



FOR LEADERS OF UU CONGREGATIONS

INTER Connections

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UUWorld.org Useful To Church Leaders

Want to interest a reporter in a story about your congregation? For an idea of what type of stories reporters go for, read *UU World* Assistant Editor Sonja L. Cohen's blog, "Unitarian Universalists in the Media" at uuworld.org/news/blog.php.

While you're there, sign up for the weekly email announcing new stories on uuworld.org and subscribe to the magazine's RSS feeds. New stories are posted on uuworld.org weekly.

Fundraising Services Office Gets a New Name

Fundraising Services has a new name: the Office of Congregational Stewardship Services. Director Wayne Clark's duties remain the same but with a new title, director for Congregational Stewardship Services. The name change is grounded in the understanding that money is most meaningful when we can move from thinking of it as a way to pay the bills and regard it as a way to fulfill ministry and that stewardship is about more than dollars and cents. Clark's new book, *Beyond Fundraising: A Complete Guide to Congregational Stewardship*, is available at uua.org/bookstore.

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LEADERSHIP

Risk-Taking, Reaching Out Help Congregations Grow

The four congregations that were named Breakthrough Congregations this year by the Unitarian Universalist Association's Growth Task Force grew for a variety of reasons. They spoke out in their communities, attracting people who wanted a church that took a stand on important issues. They reached out with advertising and a new sign. One grew after it looked inside itself and fixed the negative ways members were treating each other. Another sought professional leadership after years of being lay-led. Yet another worked to become truly multicultural and found that the UU message reaches across racial lines.

The largest of the four is First Unitarian Church in Portland, Ore., with 1,100 members. The second is All Souls UU Church in Kansas City, Mo. (528) and the third is the Carbondale, Ill., UU Fellowship (186). The smallest is Davies Memorial UU Church in Camp Springs, Md. (150 members). Longer articles on these congregations are online at uua.org/publications/interconnections.

If you know anything at all about **First Unitarian Church of Portland, Ore.**, you know the story of the red ribbon. How in 1992 when Oregon voters were asked to vote on an anti-gay measure, the church wrapped its whole downtown block in a red ribbon, calling it a hate-free zone.

The church grew 40 percent that year as it became known as the church of justice. It had also called a new minister just before the ribbon-wrapping, the Rev. Dr. Marilyn Sewell, who became deeply involved in the community and further raised the congregation's visibility.

First Unitarian grew from 675 members in 1992 to 1,100 today. Sewell credits worship that is "alive, and high energy," the church's extensive engagement in social justice work, a religious education program that has grown to include 600 children and youth, and dozens of places for people to connect.

She also credits the congregation's willingness to take risks. Sewell led 100 congregants to the 1999 World Trade Organization meetings in Seattle to protest trade policies. Some members left because of that, but many more came, says Kate Lore, the church's fulltime director of social justice. "They couldn't believe there was a church that would stand up to corporate domination and greed."

Other reasons for growth: The congregation has set aside \$2,000 to \$3,000 annually for leadership training and is raising that to \$10,000 this year. Music director Mark Slegers introduces as much music variety as possible into worship. First Unitarian claims the Association's largest music program with more than 300 children, youth, and adults singing or playing instruments in eleven musical groups.

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church in Kansas City has fluctuated between 300 and 400 members for much of its life. Several years ago it began a period of steady growth. In November 2006 it reached 500 members and in June 2007 the figure stood at 528, with 112 children and youth.

All Souls' first breakthrough came in 1994 when, in the aftermath of an acrimonious dispute over the remodeling of its building, the congregation

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INTERConnections

MISSION

InterConnections aims to be relentlessly useful to lay leaders of Unitarian Universalist congregations and the professional staff who work with them, providing information and resources that help make congregations vital.

InterConnections is a joint service of the UUA's Congregational Services, District Services, and Communications Staff Groups. It is made possible by congregations' Annual Program Fund contributions and the generosity of individual Unitarian Universalists to the UUA.

