



# InterConnections

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## 2 New Ways to Add Punch to Your Website

A new banner for congregational websites that illuminates UU news and information is available from the UUA. Check [www.uua.org/banner.html](http://www.uua.org/banner.html). The banner is automatically updated weekly.

Also, a new e-mail list called **websters** is available for website designers to share tips, tricks, tools, and techniques. Subscription information to the free list is at [www.uua.org/lists/subscribe.html](http://www.uua.org/lists/subscribe.html). List managers are Kasey Melski, UUA web designer/developer, and Donald Griggs, member of the UUA electronic communication committee.

## Services Guide Online

Comprehensive information about all UUA services, programs, and resources is now available online. Click on Programs & Services on the [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org) homepage or go straight to [www.uua.org/services.html](http://www.uua.org/services.html). You'll find information there on hundreds of programs from accessibility information and listings of Actions of Immediate Witness, to information on ordination and installation services, to materials on young adult ministry and youth advisors.

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### MEMBERSHIP

## Midweek Events Connect Members With Fun, W orship

**G**etting members out at midweek for a "church night" is a tradition for many of our congregations. It's an important time to build those community connections in a more relaxed atmosphere than on Sunday morning.

Members of the UU Church of Berkeley, Kensington, CA (555 members), gather every Thursday night. The evening starts at 5:30 with a half hour of social time, after which participants link hands in a circle and share announcements and sometimes joys and concerns. A meal follows, and then at 7 p.m. there's a half-hour worship service after which members split off to go to choir rehearsal, committee meetings, and the children's play areas. The service is led by ministers or lay people and includes a chalice lighting, readings, and a short homily. It ends with a closing circle.

The first Thursday of the month is "family night" when activities are geared for children and parents. On these nights the director of religious education or others lead classes such as How to be a UU Parent or on world religions.

**Participation has been growing,** says cominister Barbara Hamilton-Holway. Attendance averages about 50 and jumps to 60 or 70 on family nights. Some come just for the worship service.

"We really enjoy it," says Hamilton-Holway. "People like the informal participatory worship service, and they get to know a smaller group of people than they can on Sunday morning. This is a way of keeping worship and community at the heart of the church."

The Tennessee Valley UU Church, Knoxville, TN (366), reserves Wednesday nights for activities. There's a lay-led vespers service at 6 p.m., followed by a meal at 6:30. At 7:30 there's choir rehearsal and adult programming. Once a month the meal is a birthday celebration.

"For me Wednesday night is as significant as Sunday morning," says member Doug Walter. "It's about building community and getting to know other members. I've gotten to know a number of the younger children through sharing a meal with them once a week."

**The Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara, CA (407),** began a 45-minute vespers service in June as a way of offering a worship opportunity to religious education teachers who miss the Sunday service. It quickly appealed to a wider variety of folks, says member Carolyn Petry. The 6 p.m. service is lay-led and based on themes such as Friendship, Water, Dream Catchers, and What is Religion? It includes singing, meditation, poems and other readings, and a time for personal sharing. There is organized child care.

Some of the services have been organized by Coming of Age mentor/youth teams. Attendance is between 10 and 24. "It provides a nice chance for small-group worship in a fairly large church community," says Petry. She adds there are often meetings after dinner, "although we all like having dinner together so much that it's hard to leave to be on time for meetings at 7:30." Several members of

*Continued on page two*



# InterConnections

## MISSION

*InterConnections* is an ally of board members and other leaders of Unitarian Universalist congregations, providing information and resources that empower them to be as effective as possible in their work to create and build healthier congregations.

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## BRAG ON YOURSELF

The newsletter searches out exemplary congregational programs and tells how they work so other congregations can emulate them. Please help us help board members across the continent by telling us what you have done to improve your congregation. Get in touch (addresses above).

## WORLD WIDE WEBSITE

Visit the UUA's website at [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org). It contains an archive of *InterConnections* articles plus extensive information on Unitarian Universalism, the congregations, the UUA and its services, affiliate organizations, and on-line resources including electronic mailing lists devoted to helping lay leaders. It also allows easy access to the UUA Bookstore and has a listing of the Skinner House book catalog.

