

“While I am fascinated and inspired by all religious traditions, I look for the means by which love is expressed and experienced in these traditions. Love is the foundation for my theology, and for my religious and spiritual life. This is my ministry—to be present in love and compassion with others. I love my work.”

- Rev. Deane Perkins

Youth Work

Deane has taken an active role in the Sr. Youth of his church, engaging in service projects within the US and abroad. He was advisor/minister to senior youth on three different trips to New Orleans, and the co-coordinator of a service project to Safe Passage in Guatemala, an organization that provides day care, a school, a healthy diet and clothes for children that have been abused, and a free medical clinic.

“These spiritual pilgrimages serve others but also allow the youth to become more aware of other cultures and peoples’ needs, leading to greater understanding and compassion,” Deane said.

UU Experience

During his preparation as a ministerial candidate, Deane supplemented his religious background with Unitarian Universalist history and polity, preaching and clinical pastoral education. He completed a two-year internship in Montpelier, Vermont and was summer minister in Washington, Vermont for five years.

He has worked with Directors of Religious Exploration to acquaint himself with the curricula and RE practices in UU congregations, including studying the RE Renaissance modules, as well as Jr. High OWL, and taking the Youth Advisor training program. Deane also went to Star Island

for the RE Conference three summers, and, more recently, to Ferry Beach for RE week.

During a three-month sabbatical several years ago, Deane traveled to Europe to visit dozens of sacred sites, including Transylvania, where he viewed ancient Unitarian churches.

Family

Deane is married to Susan Cobb, and they have a blended family of four children who are young adults. Sue is an adjunct professor in Environmental Studies and Ecology at three different colleges in Vermont, doing much of her work online. She has also been UUCGF’s resident chef, doing many of their fundraising gourmet dinners.

Deane and Sue have a small hobby/business in stone jewelry, rocks and fossils, and they have rockhounded extensively throughout the States and abroad. They also enjoy theater, including musicals and opera. Deane has a Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do, and has two antique autos that he is restoring. “Admittedly, I am much better at taking cars apart than putting them together; nevertheless, I enjoy the work, and creating something new.”

Meet Our Candidate



Rev. Deane M. Perkins, Ph.D.



Deane with youth on a service project trip in New Orleans.

It is truly an honor for me to be your candidate as you choose your first full-time settled minister. Sue and I are very excited about the prospect of moving to Belfast to be with the UUCB family. We're both looking forward to meeting all of you in May!

- Rev. Deane Perkins

Biography:

In Deane's words: "I grew up as an American Baptist, and, at the age of 17 at a Baptist Camp in Maine, felt called to go into the ministry.

"When I was an undergraduate at Ohio Wesleyan, I spent my Junior Year in Beirut, Lebanon studying at the American University of Beirut and the Near East School of Theology where I learned a great deal about Islam, different forms of Christianity, and the Middle East.

"I traveled extensively in the Middle East and the Mediterranean while there, and then traveled through Asia to return home after the academic year was over. The experience made me aware of the beauty and complexity of the myriad religions and cultures that I encountered.

"Although I went to seminary, I found I could not become a Baptist minister at that time, and so pursued my doctorate and became a university professor in the field of Religious Studies."

Deane taught religion at Norwich University in Vermont for 30 years.

During his teaching career he published articles in a philosophy journal and made presentations at academic conferences but enjoyed teaching most, since it was a way to challenge young peoples' minds, to broaden their perspectives, to get them excited about learning.

"But the real connection that I wanted my students to experience

was one where they could sense their authentic self," he concluded.

One day in 1996, while sitting in his office, Deane asked himself, "If I were to start over, what would I do?" The realization was immediate--enter the ministry--the Unitarian Universalist Ministry.

"The circle that began with my decision at 17 was complete when I was ordained in 2003 at the Unitarian Church in Montpelier, VT."



Deane and Sue enjoying each others company.

Ministry

Deane brings to the ministry 30 years of academic teaching and research, administrative experience, leadership skills, community work, and committee work. He has an MA from Andover Newton Theological School and a Ph.D. from McGill University, both in the Psychology of Religion.

Since 2003, he has been the minister at Unitarian Universalist Church at Glens Falls, New York. During his ministry he has given workshops on Nonviolent Communication (NVC), Marshall Rosenberg's work, and participated in a team presentation on Shared Ministry in the New York Metro District.

He has been active in the Capital Region Unitarian Universalists of New York, CRU-UNY, a group of four UU congregations. During this time the group celebrated joint worship services planned over the course of the year, brought the spiritual deepening program Wellspring (from the Rochester Unitarian Church) to their congregations and are starting a new congregation in Clifton Park, New York. He also participates in the Glens Falls Interfaith Clergy Group

The UUCGF congregation adopted an 8th Principle of Nonviolence and created the Glens Falls Peace Center, emphasizing educational programs for the surrounding communities. "In fact," said Deane, "this is my passion--peace work."

"I see everything we do in church (including the finances!) as a form of ministry," Deane said. "Every effort made in the well-being, health, and growth of the church community is part of a ministerial team. We work together to foster open communication and clear boundaries, and define processes that allow people to know that they can be safe, that they will be genuinely listened to, and that their needs will be respected."

"I do not have to agree with other peoples' theologies to respect their thinking and ideas. I welcome the diversity of opinions in a UU congregation; it is how we grow together. In fact, one of the things that is truly amazing about Unitarian Universalism is Worship itself, when people with a multitude of backgrounds and beliefs come together to celebrate life."

"I am aware that a church belongs to the people -- it is ultimately their creation and their responsibility to maintain a loving, compassionate and caring community. A minister can support this, however, and help provide vision, help heal wounds, and help celebrate life with its congregants, but always with the awareness that ministry and leadership are shared."

- Rev. Deane Perkins



Deane preaching enthusiastically.