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called in two consultants, UUA district executives Nancy Heege and Helen Bishop. They showed the congregation the negative ways that members were behaving toward each other. That led to a series of "Hot Potato" discussions about topics that had been taboo, according to some. People listened to each other, understandings developed, and the culture began to change.

The next breakthrough came in 2003 when the Kansas City metro area was chosen for the UUA's pilot media campaign. The campaign forced All Souls to take a new look at its greeting practices. Says Chloe Mason Seagrove, director of membership, "We learned that even though we thought we were ready to help nurture and integrate visitors we were not. Sometimes we barely acknowledged them. So we got busy and developed a formalized greeting program."

The congregation took a risk, borrowing from its endowment to bring on a membership director and a minister of religious education, both full-time. "The move more than paid for itself in the first year by the increase in new families," says Mason Seagrove.

All Souls worship aims to "enrich, inspire, and sometimes surprise," says Senior Minister the Rev. Jim Eller, who has been at All Souls since 1999. Intern ministers have also helped it grow. One focused on young adults, creating a substantial young adult ministry. Eller notes, "When young adults come and see young people on the staff they're more likely to come back." The current average age at All Souls is 43, down from 55 in 1993.

The Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship was founded in the 1950s by Southern Illinois University faculty. For much of its history the lay-led fellowship's Sunday services consisted of professorial talks and the membership hovered around 100. Today it is at 186.

Increasing maintenance on its 1910 building caused the congregation to decide to move and grow. It called the Rev. Bill Sasso as its first minister in 1999. Having a minister, says President Jerry Molumby, gave the congregation more visibility. "We felt like we had a representative in the community," he said.

Then came a capital campaign in 2002, which raised pledges of

\$780,000 for a building. Four individual "angels" donated another \$100,000 each. The congregation built a \$1.86 million building and moved into it in 2004, and that spurred more growth.

Member Cheryl Robinson says the congregation's accomplishments are due to seven values: "1) Everyone's voice must be heard; 2) we have been willing to ask for help when we needed it; 3) we have valued the advice we have received; 4) we have believed in the generosity of angels, who have often been anonymous; 5) we value the growth of liberal religion in this area of the heartland; 6) we value social justice locally and globally; and 7) we value fun and try not to take ourselves too seriously."

Davies Memorial Unitarian Universalist Church was founded in the 1950s in a Washington, D.C., suburb. It thrived in the '50s and '60s, but lost members as much of the white population left the area. Deciding to stay in predominately black Prince Georges County, Md., the congregation in the mid-'90s resolved to make its congregation look more like its community.

The Rev. Don Cameron, later joined by the Rev. John Crestwell Jr., had a vision of creating a multicultural congregation. Crestwell, who is black, became Davies' sole minister in 2005 and continued that quest. With financial help from the UUA and the Joseph Priestley District, the congregation reached out with mass mailings and a new sign. Growth came by fits and starts. Many people of color came, attracted by advertising, personal invitations, and by a dynamic black minister in a UU pulpit. There were 48 visitors in 2002, 70 in 2004 and 83 in 2006. Membership rose accordingly, from 101 in 2001 to 150 in May 2007. Thirty-five percent of members are people of color, making it one of the most racially diverse congregations within the Unitarian Universalist Association.

There was also increased focus on religious education, with the hiring of Dawn Star Borchelt as DRE. She grew up in a multiracial church and was committed to creating an RE department where everyone would be welcome. Sixty percent of children and youth at Davies are of color.

Crestwell has written a book about Davies' journey to become multicultural. *Charge of the Chalice* is available from the church website, dmuuc.org.



Congregational Transformation

How badly do we want to transform our congregations so that they can be ready for all those individuals from varying races, creeds, and cultures who are seeking our life-affirming message? How urgent do we feel the time is, realizing that we cannot continue to do things as they have been done—realizing that we should be, even more, a church that is a beacon of light? How badly do we want Unitarian Universalism to become a more mainstream faith, for this great religion to have a larger voice?

The Rev. John Crestwell Jr., minister of Davies Memorial UU Church, Camp Springs, Md., a 2007 Breakthrough Congregation.