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*Continued from page one*

another nearby UU congregation also attend.

Such nights are not without difficulties, says the Rev. Katie Stein Sather, who tried unsuccessfully to start a church night at Avalon UU Fellowship, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada (35). Not enough people could come, she says. She thinks such nights can exclude many people who have school or other activities. It's also important, she notes, to accommodate members' busy schedules by not requiring committees all to meet on that same night.

The UU Congregation of the South Fork in Water Mill, NY (53), tried a church night, and although it was generally successful, the congregation dropped it this year, says copresident Sue Penny, when some committees decided to meet at other times and because it was a strain for children with homework.

It included a 6 p.m. pizza, pasta, and salad dinner with a brief intergenerational worship service at 6:45. The service included a chalice lighting, responsive reading, a kid-friendly activity such as forming the interdependent web of life out of string, and a reading. It ended in a "sing ring." At 7:15 committee meetings started and everyone was on their way home by 8:30.

When the program was canceled the adult religious education program picked up the meeting time, place, and catered meal for its film series.

**Food can be the hardest part** of such an event. The Berkeley church hires a caterer. The church guarantees the caterer 50 people a night and charges \$7.50 per adult and \$4 per teen. Children eat free. Because the dinner is catered, adults are free to attend the worship service without having to clean up after the meal. But other congregations do potlucks.

"We went round and round on potluck versus catered," says Petry, of Santa Barbara. "At first we had an agreement to keep the food simple, as in bread, fruit, and cheese, but of course with UUs that didn't last past

the first week. The idea of charging for the meal was off-putting to some. My thoughts are that a catered meal is something we'll do in the future."

Volunteers purchase and pick up the food for the Wednesday evening suppers at High Street UU Church, Macon, GA (124). Asking working people to bring a potluck each week would be too much, says Dick Creswell, member of the board of trustees.

He added that when the event began three years ago "I was one of the naysayers thinking people wouldn't come, and it would lose money. Both worries were misplaced."

He says about a fifth of the congregation attends each week. The meal is brought in by volunteers from a local restaurant. Sometimes it's Chinese, sometimes Greek, southern home cooking, Thai, or Mexican.

Each adult is asked to put \$6 in a collection basket. Those who expect to come to the meal are asked to call the church office by Tuesday night so the appropriate amount of food can be ordered. Tea and lemonade are made onsite. The contributions usually slightly exceed costs.

"The drain on volunteers isn't too great," says Creswell. "The rest of us pitch in to clean up after the event. It's quick, simple, easy, and nobody seems to have gotten burned out or felt put upon after three years."

**Wednesday evenings at High Street** have included adult religious education classes, choir practice, committee meetings, and board meetings. Most people come straight from work, Creswell said. About 6:35 the minister or a lay leader will give a reading, ask for announcements, joys and concerns, and the group sings a song or two.

"It's a wonderful way for newcomers and new members to get to know members of the congregation," says Creswell. "As for the rest of us, it helps us stay connected, provides another opportunity for news to get around, and really helps our community stay in touch."



## Starting a Momentum

There are times when I look at what human history has been and I say, oh, okay, there have always been people like us who get a momentum started and then it dies down and nothing becomes of it. And it's a hundred years or so before those thoughts are resurrected. But there's a little voice in my ears that insists that I continue. It insists that something really important is happening here, something that is going to have an effect here for years. Something that is going to make a significant change in the world.

Luisah Teish, *author of Jambalaya: The Natural Woman's Book of Personal Charms and Practical Rituals, and Carnival of the Spirit: Seasonal Celebrations and Rites of Passage*

## Responsible Money Talk Helpful to New Members

Talking about money, especially to new members, can be difficult for some of us. We don't like to "intrude" into peoples' private lives, but if we don't talk about it they'll likely be confused about what's expected of them.

