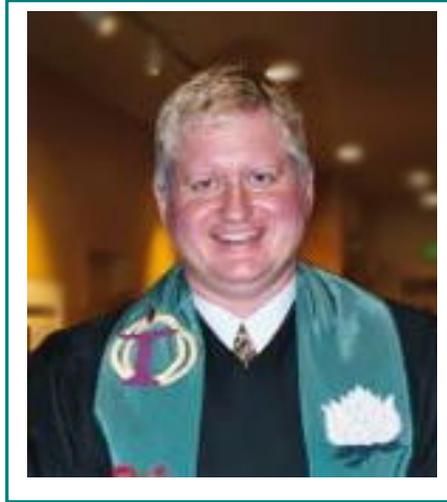


# Reverend Gregory L. Stewart

The Search Committee unanimously recommends that the Membership call the Reverend Gregory L. Stewart as the Senior Minister of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco.

Reverend Stewart is a strong preacher and committed pastor who shares our dedication to communicate the Unitarian Universalist message both within our own Congregation and out in the wider community.



Reverend Stewart is currently serving the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Northern Nevada. During his time there the congregation has grown significantly in both population and in operating budget. The Pacific Central District awarded the Reno community two growth awards, and a third for creating a “culture of generosity” at District Assembly 2005, and Reverend Stewart was asked to preach the Sunday sermon at District Assembly that year.

Reverend Stewart's dynamic and energetic ministry invites enthusiasm and participation from those within his congregation, and those investigating the possibility of joining.

One of the many things that excited the Search Committee was Reverend Stewart's

attitude of inclusiveness, and his intentional integration of congregants of differing interests, theologies, ages, and passions.

Reverend Stewart's personal passion for both outreach and in-reach derives from his unbending belief that Unitarian Universalism offers an accessible conduit to realize fully human lives and fully functioning societies in our world today. “We are poised to lead a religious movement which reinvigorates stale rituals and reinvents sacred trusts with an integrity that has stood the test of time.”

Reverend Stewart and his partner of 25 years, Stillman White, make their home with their five children: Arthur (age 13), Javonte (12), Dionte (10), Allen (10), and David (6). The family engages the world by committing intentional acts of social justice in both common and unusual ways.

- In response to the Boy Scouts of America's negative policy toward atheist leaders and members, Reverend Stewart helped organize “Tents for Tolerance,” an overnight campout on his church's grounds in Pasadena for sympathetic scouts, their families, and many church members.
- In collaboration with Stop AIDS Chicago, he designed the program “Condom Arts and Crafts,” a church-based approach to AIDS awareness and education for teenagers.



- While in Los Angeles, he helped found the Rainbow Youth Alliance, the first church-based, non-sectarian LGBT youth group in the San Gabriel Valley.
- In upper-middle class Shaker Heights, Ohio, Reverend Stewart brought in an inner city artist-in-residence and supported laity in developing a poetry exchange between authors and illustrators in Cleveland, Shaker Heights, and Washington D.C. Their work was subsequently published by an African-American press.



From left: Allen, Greg, Javonte (top), Arthur (middle), Stillman, David, and Dionte

- When they moved to the “Rainbow Ranch” outside of Reno, the family began to rescue abandoned pets and livestock and then find them new homes and forever families. At one point there were twelve such animals in residence, including a one-eyed pregnant mare, a blind cat, a six hundred-fifty pound pig, and a goat who had been destined for someone’s dinner table.



While in Reno, Reverend Stewart has been writing a column for the *Reno Gazette-Journal* and has preached on “Voice of the Liberal,” a televised worship hour.

Reverend Stewart’s education includes degrees in Urban Ministry, Music, and Religious Education. He began his UU ministry as a

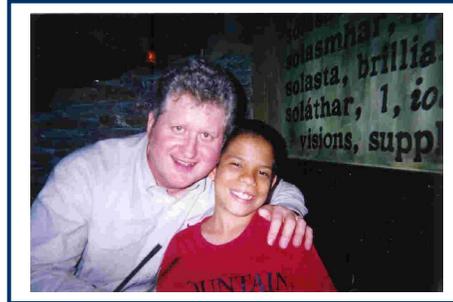
Minister of Religious Education in a mid-sized, city-center church at Chicago, Illinois. Before going to Reno, Greg ministered with large congregations at Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pasadena, and Shaker Heights, Ohio. It was in

these settings that he developed a commitment to

ministry with children and families, and the conviction that youth are among the most effective agents of social change. His ministry in the Midwest was the subject of a feature article in the *Unitarian Universalist World*, April/May 1996.

A published writer, his essay, “Activist Youth Groups: We’re On A Mission,” appeared in a previous issue of the quarterly journal, *Liberal Religious Education*. He authored the chapter, “Sunday School is Dead—Long Live Sunday School,” in the book, *Essex Conversations: Visions for Lifespan Religious Education*, published by the Unitarian Universalist Association. He wrote the adult Religious Education curriculum *Womanspirit: Women’s Spirituality in Developing Countries*, published by the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

Reverend Stewart is the creator of the critically acclaimed intergenerational program, *Way Cool Sunday School*, an “outside of the box,” experientially based approach to liberal religious education. Many of our UU congregations – including our own – have incorporated some or all of the *Way Cool* components into their educational ministries. It is also being used in churches of other denominations across the country.



*Greg and Arthur*

Central to all that Reverend Stewart is and does is worship. He believes that worship leaders are obligated to create the ambiance and present the challenges that give birth to the possibility of personal transformation. How one responds to or embodies transformation is entirely up to the individual and there is no “wrong way” or “right way” to do it. He has high standards for weekly worship services and celebrations, with an eye toward always ‘raising the bar.’ Reverend Stewart’s personal worship life is enhanced by his practice of what he calls the “classical disciplines:” study, prayer, meditation, fasting, action, reflection, and play. His family also embraces simple rituals that ensure Unitarian Universalism is an all-inclusive, seven-day-a-week religion.

As a provider of pastoral care and counseling, Reverend Stewart is proactive and likes to “walk the beat” of parishioners. Educated

specifically for urban ministry, he finds the inspiration for, and affirmation of, his chosen faith on busy streets and in city skylines, in much the same ways others do at the oceanfront or atop a mountain. This love affair with all things urban began well before his graduate school days at the University of

Chicago Divinity School or Chicago Musical College at Roosevelt University. Rather, it began as a boy and as the son of a minister, one who held faith that the world can be changed for the better – one person at a time.

Candidating Week, an opportunity to meet Reverend Stewart and his family, will be held from April 1<sup>st</sup> through April 9<sup>th</sup>. There are many gatherings scheduled to enable as many members as possible to participate before our Congregational Meeting after Services on April 9<sup>th</sup>. At that meeting we will vote on the Call to Ministry of Reverend Stewart. Though each gathering is identified as being for a specific interest within our Society, please feel free to attend any of the scheduled gatherings that fit into your calendar. The Search Committee wants as many members as possible to meet our Candidate.

In Faith,

**The Ministerial Search Committee**

Leslie Bader, Ben Bear, Carlowe Connelly, Judy Payne, Luanne Schulte, Liz Strand, Don Williams, Galen Workman