



# The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE MINISTRY AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP • WINTER 2009

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## From the Director

**T**he inauguration is just a few days off as I write this beginning. In my mind, it's a new era brimming with both possibility and danger. The possibility is for creating authentic continuity between the kinds of values we believe our country stands for and how it actually operates and the restoration of our broken relationships with the rest of the world. The danger is that this is too much to hope for, especially under the current economic crisis. We know there are divergent interests among the powerful players and that compromises will always have to be made. Can our new president and the team he has assembled make compromises that allow efforts to move forward without undermining the integrity they pledge to restore? Time will tell, but my prayer is "may it be so, oh Lord, may it be so."

**And we're hard at work on the budget** as I write this, trying to significantly cut expenses for the rest of this fiscal year and even more for next year. To that end, *The Religious Leader* is going paperless as of the next, pre-GA, edition. You will receive an email notice in mid-May with a link to the electronic *Religious Leader* on the UUA website. If you have any suspicion that we do not have your current email address (or any other information as to your whereabouts for that matter) please send an update to my assistant, Marion Bell at [mbell@uua.org](mailto:mbell@uua.org) or (617) 948-6406. Perhaps this is a good time to remind you that whenever you move or your contact information changes, we need to update the UUA database so we can

keep in touch with you, so please let us know.

**Some of us will be at GA for fewer days** this year in another cost-cutting effort. We want to connect with you and serve your needs as well as possible at GA and will be very intentional about how we use our time while we are in Salt Lake City. If you're interested in meeting with any of us, please help us by arranging an appointment ahead of GA. We'll have more specific information on our presence and availability in the pre-GA edition.

**The Excellence in Ministry Summit** in December is over and now the real work begins. Reverend Christine Robinson blogged live from the summit and continued blogging afterward. Many of you have read her reports and made comments. Her blog is at [www.iminister.blogspot.com/](http://www.iminister.blogspot.com/). Scroll down to December 10 and read back from there to get the chronological picture. On behalf of the Panel on Theological Education, sponsor of the Summit, I extend a very heartfelt thanks to Christine for providing up-to-the-minute information, as well as the opportunities to engage interested parties. You can also get the Panel's report, including the text of the keynote address, and keep track of things as they evolve at [uua.org/aboutus/governance/board-appointedcommittees/paneltheological/121902.shtml](http://uua.org/aboutus/governance/board-appointedcommittees/paneltheological/121902.shtml). The Panel met on January 13 to consider next steps in response to the eight initiatives developed by those at the Summit. Next, a report goes to the UUA Board for further action. Meanwhile,

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funding for the theological schools will remain the same as last year, minus the same cuts the UUA makes across the board due to the financial crisis (probably 10 percent) while funding needs for these and other projects to support excellence in ministry are being assessed.

Whatever the final outcomes of all of this, the conversation has been rich. Standard ways of doing things have been questioned. New ideas have come forth. The notion of

“excellence” has spread beyond ordained ministers. While relationships with the seminaries and funding are essential components, the conversation is so much larger and more fundamental than that. Fraught with some anxiety though it may be, I have faith that it will bear good fruit, and for this, I am grateful. ●

—Beth Miller, Director of MPL

## **Ministerial Credentialing/Internship Clearinghouse—David Pettee, Christine May, Mohammed El-Khatib, Kim Wilson**

### **Success in Seattle**

**E**ven though it is not quite mid-January, already the sun seems to be setting late enough so that the hope and promise of spring seems almost within reach. But not quite!

As many would expect, the UUA has not escaped the impact of the severe economic downturn. We are all working diligently to prepare for likely budget shortfalls in the next fiscal year and within the current fiscal year. At this writing, it does seem that my time at General Assembly will be considerably shorter than in previous years, as staff in Ministry and Professional Leadership pitch in to help lower our costs.

Despite the difficult financial news, one very exciting development is that we will be incorporating into the UUA Scholarship process an additional application for scholarships created through generous giving to projects of this year's Association Sunday! Do stay tuned for further information, and don't forget that the deadline for applying for UUA Scholarships is April 15, 2009!

The period between the December and March Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) meetings is usually a little quieter than in the fall. This is typically the

time of the year when I try to visit the Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy (RSCC) as they perform their important work and visit seminaries. This past December however, following the Ministerial Fellowship Committee meeting in San Francisco, a number of MPL staff and MFC members traveled north to Seattle to join with a total of 60 lay and clergy alike from around the country and the Association, for a two-and-a-half day meeting about Excellence in Ministry, a vision of the UUA Board that was carried out by the Panel on Theological Education. Overall, I found the gathering very powerful and stimulating, the music and worship layered and refined, and the workshops expertly facilitated by Susan Beaumont of the Alban Institute. More important, I got the opportunity to meet new colleagues and strengthen ties with those whom I already knew.

I would urge those with further interest to go to [uua.org/aboutus/governance/board-appointedcommittees/paneltheological/121902.shtml](http://uua.org/aboutus/governance/board-appointedcommittees/paneltheological/121902.shtml) to learn more about the gathering!