Here's how two of our congregations handle the issue: "Whenever possible we have the pledge drive chair from the past year make a pitch for pledging at our new-member class," says Linda Kaufman, at University Unitarian Church, Seattle, WA (663 members). "He or she talks about the cost of keeping the church open for a day and a year, reviews the fact that we are self-supporting, and describes how pledging works. We find that many new members have never been adult members of a church.

"We also tell them the average amount of a pledge in our congregation. The pledge chair also shares his or her own history of involvement in the church, including pledging."

Kaufman adds, "We tell our prospective new members that their pledges will grow with their involvement in the church and that their involvement in the church will grow with their pledges. I tell them that just as my spiritual development has evolved over the past 10 years so has

my ethic of giving, and that giving is good for the giver and the receiver. I suggest to them that pledging goes up and down with life circumstances and that I personally feel best when my checkbook matches my values."

At First UU Church, Rochester, MN (276), potential members are strongly encouraged to attend new UU classes, which include a discussion of the responsibilities of being a member, including volunteering time and pledging. "We talk about the different ways people can get involved, how decisions are made, where the money goes," says Beth Atkinson. "Then, once someone has signed the membership book, representatives from the finance and membership committees make a pledge call on the new member. We use material from the previous year's pledge drive, which includes the suggested share giving table which is calculated according to income level. We've had great success doing this and our new members are pledging on average the same amount as our longer-term members."

For more information see the UUA's new canvass manual, *Fundraising With a Vision*, by Edward B. Landreth, available from the UUA Bookstore (800) 215-9076 #7250 \$25.

## Antiracism Programs Available From Faith in Action Department

Individuals who would like to build interest in antiracism efforts in their congregations and communities are invited to consider a series of programs offered through the UUA's Faith in Action Department.

The usual path for congregations wishing to increase their awareness of white privilege and to learn how to dismantle racism is as follows:

- Begin by experiencing the Weaving of the Fabric of Diversity antiracism curriculum
- Read the Journey Toward Wholeness Report and participate in its congregational antiracism assessment and congregational reflection action process guide
- Participate in the annual Journey Toward Wholeness Sunday
- Sponsor a weekend Jubilee World workshop for your congregation
- Hold an Introduction to Building a Transformation Team workshop
- Hold a Jubilee World 2 workshop

The Journey Toward Wholeness Report, including the antiracism assessment and congregational reflection guide, is available from the UUA Bookstore, [www.uua.org/bookstore](http://www.uua.org/bookstore); (800) 215-9076 #4320 \$7. All other materials are available from the Faith in Action Department.

If a congregation wishes to go farther than the steps listed above, it may consult directly with the Faith in Action Department for a plan that fits its circumstances and desires.

Most congregations develop antiracism transformation teams in cooperation with other nearby UU congregations to share costs and develop relationships. The formation of a team is a two-to-four-year process that costs approximately \$5,000.

*For information about creating such teams, including any of the preliminary steps, contact Susan Gershwin in the UUA Faith in Action Department at [sgershwin@uua.org](mailto:sgershwin@uua.org); 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108; (617) 742-2100, ext. 642. Ask for the Journey Toward Wholeness Path to Antiracism brochure. Information is available on the web at [www.uua.org/faithinaction](http://www.uua.org/faithinaction) and at General Assembly in June at the Faith in Action booth.*



## General Assembly Coming in June To Nashville, TN

General Assembly 2000, five days of leadership and inspirational forums and worship services, will take place from June 22-26 in Nashville, TN.

More than 200 workshops are spread over five days. Denominational and congregational leaders will lead workshops and respond to questions about all aspects of congregational life, including fundraising, religious education, social justice, and small-group ministry.

Congregations are encouraged to send teams of leaders. Adult registration is \$230/full week, \$160/weekend. Youth fees are \$120/week; \$80/week-end. Higher fees apply after May 18. Downtown hotel rooms average \$125 per night.

*Information is available on the UUA website [www.uua.org/ga](http://www.uua.org/ga), or from the GA Office, UUA, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108; (617) 742-2100, ext. 209.*

## New Books On Lay Ministry, Fund-Raising

These books for congregational leaders are new in the UUA Bookstore, (800) 215-9076 or [www.uua.org/bookstore](http://www.uua.org/bookstore).

