

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem

Life Lines Lay Ministry
Handbook



Rev. 2016

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Mission Statement

The function and purpose of the Life Lines Lay Ministry, in conjunction with the Minister, is to provide compassionate caring to individuals who desire emotional or personal support, and to reach out to those in the congregation who are homebound or otherwise disconnected from the congregation. The primary responsibilities of Life Lines Lay Ministers are to respect the privacy of each individual contacted; to remember and respect boundaries, our own and others': and to consult the Minister or professional advisors when appropriate.

Benefits of the Life Lines Lay Ministry

- More pastoral care needs of the congregation are met.
- Life Lines Lay Ministers can support one another in reaching out to the disconsolate and disconnected.
- Over time, as more and more people are trained, we create a growing body of those able to provide lay pastoral care.
- This program helps the congregation become more comfortable in giving and receiving care.

Ways that the Life Lines Lay Ministry Helps the Congregation

- Caring for the congregation by visiting the sick or homebound, sending notes of encouragement, lending a helping hand, drying a tear, sharing a laugh, helping to celebrate joys, and arranging for such things as transportation to church or meals during times of stress or loss.
- Being a caring presence: Keep the Life Lines Lay Ministry and the concept of caring for each other visible with

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newsletter articles, periodic Sunday services (or parts of services), by wearing our name tags, and by word of mouth.

- Preventing people from “falling through the cracks”: Make a point to connect with new people and those who have not been around for awhile.
- Supporting each other: Caring can create its own needs and is more rewarding when shared. Be there when another Lay Minister needs assistance, information, or just someone to talk to.
- Participating in ongoing training: Helps Life Lines Lay Ministers be more skillful in caring.

Group Ethics of Life Lines Lay Ministers

We, the members of the Life Lines Lay Ministry, agree to uphold the following standards and behavior with each other and with our larger community:

- Honesty and frankness with sensitivity to feelings.
- Confidentiality.
- Support, empathy, and giving each other the opportunity for “debriefing.”
- Appropriate participation in teamwork.
- Effective communication, giving clear directions.
- Reasonable expectations for ourselves and others’ “fair load,” so that we feel we have the ability to say “no.”
- Giving people the opportunity to speak and allowing them to finish speaking.
- During meetings, no check-in cross talk: stay focused on topics to accomplish group goals.

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- Keeping in touch with the Minister and the group between meetings, as necessary.

Recruitment of Life Lines Lay Ministers

Because of the sensitive nature of the caring ministry we provide, we strive to have a process of recruitment for new members that helps insure that this is a good fit for volunteers.

As new members are needed we will announce that those who feel a call to be a Life Lines Lay Minister should let the minister or facilitator of Life Lines know of their interest. Current members of Life Lines will compile a list of members who they feel would serve well in this role. Letters will then be sent to those whom we believe are well suited to be Life Lines Lay Ministers. There may be personal phone calls from the minister or facilitator after the letter has been sent.

Expectations of Life Lines Lay Ministers

- Normally, be a member of UUCS for at least one year before joining the team.
- Make a commitment to the goals and purposes of the Life Lines Lay Ministry.
- Complete an orientation session and become familiar with resource materials.
- Commit to a one-year term as a Life Lines Lay Minister, with an option to extend this on an annual basis. After a break in service, a retired Life Lines Lay Minister may return to active status.

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- Attend the monthly meetings, including any training session portion. If unable to attend, the facilitator must be notified.
- Learn to use the Warm Line and regularly check for calls (see page 7 for details).
- Actively participate in the Life Lines Lay Ministry and follow through on commitments made, respecting the privacy of individuals.
- Consult the Minister and other Life Lines Lay Ministers when help is needed.
- Be very welcoming to visitors and newcomers. (Hint: Visitors often arrive early and sit alone. This is a good time to make contact.)
- Attend Sunday services on an average of at least twice a month.
- Send appropriate information (with permission) to the editor of the News of the UUCS Community so that the congregation can become aware of what is going on in the lives of our members.
- Assist the minister with memorial services by attending and in other ways as requested.
- If at some time you can't meet these expectations, take a leave or resign--and be sure to notify the facilitator. Don't just stop showing up.

Expectations of the Minister

The Minister must:

- Be willing to share power and responsibility, and seek assistance from the Life Lines Lay Ministry in order to make the overall ministry more effective.

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- Support a team approach to pastoral care, support the group by being present and by the sharing of understanding, insight, and inspiration.
- Clearly distinguish between the Minister's and the lay ministry team's roles and be willing, whenever it is appropriate, to refer those members of the congregation who are in a personal crisis situation and in need of counseling or other support to the lay ministry team.

Expectations of the Congregation

The congregation must be willing to:

- Face the challenge of lay pastoral care.
- Work with the discomfort many of us feel about being helped.
- Be vulnerable by admitting that we all need help at times.
- Be open to cultural transformation, allowing new structures of interpersonal support to be built.
- Support a team approach.

Specific Responsibilities of Life Lines Lay Ministry Members

Facilitator:

- Creates the agenda for each meeting and calls the Life Lines Lay Ministry meeting to order.
- Helps focus discussion to meet team objectives, keeps track of time, and if necessary, finds consensus to either extend the discussion or carry an item into the next meeting.
- Maintains the voice of gentle authority, representing the highest interests of the team.
- Brings the meeting to a close on time.