With regard to news from the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, it is now acceptable for aspirants and candidates to complete their

clinical training either in a site that has been approved by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) or a clinical site under the auspices of the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP). No matter where the clinical training takes place, the MFC always reserves the right to recommend further clinical work if the Committee feels that a candidate has not demonstrated adequate pastoral skill during her or his MFC interview.

Finally, during these challenging financial times, those of us in the Ministerial Credentialing Office are anxious to try to help you keep moving forward on your path toward ministerial fellowship. We have been receiving more calls and email than usual from aspirants and candidates needing to make accommodations based upon a change in their finances. I spend much of my time working with aspirants and candidates seeking waivers of one kind or another, so if you imagine that we could be helpful, please don't hesitate to contact us. It's been my steady observation that often just naming some of the concerns and fears that are right below the surface helps with coming up with and developing new and creative solutions. ●

In the faith,  
David Pettee,  
Ministerial Credentialing Director

## Internship Clearinghouse News

**Our 2008–2009 crop of interns** have settled nicely into their internships. We have about 70 interns in internship at this writing. The expectation that all interns get their Learning/Service Agreements to me for review within two months has been excellent this year, I'm happy to report. For the upcoming 2009–2010 year, we already have a

half-dozen intern–site matches so far, and more are coming in every week. If you are in a position to report a match, please email me and let me know.

I want to remind all future interns again of an MFC policy that takes effect in September, 2009. The Ministerial Fellowship Committee expects that all interns must have met with an Regional Sub-Committee on Candidacy (RSCC) before they begin their internships. Please note that interns do *not* have to have been granted candidacy status. Interns who have had their candidacy postponed are equally eligible to undertake internships. The new policy is designed to reduce the number of internships that do not go well. There have been a number of internships over the last five years that ended prematurely, and a significant portion of those difficult leave-takings were from interns still in aspirant status who had not interviewed with an RSCC prior to commencing his or her internship. Prospective interns who have not yet made an appointment to see their RSCC are urged to contact their RSCC administrator as soon as possible.

The Internship Stipend Grants Program has awarded funds to three new sites and has given one second-year renewal grant. As congregations begin to feel the pinch of a weak economy, we expect that a number of teaching congregations will need to step back. We hope that other congregations will consider becoming teaching sites and will take advantage of the Stipend Grants Program. The deadline for applications for the 2010–2011 year is November 1, 2009. For a full description of this program, please see the Internship Clearinghouse web page. ●

—Rev. Kim Wilson,  
Internship Clearinghouse  
Coordinator

Religious Education and Music  
Leader Credentialing &  
Renaissance Programs—Beth  
Williams, Paula Welling

## What's New in the Religious Education Credentialing Program

**M**any congratulations to Nathan Ryan who was awarded Credentialed Religious Educator Level by the RECC in October, 2008 and Sheri Phillabaum who was awarded Credentialed Religious Educator—Associate Level on December 8, 2008.

We welcome the following religious educators who have been accepted into the Religious Education Credentialing Program and are working toward various levels of achievement. Their commitment to excellence in

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religious education and professional development are recognized through these efforts:

Kelly Harris, FL

Judith Sasser, PS

## Creating Portfolio Overviews

### Putting together a Religious Education Credentialing Program

portfolio can be a challenge. Not only do you have to document your learning, personal, and professional experiences, but you also have to demonstrate how you have integrated knowledge and skill in a competency into your professional practice. One way to do that is through the competency area overview. The overview is not the place to list every workshop you have taken or training you have led. These belong elsewhere in the competency area. It is the place to demonstrate what you know about the competency and how you use this knowledge in your work. How do you demonstrate this? Where do you even begin? I have found it useful to consider the following questions as you build the overview:

1. What is your understanding of the content/scope of the competency? This shows your knowledge of the subject and your ability to put it into the perspective Unitarian Universalist congregational life.
2. What facts/opinions/theories about this competency can you cite from the experts in this field? This can demonstrate that you are conversant in the subject and its experts. When you use these facts and theories to support or to challenge your own beliefs about the competency, it demonstrates that you are critically engaged with the subject.
3. What are one or two examples of your, and your congregation's, experience with this competency? This is an opportunity to put your knowledge into context. When linked to #2, it demonstrates your ability to analyze your lived experience through the lens of theory.
4. What are one or two highlights of your background in this competency? This is an opportunity to highlight a book or experience that was formative to your knowledge and skills related to this competency, and how it continues to serve you in your professional practice.
5. Why is it important for a religious educator to have knowledge and skills in this area? This is where you show that you know why you do what you do, and your ability to generalize the particulars of your own life to the requirements of your profession.