*Letting Go: Transforming People for Ministry*, by Roy D. Phillips. Revised and updated edition of Phillips's book, *Transforming Liberal Congregations for the New Millennium*. This book challenges clergy to let go of traditional views of their role in the congregation in order to allow lay ministries to flourish. Study questions included. Alban Institute, 1999. #7015 \$13.95

*Creating Congregations of Generous People*, by Michael Durall. Build gift-giving based on reflections of "who we are." Increase your church's spiritual growth while implementing an annual stewardship appeal. Durall is a UU and editor of *Charitable Giving*, an interfaith newsletter on financial issues. Alban Institute, 1999. #7018 \$13.95

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## LEADERSHIP

# Dedication Ceremonies Deserve Care, Reflection

**W**hen a congregation adds to its space by building or remodeling, it has cause for celebration.

But there are right and wrong ways to perform these ceremonies. The Rev. John A. Buehrens, UUA president, has participated in more than 100 building dedication services. The most common flaw that he observes? "Too much self-congratulation, not enough spirituality and reflection on what the building is for," he says.

**He recommends holding a dinner** the night before to properly thank people for their roles in the process.

Seventy-five minutes is the maximum time for a dedication service, in Buehrens's opinion. He says he once participated in a service that began at 10:30 am. "It was 12:15 before we arrived at sermon time. I was tempted to stand up and say, 'Let's eat!'" he reports. "But then I decided that some spiritual food was needed, so I canned the sermon I had written and told a powerful story that seemed relevant—in 10 minutes."

He says, "Think of the first half of the service as the time of remembrance and gratitude. The second half, including the sermon and the spoken act of dedication, should serve as reminders of the mission and vision of Unitarian Universalism."

Consider the following:

- Think about dedicating the offering to a special extension or social justice project or to other building projects in the district.
- Commission a special piece of music. The UU Church of Bloomington, IN (272 members), engaged a local composer to write music based on a poem by a UU minister, says Susan Swaney, Bloomington music director.
- Notify the news media. You're generally assured of some publicity. Invite ministers of area congregations, service agencies you work

with, and recent visitors.

- Prepare a history exhibit, including photos of the congregation's previous buildings.

**When the UU Church, Columbia, MO (208)**, dedicated its expanded building a year ago, the dedication service included a symbolic handing over of keys to the building—starting with the building contractor who passed them to the architect who gave them to the chair of the building expansion committee who presented them to the president of the board. Each spoke a few words in turn.

Sue Polgar, at Mt. Diablo UU Church, Walnut Creek, CA (351), recommends that congregations have both a private and a public dedication. At Mt. Diablo the private part occurred over several days and included an all-church dinner and presentation of an original musical play.

The public dedication took place a few weeks later when the congregation held its first regular service in the sanctuary. "Gone was the sense of self-congratulation," says Polgar. "Present was the sense of the sacred."

**Don't wait too long** for the dedication, says Carolyn Salmon, president-elect of the UU Church of Pensacola, FL (103), noting that momentum can be lost. "Select a speaker and get your date on their calendar well before move-in," she advises.

Don't skip a dedication because of costs. "Probably no congregation which has just completed buying or constructing a new church feels like it has the money for a dedication, but it's important enough to the congregation's life to find a way to pay for it," Salmon says.

Budget at least \$250 even if food is being donated, say organizers of such events. If you're paying for travel for a speaker plus food and music costs, plan on \$2,000 to \$5,000. Don't forget to add in the costs of printing and floral arrangements.



## MONEY

# Credit Card Pledging Helps With the Cash Flow

**T**he First Unitarian Church, Oakland, CA (284 members), used to have a cash flow problem in the summer. As church administrator Jay Roller explains it: "People would go away in the summer and forget to pay their pledges."

