Our congregation provides a progressive spiritual home for summer residents seeking an option. The Lakes Area summer population is estimated to be 80,000.

The main attractions of the Okoboji area are the glacier-carved lakes. This beautiful chain of lakes extends from the Minnesota border southwest several miles and covers approximately 15,000 acres. The Iowa Great Lakes include Iowa's largest natural lake, Spirit Lake, and five interconnected lakes. Spring-fed West Lake Okoboji is a beautiful shade of blue and 134 feet deep. It is the centerpiece of the five chain lakes, and the surrounding communities provide the backdrop for Okoboji's year-round playground. Because of the beautiful lakes, the small town hosts a variety of amenities including a biological field station operated by the Iowa Board of Regents, a nature center, summer theatre, YMCA,

Page 4 ILUUF Contract Minister Position

many summer camps, great local schools, and many county and state parks for hiking, fishing, and cross-country skiing.

Describe how your Congregation is known/perceived by the larger community:

We are a very small group that offers an alternative to the prevailing conservative attitude. We lack the image a church building provides and a consistent minister, which makes our congregation difficult for people to find or understand. While members of our congregation have identified a need to expand ILUUF's role in the community with families that do not attend fellowship, we need more consistency in our message and vibrant, visible leadership to make these community connections. We expect a part-time minister to lead this effort.

Describe your Congregation's religious, political and social context from a historical and current perspective.

Our Fellowship includes members from many different religious and political beliefs. We are curious about new ideas and believe respect, opportunity, and representation should be available to everyone. The ILUUF has been a reliable refuge for people that share, or are interested in, and support progressive ideas. The area's conservative majority makes the ILUUF an important space for people of like mind to explore alternative ideas and find an inclusive spiritual home.

POSITION BASICS

Anticipated Start Date: As soon as possible

Term: 25% time

Minimum Salary: We offer a competitive wage for a qualified candidate. There would be no benefits as this is a part-time position.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Description of minister's role in relation to other paid staff

There is no other paid staff.

Primary areas of focus for the minister

- Develop and lead services twice a month.
- Attend monthly board meetings and provide strategic leadership.
- Provide outreach to members.
- Provide community outreach and engage with the local religious community.
- Support administration of the congregation as needed.

Holiday service outside of scheduled services.

Currently, we do not conduct holiday services.

Status of the congregation as a Welcoming Congregation. Yes

Status of the Congregation as a Green Sanctuary congregation. No

Status of the Congregation as an Honor Congregation. Unknown

How does the congregation define good preaching and worship?

Our Fellowship is comprised of all political and religious backgrounds so good preaching

Page 5 ILUUF Contract Minister Position

begins with insightful ideas or life experiences that challenge attendees while at the same time, are something they can relate to or apply to their community or worldview. It also helps to deliver the message with energy, humor, and sincerity. We like to ask questions. Often, time will expire before our groups' questions and follow-up discussions have concluded.

How is technology currently used in your congregation and what are the technological requirements for the minister?

We shifted to ZOOM meetings during COVID (March 2020 – current). We maintain a hybrid service (in-person and ZOOM) after the COVID risk diminished. Volunteer board and program committee members currently manage the ZOOM service segment and can assist as needed. Audio/visual equipment is provided by Arrowwood. We provide our own computer.

Our website is updated by our Board Chair and maintained by an outside contractor.

How has your ministry changed since COVID began? Where do you see decline? What have you let go of? Where do you see fresh energy? COVID forced us to learn how to meet online which was invaluable in keeping our Fellowship going. We continue to offer hybrid services, which has made us more inclusive because we have numerous members that otherwise would not be able to attend because of transportation, health and other reasons.

Have you passed the Eighth Principle, or is the congregation in process of moving to a congregational vote? We have had presentations and discussions about it led by other congregations that have adopted it. But with the pandemic and focusing our energies on hiring a minister for the first time this has not been a priority.

How did the last ministry end (or how is it ending)? How is the congregation doing with this time of transition? We have never had a permanent minister; and we look forward to this next step in the growth and development of our Fellowship.