By no means is this framework of questions the only way to structure a competency area overview. I hope it gives you a place to start. ●

## Renaissance Program News

The following are Renaissance program modules scheduled for the coming year:

Feb. 20–22, Multicultural, Cleveland, OH, Kathy Strawser, [kstrawser@wsuuc.org](mailto:kstrawser@wsuuc.org)

March 5–7, Curriculum, Angola, IN, Amy Peterson Derrick, [pestro2001@hotmail.com](mailto:pestro2001@hotmail.com)

March 6–8, Worship, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA, Tera Little, [teral@att.net](mailto:teral@att.net)

March 24–26, Curriculum, Syracuse, NY, Jan Hutslar, [janhutslar@yahoo.com](mailto:janhutslar@yahoo.com)

April 2–4, UU History, Fort Collins, CO, Alice Springer, [dre-uucsf@qwestoffice.net](mailto:dre-uucsf@qwestoffice.net)

April 14–15, RE Philosophy, Newton, MA, Sarah Hawn, [sarahnhawh@earthlink.net](mailto:sarahnhawh@earthlink.net)

April 30–May 2, Multicultural RE, Ames, IA, Phil Lund, [plund@psduua.org](mailto:plund@psduua.org)

We are pleased to congratulate the following religious educators who recently received Renaissance Recognition:

Carney Doucette, NNE

Mary Rogers, SW

Elizabeth Spisto, CB

Jamie Forbes, MNY

Kathleen Skaggs, SW

Beverly Tricco, BC

### Renaissance Module Leader-in-Training process:

Have you ever been so inspired by a Renaissance Module Leader that you have wondered how you might serve in that role? If you would like to be on the leader's list for a module that you have already taken, we invite you to apply for participation in our Renaissance Module Leader-in-Training process. The process requires submission of a current resume and a recommendation from district staff on group facilitation skills, and includes successful evaluation as an assistant module leader. For more information about the process and how to apply, please contact Paula Welling at [pwelling@uua.org](mailto:pwelling@uua.org) or (617) 948-6418.

**Scholarships:** A reminder that the Barbara Marshman & Ann Fields Memorial Scholarship is awarded annually to a religious educator who is engaged in a program of graduate study and is serving a Unitarian Universalist congregation. This \$500 prize is given through the generous contributions of those who wish to memorialize and honor the work of these two great religious educators, and through the ongoing support of the UUA. The Veridan Fund for Religious Education Excellence (VFREE) Scholarship is awarded to a candidate in the UUA Religious Education Credentialing program in order to undertake a significant professional development experience. This \$3,000 annual prize is given through the generous contributions of the family, friends, and colleagues of the late Rev. Norma Veridan to honor Norma's life and ministry, and through the



ongoing support of the UUA. The VREE Fund was established according to Norma's wishes to provide scholarships to religious educators who strive to strengthen religious education in our UU congregations by advancing their professional development to a new level of expertise, as outlined in the UUA Religious Education Credentialing program. The application deadline for both scholarships is May 1, 2009. Modest scholarship assistance for training in religious education leadership is also available to all religious educators serving UU congregations. Please contact Paula Welling at [pwelling@uua.org](mailto:pwelling@uua.org) for application information. ●

## Music Leadership Credentialing

We are pleased to announce that there is now a page on the UUA website for the Music Leadership Credentialing

Program. You can access it through the following link: [uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/musicleadership/index.shtml](http://uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/musicleadership/index.shtml). On this page you will find a description of the program, and information about program requirements, curricula offered through the program, the program "Triad," and how to apply to the program. The application deadline for the Class of 2009 is March 31, 2009. We hope you will consider this path of professional growth and enrichment. Any questions may be addressed to Beth Williams, Music Leader Credentialing Director at [bethwilliams@uua.org](mailto:bethwilliams@uua.org) or Paula Welling, Music Leader Credentialing Assistant, at [pwelling@uua.org](mailto:pwelling@uua.org). ●

—Rev. Beth Williams, Religious Education and  
Music Leader Credentialing Director; Renaissance  
Program Co-Director

## Transitions—John Weston, Emily Schwab

### Interim Ministry News

#### For Interim and Consulting Ministers-to-Be

Ministers who will be conducting their first interim ministry, or their first in five or more years, are expected to attend the Orientation to Transitional Ministry, to take place at Boston University from 5:00 p.m. Monday, July 27 to 4:00 p.m. Thursday, July 30. Travelers should plan to arrive Monday afternoon. Consulting ministers are also welcome.

The Orientation will largely be conducted by faculty from the Interim Ministry Network, an Alban Institute-initiated ecumenical group that has successfully developed and advocated for research-based and theologically informed interim ministry for two decades.

The cost of the orientation is 1.5 percent of your Salary plus Housing for the year to come. (Pledges are accepted—due Nov. 1, 2009.) In return, the UUA provides you with room (Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday nights) and board (dinner Monday, three meals Tuesday and Wednesday, and Thursday's breakfast and lunch), course materials, and program, and reimburses your reasonable transportation costs to Boston and back. Please register only when your interim position is secure.

Ministers who wish to attend the orientation in the hopes of landing an interim position later in the summer are welcome to do so. The cost will be \$400 in advance for room and board, course materials, and program. These ministers cover their own travel costs. Registration period is May 15–June 30.

#### More on Interim Ministry

In 2008–2009 there are 102 interim ministries in being. Of these, 25 are in their second year. The 102 is up from last year's 95, down from 2006–2007's 105, but up again

from 2005–2006's 89, and only 67 the year before that. It's a turbulent market!

What, you will ask, is the market in the coming year? Hey—if Allan Greenspan with his boatload of number crunchers got it so wrong (as any Ayn Rand devotee must know), I can't even begin to muster the hubris required to make a prediction. The future is a closed book.