Forum: Pre-service RE

The following letters are responses to a question in the Spring 2007 issue of *InterConnections* about congregations that hold children's religious education before the church service.

I am the director of religious education at the UU Congregation of the Grand Valley in Grand Junction, Colo. (95 members). This school year we implemented the plan of holding RE classes before church services because we are limited on classroom space. Classes are from 9 a.m.-10 a.m. Our services begin at 10:30 a.m. Two classes meet in the back of the sanctuary. The other two have their own classrooms, and we also have a nursery. After class the children are in the service for 20 minutes, then go to a classroom for an activity period.

The challenges have been the length of time the children are at church, 9 a.m. to noon, and finding volunteers to cover the activity period during service time.

Julie Bradley, UU Congregation of the Grand Valley, Grand Junction, Colo.

In the 17 years I've been a member of our 30-member lay-led fellowship, except for one year, we have had our

children's RE at 9:30 a.m. before our 10:30 a.m. adult program. We have hired older teens to supervise the children who choose not to attend the program—which is most of them—in a combination of snack time, planned activities, and free play.

Benefits: Adults teaching RE can attend the adult program. It's easier to convince members besides parents to teach or be special guests. The children develop strong friendships because they have time to play together. The older children can participate in the adult program if they wish.

Disadvantages: It's a bigger time commitment each Sunday. The one year we ran the RE program at the same time as the adult program was in reaction to a few families' concerns that it was hard on their children to be at Fellowship for three hours. (We also have a light lunch after our adult program, so most people are there until 12:30 p.m.) We didn't like it that year because we missed the adult program when we were teaching and the children missed their playtime. Another disadvantage is we have to hire and pay someone to supervise.

Laurie Gauer, Lake Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists, Excelsior, Minn.

The Benefits of Long-term Disability Insurance

The article about ministerial disability in *InterConnections* (Spring 2007) reminds us that we are all vulnerable to sudden illness or accidents that can impair our ability to earn a living. Congregations are at risk of losing the service of a minister or key staff member, and this can have significant financial implications.

The UUA provides its congregations access to group dental, term life, and long-term disability coverage for staff members who work half-time or more. The current policies are with MetLife. In April 2007, 932 church staff members were enrolled for long-term disability insurance, 692 for life insurance, and 482 for dental.

Congregations typically permit their staff to enroll in any one or all of these three lines, and enrollment should occur within the first 30 days of employment. Congregations are not required to pay the premiums, but many do.

Long-term disability insurance provides benefits of 60 percent of wages (salary and housing allowance in the case of clergy) after a period of 90 days of the enrollee being unable to perform his or her duties.

Problems can arise if a staff member who becomes disabled has no disability protection and the congregation feels a moral obligation to continue wages until the employee gets well, which may take years. Differences of opinion on the congregation's obligations can create tension within governing boards or in the membership. For more information email ocsf@uua.org.

*The Rev. Ralph Mero
UUA Church Staff Finances Director*

About InterConnections

InterConnections is published four times a year and is sent free of charge to members of governing boards and professional staff of congregations. Others can read it on the internet at uua.org/publications/interconnections/. Sign up for email announcements when each new issue is online at lists.uua.org/mailman/listinfo/interconnections-l.



'Faith and Web' Speaks To UU Webmasters

UU webmasters will want to take a look at "Faith and Web" (faithandweb.com), a new blog about achieving excellence in church website design and production. It's written by Anna Belle Leiserson, a professional webmaster and longtime "web diva" for First UU Church of Nashville. She is also past chair of the UUA's Information Technology and Electronic Communications Committee. Goals of the website are to share web building tips, insights, and new technologies with church leaders who care about their websites—and to have fun doing it, says Leiserson. When time permits, she writes longer, more in-depth articles on topics such as search engine optimization and website statistics.

'Growing Our Faith' Theme Of Association Sunday

Sunday, October 14 has been designated by the UUA as "Association Sunday." Congregations are asked to hold a service on the theme of "Growing Our Faith Through Growing Our Numbers." Worship materials will be available on this theme and congregations are asked to take up a special collection for the "Now Is the Time" fundraising campaign, which will be used for national marketing and growth outreach projects.

