

First Religious Society Unitarian Universalist  
Newburyport, MA

**Job Description**  
**Director of Church Music**

January 2024

Application Deadline: March 1, 2024  
Anticipated Start Date: Between July 15 and August 1, 2024

**Job Title: Director of Church Music**

**Reports To: Minister**

**Position Status**

0.5 FTE, Exempt, Ministerial.

The Director of Church Music (DCM) position is approximately 20 hours per week.

**Position Description**

Music at the First Religious Society Unitarian Universalist (FRSUU) is an essential part of our spiritual life. Enriched by many active musicians within the congregation, our music program serves to deepen our spirituality, maintains a high musical quality, and supports and nurtures people of all musical ability. As a highly visible performance space in this historic town, the 450+ member church considers its music program to be an important outreach to the community.

The DCM is responsible for directing all aspects of the church's music program. The DCM serves as organist/pianist and director of the Adult Choir and is expected to enhance the adult music offerings, cultivate volunteer musicians within the congregation, and create a program that includes diverse musical styles and expression through programming and outreach to the larger musical community. The DCM works extensively and collaboratively with the Minister. The strength of their relationship is imperative to maintain the growth and vitality of our beloved church community. The DCM also collaborates with the Director of Children's Ministries for youth music.

The church is home to a historic 1834 Joseph Alley two-manual organ that was, in fact, built here in Newburyport just blocks away from the church. Joseph Alley was a respected organ builder of his time. The organ was significantly expanded by Hutchings in 1889 and then was renovated by CB Fisk/Andover in 1957. Most recently, there was a full renovation and expansion of the organ by A. David Moore in 2012. The organ is now equipped with multi-level, programmable combination stop action. It stands as one of the finest historical organs in the area and can support a wide range of organ literature.

The First Religious Society seeks an accomplished organist/pianist and choral director with church experience and excellent interpersonal skills to help FRSUU's music program continue to grow and flourish. This is a congregation who loves music and looks forward to the continuing development of a diverse and eclectic music ministry.

### On-site Work Expectations

The Director of Church Music is expected to be on-site for:

- Church choir rehearsals
- Sunday services
- Bi-weekly Worship Planning Team and Staff meetings
- Special program rehearsals and performances
- Scheduled office hours to be determined in conjunction with the Minister

### Core Responsibilities:

1. Accountable for all aspects of the music program
2. Participates in bi-weekly Worship Planning Team meetings in partnership with the Minister, the Director of Faith Formation and Spiritual Exploration, the Director of Religious Education, and lay service leaders to plan Sunday and special services
3. Selects choral, organ, piano, and/or other instrumental music as well as schedules choirs and soloists for Sunday and special services
4. Rehearses the adult choir one night a week and before Sunday services September through early May
5. Conducts the Adult Choir during services
6. Leads June pick-up choir
7. Plays the organ and piano during services as needed
8. Solicits and supports additional vocal or instrumental performances by members of the congregation for Sunday and special services
9. Recruits paid and volunteer vocalists, instrumentalists, and ensembles to diversify and deepen the music ministry of the congregation
10. Organizes and conducts the annual Christmas Candlelight Chorale Service held on the Sunday before Christmas, including developing the program in collaboration with a small group of experienced congregants, rehearsing and conducting the choir, recruiting additional singers from the community, and contracting with other musicians as needed for these performances
11. Contracts brass instrumentalists and other special musicians for Christmas Eve and Easter services
12. Is available to work with the Minister and families to plan and provide music for special services such as weddings and memorials. The DCM will perform, recommend, and/or arrange for other resources if needed. *These activities are separately compensated.*
13. Supervises any other additional hired musicians
14. Oversees the use and maintenance of the historic 1834 Joseph Alley organ and other church instruments, including two historic Steinway Model A grand pianos, a Kimball upright piano, a Knabe spinet piano, and a Korg electric piano

