



UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
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Who Gets To Vote!

A Guest Column by The Reverend Sue Sinnamon
Director of Faith Development, Thomas Jefferson District

When I served congregations as an MRE I had regular discussions with Middle School Youth Coming of Age participants about the requirements for membership in Unitarian Universalist Congregations. I always sent pledge materials to our high school students too. These were just two ways I could begin the conversation about what is required of individuals when they join a congregation.

I have to admit I had a motive. I worked with the high school youth group. There was nothing to compel them to be there each week. I wanted them to decide that part of being a congregation member meant that you showed up. I wanted them to decide they had a responsibility to the rest of their community.

We always had lively discussions. One particular group decided that to be a member:

1. You showed up every Sunday.
2. You brought your children to Sunday School every Sunday.
3. You pledged 3 – 5% of your gross income.
4. You contributed to the community by volunteering, inside and outside the walls of the congregation.
5. Adults attended worship each Sunday as their religious education.

The only thing we had to discuss in depth was the pledging. They thought it was unfair to require a contribution since not everyone had money, until we discussed a percentage of income. I could see their minds working on how much of their income they could contribute.

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Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson

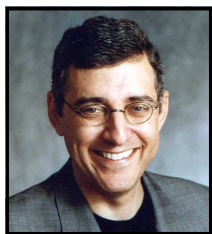
Envisioning a World Where Justice and Compassion Cross All Borders

The wellsprings of generosity, hospitality, and compassion run wide and deep in the UU Church of Tucson. The arid desert environment has not prevented the church from providing an open and welcoming Unitarian Universalist gathering place, flourishing programs, and vital social justice ministry.

The church is situated in southeastern Arizona, not far from the border between the United States and Mexico. The members of the UUCT have committed themselves and their resources to assisting migrant people who are at great risk in the intense heat of the desert and harsh political climate they encounter when they cross into this country. The statistics that affect the migrant population are startling: five thousand people have died in the desert since the construction of the border fence.

“The existing ‘death policy’ as a deterring factor is not working,” asserts The Reverend Diane Dowgiert, now in her fourth year of ministry with the church.

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From the Acting Chair:
Jim Sanders

The Cycle of the Seasons

SUMMER 2009 – How are we doing?

Since my last note to you in the APF Quarterly Newsletter, our Association and our Congregations have moved through the first half of the 2010 fiscal year. With new leadership in our congregations and with a new UUA administration, we have been working to bring the programs and spiritual support that our members need and want. All the while, we wonder if we can accommodate our needs when hit with the reality (perceived or real) of the budgets that each of our congregations passed last spring.

FALL 2009 – Workshops Galore:

I have been fortunate to speak with a group of financially minded leaders from my home district, an energetic group of treasurers, presidents and canvass/fundraising chairs. In almost every case, they were battling internally with their visions and the reality of funding those visions. They know that they need to prepare themselves for the stewardship work that needs to be done to meet their goals. They knew that their visions were strong, but needed guidance on “how to communicate that vision effectively” and break through to that “place of abundance”. They spoke of the need for “best practices” in their stewardship work.

A positive response to that need is being handled through the districts. They continue to provide leadership training workshops and retreats to help prepare our leaders for the future of Unitarian Universalism. Grant money comes back to the districts from your APF support. It provides needed income for your district staff to deliver services to you.

How do you learn about these training opportunities?

Subscribe to your District’s electronic newsletter list, subscribe to one of the many UUA list-serves, and connect on Facebook or Twitter.

WORK IN the UUA and Beyond:

Our Association of Congregations is also working to balance the budgetary needs of our UUA and the reality of funding that it receives through our gifts to the Annual Program Fund.

While the current years’ budget has been pared down from the previous year in light of the economic downturn that we are experiencing, it appears that change in congregational participation falls as congregations discover that the “old way of thinking and doing” doesn’t work in today’s economy.

One of the first things cut is denominational support. The UUA staff, board and the APF Committee are keenly aware that we ALL need to do our part to support our faith movement.

The UUA and APF Committee Ask Ourselves:

- How can we help you fund your vision most effectively?
- How does your full participation in the Annual Program Fund provide you with the tools and support you need to meet your goals?

WINTER 2010:

I am excited to be working with a dedicated group of volunteers. Our APF Representatives work tirelessly in their home districts to respond to your questions, to direct you to resources and to work alongside you on your journey through the exciting world of stewardship and stewardship education.