Colleagues wishing to prepare themselves to serve a congregation "in the interim," please plan to update your Ministerial Record and submit an application for interim ministry online by April 1, and to have your interim ministry packet ready to send out by April 21. That's the date on which I start making recommendations. The *Interim and Consulting Ministries Handbook* should be your guide.

As most of you are aware, the Ministerial Settlement System, for settled ministries, resembles the NASDAQ in affording ministers the opportunity to inform themselves about congregations and to exercise a high degree of individual election. Interim ministry placement works quite differently. Given the press of circumstance and the confusion in which many congregations find themselves following the announcement of a ministerial departure, interim placement operates more like the Soviet economy pre-Gorbachev.

Thus, the brevity of the application to conduct an interim ministry, i.e., asking only about your preferences as to the Districts and types of interim ministry in which you are willing to serve. Beyond that, it is up to the Transitions Director to provide each congregation with a list of the four ministers best qualified to serve it in light of the needs of all other congregations.

The UUA's interim ministry program looks first to the placement of Accredited Interim Ministers (AIMs) and AIMs-in-Training (AIMITs), i.e., those who take the extended training, attend the seminars, serve in

interim ministry positions year after year, and relocate every year or two. The rationale: AIMS and AIMITs can only be there for the congregations if the congregations are there for them. Given the sharpened sensibilities AIMS and AIMITs bring to their work, this is at it should be. Thus only AIMS and AIMITs are asked for

their specific congregational preferences. Given the uneven distribution of preferences among them, even their elections cannot always be honored. ●

—John Weston,  
Transitions Director

## Ministerial Development—Jory Agate, Margaret Montore

### Grants and Deadlines

**Continuing Education (CE) Grants**—Funds available for continuing education grants have been exhausted for this fiscal year. If you are interested in receiving a continuing education grant next fiscal year, be sure to apply early! Grant application forms will be available beginning June 1, 2009 and are available for continuing education opportunities that occur between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010. The CE program need not have been completed at the time of application.

**Ministers in Preliminary Fellowship**—The summer deadline for applications for renewal of fellowship has changed. All paperwork must be submitted by July 15 in order to be eligible for review at the September Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) meeting. Late applications will not be accepted. Incomplete applications will be postponed until the December meeting of the MFC.

**Crafting a Culminating Chapter on Ministry**—Join 40 UU ministers who are 58 years or older for a five-day retreat April 13–17 in Jacksonville, FL to discern how you would like to shape the final chapter of your professional ministerial career. This retreat is being led by UU minister and Alban consultant, Larry Peers, and staff from MPL. Cost is \$575. Contact our office for more information and a registration form. There is still some scholarship money available for this program.

**Natalie Gulbrandsen Scholarship Fund for International Studies**—The Scholarship Fund has been

established to provide opportunities for ministers and ministerial candidates to engage in meaningful ways in a developing country for academic, interfaith, or social justice purposes. Ministers and candidates who are interested in broadening their liberal religious knowledge and understanding and in strengthening their international sympathies by immersing themselves in a developing country are encouraged to apply. Application deadline: April 15, 2009.

*Grant Guidelines:* 1) Grants will be made to individuals who are Unitarian Universalist ministers serving in a congregation or community setting or to candidates for ministerial fellowship. 2) Grants will be made to individuals in order to have meaningful exposure to developing countries. The goal is that the individual's ministry may be informed by an understanding of the nature and consequences of poverty and of the economic differential between nations and regions of the world. 3) Developing countries shall be defined as those falling in the lower 50 percent of the nations of the world economically, as determined by the United Nations Human Development Report or other such indices. 4) Grants of at least \$1,000 will be made for projects of an academic, interfaith, or social justice nature. For more information or to receive an application, please be in touch with our office. ●

In faith,  
Jory Agate, Ministerial Development Director  
Margaret Montore, Ministerial Development Assistant

## Worship and Music Resources—Erik Walker Wikstrom

### Top Ten Things You Can Do to Improve Worship in Your Congregation

It is clear that the single event in the life of most congregations that brings the community together like no other is the weekly worship service. For some people it is their only contact with the congregations; for most others it is the touchstone. What, then, can we do to deepen the experience of worship?

The UUA's WorshipWeb now contains a pithy "top ten" list of things you can do to improve worship right

away, without rearranging the seating or buying new equipment! The first five are somewhat philosophical in nature, directed toward helping the worship leaders deepen their own spiritual grounding in preparation for nurturing the congregation's. The second five are specific, practical things to keep in mind while planning services. The entire list can be found on the WorshipWeb ([uua.org/spirituallife/worshipweb/](http://uua.org/spirituallife/worshipweb/)). Here's a taste—the number one thing you can do to improve the quality and the experience of worship in your congregation:

*Nurture a Collaborative Relationship between Worship Leader and Music Professional.* Music is such an essential

element of a fully engaging worship service yet it is often less than fully integrated, often relegated to the sidelines. Strive to have close and collaborative communication between the clergy person or lay leader and the music professional during the development of a service so that both can bring their expertise to the table. (And for goodness' sake encourage and support your congregation's