Seasonal sag is a perennial church problem. Oakland solved it with plastic. It started asking friends and members to pay their pledges with credit cards. Now 40 percent of the church's pledge income comes in on credit cards. The church's annual pledge cards even encourage that option.

A small but growing number of congregations permit the use of credit cards to pay for pledges, church auction and bookstore purchases, and capital campaigns, says Jerry King, a UUA fundraising consultant.

Card companies commonly take three or more percent of the amount pledged, but the figure is negotiable and also varies with volume. If your bank won't give you a low rate, ask a member involved in nonprofit management to bring in periodicals from that field, which usually have ads from bank card companies offering rock bottom rates.

The UU Church, Nashua NH (307), has accepted credit cards for pledging for five years. "It's really helped the cash flow," says Barbara Koumjian, church administrator. "We have guaranteed income every month." But it also takes time, since card payments are not automatic. Someone has to spend an hour or two on the phone, calling in the card numbers and amounts to the bank each month and chasing down those few people with expired cards or who changed card companies. Some church office managers say credit card payments involve more work. Others say it's no worse than managing a flow of checks. Things to consider:

- Require that all cards be processed the same day each month to ease bookkeeping.

- Mistakes can be costly. If a card is overlooked one month it means asking the donor to increase future payments or send a check.
- Pledges may be larger if members make monthly payments.

At the UU Fellowship of Bainbridge Island and North Kitsap, WA (64), 13 pledges come in on cards at a cost of three percent plus a \$20 annual fee. "I've got to be organized to not make mistakes," says treasurer Mary Romeo. "What makes this worthwhile is that we get 100 percent of the pledges (minus the card fee), and they come in regularly in the summer. And our members like it."

Murray UU Church, Attleboro, MA (200), invited members to use credit cards this year, but only got four takers and won't continue. "It added quite a bit of work," says Evelyn Sanford, church administrator.

Card usage is too expensive for most congregations, says Wayne Clark, the UUA's congregational fundraising services director, and requires too much record-keeping. Instead, he recommends bank drafts (also known as electronic fund transfers), a monthly automatic withdrawal process that involves little or no cost.

Should churches be encouraging credit card debt? "We have to assume that people are responsible adults," says King, who also supports the EFT option. The Rev. Terry Sweetser, a fundraising consultant to UU congregations and author of the popular fundraising video *Funding the Dream*, says, "Research shows people who are willing to give by credit card are generally more generous than those who don't. But the system does take effort to set up and use and we lose a cut depending on volume. It may only be worth it if you have a lot of people doing it or your congregation has another reason to accept credit cards."

See article at right for one congregation's venture into online pledging.

## Money From the Internet? It Could Happen to UUs

Many UU congregations that believe they're not set up to receive credit card donations might be surprised to learn they're listed on a new internet site for that very purpose. The website, [www.Helping.org](http://www.Helping.org), a charitable arm of media monolith America Online, lists thousands of nonprofits, including many UU congregations and affiliates.

Visitors to Helping.org may make online credit card donations to any of the nonprofits listed, including churches. Recipients get a check in the mail from Helping.org. The only fee deducted is two percent by the credit card company.

Eligible institutions were compiled from lists of organizations that are designated 501(c)(3) nonprofits or have filed a Form 990 (for nonprofits with income of \$25,000-plus) with the IRS. The filings are publicly available.

The UU Church, Buffalo, NY (355 members), has gone a step further, building a DONATE NOW button into its church website, [www.intotem.buffnet.net/uuchurch](http://www.intotem.buffnet.net/uuchurch), and linking it to the Helping.org site. Church webmaster/trustee Bill Parke hopes the button, which he installed in January, will make it easy for the church's far-flung friends to support it and will be a popular service for those who'd like to make a contribution at odd times, such as New Year's Eve, for tax purposes. "This could be a conduit for contributions we might not otherwise receive," he believes.

## UUA Resolutions Now in Web Database

The UUA's official actions and resolutions, from 1961 to 1999, are now online at the UUA website. The new feature includes a topical list for searching for actions by category as well as by keyword.

