

**Leader for Youth and Family Ministry**  
**Augustana Lutheran Church**  
**Portland, Oregon**

## **Position Description**

*Make an impact in a multicultural, multinational, and multigenerational sanctuary congregation of justice-seekers and peacemakers who welcome and affirm every person.*

If you are an experienced Youth and Family Ministry leader looking for an unique opportunity to collaborate, innovate, and empower people of all ages to embrace a mission of walking with the most vulnerable, freeing the oppressed, feeding the hungry, and caring for the sick and imprisoned, the refugee, the immigrant, the child and the elder, we invite you to consider the role of Leader for Youth and Family Ministry at Augustana Lutheran Church.

How your vocation and our opportunity might coincide:

- You are driven by your love of working with youth and families, and your passion for serving Christ within an affirming congregation. This role will give you the opportunity to take your vocation to the next level within a congregation that has been at the forefront, on a national level, of many initiatives from the sanctuary movement to gun control.
- This is a varied role that will present you the opportunity to learn new skills and flex muscles you never knew you had. You will also enjoy the support of great leadership and a congregation that publicly proclaims that Black Lives Matter while striving with many partners to end white supremacy as well as systemic and institutional racism.
- Pivotal to your success will be your opportunity to grow your communication skills to the next level, you will establish credibility and build relationships of trust with local and national civic and educational leaders.

We are passionate about our collaborative, inclusive, and affirming environment, and, as a congregation, we are called by Christ to share the good news of God's love to all people. We are moving forward with this exciting search during these uncertain times because of our commitment to faith formation, and to supporting and strengthening our current and future youth and families of Augustana.

## **Role Overview**

This is a one-year, part-time contract position involving approximately 20-25 hours per week, including Sundays and/or other weekend days as needed.

As our Leader for Youth and Family Ministry, you will report directly to our Senior Pastor, the Rev. Dr. Mark Knutson, as you will step into a key leadership role where your primary areas of responsibility will encompass the following areas:

- You will **serve as the public face of our youth and family ministry**, both within Augustana and beyond into the community.
- You will **create and curate exciting, relevant, and diverse program content for youth and families** consistent with our mission and faith formation philosophy.
- You will **recruit, train, support, and encourage the volunteers** who are the backbone of the church, and essential for our youth and family ministry.

In addition to the responsibilities outlined above, you will also support the Senior Pastor with other projects on the local and national stage that align with our core mission and faith formation philosophy.

**Pay/Benefits:** \$20-\$25/hour wages, plus healthcare and pension benefits at the highest ELCA level.

## Role Specifics

You will develop programming and coordinate committees internally related to youth and families, but just as importantly, you will provide outreach to youth in the community.

More specifically, your key role responsibilities will be to:

- Serve as the public face of youth and family ministry at Augustana Lutheran Church and as a role model and mentor for our young people.
- Lead high school Bible studies and educational, social, and service activities, including overnights and trips.
- Develop spiritual, educational, and social programming with and for our young people that is appropriate for their highly programmed lives.
- Strengthen and coordinate the work of the Youth Leadership Council, the Youth and Family Committee, and the Christian Education Committee.
- Focus intentionally on in-reach to youth and families at Augustana and outreach in the community through local schools and other youth-centered programs.
- Participate in various worship services, and work with the Senior Pastor to continue including youth and families in worship and service, building on Augustana's strong youth and adult leadership.
- Work with the Gifts of Ministry Coordinator to recruit, train, and support volunteers for youth and family ministry.
- Collaborate with other staff members and coordinators (worship, music, mission) to ensure that youth and families' needs and gifts are embraced throughout Augustana's ministry.

## The Ideal Candidate

We look forward to welcoming a person who is not only a self-starting team player, but who is also theologically grounded, eager to share God's love in Jesus Christ with youth, families, and those who support them. It is likely that you will have at least 3-5 years of experience in youth or family leadership and be:

- Deeply grounded in social justice and passionate about youth and family ministry, knowing that these are ministries of the whole congregation.
- Committed to ministry with, for, and by youth and to leadership development for our youth and the adults who work with them.
- Excited about both in-reach among Augustana's members and outreach in the broader community.
- Creative in programming, resource development and communication, including the use of social media and other digital platforms.

In addition, although not seen as requirements, we would love it if you have musical leadership, such as leading songs with voice or other instruments, and have the ability to develop social media content to promote, support, and communicate with youth and families.

**At Augustana, dreaming big is encouraged!**

## Why Augustana Lutheran Church?

Deep in the heart of Northeast Portland, we are a thriving, multicultural, multinational, multigenerational, welcoming and affirming, sanctuary, servant, and Reconciling in Christ congregation of about 850 members, called by Christ to share the good news of God's love for all people. We are called by the Creator to work with our Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Native American and Christian sisters and brothers and many people of good will, to seek justice and peace in all the earth and to care for the creation for generations to come, as together we weave God's beloved community.

We are the church, committed to walking with the most vulnerable, freeing the oppressed, feeding the hungry, and caring for the sick and imprisoned, the refugee and the immigrant, the child and the elder. We are the church, publicly proclaiming that Black Lives Matter, while striving with partners to end white supremacy and systemic and institutional racism. We invite all to join us, united in the love of Christ and the power of

the Holy Spirit, as we weave the Beloved Community where we truly love God, our neighbors, and ourselves.