Music Professional to be a member in the Unitarian Universalist Musician's Network—[www25.uua.org/uumn/](http://www25.uua.org/uumn/)—a really wonderful resource and professional organization.) ●

In gassho, Erik Walker Wikstrom,  
Worship and Music Resources Director

Office of Church Staff Finances/UU Health Plan Office—Richard Nugent, Joyce Stewart (Retirement Plan), Liz Oliver (Group Insurance), Jim Sargent (Health Plan), and Tracy Withy (Health Plan)

## Paying Attention . . .

**My eight year old son, Asa,** loves a children's book entitled *The Three Questions*. It is a retelling by author Jon Muth of a short story by Leo Tolstoy. The illustrations are brilliant. A young boy, Nikolai seeks the answers to three questions:

What is the best time to do things?  
Who is the most important one?  
What is the right thing to do?

After getting unsatisfactory answers from an assortment of his friends, Nikolai decides to visit his friend, Leo the turtle. Leo has lived a very long time, and Nikolai is sure that Leo will know the answers he is looking for. Leo lives high up in the mountains. When Nikolai arrives, he finds Leo digging a garden. As Nikolai helps Leo with his gardening, he asks his three questions. Leo listens carefully, but only smiles while Nikolai continues digging. They work until a major storm arrives. The wind blows wildly. Tree limbs bend. Rain falls in sheets. Thunder cracks. And through the din of the storm, Nikolai hears a voice crying for help. Going into the surrounding woods, he finds a panda injured by a fallen tree. After getting her back to Leo's cabin, the panda awakens and asks Nikolai to go back into the storm to find her cub, which he does. The next morning Nikolai is still waiting for Leo, the wise old turtle, to answer his three questions. Leo looks at Nikolai and tells him that his questions have already been answered. He says, "Remember . . . there is only one important time, and that time is now. The most important one is always the one you are with. And the most important thing is to do good for the one who is standing by your side. For these, my dear boy, are the answers to what is most important in the world. That is why we are here."

For me, this story is about the importance of our relationships, the need to pay attention to not only those relationships, but the broader environment, and the need to be fully present to those we encounter in our lives. After six months serving as the Acting Director of the Office of Church Staff Finances (OCSF), these lessons guide my work and the work of the staff of our office. We

strive to be attentive to the many phone calls, emails, letters, and forms directed toward us. The benefit programs, aid funds, and compensation-related questions that we administer are quite varied. OCSF manages the UUA Health Plan, Retirement Plan, and Group Insurance programs and oversees many of the aid funds providing financial assistance to ministers, surviving spouses/partners, and other church staff. We also shepherd development of the Salary Guidelines and coordinate the District Compensation Consultants program. Even more varied are taxation issues (housing, stipends, professional expenses, and so forth) and other compensation issues from religious professionals and congregational leaders. ●

## Aid Funds

Our office administers various trust funds that provide assistance to ministers, surviving spouses/partners, and other religious professions. In recent weeks, we have mailed checks to retirees to assist with winter fuel costs and to newer ministers to help reduce student loan debt. We also respond to individual needs as financial and other emergencies arise. We work closely with the Society for Ministerial Relief and the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society who are able to provide ongoing financial stipends to individuals with extremely limited retirement funds. In coordination with the Unitarian Service Pension Society, our office manages the service gratuity program that provides quarterly checks to ministers (and their survivors), aged 66 or older, with twenty or more years of service. If you are experiencing a financial emergency, or desire more information about our aid funds, please contact me at [rnugent@uua.org](mailto:rnugent@uua.org) or (617) 948-6456. ●

## Living Tradition Fund

A large source of funding for our debt relief and student scholarships (administered by David Pettee, [dpettee@uua.org](mailto:dpettee@uua.org)) is the Living Tradition Fund. The two largest sources of income for this fund are the offering at

the annual Service of the Living Tradition during General Assembly and the offerings taken during ordination and installation ceremonies. In recent years, some ministers have been directing some or all of these funds to their seminary rather than to the Living Tradition Fund. In doing so, we have less funding available for ministerial student debt relief and student scholarships. ●

## Don't Go Without Long Term Disability Insurance

Sadly, every year several congregations are faced with an employee becoming disabled due to a health problem or accident. Inevitably, some of these employees were not enrolled in the UUA Long Term Disability (LTD) program, which provides 60 percent of pre-disability salary following 90 days if our insurance provider, MetLife, confirms disability. In these circumstances, congregations are faced with extraordinarily difficult decisions particularly with long-tenured employees. If you or others within your congregation are not covered, please consider enrolling in this important insurance program. Liz Oliver is our new Group Insurance Coordinator. She can provide information about our LTD, Life, and Dental plans at loliver@uua.org or (617) 948-6401. ●

## UUA Health Plan

Following the fall open season, the UUA Health Plan is now serving approximately 760 employees—15.2 percent over January, 2008. The growth from 2007 to 2008 was 12.4 percent, so the growth trend is accelerating. Nearly all of the growth during open enrollment was within currently subscribing congregations, although we did see an increase in the number of subscribing congregations from 323 to 330. Based on the past two years' experience, we expect to see growth continue throughout 2009, adding at least 50 additional employees. The Plan has been receiving a significant number of inquiries from

congregational staff people who expect to lose coverage through their spouse/partner in 2009. That economic reality, plus our increasing favorable market position with a compounded two-year premium rate increase of only 4 percent, put us in a strong growth position. If you have any questions, you can reach Health Plan Director Jim Sargent at jsargent@uua.org or (617) 948-6405 or Tracy Withy, Health Plan Coordinator, at twithy@uua.org or (617) 948-6401. ●