Visit the site at [www.uua.org/actions](http://www.uua.org/actions)

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## Do's and Don'ts In Leading Worship

Don't feel it's necessary to reinvent the wheel. Originality in worship is no special virtue. Familiar language, like an old shoe, soothes and reassures.

Don't put anybody down, including yourself.

Do take care of your congregation. They are really yours: They have placed themselves in your care for an hour. Some are hurting. Some are angry. Some need sympathy, others to be challenged, others just to laugh or cry. Try to make worship a safe place for them all.

Do overhear. Don't try to wing it until you've been doing this every week, for say, 10 years. Maybe not even then.

Don't draw attention to yourself. The message counts, not the messenger. Do, however, share something of yourself in worship. If you can, try to say something that costs you something to say.

Do be brief. Each time you open your mouth to speak, 200 others must keep theirs shut. Leave them asking for more, not wishing for less.

*From Shared Ministry Sourcebook: Resources for Clergy and Lay Ministering Together in UU Congregations, (out of print) edited by Barbara Child, 1996, UUA.*

## New E-Mail List For OWL Facilitators

Facilitators of the Our Whole Lives sexuality curriculum now have their own UUA-sponsored e-mail list, OWL-L, where they can share resources and ask questions of one another.

It also provides an efficient way for the Sexuality Education Task Force to send announcements to all facilitators concerning resources, helpful hints, and educational opportunities.

Participation is limited to trained Our Whole Lives facilitators, trainers, staff members of the UUA and the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, and authors of the curricula.

*Subscribe using the online form at [www.uua.org/lists/subscribe.html](http://www.uua.org/lists/subscribe.html) or by sending a message to [listproc@uua.org](mailto:listproc@uua.org) with the word subscribe OWL-L (your name).*

## TOOLBOX

# Checklists Help Determine Congregational Health

**A**sking the right questions is a key part of learning how well your congregation functions. The new book, *Churchworks: A Well-Body Book for Congregations*, by the Rev. Anne Heller, district executive of the Pacific Northwest District, includes checklists for committees and boards of trustees. Here are several lists to help guide you through an analysis of your congregation. For more complete lists, see the book.

### Check the heartbeat of your congregation—how broad is your ministry?:

- How do we welcome and include new people?
- Do we have an active Caring Committee?
- Do we publicly recognize people who volunteer?
- Are we openhearted to our children? Do we have intergenerational services? Do we provide child care for all congregational events?
- Are our minister and staff fairly paid? Do we thank them for their work?

### A checklist for resolving conflicts.

Does each person agree to consider the following before proceeding:

- How willing am I to resolve this conflict?
- Do I want this to work for both of us or only for myself?
- What is the key issue or problem in this conflict?
- Have I told him or her how I feel?
- What can I give? How can we all save face?
- Can we manage this ourselves or do we need outside help?

### When considering growth, members of a congregation should ask:

- Do we welcome diversity?
- Do people in our congregation truly respect other points of view?
- Do some people put other people down? Can we debate issues and still part friends?
- Does our property look cared for?
- Do we sing enough and get together

er enough for meals?

- Do we work on conflict rather than letting it go underground?
- Do we really care about justice, equity, and compassion? What does our congregation do for others?

### Maintenance manual:

- Are copies of the deed and other important church documents safely stored away?
- Are people aware of the location of electrical on-off switches and water and gas shut-off valves?
- Is there a long-range plan for maintenance?
- Is there a policy on who should have keys to the building? Are locks rekeyed at regular intervals?

### Building trust in meetings:

- Do we agree to begin and end meetings on time?
- Try not to speak in a code or shorthand that excludes newcomers?
- Repeat comments of others to make sure we correctly understood them?