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- Is responsible for assuring that the meeting area is left clean and secure.
- Provides leadership for scheduling and planning the annual retreat (optional).

Clerk:

- Prepares and distributes the minutes of each meeting before the next meeting.
- Maintains assignment lists, additions of new members, etc. Keeps in touch with the Minister and the group.

Training Facilitator:

- Works with the group to arrange in-service training by members or professionals from outside the group.

Chalice Lighter at meetings:

- Lights and extinguishes the chalice. Selects and reads opening and closing words. (This is a rotating position from meeting to meeting.)

Refreshments:

- Provides coffee, tea and snacks. (This is a rotating position from meeting to meeting.)

Setup/Cleanup: Everyone

Library Shelf Materials Maintenance: Maintain and organize the space allocated to the Life Lines Lay Ministry in the UUCS library. This space contains information acquired from training sessions and other community resources that may be of interest to our congregants.

Life Lines Joys and Sorrows Representative (during Sunday services): A previously designated Life Lines Lay Minister staffs

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the Joys and Sorrows book in the foyer before the second worship service, and conducts the Joys and Sorrows portion of the service. At the appropriate time in the service, the representative goes to the podium with the book in hand. He/she is sometimes assisted by the minister or the service celebrant or anchor, who may hold the microphone for those speaking their joy or sorrow. The representative normally selects someone to hold the six candles that are allotted to joys and sorrows before the service. Five scripts, one for each week of the month, have been created for the Life Lines representative to follow. The scripts inform the congregation how the ritual will be performed, and congregants are invited to come forward if they wish to speak their own joy or sorrow. First, the Life Lines representative reads any sorrows or concerns that have been written in the book, and then asks those who have come forward to speak a sorrow to come to the microphone in turn and do so. Following the sorrows, the joys that were written in the book are read, and then again the congregants who have come forward to speak of a joy are asked to come up and take their turn. After all have spoken, a final candle is lit.

(Note: The Life Lines Lay Minister who conducts Joys and Sorrows during the worship service has primary responsibility for monitoring the Warm Line during the following week, although each person on the team should check the line regularly.)

Checking the ‘Warm Line’

Dial 503-370-4000 and key in the Life Lines mailbox number, 29186, when prompted, followed by the # sign. Next, you will be asked to key in the pass code (given to all Life Lines Lay Ministers), along with the # sign. If there are no messages, you may just hang up. If there are messages, follow the prompts to listen. If there is more than one message, follow the prompt to go

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to the next message. Messages are stored for twenty days, and then automatically deleted. The first person to listen to a new message has the responsibility of handling the call; however, other Life Lines team members may be consulted. If a message has already been heard by another team member, it will be announced as a played message.

Compassionate Care Circle

After the service on the second Sunday of the month, in the front of the sanctuary, Life Lines Lay Ministers and sympathetic members of the congregation meet with those who want to share their life challenges with a small group and receive 'hands on' comforting. While the circle is not comprised solely of Life Lines Lay Ministers and therefore matters spoken of there should not be assumed to be held in confidence, many derive solace from sharing and connecting with a small group.

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Sample Life Lines Lay Ministry Meeting Agenda

DATE
LIFE LINES LAY MINISTRY
AGENDA

MEETING BROUGHT TO ORDER: 9:30

READING AND CHALICE LIGHTING

CHECK-IN

LIFE LINES CONTACTS [The facilitator provides a list of our contacts over the past month for discussion of actions taken or needing to be taken. The group decides which contacts can be removed from the list and provides names of new contacts that need to be added to it.]

REFRESHMENT BREAK

OLD AND/OR NEW BUSINESS

ASSIGNMENTS FOR JOYS AND SORROWS, COMPASSION-ATE CONNECTION AND WELCOME TABLE [Volunteers are noted for those portions of worship services for the next month.]

PLANS FOR THE NEXT MEETING [The date of the next meeting is announced and volunteers are designated to light the chalice and read the opening and closing words, and to bring refreshments.]

READING AND EXTINGUISHING OF CHALICE

GUEST SPEAKER [if scheduled]

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UUCS Life Lines Lay Ministers since 2001

Jo Bateman	Kristen Hunt
Don Beckman	Mary Ann Kaestner
Margaret Boyle	Jackie Klimowicz
Mary Bray	Jim Koch
Joyce Bynum	Robin LaMonte
Lynn Cardiff	Katie Larsell
John Casey	Jean Logan
Kay Cogswell	Delores Lusk
Michelle Cordova	Ginny Merriman
Jan Cote	Mary Murphy
David Cozart	Cathie Olcott
Ed Crawford	George Piter
Rick Davis	Karen Piter
Rhea Devery	Hudson Schweickert
Joan Erickson	Bill Sea
Ken Erickson	Wayne Seely
Jane Fields	Lise Adams Sherry
Ray Files	Mary Solstrom
Marge French	Barbara Stebbins-Boaz
Mary Edith Gilbertson	Lou Stoetzer
Sara Glassburner	Elsa Struble
Angela Gross	Stan Tepper
Lydia Gutierrez	Judith Van Osdol
Barry Halgrimson	Annette Vasseur
Dale Harris	Chris Vogel
Mary Hart	Robin Wengert
Angela Herrera	Kim Willaman
Stella Jean Hill	Wilson Wyant
Ellen Howard	Lorna Youngs
Katie Howe	Judy Zimmerman
	Erin Zysett