For more information send an email to AssociationSunday@uua.org, or email the Rev. Stephan Papa at spapa@uua.org. You can also call Cherisse Haakonsen at 617-948-6544, or send her an email at chaakonsen@uua.org. Association Sunday is anticipated to be an annual event through 2011.

Increase Approved For APF Contributions

Here are Annual Program Fund amounts requested from congregations for the next two years. Congregations are asked to make a financial contribution each fiscal year (July 1 - June 30). The requested contribution (Fair Share) is calculated on the basis of the number of members a congregation certified for General Assembly the previous February.

The Fair Share for the following fiscal years is:

2007/08: \$54 per member
2008/09: \$56 per member

NOURISHING THE SPIRIT

Newton SGM Program Holds True to Principles

First Unitarian Society in Newton, Mass. (385 members), may have one of the best Small Group Ministry programs around. The program began in 2001 with 90 people in nine groups. Today there are 72 members in eight groups.

"It's a very solid and very significant program in our church," says Holly Zeeb, coordinator of the program since last fall and co-leader of one of the small groups since the beginning. "These groups contemplate really significant questions, and members are witnesses to each other's spiritual reflections and growth."

She says the program has attempted to stay true to the original concepts, as laid down by the Rev. Calvin Dame, one of the founders of Small Group Ministry within the UUA. The following aspects help make the program at Newton successful, Zeeb says:

- Continual publicity about the groups through a Small Group Ministry brochure, a monthly information table at coffee hour, and newsletter notices. In February the SGM program organized a worship service on Small Group Ministry, which generated many new members.

- Twice since 2001 there have been daylong workshops on Small Group Ministry, reminding everyone of the program's principles and structure.

- Openings in the groups are filled by the program coordinator, not by the groups themselves, ensuring that new folks are made fully aware of the program's structure.

- New topics are always under development by the curriculum coordinator, Bob Zeeb, and by the groups themselves. When a group comes up with a good topic it passes it along to Bob, who compiles them periodically into booklets for all the groups.

- The groups do service projects mostly within the church on a regular basis. "Our members were already so involved with social justice in the larger community it made more sense for the groups to focus their projects within the church," says Zeeb. Such projects

are a core principle of Small Group Ministry, helping the groups connect with something outside themselves.

There have been challenges. Originally all of the group facilitators met monthly to share information. Over time facilitators stopped coming, says Zeeb. "They felt like they knew what they were doing." Instead, the SGM steering committee meets three to four times a year to discuss the groups and whether they need to do more recruiting. Generally a representative from each group is present.

Another challenge is that some groups spend much of their meetings on check-in, not leaving enough time to discuss a topic. Zeeb says, "We talk in our facilitators' meetings about how to keep members on track." Having structure helps, she says. "We've been able to handle some challenging people because there is a definite structure and everyone knows what it is."

None of the groups have divided to form new groups, as originally recommended, which sometimes worries Zeeb. She says the groups could be considered both islands and bridges. "There are people who seem only to connect with others through their group. But many others have spoken quite eloquently about how deep they are able to go in their group because it's been together a long time, and some say SGM has been the springboard for deeper engagement in the larger church."

She adds, "I do consider the groups to be a ministry of the church rather than just another program. It's really meeting a need."

Barbara Bates, a member of the initial steering committee, believes the program has continued to be vibrant because the steering committee meets several times a year and helps the groups adhere to SGM core principles. And every few years they have a worship service where people testify about the value of SGM. "It may also be a result of this congregation's historical focus on creating strong community," she says.



TOOLBOX

New UUA.org Takes Shape With More for Everyone

If you've looked at UUA.org recently you know that it's changed. The redesigned site, which launched in the spring, aims to be more useful to visitors, lay leaders, and others.

Even if you've checked it out recently, it's worth going back frequently, says Deborah Weiner, the UUA's director of Electronic Communication. The site, although open for business in April, won't be truly complete until about the end of the year when most of the 20,000 or so pages will have been moved over from the old site. "It's a very complicated move," she says.