Take advantage of that support. Share this quarterly newsletter in your own congregations and contact your APF Representative when a question arises.

The APF Committee will be working this winter and spring to develop additional strategies to help us all navigate into the 2011 fiscal year, the next cycle of the seasons.

Until then, in faith and service,

Jim Sanders, Acting Chair
APF Committee

Transformation: From Yankee Thrift to Yankee Vision

Angela Matthews, APF Representative to the Northern New England District

The most common associations with the word “Yankee” are the name of a baseball team and the adjective used to describe the frugal nature of northerners – more specifically northern New Englanders. Google the word and you may find as I did, an article published in The Baltimore Sun on June 16, 1899 criticizing a plan to “melt silver dimes to fashion a loving cup for Admiral Dewey,” because the testimonial showed a lack of ‘Yankee Thrift.’ The term has been around for a long time and, at least by this article, a documentable 110 years. More recent research on charitable giving shows that the tradition holds strong with the northern New England states performing in the bottom ten nationally in generosity for decades.

This fall, Laurel Amabile and I set out to prove that old dogs can indeed learn new tricks when we presented “Guide My Feet and My Commitment Too” at the Northern New England Track Meets held in Maine and Vermont on two Saturdays in October. The exciting and encouraging news is that over the two sessions twenty-five stewardship volunteers and ministers from congregations all over the tri-state region attended the all-day workshop with the specific intent of becoming master teachers of new tricks.

The response was overwhelmingly positive about bringing back to their congregations a message of abundance and generosity, and using new tools to make their case for meeting all their church budget needs, district dues, and UUA fair share giving through member pledges. This was the consensus goal of the two sessions along with commitments to lead the charge for giving away one or more plates a month in local communities and fundraising only for special projects rather than for making the bottom line.

This is revolutionary thinking in Northern New England and the volunteers who gathered for the workshops came with that level of warrior commitment. There was the recognition that our principles are at the core of our generosity. The question to ask is not what do we want to give but rather what do we want to do. From that grows bold vision that can truly transform a congregation, a community, and the world.

A Reminder to Ministers

The deadline for submissions for the 2010 Stewardship Sermon Award is February 16, 2010.

The Stewardship Sermon Award is given annually for the sermon judged most effective in exploring and promoting financial support of our Unitarian Universalist faith.

It is sponsored jointly by the Annual Program Fund (APF), the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA) and the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA).

For more information regarding eligibility and submission requirements, please visit <http://www.uua.org/giving/awardsscholarships/stewardshipsermon/index.shtml>

UU Church of Tucson - Continued from page 1

Many people in the church have become deeply involved and supportive of the No More Deaths program, which organizes resources and people to provide humanitarian aid to migrants and advocacy for humane migrant treatment and policies. Joining forces with the interfaith and environmental groups, members of the church have been actively raising funds and assembling the 24-hour survival kits called “migrant packs.” The migrant packs include water, food, and medical supplies to those who may otherwise die in the desert.

One church member, Walt Staten, was recently arrested, charged and found guilty of “Littering in the Desert” for leaving jugs of water in a remote desert area where migrants are apt to pass through. The maximum sentence is one year in prison and up to a \$10,000 fine. Walt’s fellow members have been actively writing letters of support for Walt to congressional representatives and trying to work with local officials to change the policies and outcome of the case.

The members of the UU Church of Tucson regularly share their offering plate to support causes they believe in beyond their support of the humanitarian aid efforts with the No More Deaths program. The church also provides housing and meals for area homeless people each week during the winter months, supporting the effort with food and volunteer time.

The UUCT has faced some difficult financial choices in recent years. However, members have sustained their commitment to being a Fair Compensation Congregation and full contributors to our Association’s Annual Program Fund and the Pacific Southwest District.

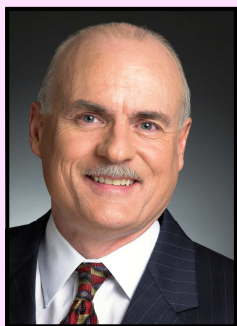
Stewardship Wisdom for Congregational Leaders

by Laurel Amabile, Annual Program Fund Director

Regardless of religious affiliation, there are things that are being learned about congregational stewardship that can be of great help to us - particularly in challenging economic times. There is much wisdom to be gleaned from current research about congregational giving, fundraising, and stewardship.

