

Welcome Natasha Walker, new UUANI Executive Director

We are excited to welcome Natasha Walker as UUANI's next Executive Director, effective Jan. 1, 2026.

Natasha was the unanimous choice of our Board and Accountability Council to replace founding Executive Director Rev. Scott Aaseng, who is retiring. We chose her after an extensive search process in which seven candidates were narrowed down to two finalists.

Natasha is a dynamic leader in operations and strategy, bringing over two decades of experience from major global organizations to her new role. Her career is defined by a consistent ability to drive impactful change, streamline complex processes, and foster a culture of collaboration and inclusion.

But it is her grounding in UU values, commitment to continuous growth, and passion for justice that are at the heart of her work. These qualities are evident through her membership at First Unitarian Church, her pursuit of spiritual direction certification at Meadville Lombard Theological School, and by her work with [Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism \(BLUU\)](#), a national organization devoted to developing Black sacred spaces. With her strategic mindset and empathetic leadership style, Natasha is dedicated to bringing her unique skills and passion to serve the mission of UUANI.

"After an intensive 8-month search, Natasha emerged as the clear choice to succeed Rev. Scott. Natasha is a dynamic and perceptive leader with outstanding communications and relationship-building skills, with the fresh perspective on the social justice landscape needed to be effective in these times of radical change."

-- Chuck Ruth, search chair and UUANI co-president

"From my very first meeting with Natasha, I was struck by her energy and spirit. Even over Zoom, her leadership, thoughtfulness, and confidence were unmistakable. I believe that she will help UUANI strengthen the capacity of UU congregations across Illinois to bend the arc toward justice."

-- Sallee Lowery, search committee member and UUANI co-president

Before joining UUANI, Natasha spent nearly a decade at Google, where she rose through the ranks in a variety of leadership positions within People Operations and Workplace Experience. As a Strategy and Operations Partner, she provided key support to HR executives, advising on functions, compliance, and best practices. She also held a pivotal role as an Executive Operations Manager, leading initiatives to align global teams, manage resourcing strategies, and evolve operational systems for faster, better decision-making. Her tenure also included a position as a Process Design Project Manager for People Operations Global Process Excellence.

Prior to Google, Natasha worked for the Walt Disney Company, where she was an Industrial Engineering Manager and Global HR Project Manager. In these roles, she served as an internal consultant for various lines of business, finding efficiencies and optimizing guest experiences. She began her career at McKinsey & Company, coaching client teams to achieve significant operational savings.

She is a single mother to three brilliant, neurodiverse children: Zaria, 14; Lennox, 11; and Holden, 6. In addition to her busy family life, Natasha is a member of American Mensa and enjoys her experiences as a certified tea sommelier.

She will work in November and December on the transition together with Rev. Scott, who is stepping down at the end of the year.

"I couldn't be more thrilled to be passing the torch to Natasha Walker as UUANI's next Executive Director! Her rich leadership experience with Black Lives of UU as well as the corporate world, her commitment to developing both people and systems, and her inspiring presence make her the perfect person to lead our network into the future. I have every confidence that she will build on the strong and growing participation of UUs across the state and take UUANI to the next level."

-- Rev. Scott Aaseng

"Thank you all for this warm welcome. I am incredibly honored to be joining UUANI. A lot of my professional life has been about connecting people and improving processes,

whether that was optimizing how we work or building stronger teams. My core belief is that leadership is about nurturing people and fostering collaboration. I'm a firm believer that positive change happens when we work together, listen to each other's insights, and build on our shared strengths. I am eager to get to know each of you and to embark on this journey with you."

-- Natasha Walker

Your UUANI Board and Accountability Council are excited about the gifts Natasha brings. Now, more than ever, you can secure the future of UUANI with your gift to celebrate our wonderful new leadership. Click here to [donate](#). And to talk with any of us about your ideas, and ours, for the future of UUANI, click [here](#).

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Accountability Council:

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- Nicole Pressley, Organizing and Strategy Team Director, Side With Love/UUA
- Curtis Smith, Second Unitarian Church