## UU Organizations Retirement Plan

Given the market volatility, our office has fielded many calls from Retirement Plan participants. Of our 2,750 participants, the average portfolio is approximately \$52,000, while the median is only \$20,000. In the coming months, our office will be coordinating the process of evaluating whether or not to remain with Fidelity as the service provider of the UUA Retirement plan. If there were to be a change in providers, it appears at this point that the conversion would take place effective January 1, 2010. These dates are subject to change as we move through this complicated process. Contact Joyce Stewart at jstewart@uua.org or (617) 948-6421 for any retirement plan related questions. ●

## 2009 Salary Recommendations

The Compensation, Benefits, and Pension Committee adopted the 2009 Salary Recommendations at its October 2 meeting. The 2009 salary recommendations, available at [uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/compensation/index.shtml](http://uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/compensation/index.shtml), are based largely on the results garnered from the salary survey distributed to all UU congregations in May, 2008. ●

—Richard Nugent,  
Acting Director,  
Church Staff Finances

## Resources & Possibilities

### From the Chair of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC)

The December 2008 meeting of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee took place in San Francisco, and was followed by the Excellence in Ministry consultation in Seattle, where the MFC was represented by Rev. Emily Gage and me.

Our Committee has not had a chance to hear our report on this meeting, or decide on follow-up, but one of the suggestions made in Seattle encourages us to undertake a comprehensive review of the competencies we require to encourage excellence in ministry. Stay tuned for more on that!

Let me update you on our work and our membership changes in December. We interviewed twenty candidates; ten women and ten men

from eleven different theological schools around the country. Fourteen of them received a Category 1, four received Category 2, one received Category 3, and one received Category 4.

We welcomed new member, Jessica Halperin, a lifelong Unitarian Universalist from Pittsburgh, PA. Jess is an active young adult and regularly attends All Souls Unitarian Church in Washington, D.C. and the online Church of the Younger Fellowship.



We were also grateful for the service of the Reverends Mitra Rahnema and Neal Anderson, who served as liaisons to candidates.

I want to say a word about preliminary fellowship applications for renewals because there has been a change in our process for reading and discussing them. In the past, up to 100 renewal packets were read during our meetings and passed around to various members for review and comments. Now we are reading the renewal applications online prior to the meeting, thanks to the innovation of Mohammed El-Khatib, our MFC Assistant! This enables the MFC members to absorb the renewal materials and respond to them more carefully. Now readers feel free to write more detailed responses for renewal decision letters. We continue to look very carefully at the professional development plans for people applying for renewal of fellowship. We see preliminary fellowship as an equally important part of ministerial formation as the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), internship, or seminary classes. It is a time to create a lifelong pattern of discernment of your continuing education needs. Too many people write a laundry list of what they want to do in church next year, rather than a thoughtful self-analysis of what they need to learn more about in the practices of ministry.

If a minister's application for renewal is denied or "continued in present status" it is after at least three readers have carefully reviewed the material and the full Committee has heard their thoughts and concerns and votes on their recommendation.

When we stopped requiring the selection of a category of ministry at the time of preliminary fellowship, we invited ministers to take advantage of the opportunity to complete a specialty in ministry during the preliminary fellowship process. We now recognize these specialties at the time of final fellowship. Three years of evaluated ministry in a specialty is required. We hope that ministers will see preliminary

fellowship as the last formal stage of theological education and ministerial formation, rather than a bureaucratic hoop to jump through. •

—Wayne Arnason

## UU University Moves to the Center of General Assembly

In 2009, GA will offer a newly integrated UU University approach to its programming. Instead of taking place prior to General Assembly, thereby adding expense and scheduling conflicts, UU University will now be nine hours of GA programming that will not compete with any GA programming. This highly successful leadership development opportunity has expanded to six tracks and will be available to all GA participants.

The general areas of programming will be: Stewardship, Multigenerational Ministry, Multiculturalism, Congregational Governance, Social Justice, and Theology. "Deans" have been chosen to oversee each track and each track will provide opportunities for in-depth reflection, capacity building, and tools for integrating new knowledge with congregational life.

This change also allows ministers to fully participate in a way that was not possible when UU University competed with Ministry Days.

Ideally, congregations will send teams of leaders to GA who can attend different UU University tracks. Teams can then meet to talk about how they may bring their learning back to their congregation.

You might begin now to encourage particular lay leaders to consider attending. Registrants for GA will need to preselect a track, so early information is helpful.