- Stewardship is a ministry. It is much broader in scope than fundraising, requiring a highly relational and pastoral approach.
- All of the resources of the congregation or faith community are involved with stewardship: money, property, people, time, and energy.
- Hospitality, careful tending and management of resources, and a clear vision and mission are aspects of stewardship.
- Giving and generosity are matters of the spirit and are at the heart of stewardship.
- Giving is a spiritual discipline at its core, a practice that reflects one's faith as well as spiritual depth and maturity.
- Becoming a generous person involves a lifelong, developmental process which begins in infancy with receiving love and evolves with experiences of giving and receiving.
- There is a direct relationship between one's deepest held values and the motivation to give. We contribute our time and resources to those things that matter most in our lives.
- Our religious leaders—particularly ministers and religious educators—must take an active role in modeling and teaching good stewardship in order for the concepts and principles to take root in their congregations.
- Regardless of the economic context, congregations with the highest individual giving levels focus on an inspiring mission and vision, engage in a visible, year-round stewardship program, and ask for levels of financial support that are proportionately appropriate for each individual or family.
- Generous congregations provide a safe environment in which to talk about money and its role in peoples' lives. They offer training and support in personal financial planning and giving choices so that generosity can be practiced.
- Generous behavior in congregations can be expected, but not taken for granted. It is important to express appreciation and gratitude for all that people contribute and for all gifts received.

Thomas S. Howard: APF Representative to the Metro New York District



Tom was married in the Unitarian Church in Summit, and over the past 20 years has served as President of the Congregation's Board of Trustees, chaired the Capital Campaign as well as the annual fund drive, and chaired the Membership and the Long Range Planning Committees. He also has acted as a facilitator for a covenant group and has performed as auctioneer of many years standing at the congregation's annual Services Auction, which grows in attendance and revenue each year.

In the rest of his life, Tom is a lawyer practicing civil litigation with a firm in Hackensack, New Jersey and New York City, focusing on trials, arbitrations and appeals in will contests, business disputes, medical malpractice, and nursing home neglect. He holds a J.D. from New York University.

Tom says that he volunteered to work on the Annual Program Fund because he enjoys both the fellowship of UU's and the good work of the UUA. He is passionate about Unitarian Universalism as a chorus of voices supporting liberal religious beliefs, founded on a faith in the ultimate goodness of all life.

Linda Nelson: APF Representative to the Thomas Jefferson District



Linda Nelson found her spiritual home six years ago at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Lowcountry (UUCL). She served two years as Co-President during which time the first full-time minister was hired and a new church home built.

At UUCL, Linda also served on the Nominating, Religious Education, Program and Social Justice Committees. Currently, Linda is a member of the Fundraising Committee and chairs the Leadership Development Committee. She just completed a 6-month term as President, finishing the term vacated when the UUCL President moved out of state.

In 2007, Linda conducted a two-part workshop on *Ideas for Growth Workshop* at UUCL and was Site Coordinator for the first meeting of the Southern Cluster of the TJD. Linda was a student at The Mountain School of Congregational Leadership (now known as Southland UU Leadership

Experience) in 2005 and on faculty for the next four years.

After receiving her MBA in 1999, Linda left her position as Assistant Director of Radiology a year later to join Dictaphone (now Nuance Communications) where she is Sales Training Manager for the Healthcare division. Linda is a single Mom and lives in Hilton Head Island, SC with her two youngest children; her two oldest children live in Charlotte, NC and Brooklyn NY.

Who Gets to Vote! - continued from page 1

Then one of the youth asked, "Can we join, can we become members?" The by-laws stated that at age 16 or upon completion of an approved coming of age program, youth could become members. So I told them Yes.

When we had completed the coming of age program, those youth who decided to join the congregation participated in the joining ceremony on a Sunday morning. The ceremony was the same one we used with all new members. We said our words of covenant together.

In the weeks that followed the ceremony, I had two questions from these youth, "When do we get our permanent nametags?" and "When will I receive my pledge form?"

These young people were full and recognized members of this congregation. They knew they had a voice and a responsibility. They had to show up, pledge, volunteer, and continue their faith development. They attended worship services. They would go on to be leaders in the congregations in the communities of their future. This congregation opened itself to the youth as full members and in a profound way the youth taught the congregation what it meant to be a member.