Here's a primer on how to use the new site. It's designed for three categories of users: visitors, members, and lay leaders. Click on one of those headings on the main page to find the information you want. A fourth heading is "I Am Interested In," which allows people to find information about eight specific subcategories including news, publications, religious education, social justice, and giving and generosity.

On the new site, under the "I Am Interested In" button, leaders can share the good news of their congregation in the Congregational Life section, find out what's coming up on the Events Calendar, or read a sermon in the Spiritual Life section. Index pages for past issues of *InterConnections* are also in that section.

Click on the "Leaders" button, then on Leaders' Library in the left column and that will bring up a screen that permits users to search for topics using keywords, such as "social justice" or "fundraising." Searches are also possible by size of congregation. Under the Leaders button users can also update subscriptions to *UU World*, *InterConnections*, and other publications.

Under the "Visitors" button users can call up the names of congregations and specifically find those that are Welcoming or wheelchair accessible. Welcoming congregations are those that have completed the UUA's Welcoming Congregation program and are intentionally welcoming to people who are

bisexual, gay, lesbian, or transgender.

The Visitors section also has a description of the UU Principles, as well as a description of UU worship services, music, ceremonies, and holidays. There is a list of books that are useful for newcomers and a place to ask questions about the faith.

The website of the UUA Washington office, which has been separate from UUA.org, is being merged into UUA.org. "There's a lot of emphasis right now on adding social justice information to the website, including the content of the Washington Office site," Weiner says. "Social justice is one of the biggest and most important parts of this website."

The website is organized under a "content management system," which is in common use across the business world and is the system used by most religious denominations, says Weiner. CMS allows many staff within the UUA to add and change content, whereas most of the information on the old site had to be created by three to four people. Weiner says about 40 people will have responsibility for adding to the website. That will permit information to be added, updated, and maintained faster.

Weiner says complaints about the old website were that people couldn't find information, there was too much information for ministers and not enough for lay leaders, and not enough spiritual content. "We had a one size fits all website. We wanted the new one to be spirit-driven and configured in a way so that people could navigate through one of these four doorways to find what they need." If you need help with the site, email info@uua.org.

She notes that every page on the new site has a link near the top so that page can be printed or emailed to friends. At the bottom of every page is a sitemap to help people get a sense of what the site includes and how it is organized.

UUA.org is designed to display properly for computers using Netscape, Internet Explorer 6 or 7, Mozilla Firefox, and Safari browsers.

Newsletter Offers Tips, Information for Small Congregations

Small Talk, a monthly four-page newsletter of tips and information for small congregations (under 150 members), is sent monthly to more than 400 subscribers. It was developed by the Rev. Jane Dwinell, a small-church consultant living in Vermont. The design editor is Dana Dwinell-Yardley.

Small Talk topics have included the importance of keeping track of attendance numbers, when to hire an administrator, whether and how to grow, and making your congregation more visible with signage.

"There was nothing like this newsletter when I started it," says Dwinell. "The response has been incredible."

Intended at first only for congregations in the Northeast District, *Small Talk* is now available to small congregations anywhere. Dwinell also visits other districts and congregations to offer consultations.

The newsletter, begun in December 2003, is free if received by email.

Paper subscriptions are \$10 for those without email. To begin receiving it, log on to <http://lists.uua.org/mailman/listinfo/smalltalknewsletter>.

There is also a Small Talk email chat list available at uua.org/lists for lay leaders, directors of religious education, ministers, and musicians in small congregations. Contact Dwinell at sky@vtlink.net or at 802-229-4008 or 1 Bingham St., Montpelier VT 05602.

Free Reparations DVD For Discussion Groups

Copies of a documentary, *Slave Reparations: The Final Passage*, are available free of charge from the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Palisades in Teaneck, N.J., to any group willing to hold a discussion session on it. The congregation sponsored creation of the DVD with a grant from the Fund for Unitarian Universalist Social Responsibility.

UUCP member Arlene Corsano interviewed black academics and others in creating the documentary. They discuss the legacy of slavery and rebut the most common arguments against reparations.