For more information turn to the UUA website at [uua.org/events/uuuniversity/index.shtml](http://uua.org/events/uuuniversity/index.shtml). •

—Rev. Dr. Terasa Cooley  
Program Director, UU University

## Unitarian Universalist Retired Ministers and Partners (UURMaPA)

In October, the UURMaPA Board established an Endowment Fund to support and ensure the long-term future of the organization's mission to serve retired colleagues and their partners. An Endowment Fund Committee, consisting of Peter Haslund, UURMaPA Board member (and spouse of Bets Wienecke), David Hubner, and Joel Weaver (spouse of Carol Taylor), has been appointed to manage the Fund. The three members bring to the Endowment Committee banking, corporate finance, and personal investment experience.

I am heartened to report that UURMaPA members have already contributed money to the Fund and others have purchased Charitable Gift Annuities through the UUA, naming UURMaPA as beneficiary. We invite others to join us. For more information contact our treasurer, Kathleen Hunter at [kdhagd@mac.com](mailto:kdhagd@mac.com) or Ralph Mero at [rmero237@verizon.net](mailto:rmero237@verizon.net). •

—Nancy Doughty,  
UURMaPA Board President

## National Conference Coming Up

**Leading Congregations into a Multiracial, Multicultural Future: Now Is the Time!**

This conference will be held April 3-5, 2009 in Tulsa, OK (following the success of the 2007 and 2008 conferences). Register now at [uua.org/events/multiracialmulticultural/index.shtml](http://uua.org/events/multiracialmulticultural/index.shtml); deadline is March 16, 2009. •

## CLF Seeks Teachers for Online Classes

The Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF), our UU

cyber-church, offers a variety of online classes through their Online Learning Center. These classes are open to all, and cover a wide range of topics under the categories of UU History and Identity, Spiritual Practice, Ethics and Social Justice, and Theology. The CLF is always interested in recruiting exceptional UU ministers and laypeople who would be interested in teaching a 4 to 8 week class for them. The pay is minimal (\$20/student), but it is an excellent opportunity to share a passion and to reach out to UUs around the world. For more information, contact their minister for lifespan learning, Lynn Ungar, at [lungar@clfu.org](mailto:lungar@clfu.org), or go to [www.clfu.org/learn](http://www.clfu.org/learn). •

## The Unitarian Universalist Funding Program

Inspired by the richness and diversity of our liberal tradition, our mission is to promote the influence of Unitarian Universalist principles through grant making. Do you have an innovative project or program that needs financial support? The UU Funding Program may be a source of funding to support your work. We make grants of \$1,000 to \$20,000 to qualifying UU organizations.

Our Funds have unique missions and guidelines:

**The Fund for Unitarian Universalism** makes grants to Unitarian Universalist organizations for projects that strengthen Unitarian Universalist institutional community life and nurture and celebrate our liberal religious heritage.

**The Fund for International Unitarian Universalism** makes grants to Unitarian Universalist organizations for programs that strengthen and promote UU ideals and values and nurture and celebrate our free faith beyond North America.

**The Fund for Unitarian Universalist Social Responsibility**

provides grants to UU organizations that increase the direct involvement of UUs in service, advocacy, and community organizing to create justice in the world, link UUs with their community, and foster a generosity of spirit and action.

**Congregation Based Community Organizing (CBCO) Matching** grants are available to congregations joining an interfaith organizing network (such as Gamaliel, Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), People Improving Communities through Organizing (PICO), or Direct Action Research and Training (DART)) for membership (March 15 application deadline) and training (applications accepted on a rolling basis).

March 15 (postmark) is our next application deadline. Application forms and guidelines are available at our website ([www.uua.org/uufp](http://www.uua.org/uufp)), by contacting us at [uufp@aol.com](mailto:uufp@aol.com), or you may write or call us directly at UU Funding Program, P.O. Box 301149, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130 or (617) 971-9600. •

## PR Materials for Newly Settled Ministers and Directors of Religious Education

If you are beginning a new placement this year, congratulations! This is a unique opportunity to introduce yourself to the local community, raise awareness of the congregation that you are serving, and attract new visitors to your congregation for worship and programming.

The UUA has published public relations materials for congregations welcoming new ministers or directors of religious education. Our resources include:

- A step-by-step guide to publicizing your arrival.
- Sample press relations materials from the beginning of Rev. Fred Small's ministry at First Parish

in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 2008.

- Sample media coverage from 2007–2008 of new ministers and directors of religious education in Unitarian Universalist congregations.

All of these resources can be found at [uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/congregationalpr/index.shtml](http://uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/congregationalpr/index.shtml).

For more information, please contact Shelby Meyerhoff, Public Witness Specialist, at [pw\\_specialist@uua.org](mailto:pw_specialist@uua.org) or (617) 948-6103. •

## Fund for Nurturing Unitarian Universalist Scholarship

The deadline for this scholarship is March 15.

The Panel on Theological Education of the Unitarian Universalist Association is receiving applications for grants up to \$25,000 from Unitarian Universalist scholars who are committed to strengthening the UU movement through research and publication, excellence in teaching, and educational leadership.

Candidates eligible for this program, in order of priority, are:

1. Ph.D. candidates in religious/theological studies at the dissertation stage who show promise of contributing to the UU movement through research and publication, excellence in teaching, and educational leadership;
2. Emerging UU scholars who require financial and mentoring assistance to prepare a completed dissertation for publication;
3. Established UU scholars who are cultivating the next generation of UU scholars and ministers.