## Administrative Responsibilities

1. Prepares and manages the annual budget for the music program in collaboration with Director of Operations
2. Submits musical choices, music notes, and anthem texts/lyrics to the office administrator in a timely manner for inclusion in the weekly Order of Service
3. Selects and orders new music and maintains the choral music library (including the online catalog) in collaboration with the volunteer choir librarian; expands the diversity of the music library while preserving historic materials
4. Supervise the Audio-Visual staff member for all audio and video needs—includes collaborating to use technology for different kinds of events and managing A-V equipment (microphones, cables, stands, mixers, TV monitors, etc.)
5. Organize and manage the committee for the annual Wilson Music Series between January and March
6. Other administrative duties and responsibilities as required or assigned by the Minister

## Collaborative Responsibilities

1. Strives to sustain and increase choir participation while continually improving the quality of its performance
2. Collaborates closely with Office Administrator to produce Orders of Service for Sunday services as well as special services and concerts
3. Creates ad hoc vocal or instrumental groups to expand the musical experiences available to musicians within the congregation as well as to draw in new members and promote interfaith connections.
4. Collaborates with the church staff, lay leaders, and active musicians of all ages within the church
5. Collaborates with lay leaders and volunteers to organize the monthly Jazz Vespers services, the annual Wilson Concert Series, and occasional special events with the goal of increasing attendance and community recognition
6. Implements a process for involving members of the wider congregation in the music ministry of the FRS
7. Encouraged to join and participate in the Association for Unitarian Universalist Music Ministries (AUUMM) (formerly known as the UU Musicians Network)
8. Participates in bi-weekly Worship Planning Team meetings and regular staff meetings.
9. Attends other church meetings as necessary to collaborate and represent the musical programs of the church.
10. Reaches out to and interacts with other professional musicians in the area

## Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

The Music Director should have the following knowledge and skills:

- Demonstrated accomplishment as a musician, choral director, and organist/pianist
- An advanced degree in organ, choral conducting, and/or church music is preferred
- Excellent piano and/or organ performance skills. Organ performance skills must at least be sufficient for inspiring hymn playing and other service music.
- Demonstrated experience, willingness, and ability to draw upon diverse musical styles and traditions
- Experience in directing a church music program is highly desirable

- Experience in guiding amateur singers in their continued learning, vocal development, and musical growth as well as sensitivity to their needs
- Understanding of or willingness to become familiar with the Unitarian Universalist (UU) musical tradition, hymnody, and theology
- Excellent people skills, compassion, and an ability to consider diverse opinions, plus the ability to work effectively and collaboratively in a team as well as with other constituencies as necessary
- An interest in church culture and community dynamics
- Ability to organize, manage and carry out administrative and logistical tasks in a timely manner
- Clear and open communication skills

## Salary

The annual salary for this position is \$40,200.

Participation in special services such as weddings and memorial services is compensated separately.

FRS offers a generous program of benefits, including:

- Excellent paid vacation and the possibility for additional Sundays off
- Retirement benefits
- Life Insurance
- Participation in FRS Health, Dental, and Long-Term Disability programs

FRSUU is a UUA Fair Compensation Congregation and follows their recommended policies on salary ranges for a church of our size and location.

## Physical Requirements

Must be able to climb stairs, as the organ is on the second floor with no elevator.

## Application Deadline: Friday, March 1, 2024

### *To Apply, please send the following materials:*

- Cover letter that includes a paragraph about what attracts you to this position
- Resume including church music experience and size of choirs you have directed as well as other relevant professional experience.
- Names and contact information for three professional references
- Optional: Supportive audio or video recordings of your performance and conducting

**Email Submission (Preferred):** [DCMSearch@frsuu.org](mailto:DCMSearch@frsuu.org)

**US Mail Submission:** Music Director Search, FRSUU, 26 Pleasant Street, Newburyport, MA 01950

FRSUU is an Equal Opportunity Employer.  
People of Color, LGBTQ+, women, and members of other  
historically marginalized groups are strongly encouraged to apply.