You can contact Corsano at acecorsano@hotmail.com. For more information visit the website usslavereparations.org.



Personal Invitations, Website Bring Visitors

Here's what the UU Church of Berkeley, Calif. (see story at right), learned about where its visitors came from in 2006, after implementing a procedure to better identify and track them:

The largest number, 39 percent, came because friends invited them; 30 percent found the church through its website, uucb.org; 11 percent were invited by family, 10 percent had been UUs previously (many of these came from nearby Starr King School for the Ministry), and four percent came because of public events at church. The rest came from various smaller categories, including mailers the church sent to the neighborhood.

The church used its new data on visitors to make changes in its outreach. Learning that few visitors found it in the Yellow Pages, it dropped its \$4,000 ad. Instead, it publishes an adult education course catalog, which many visitors said brought them to the church for the first time.

The Membership Committee does its annual survey of visitors, using the website surveymonkey.com, which allows users to tailor questions to their particular needs.

Forty percent of first-time visitors come back at least once at UUCB. Between one-in-five and one-in-six eventually become members. It's not hard to collect data on visitors on Sunday morning, says Linda Laskowski, who developed the tracking system. "Most are willing to fill out the form because they've come to church looking for a connection."

Laskowski offers this tip: Use check-off boxes whenever possible. "When we asked them to fill in the blank as to how they found us, only half did. But when we changed the form almost everyone would check a box." Have multiple cards to minimize standing in line, she says. Let people fill out the cards in the service.

Spread the Word

Don't worry about copyright: Make all the copies of *InterConnections* you want for others in your church. Tell everybody that they can also find *InterConnections* on the UUA's website at UUA.org.

MEMBERSHIP

Knowing Your Visitors A Key Growth Factor

What does our congregation need to do to grow? Should we be more welcoming, or is it a matter of adding more ways to integrate folks? Or should we really be focusing on outreach?

It can be hard to know what to do if you're part of a membership committee. How should you spend your time and resources to achieve the best possible results?

Start by knowing your visitors, says Linda Laskowski. She has helped the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley, Calif., and other congregations focus their membership energies by developing a process to let them know more about their visitors, including how they found the church and why they came. (See sidebar at left)

Know how many visitors you have, she says: "If you have enough visitors to grow then it's probably not necessary to spend your money on bringing more in. Instead, tighten up your welcoming and conversion processes." And if people are leaving, find out why.

Laskowski's process, which she has presented at district gatherings and at General Assembly this year in Portland, starts with collecting data. Visitors at UUCB are encouraged to fill out a visitors card, listing not only their contact information, but how they found the church. She also created an exit interview questionnaire to find out why people leave the church. There is also an annual survey of visitors.

Her system is not complicated, but it requires constant attention to visitors and consistent record-keeping. Two people staff a visitor table each Sunday morning, encouraging visitors to fill out a card, and making mental notes on returning visitors. A third person enters the new data in a spreadsheet, which helps the committee see what steps it should take to grow.

The challenge for UUCB and other congregations is to attract enough visitors to grow, she says. "I've read that if a church wants to grow it needs to have at least the number of first-time visitors annually as it has members."

The 500-member UUCB gets about 300 visitors annually, she said and so it's working on bringing more in.

A question on the annual survey asks new people if they felt welcome when they first attended UUCB. An overwhelming majority did. "We get scores of about 2.7 on a three-point scale for being welcoming," says Laskowski. So rather than implement more ways to welcome people, they chose to focus on outreach to bring in more visitors.

The church sends three mailings to people who move into the area. In a recent year the first mailing was a seed packet, "a gift for your new home," with church information printed on it. The second mailing was a flyer about summer social justice forums. The third mailing was a postcard with Christmas eve and other holiday activities. "About 5 percent of the households that we mail to do visit," said Laskowski. "The mailings pay for themselves."