### The following are ways that congregations can talk about their community involvement:

- Do a social justice timeline, listing the ways your congregation has served others
- Brainstorm new social justice possibilities and ask people to sign up for those that interest them most

### Celebrating ourselves:

- Cover a wall with paper where members can write everything they did to help others this year
- Have a Sunday where people come dressed as a social justice hero or role model from history, literature, or mythology
- Send thank you notes to people who work hard on behalf of the congregation
- Create a path or wall of honor

*Churchworks*, published in 1999 by Skinner House, is available from the UUA Bookstore at (800) 215-9076. #7008 \$25



## NOURISHING THE SPIRIT

# What's In a Name Change? Theology, Passion, and More

**W**hen the congregation of the First UU Church of Duluth, MN (190 members), made the decision this past winter to begin raising money for a new church building, it seemed like the time might also be right to consider changing the name that would go up on the new building. Because the church draws from a broad area some members wanted a regional name. And as discussions progressed there were others who wanted to trade “church” for “congregation.”

The depth of feelings surrounding a possible name change surprised everyone. As time went by and more and more energy was expended on possible names, the congregation made an important decision—to put off a decision for a year.

Because the congregation had just spent several years in an intensive strategic planning process and was just embarking on a capital campaign for its new building, members concluded that one more high-energy project wasn't what they needed.

“We were pretty naive in some ways,” says the Rev. Karen Gustafson. “We went at this with a mechanistic process, sorting out the different names to come up with a new one. But what we needed to do first was to find a way to get people who have strong feelings to truly listen to each other and be willing to alter their understanding and ultimately agree on something. And beyond that, we learned never to do a name change while another major event is taking place.”

Changing a congregation's name requires long and careful deliberation, says Debbie Weiner, the UUA's director of electronic communication. When congregations consider name changes there are usually two issues, she notes. The first is whether to identify as a church, congregation, fellowship, or society. The other is whether to add Universalist or Unitarian to the

title. Although the two denominations merged in 1961, many congregations have not adopted both names.

For congregations considering name changes, or for new congregations, Weiner encourages the use of inspiring names from UU history, noting there are congregations named for James Reeb, Sojourner Truth, and Michael Servetus. Many congregations also choose to name themselves for an environmental feature. There's the River of Grass UU Congregation and the UU Fellowship of the Emerald Coast, both in Florida.

Even if a congregation considers a name change but decides to stick with its old name, the discussion process can be valuable, say congregational leaders. When All Souls UU Church, Kansas City, MO (317), added Universalist to its title a few years ago, there was also debate about dropping “church” for “congregation.” In the end there wasn't much interest in that, says Sharon Blevins, who was president at the time. But the process of holding two congregational meetings, taking several straw votes on proposed names, and discussing the issue at meetings and in the church newsletter seemed to help people come to a decision.

At the UU Church of Fort Lauderdale, FL (135), members debated changes in their name for a year, including whether to add “First” and to change “church” to “congregation.” But when the changes came to a vote last January there wasn't much enthusiasm for a change, says Mary Teslow, chair of the renaming committee. Still, the process seemed to reinvigorate the congregation, she says.

“At the vote many members spoke with a depth of commitment as to why they preferred we keep our current name. I believe that was a wonderful outcome of the process. We enthusiastically reaffirmed we are UUCFL. And I think we can now go on growing our church.”

## UU Leadership Schools Offer Summer Courses

Information about Unitarian Universalist leadership schools, which generally hold one-week summer sessions for congregational leaders, is available now from UUA district offices. There are 11 such schools in the US and Canada and a twelfth in Great Britain. Many have registration deadlines of mid-April. The Florida District has a session in November.

Congregations are encouraged to send one or more persons annually to one of the leadership schools. Cost is generally \$500 to \$600 and congregations often pay part. Information about some schools may be found online at [www.uua.org/related.html](http://www.uua.org/related.html).

Coursework generally includes organizational development, theology, UU history, elements of worship, and the creation of a worship service. Participants explore new ways of looking at issues and find solutions to problems through a combination of lectures, exercises, and discussions. The programs are designed to provide insights and confidence, enriching participants' church, work, and personal lives.

## Congregational Growth Requires Enough Staff

Some congregations do not grow because they are not staffed for growth. As a rule of thumb, if you desire to staff for growth, you need one full-time program person on your staff for every one hundred active members (not including such staff as custodians or secretaries). Active members refers to how many are attending worship in an average week. You are staffing for maintenance if you are just slightly under that figure. You are staffed for decline if you are seriously under that figure.