I cringe when I see congregations cut youth and young adults from their membership rolls because they cost money. I cringe when I see congregations discourage youth and young adults from joining because they will not be there that long. These young people are both our future and our present. We need their leadership now. To cut youth as members or discourage membership because of money and mobile lives sends them the message that they do not belong. They are unable to play leadership roles in congregations because they are not members. They cannot be leaders in the larger denomination if they are not congregational members. I would venture a guess that the youth and young adults that choose membership in congregations grew up in congregations and know how to be leaders. They have been taught how to worship, plan an event, conduct a meeting, the joy of conflict, to articulate their ideals and most important, how to be a Unitarian Universalist living their faith in the world. Why will they join later on in life when we do not let them fully participate now?

Teaching individuals how to be members of our congregations is one of the most important things we do. We tell them what is required. We teach them how to participate in our communities and we train them to be leaders. Our Unitarian Universalist faith desperately needs our youth and young adults. They know how to be members of our congregations and we can let them lead us.

New from the UUA Bookstore: The Giving & Generosity Set

NEW! Stewardship and Development Staff on Twitter:

Rev. Terry Sweetser's Fundraising 101, www.Twitter.com/fundraising101, for daily messages to help organizations thrive by engaging in effective fundraising practices.

Laurel Amabile's Giving Speaks, www.Twitter.com/givingspeaks, for daily messages that promote giving, generosity, and excellence in stewardship.

NEW! Congregational Stewardship Blog

Written by Wayne Clark, Director of Congregational Stewardship Services

Follow at <http://congregationalstewardship.blogs.uua.org/>

Stories of Generous Congregations

Learn more about the practices and activities of some of our most generous Unitarian Universalist congregations.

Read the stories at <http://www.uua.org/giving/news/generosity/congregationalgiving/index.shtml>

Setting The Table

A Liturgy by The Reverend Laurie Bushbaum

This is a "Gift at Your Table" liturgy for services that include children and/or adults. Start with a table in place and as each item is mentioned, it is carried forth and laid into place. The pace should be slow.

Why do we have a table here?

We have a table here because we believe in community, in what we have to give to and receive from one another. We are created to be fed in relationship and the table is our symbol.

Why do we have a cloth on the table?

We have a cloth on the table because each life is interwoven with every other life. The cloth is our symbol of the love which binds us, upholds us, and covers us.

Why do we have a candle on the table?

We have a candle on the table because we believe in the light: the light of faith, hope, and love. The candle is our symbol of this light and for our flaming chalice which guides our search for truth.

Why do we have flowers on the table?

We have flowers on the table so that we remember to see the mystery and beauty of creation which continually surrounds us. Flowers are our symbol of the grace which springs up into our lives.

Why do we have bread and wine on the table?

We have bread and wine on the table as gifts of the earth. They speak of the power of growing things; they ask us to wait for the ripening and harvest. Bread and wine are our symbols of trust and fruitfulness.

Why do we have an empty box on the table?

The empty box is to remind us to welcome unseen guests at our table - brothers and sisters who share this earth and this life. The empty box reminds us to give from our fullness to those who have need so that we may all know justice and peace.

The table is set.

Contact Us!

We love to hear from our congregations!

Please feel welcome to contact us with any questions or concerns that we might address for you.



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Annual Program Fund Committee

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Florida	Bertha Perez
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Pacific Northwest	Jim Mason
Pacific Southwest	John Morehouse
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Southwest	Open Position
St. Lawrence	Suzanne McNamara
Thomas Jefferson	Linda Nelson
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DPA Liaison	Dick Jacke
LREDA Liaison	Susan Freudenthal

To contact any of these outstanding volunteers, please call the Annual Program Fund office at (617) 948-6512.

Giving to the Annual Program Fund

When sending your contributions to the Annual Program Fund, please be sure to:

1. Make all checks payable to "UUA Annual Program Fund"
2. Note your congregation's ID number on the check
3. Include any statement stubs with the payment
4. Send your contributions directly to our banking lockbox at:
UUA Annual Program Fund
P.O. Box 843153
Boston, MA 02284-3153
5. To minimize paperwork, please ensure that checks for other UU entities and programs are not sent to this address.
6. Accept our thanks for all that you do to support Unitarian Universalism!