Laskowski says UUCB's visitor tracking program works well with *The Membership Journey*, a guide helping congregations formulate effective membership strategies at archive.uua.org/programs/congservices/uncommon/hospitalityhome.html. "Once congregations have their own membership numbers and have a sense of where they could make the most improvement, they can go directly to that part of *The Membership Journey* to get ideas for things they can do." Some of UUCB's membership tracking tools will be on UUA.org soon.

"In essence we are putting more energy into converting visitors into members," she says. The ratio of visitors becoming members has improved slightly since these steps were taken, going from 1-to-6 to almost 1-to-5.

Laskowski cautions, "These tools by themselves will not increase growth. They will tell you where to put your energies to most effectively grow. Most of the articles I see on fixing the membership process are about doing things right. This is about doing the right things based on what your congregation needs."



MONEY AND RESOURCES

Useful Information That Bears Repeating

Here is useful information we found while preparing the back issues of *InterConnections* for the new UUA.org website. The back issues will be added to the website over the next few months. To find *InterConnections*, click on the "I Am Interested In" button, and then on Publications. Can't find what you need during the website transition? Contact interconnections@uaa.org.

CBCO: Congregations interested in joining a congregation-based community organization (CBCO) will need the new CBCO guide entitled *Congregation-Based Community Organizing: A Social Justice Approach to Revitalizing Congregational Life* produced by the UUA Office for Congregational Advocacy and Witness. Contact the office at socialjustice@uaa.org.

Church of the Younger Fellowship: Organized by the Church of the Larger Fellowship, the CYF is designed as a church home for young adults who do not have another church or who want more religious experience. uucyf.org.

Church on Loan: The Church on Loan Program of the UUA's Church of the Larger Fellowship provides services to small and emerging congregations. It has more than 80 full worship services and a lending library, and offers religious education and parenting and family resources. clf.uaa.org.

GA Banners: Directions for making a banner and pole support for the General Assembly banner parade is at uaa.org/events/generalassembly/programming/16055.shtml.

Explain Your Faith: A great way to grow a church is to help members learn how to explain their faith to friends, neighbors, and coworkers. The book *Articulating Your UU Faith: A Five-Session Course* by the Revs. Barbara Wells and Jaco ten Hove is one of the best resources for that purpose. Available from uaa.org/bookstore.

Accessibility: For questions about accessibility issues, email the UUA Office of Accessibility Concerns at access@uaa.org.

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Pamphlets: Read UUA pamphlets online or order them at uaa.org/publications/pamphlets/index.shtml.

UU Trauma Response Ministry: Contact the UU Trauma Response Ministry if your congregation would like external support in dealing with a natural disaster or personal tragedy, traumaministry.org or 866-730-8181.

Email Lists: Get helpful information about your congregational responsibilities by joining one or more of the 250 UUA-sponsored email lists on topics from membership to social justice. Worried about too much email? Get them in digest form once every few days instead of individually. Find the lists at uaa.org/members/emailists. Some of the most useful email lists: **MEMB-L** (Membership Committees), **UU-Leaders** (for lay leaders), and **UU-Money** (for folks who deal with church finances). Every congregation should also subscribe to **UUA-L**, a list for announcements from the UUA.

Small Group Ministry: Get help for your Small Group Ministry program by joining the UU Small Group Ministry Network at smallgroupministry.net. Get advice from other small group leaders and share session topics.

Subscriptions: Manage *UU World* and *InterConnections* subscriptions at uaa.org/leaders/16298.shtm.

Youth Group Handbook: The 2006 *Youth Group Handbook* replaces one last published in the early 1980s. It has guidelines for starting a youth group from scratch and tips on effective leadership. It also addresses collective decision making, working effectively with adults, fundraising, social action, anti-oppression work, and worship. It includes a collection of games and activities for building trust and community. The book is \$15 from the UUA Bookstore, uaa.org/bookstore; 800-215-9076.

Salary Recommendations Posted at UUA.org

Updated church staff salary recommendations from the UUA Office of Church Staff Finances are available at uaa.org/aboutus/professionalstaff/ministryprofessional/officechurch/index.shtml. The recommendations were developed by the volunteer UUA Compensation, Benefits, and Pension Committee and the District Compensation Consultants. Recommendations are for the positions of ministers, religious educators, music professionals, administrators, membership coordinator, and custodial staff.