*From Making Your Church More Inviting, by Roy Oswald, Alban Institute, 1992. May be ordered from the Alban Institute: #AL134 \$14.95 (800) 486-1318*

## Letters Policy

*Interconnections* encourages letters from readers, by e-mail or real mail. Its letters page is a forum in which lay leaders discuss techniques for building healthy congregations. Space is limited, and letters are subject to editing.



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

In this feature we seek out answers to questions of broad interest, drawing on experts in congregations, the UUA, and elsewhere. If you would like to submit a question, please write to *InterConnections* at the address on Page 3 or e-mail [dskinner@uua.org](mailto:dskinner@uua.org).

**Q** *I've been talking with our religious education director about the rich experience youth had at the Salt Lake City General Assembly in June, and we'd like to hear about other congregations' experiences, how they went about organizing the trip, how they managed funding, etc.*

**A** "I'm a big promoter of sending youth to GA," says the Rev. Greg Stewart, minister of religious education at Neighborhood Church, Pasadena, CA (579 members). "It is worth, arguably, a year's worth of Sunday school and worship." He recommends building enthusiasm by having youth from the district who have been to GA talk to your youth.

The youth will need to raise money all year to fund the trip, says Stewart, noting there are scholarships from the UUA Youth Office, but ultimately the congregation must invest in this endeavor. Individual members have also sponsored youth. It's important, he says, for adults to see that youth are attempting to raise their own funds and then they'll help. Stewart also recommends that upon their return, all participants in GA present a worship service (rather than a report) on their GA experience.

Bobbie Poole helped organize a trip to GA 1999 in Salt Lake City by about 25 youth from the Mountain Desert District, including nine from her

church, Foothills Unitarian Church, Fort Collins, CO (366), where she is a youth advisor. The district rented three mini-vans and the group slept on the floor of a UU church in Salt Lake City, bought and prepared its own food, and took showers in the hotel rooms of adult attendees from their own churches.

She recommends a high adult to youth ratio (five to one on this trip) and close supervision of youth attending GA for the first time. It also helped that the district had a display booth in the convention hall where youth could stash their gear and rendezvous during the day. The trip cost about \$300 per youth, including registration, travel, meals, lodging, \$25 spending money, and a YRUU tee shirt.

The expectations for the youth were clearly spelled out before the trip. The youth were given a code of ethics, attendance requirements, detailed GA schedules, and a food preparation/cleanup schedule for the week.

Registration for youth at GA 2000 is \$120. Hotel housing is available for \$245 for the week.

**Q** *My church is likely to go to two Sunday services because we're too crowded on Sunday morning. We already see that the two services will not be identical—the choir wants to sing in just one service, probably the latter. Also, the children's religious education programs will be different. What I want to avoid is*

*the scenario where everybody comes to the second service and the first one withers on the vine. What have people done to enhance the service at the less popular time and to build it so it has its own constituency?*

**A** When there are two services, the later one usually attracts significantly more participants, say leaders in many congregations. Special music can help to fill up the first service. Also, consider having the choir sing only two Sundays a month if it participates in both early and late services. Or, form choir subgroups to sing at the earlier service.

It's probably impossible to achieve an even split, says Martha Osgood, former membership chair who usually attends the early service at the UU Church, Eugene, OR (219). She finds the coffee hour between the services a good way to keep up with friends who attend the later service. Give the earlier service two or more years to attract a following. Promote it as a way to free up the rest of the day.

The UUA also has a free booklet, *Considering Two Services*. Order it from Adam Stuhlfaut, [astuhlfaut@uua.org](mailto:astuhlfaut@uua.org); Office of Congregational, District, and Extension Services, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108; (617) 742-2100, ext. 269. It recommends adding a second service if 75 percent of the desirable seats in the meeting room are full.

 **InterConnections**

*For Lay Leaders of UU Congregations*

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