

Starr King Search Committee Bios

Rev. Dianne Daniels (she/her)



Starr King: Alumna, Master of Divinity, 2021

Rev. Dianne M. Daniels (she/her) was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, where her parents, Charles and Katherine Morton, rarely attended church. Rev. Dianne grew up resisting restrictive, overly strict “rules” like the one that women needed to walk “two steps behind their husband,” a tenet of her mother’s former Baptist upbringing. Her father’s resistance to “organized church” encouraged her to find her way, religiously and spiritually.

Rev. Dianne married her high school sweetheart, Aaron Daniels, the same weekend as their 10-year high school reunion. Although Dianne and Aaron are each other’s second spouses, their 34-year marriage is “solid as a rock” and a source of enduring love, joy, peace, and

laughter for them both. They have three grown children (laughingly called His, Mine, and Ours): Christopher, Ronald, and Ariana.

Rev. Dianne was introduced to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Norwich by Ms. Lottie B. Scott, one of the elders of her community. She and Aaron loved the people and the atmosphere so much that they’ve been members for over thirty years.

Rev. Dianne started feeling the call to ministry while attending services in Norwich. In her words, “I fell in love with the people and the messages I heard from the pulpit.”

She applied to and was accepted at the Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, California, graduating with her Master of Divinity degree in 2021. Dianne was ordained in October 2023 by her home church in Norwich and the Universalist Church of West Hartford, where she served as Sabbatical Minister from August 2023 through January 2024.

Rev. Dianne enjoys guest preaching in and around eastern CT, western Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. Her previous experience with technology makes her comfortable with Zoom preaching to congregations as far away as Washington State.

Rev. Dianne is thrilled to serve UUFS as their consulting minister and looks forward to continuing to deliver heartfelt, inspirational sermons that uplift and encourage the congregation while assisting with the congregation’s growth and spreading the UU gospel.

Rev. Dianne lives in Norwich, CT - the Rose City - with her husband in an 1850s vintage Greek Revival home that they continue to remodel and restore.

Related links:

<https://uufstorrs.org/ministers-welcome-page/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZIAVGcSDC6k>

<https://hartforduu.org/%EF%BB%BFletter-of-introduction-from-dianne-daniels/>

<https://stillharbor.org/daily-news-blog/2024/alumni-spotlight-dianne-daniels>

<https://findajp.com/justice-peace/dianne-m-daniels/>

<https://soundcloud.com/diannemdaniels>

Richael Faithful (they/them)

Starr King: M.Div. Candidate

Richael Faithful has been in liberation movements for twenty years. They are trained as a community organizer, licensed as a movement lawyer, initiated as a folk healer, seasoned as a strategist and facilitator, and celebrated as a writer and experiential artist.

Learn more about their background [here](#).

Education and Licensing

- Bar licenses in the Commonwealth of Virginia and District of Columbia (2011).
- Juris Doctor with Outstanding Scholarship Honors, American University Washington College of Law (2011).
- Bachelor of Arts with Academic Honors, Interdisciplinary Studies: American Inequality, Social Thought & Political Economy, The College of William & Mary (2007).

Other Healing-Related Training

- 60-hour Integrative Somatic Trauma Therapy Certificate Program, The Embody Lab (2023).
- Going with Grace End of Life Training to become a Death Doula and End of Life Planner, Certificate of Completion (2021).
- Certificate of Shamanic Studies, completion of apprenticeship program with The Polarity Center and Shamanic Studies (2014).

Related links:

www.richaelfaithful.com



Kellie Kinsman (she/her)



Starr King: Student, Trustee

Professional bio

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/kellie-kinsman-5b0867115/>

Experience

- UU Ministerial Aspirant
- Starr King School for Ministry Aug 2022 - Present • 2 yrs 3 mos
- AV Tech
- Pacific Unitarian Church • Part-time Jun 2021 to Present • 3 yrs 5 mos
• Rancho Palos Verdes, California, United States • On-site
- Legal Assistant Paralegal • Multiple Firms • Full-time Apr 1994 - Jun 2017 • 23 yrs 3 mos New York, NY • Hybrid

Education

[Starr King School for Ministry Master of Divinity - MDiv, Religion/Religious Studies Aug 2022 - May 2026](#)

Linda Laskowski (Chair) (she/her)

Starr King: Trustee, Chair of Investment Committee, former Chair of Finance Committee and Treasurer

Linda Laskowski joined the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley in 2001, and has served in a variety of congregational leadership positions, including the Coordinating (Management) Team, Membership Chair, Canvass Co-Chair, and Treasurer. In addition to Starr King, she has also served on the UUA Board of Trustees, the Pacific Central District Board, and the Panel on Theological Education.

Linda Laskowski spent 30 years in management for AT&T and its derivatives, including 15 years creating and running start-up organizations. That included leading a joint venture with a major US telephone company and France Telecom, and growing the first full scale residential broadband service in the US to over 100,000 customers in the Boston area. She joined Golden Seeds, a 300 member angel investment group, in 2016 as a Managing Director and since then has made over 20 investments in women-led companies.