Want to Know More About Open Space?

Interested in using Open Space Technology in your congregation after your experience using it at General Assembly this year? Here's how to find more information:

Harrison Owen, founder of Open Space Technology, has written a guide to OST, available at openspaceworld.com/users_guide.htm.

A shorter description of how Open Space Technology works, including links to quotes, articles, photos, and other resources about Open Space in action, is at openspaceworld.org.

Find an article about its application in UU settings at uuworld.org.

Now is the Time . . .

. . . to notify congregations in the communities where your high school graduates will be attending college this fall or working. Ask them to invite your graduate to a young adult function or to simply call or send them a note welcoming them to town and inviting them to visit the congregation. It's also a good time for congregations in college towns to check in with admissions offices for names of any declared Unitarian Universalists.

. . . to tidy up your premises. August is a peak church-visiting month. Look at your facilities with the eyes of a visitor. Are they clean and attractive? Are there signs that would be helpful for guiding newcomers?

GA at Home

Couldn't make it to General Assembly? Many presentations are available at uaa.org/ga and can be purchased on CD for use in committee and study group settings.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

In this feature we seek out answers to questions of broad interest, drawing on experts in congregations, the UUA, and elsewhere. To submit questions, write to *InterConnections*, 8800 Norwood, Leawood, KS 66206, or email interconnections@uua.org.

Q One of our new members, an accountant, says we should have an audit of the church books. What should that cost?

A With audit fees now frequently approaching \$7,000 to \$15,000 for modest sized organizations, few nonprofits can afford a full-blown audit every year, unless an accountant-member of the organization is willing to do it at a discounted fee, says Ralph Mero, the UUA's church staff finances director.

Sometimes, a less expensive "management review" can be performed by an accountant or experienced bookkeeper, says Mero. Such a review of cash management procedures, accounts payable procedures, and the system for recording and reporting pledges and contributions and other financial procedures is often sufficient to assure that the board has met its fiduciary responsibility and that the books are accurately maintained. This should be done at least once every three years, usually before a new treasurer or bookkeeper takes office.

Mero adds, "Financial reviews should be seriously considered whenever a long-term volunteer treasurer or staff

bookkeeper is replaced. Not that we are suspicious, but these are the times when unexpected discrepancies often come to light."

Q We often have guest ministers who speak at our services and we try to pay them responsibly. Where do we go for the latest figures on what we should pay for professional services, not only for Sunday speakers, but also for weddings, etc.?

A Go to the UU Ministers Association's website at uuma.org/Documents/PDF/FeeChanges.pdf. The recommended fees are advisory. Here are some of them:

Scale of Fees for Professional Services (adopted June 2004)

1. Within the parish to non-members/contributors:

a. Wedding: \$300; with rehearsal \$350; alternatively, 10 percent of total wedding budget.

b. Funeral or memorial service: \$200; with committal or eulogy \$250.

2. Societies without regular ministers:

a. Wedding: \$300; with rehearsal \$350 plus \$.445 per mile.

b. Funeral or memorial service: \$200;

with committal \$250 plus \$.445 per mile.

c. Sermons, other program services: \$200 (one service), \$250 (two services) plus \$.445 per mile.

3. Societies temporarily without ministers:

a. Wedding: \$300; with rehearsal \$350 plus \$.445 per mile.

b. Funeral or Memorial Service: \$200; with committal or eulogy \$250 plus \$.445 per mile

c. Sermons, Sunday Morning Service: \$200 (one service), \$250 (two services) plus \$.445 per mile.

d. Other Program Services: \$50 per presentation hour plus \$.445 per mile.

Q Is there a way to print the entire *Congregational Handbook* from the UUA website?

A The *Congregational Handbook* is best used as an online resource, says Susanna Whitman, Growth Services Administrator for the UUA, and a co-creator of the handbook. "It includes links to supporting documents, web pages, and people. It was created in this way so as to be updated more readily with current information, given the technology now available."



For Lay Leaders of UU Congregations

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