We embrace innovation, trying new things and supporting relationship building between youth and caring adults. We believe youth are today's leaders and value each one's contribution to the congregation and our community. Children and youth are encouraged to participate in a variety of congregation life activities including worship, music, Sunday School, and service.

### **Who are our Youth?**

Augustana youth describe themselves as activists on social justice issues, working for the good of the greater community, and concerned about the environment. They are dedicated, socially conscious, friendly, welcoming, inclusive, empathetic, motivated, fascinating, compassionate, collaborative, caring, hard working, interesting, intelligent, and spiritually sound. They see themselves as young leaders who are making a difference now and as leaders into the future. They are passionate about social and racial justice, climate change, gun control, human rights, the Intersection of social justice and activism, and connecting world events to spirituality and faith.

Our youth come from throughout the Portland metropolitan area. At Augustana, children and Youth are visible and active during Sunday services, helping with the offering and communion elements, serving as lectors and acolytes, and playing in the band at the 8:30 a.m. service. Children as young as seven and eight read the lectionary readings. Within the church, they are frequently reminded that they are not becoming leaders, rather they *are* leaders.

In the community, Augustana's youth can be found alongside their peers—playing in bands, performing in recitals, hiking and camping, and on athletic teams from soccer and basketball to swimming and cross-country. Augustana's youth participate in rallies and marches, work on clean-up days, and start clubs and nonprofits to advocate for causes they care about. Many speak more than one language.

### **Who is our Senior Pastor?**

Mark was given the Heart of Sanctuary Award by the Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice in 2015; named Ecumenist of the Year in 2009 by Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon; Distinguished Pastor by Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley in 2009; the Fortenza Award by Desarrollo Integral de la Familia for service in the Latino community in 2014; the Drum Major for Justice Award in 2015 as a member of the AMA Police Reform Steering Committee; and one of the 50 Most Influential Portlanders by Portland Magazine in 2012. Prior to coming to Augustana, he served as the Churchwide Director for Youth Ministries in Chicago for the 5.3 million-member Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In 2014, Mark served as a statewide Chief Petitioner for the Freedom to Marry Initiative, and is the current chair of Lift Every Voice Oregon, an interfaith movement for gun control. He is a graduate of the University of Oregon and has a M.Div. from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley. In 2019 he received a Doctor of Ministry from Wesley Seminary in Washington, D. C. His thesis was titled, "Always Step out in Faith Sowing the Seeds of Sanctuary, Solidarity, and Hope in Troubling Times."

## Why Portland?

Portland Metro is a vibrant, colorful location consisting of diverse neighborhoods, communities, school districts, and lifestyles. It is divided into distinct neighborhoods, each with its own activities, shops, restaurants, and breweries to explore. Portland is a city known for “keeping it weird,” from people keeping chickens in their backyards and the country’s first naked bike ride (now an annual event) to a kilt-wearing flaming bagpipes-playing mono cyclist may head through your neighborhood. In Portland, you can walk around with horns on your head or pink hair; people aren’t going to look at you twice. Other cities may have higher levels of diversity (we are 74% white), but also higher levels of conformity.

Interestingly, Oregon is one of the least religious states in the country—about 25 percent of people don’t identify with any specific religion. However, Dr. Monica Miller in her book *Religion and Hip Hop*, based on a survey from 2013, discovered that while young people in Portland don’t go to church often, many see a humanistic spirituality as part of their daily lives and politics. For them, meaning happens where social, culture, and political issues lie. They’re very focused on the importance of community. Art. Music. People saying, “I believe in feeding the hungry, I believe in sharing.” That takes the place of what many would consider religion.

Northeast Portland, where Augustana is located, includes the most diverse collection of neighborhoods in all of Portland. It also contains some of the city’s most important landmarks, like Portland International Airport, Lloyd Center, and the Oregon Convention Center. You will never run out of things to do in the area, with many locally owned shops, bars, and restaurants as well as activities ranging from a festival called “Last Thursday” on NE Alberta St. (the final Thursday of every month), to movies or live shows at one of the area’s historic theaters constructed in the 1920s.

Northeast Portland is extremely bike-friendly and walkable. Neighborhoods like the Alberta Arts District, Irvington, Alameda, Grant Park, and Laurelhurst are some of the trendiest and most desirable places to live in the Rose City, but there is also significant homelessness and gentrification. The homeless problem is severe, and it is a contentious issue we work hard to address. Through gentrification, historically Black neighborhoods have been torn down and these “renewal efforts” have destroyed sacred spaces for people of color. In addition, the skyrocketing housing prices have pushed many long-time Portland residents of color out of the North and Northeast neighborhoods they used to call home and into neighborhoods of less environmental safety, further widening the racial inequalities within the city.

## How to Apply

Please submit a resume and cover letter that describes what is the appeal of this position, and, based on what you know about the role, how your background has prepared you to be successful in it to:

### **The Selection Committee:**

**[selectioncommittee@augustana.org](mailto:selectioncommittee@augustana.org)**

We look forward to hearing from you soon!