For more information, please visit [uua.org/giving/awards/scholarships/fundnurturing](http://uua.org/giving/awards/scholarships/fundnurturing). •

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## UU International Resources Office

### We Are Called. We Can Lead. Help Is at Hand

UU congregations have always sought to be effectively internationally engaged. Our faith teaches us that inherent worth and dignity are universal, not national. We've learned that connections with brothers and sisters around the world provide a unique opportunity to build peace and justice, to learn and grow in spirit, and to mentor faithful global citizenship to our children and the world. But, designing international engagement ministries can be challenging.

The UUA's International Resources Office is ready to help your congregation design and implement *integrated, sustainable, and transforming* international ministries.

Visit [uua.org/fwb](http://uua.org/fwb) for more information. Or, contact the UUA's director of International Resources, Rev. Eric Cherry, at [echerry@uua.org](mailto:echerry@uua.org). •

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## UUA Actions of the Month for Winter/Spring 2009

Each month, the UUA implements robust action campaigns that aim to engage congregations and individual UUs. The monthly actions will focus on accomplishing concrete policy objectives that reflect our faith values. This spring, we will be building action campaigns around the following objectives:

*February Action of the Month: BGLT Equality*—Join UUs across the nation in lobbying for BGLT equality. Visit your Representative or Senator's district or national office and ask them to support BGLT equality.

*March: Comprehensive Sexuality Education*—Mobilize your congregations or youth and young adult groups to participate in the

call-in days timed to coincide with lobby visits from participants in the Sexuality Education Advocacy Training taking place in Washington, D.C., March 21–24.

*April: Environmental Justice*—Leading up to and during the month of April, culminating on Earth Sunday, April 26, Unitarian Universalists will be called to engage in environmental justice, pursuing environmental issues through the lens of social justice.

Visit [uua.org/socialjustice](http://uua.org/socialjustice) or email [socialjustice@uua.org](mailto:socialjustice@uua.org) for more information. •

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## Association Sunday

Many thanks to each of the 580+ congregations that participated in Association Sunday 2008! The shared commitment to Unitarian Universalism that transcends these tough economic conditions serves as inspiration for the future. For more information about how much was raised to support lay theological education and excellence in ministry programs please visit [uua.org/associationsunday](http://uua.org/associationsunday).

We are very excited that our preparations for the third annual Association Sunday are now underway! This fall, we will celebrate our common bonds once again and *Grow Our Diversity* through a special service and collection on October 4, 2009.

Through a historic collaboration between *you*, via a survey to which over 1,000 Unitarian Universalists responded, Rev. Bill Sinkford, current president of the UUA, and the two candidates for the UUA presidency, Rev. Laurel Hallman and Rev. Peter Morales, the programs that Association Sunday 2009 will fund were recently determined. This year, your generous contributions will help us to develop spiritual communities that are more welcoming to *all* people by:

- Expanding the *Building the World We Dream About* curriculum and associated resources.

- Supporting congregations who are working to create a Unitarian Universalism that is racially, culturally, and economically diverse.
- Enabling UU congregations and districts to minister effectively to youth and young adults who identify as people of color or multiracial, and their families, in the areas of spiritual development, racial/cultural identity development, and leadership development.

Please join us in celebrating our connections in faith. We are better together! Register your participation by sending an email to [associationsunday@uua.org](mailto:associationsunday@uua.org), calling (617) 948-6544, or visiting [uua.org/associationsunday](http://uua.org/associationsunday). More information, including worship and organizing resources, will be forthcoming. •

In faith,  
Rev. Stephan Papa, Special Assistant  
to the President for Growth Funding

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## Association of UU Administrators (AUUA) Professional Day at General Assembly 2009

AUUA Professional Days starts on Tuesday, June 23, at 4:00 p.m., with the AUUA Annual Meeting, which then segues into our “no-host” reception and the AUUA Banquet.

We are greatly pleased that Kay Montgomery, the Executive Vice President of the UUA, will be with us for the banquet as our speaker! Kay celebrated her twenty-fifth year with the UUA at last year's General Assembly, and many know that she began her church career as the administrator of our Atlanta congregation. She has been a supporter of the AUUA for many years, and we are really excited that Kay will be with us that evening!

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There will be an interesting and educational program presented on Wednesday, June 25—please keep an eye out for all of the details in the next issue of the AUUA newsletter (or see [www.auua.org](http://www.auua.org) in early February).

We do hope that our congregations have budgeted for their administrators' travel, stay, and registration fees for the AUUA

Professional Day and General Assembly. This is a rare opportunity to learn from and network with other UU administrators from across the country. With the Presidential election happening this year, I expect a large turn out, even with the current state of the economy.

Make sure your administrator knows to keep an eye on the various deadlines for registering, and so

forth, by taking a look at [uua.org/events/generalassembly/](http://uua.org/events/generalassembly/). There are also some scholarships/matched funds available, as well as some "volunteer for registration" opportunities.

I look forward to seeing you in Salt Lake City! ●

Onward and Upward,  
Chuck Rosene, AUUA President

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## The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE UUA MINISTRY & PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP

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