Laskowski graduated from the University of North Dakota with a degree in math and physics, and did work in electrical engineering at North Dakota State University. In addition to a Master of Management Science from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, she has a Master of Business Administration from the University of Nebraska.

Laskowski has served on a number of for profit and not for profit boards in addition to the Unitarian Universalist Association. This includes the University of North Dakota Alumni Association and Foundation, the Marin

Cancer Project, two banks, a regional hospital, a small manufacturing company, and two national industry associations. She lives in Berkeley, California.

Dr. Kat Liu (she/her/ta)



Education

M.A.L.S. in Religious Studies
from Georgetown University
Ph.D. in Biology from California
Institute of Technology
A.B. in Neurobiology, Cognitive
Psychology from University of
California, Berkeley.

Dr. Som Pourfarzaneh (he/him)

Starr King: Associate Professor of Islamic and Digital Media Studies, Director of the Center for Multi-Religious Studies, CMRS Faculty, Full-time Core Faculty

Dr. Som Pourfarzaneh is the Associate Professor of Islamic and Digital Media Studies and Director of the Center for Multi-Religious Studies at Starr King School for the Ministry. He has extensive academic and industry experience in social, cultural, and digital anthropology, Islamic studies, multi-religious studies, and interreligious dialogue. He holds a Ph.D. in Cultural and Historical Studies of Religions from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA, and was part of the first cohort to graduate from Starr King's Master of Arts in Social Change (MASC) program in its inaugural year. He also holds a B.A. in Integrative Biology from the University of California, Berkeley.

Pourfarzaneh's academic work focuses on Islam and Media, Muslims in America, Anthropology of Islam, Digital and Social Media, Social Justice, Cultural Production, Interreligious Dialogue, and Multi-Religious Identity. Outside of the academy, he has also written and worked for high-profile entertainment companies and editorial websites such as Electronic Arts, Perfect World Entertainment, Modus Games, and MMORPG.com, and is the author of four books and seven games.

Education

B.A. in Integrative Biology from University of California, Berkeley
Master of Arts in Social Change from Starr King School for the Ministry
Ph.D. in Cultural and Historical Studies of Religion from the Graduate Theological Union



Related links

<https://www.sksm.edu/faculty/dr-som-pourfarzaneh>

<https://www.sksm.edu/saturday-spotlight-som-pourfarzaneh-ph-d>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/spourfarzaneh/>

Rev. Dr. Sheri Prud'homme (she/her)



Starr King: Assistant Professor of Religion and Education, Full-time Core Faculty; Alumna

Rev. Dr. Sheri Prud'homme holds a Ph.D. in interdisciplinary studies in history and theology from the Graduate Theological Union. Her dissertation focused on 19th century Unitarian minister Thomas Starr King's use of Yosemite and the Sierra Nevada as sacred texts, asking what his ecotheology might contribute to contemporary ecotheologies as well as offering needed correctives to his imperialist project. She was ordained as a Unitarian Universalist minister in 2001 and has served as a minister of religious education in the Unitarian Universalist churches of Oakland, Davis, and Berkeley as well as the Pacific Central District. She also served as the administrator of InterPlay and Bodywisdom, Inc, an arts-based nonprofit organization and for nine years was the owner and director of a preschool in Berkeley. She is the co-creator of Chalice Camp, a Unitarian Universalist summer day camp that has been running for over 20 years in the Bay Area and replicated in sites across the country. Her first book,

Gather the Spirit: History of the First Unitarian Church of Oakland, 1869-2000, received the Unitarian Universalist History and Heritage Congregational History Prize.

As a professor, Dr. Prud'homme affirms the capacity of education to transform lives, communities, societies. She brings a commitment to fostering a connected, collaborative, enlivened learning community with an expectation that all participants will be teachers as well as learners. In her instruction, she values the lived experience of her students and aims to use multiple modalities to respect their diverse intelligences.

Dr. Prud'homme lives on unceded Ohlone land in South Berkeley. She is the daughter of two educators and the mother of two teens. She is of French, German, and English heritage. Her feminist awakening and coming out as a lesbian during college were followed by learning about white privilege and systemic racism from community activists when she moved to the Bay Area of California in 1993. She has worked to dismantle oppressions - internally and systemically - and educated to counter oppressions and create just and sustainable communities ever since. She is very grateful to the taxpayers in Berkeley for supporting the public schools. She enjoys hiking, backpacking, kayaking, and gardening.

Education

M.Div., Starr King School for the Ministry

Ph. D., Graduate Theological Union

Related links:

Curriculum Vitae of the Rev. Dr. Sheri Prud'homme: <https://www.sksm.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Sheri-Prudhomme-CV.pdf>

<https://www.uua.org/people/sheri-prudhomme>

<https://www.sksm.edu/saturday-spotlight-rev-dr-sheri-prudhomme>

Rev. Dr. Chris Schelin (he/him)

Starr King: Dean of Students, Director of Contextual Education, Assistant Professor of Practical and Political Theologies Full-time Core Faculty, Staff

Previous/Other Position(s) at Starr King: Assistant to the Coordinator of Academic Programs and Dean of Faculty Education

Rev. Dr. Christopher Schelin serves as an administrator and faculty member at Starr King School for the Ministry. His primary role is coordinating student services programs as the Dean of Students. As the Director of Contextual Education, he oversees praxis-oriented learning opportunities beyond the classroom, such as field education internships and clinical pastoral education.



