

From Sandra's Study
Rev. Sandra Fees

When I was in theological school, one of my requirements was field education at a church. Working in a field site gives students an opportunity to learn and practice ministry with ongoing supervision and feedback. It is akin to what student teachers are required to do.

I completed field education for one year at our Lancaster congregation where I taught K-1 and offered other RE programs. I had the opportunity to work with an experienced Director of Religious Education and excellent teachers. I learned about the developmental needs of my class, studied UU curricula, and developed a strong bond with the children in my class. I worked with a teacher with experience with autistic children, and she was invaluable in teaching me how to be a presence and positive influence with the children in our class who struggled emotionally or with learning disabilities.

Knowing how much my own field education meant to me, I am looking forward to our having a student minister with us this coming year. It seems somehow fitting that she comes from the very church where I did my field education and from the seminary where I studied.

Kate Diller, a longtime member of the Lancaster UU congregation and a second-year student at Lancaster Theological Seminary, will be serving as our student minister this fall and spring. Her background prior to entering seminary was in the medical field. She will be spending approximately 10 hours of her time each week on field education with our congregation, including the time she spends with us on Sunday mornings.

Kate and I are finalizing her learning covenant to reflect her particular vocational needs. Her broad goals are to continue to explore what it means to be a minister and to continue to develop her leadership skills. Her particular focus will be membership – helping us develop our plans for outreach, welcome, and hospitality for visitors and members – as well as stewardship programs that will support our short- and long-term goals. Kate will also teach an adult education program, assist with worship, and get involved in other areas of church life, as her time permits. I will be providing supervision and feedback to her on a weekly basis. I will also be gathering a small lay team to meet with her regularly.

I look forward to Kate's time with us and to our building a relationship with her. I know you will welcome Kate warmly into our community and do your best to help her develop and explore her skills as a minister.

Yours in faith,
Sandra