



FIRST
UNITARIAN OF PORTLAND
EST. 1866
Living Our Liberal Faith

June 6, 2019

Beloved Congregation,

Teaching in the Learning Community is a big commitment. But it is also one that can deeply enrich your spirit with joy and inspiration. I always say that we have as much to learn from our children and youth as they do from us. This is a special opportunity to connect with the young people of our congregation and discover what spiritual exploration looks like for them. Learn and grow together, bear witness to their lives, nurture, and laugh.

You may think that this sounds great but that the commitment is more than your life can hold right now. Before you turn away, please take a moment to consider all the ways we're making it easier than ever to consider serving in the Learning Community.

We've increased the size of our teaching teams to allow for more built-in flexibility to take Sundays off when needed. We require two teachers per classroom each Sunday, so with teams of three or even four, not everyone needs to be there each Sunday. In addition, we have a list of experienced substitutes at the ready. For most of our teachers, the relationships they build with fellow teachers are just as meaningful as connecting with our young people.

Most teachers still take part in worship. They teach during one service and come to the sanctuary during the other. You don't have to give up Sunday worship in order to teach.

All curricula and lesson plans are already in place. You do not need to create anything from scratch. Each teacher takes a turn in organizing a lesson, but since this is shared across the whole teaching group, you may only need to do this a few times during the year, and you'll have as much staff support as you need.

Experience with children or youth is not a requirement. We pair new teachers with experienced teachers as much as possible. And you don't have to be a religious scholar to ask good questions or to listen to our children and youth.

Next year we will have more All Ages Worship, Chapels for children and youth, and will be introducing All Ages Service Project opportunities in addition to some Sundays when we don't have Learning Community programming (usually connected to holidays). All of these mean fewer Sundays where all of our teachers need to be in the classrooms – so additional built-in flexibility.

The Learning Community staff team as well as the Religious Education Committee are here to support you. We strive to support our volunteers in every way possible, and we're here during the week and every Sunday. We have teachers who are young parents, retirees, and professionals, and we will meet you with gratitude wherever you are.

Come learn with us and fill your spirit. Share your unique gifts. Get to know the incredible young people of this congregation and impact the future of their lives and Unitarian Universalism.

I look forward to connecting with you!

In faith and gratitude,

Cassandra Scheffman
Director of Family Ministries