Chris holds a Ph.D. in ecclesiology and political theory from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. His doctoral studies were conducted in collaboration with the International Baptist Theological Study Centre (IBTS). He now serves as a Senior Research Fellow at IBTS Amsterdam.

His research interests include Baptist history and theology as well as the interactions between religious traditions, political liberalism, and democracy. He is the author of *The Contestable Church: Dissent, Democracy, and Baptist Ecclesiology* (Mercer University Press, 2024). He is currently working with a co-author on a history of the conflicts at the Baptist-affiliated Louisiana College.

Chris is an ordained minister affiliated with the American Baptist Churches USA and the Alliance of Baptists. Before joining Starr King in January 2015, he served as an associate pastor for six years in North Carolina. As an avid student of comparative theology and contemplative spirituality, he is delighted to work in a multireligious environment.

Chris enjoys amateur astronomy, gardening, and camping. He lives in the East Bay with his wife and two children.

Education

B.A. Louisiana College

M.Div. Duke University

Ph.D. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Related links:

<https://sksm.academia.edu/ChristopherSchelin>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/christopher-schelin-88097860/>

Advisors to the Search Committee

Katie Garcia (she/her)



Advisor to Search Committee, Starr King Graduate, Consultant to Starr King for more than 10 years

For more than 18 years, Katie Garcia has helped leaders and emerging leaders across industries to improve their ability to lead and to communicate effectively. Over the course of her career, she has worked with dozens of organizations across nearly every sector and hundreds of leaders from across the globe.

She is the founder and president of Athene Strategies, a firm that focuses specifically on working with nonprofit organizations. She also serves as a Senior Advisor at Logos Consulting Group, which is a partner of Athene Strategies, and a Senior Fellow at the Logos Institute for Crisis Management and Executive Leadership. She is also Logos' Chief of Staff.

She has extensive experience in working with civil rights, human rights, educational and religious organizations. She has previously built and/or run communication departments for several nonprofit organizations and INGOs, including at Religions for Peace - the largest multi-religious coalition of senior religious leaders working for peace.

Katie is also an experienced teacher. She is a contract lecturer at the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Sciences at Columbia University, where she teaches classes on communication and navigating difficult conversations. She has frequently guest lectured on strategic communication, crisis communication, and effective feedback at New York University's School of Professional Studies, the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and the College of Mount Saint Vincent.

She was recently named to the 2024 Class of 15 Under 35 by the Public Relations Society of America - New York (PRSA-NY), a recognition given to the most inspiring and influential next generation leaders in the communication industry.

Katie is a lifelong Unitarian Universalist. She is a graduate of Starr King's Certificate in Unitarian Universalist Studies. For three years, Katie served as the Youth Group teacher in her local congregation, working with middle and high school students. For five years prior, she also served as a volunteer religious education teacher for children ranging in age from 3 - 18 years old.

Larry Ladd (he/him)



Advisor to Search Committee, Sustaining Starr King Donor, Volunteer service to Starr King in various capacities over the past ten years.

Larry Ladd is a consultant on strategy, finance, and governance to colleges, universities and theological schools. His work includes extensive executive search work through AGB Search, including completing over twenty five searches in the past four years for presidents, deans, and chief business officers.

He has extensive experience as a trustee, consultant, and financial executive for colleges and universities. He have served over one hundred colleges, universities, and theological schools: financially strong and financially challenged, large and small, public and private, not-for-profit and for-profit.

Mr. Ladd's prior executive experience includes serving as director of budget and financial planning at Harvard University, chief operating officer at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, dean of administration at Tufts University, dean of the college of special studies at Tufts University, assistant provost at Boston University, and assistant to the president of Duke University.

Mr. Ladd has been a trustee at the University of Massachusetts, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the Meadville Lombard Theological School, and Boston Architectural College. He has held officer positions including board chair, treasurer, audit committee chair, and investment committee chair.

An active Unitarian Universalist volunteer, he chairs the denominational affairs committee of his congregation, serves on the governance committee of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, and is a member of the Bylaws Renewal Team of the UUA. In the past he was chair of the UUA Nominating Committee and served three terms as UUA Financial Advisor among other roles.

Representative Executive Searches

- Ohio University - President
- University of Dubuque - President
- Rollins College - Dean of the Crummer School of Business
- University of Houston - Vice President for Finance and Administration
- University of Nebraska Medical Center - Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance
- Saint Mary's College of California - Vice President for Finance and Administration

Education

- Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst
- Received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from the Meadville Lombard Theological School
- Participated in professional development programs in strategic planning and change management at the Harvard Business School