

FOR MINISTERS AND BOARD PRESIDENTS



Leap of Faith Growth Initiative

The theme of Association Sunday 2010, scheduled for October 3, is *Celebrating 50 Years and the Future of Our Faith*. Proceeds will go to ensuring that our faith thrives for generations to come by supporting the *Leap of Faith* action plan developed by the UUA's spring 2010 strategic review.

In May 2010 Rev. Peter Morales invited the ministers of several congregations with admirable records of numerical growth to join him in considering how best to encourage and support numerical growth in our congregations. Out of this consultation emerged the **Leap of Faith Initiative**. This pilot project will develop mentoring relationships between congregations. An outside evaluator will assist in identifying congregations ready for numerical growth and in learning how best to partner with them for sustained growth.

- We affirm that there is wisdom within our congregations. All of them have the capacity to change, grow, and deepen in their missions and ministries. Leap of Faith will encourage Learning Communities to share this embedded wisdom.
- These congregational partnerships will involve mutual mentoring and embedded learning as they share what has worked for them in developing vital ministries.
- Each aspiring congregation will determine the areas of learning and experience that will take them "over the threshold" to sustained numerical growth. These may include new technical skills, adaptive approaches and culture changes.
- Congregational teams will gather in New Orleans, October 21-23 and based on their goals will form Learning Communities, which will function through shared experiences and developing personal relationships.
- As Learning Communities, participating congregations will share what they are learning for the greater health and well being of Unitarian Universalism.
- Leap of Faith will offer ways for interested individuals and congregations to learn along with the Learning Communities through websites, social media, blogging, webinars, an administrator, and other Congregational Life staff.
- The Steering Team is working with a professional outside evaluator in a rigorous assessment process, which will roll forward the most helpful aspects of this project in subsequent years with additional congregations.
- This first year, Congregational Life Staff members nominated congregations that are poised on the threshold of numerical growth; nine aspiring congregations will be selected to participate and then matched with mentoring congregations.
- The Leap of Faith Steering Team is Nancy Bowen (lead), Alicia Forde, Annette Marquis, Janine Larsen, Phil Lund, and Stefan Jonasson with support from Congregational Life Staff Team members.

As part of *Celebrating 50 Years and the Future of Our Faith* we urge your generous contributions to the Leap of Faith Growth Initiative. Outside evaluation and learning will provide a model for strengthening our connections and empowering increasing numbers of congregations to grow our faith.