

From Perspiration to Inspiration: Spiritually Grounded Leadership for Large Congregations

Large churches face unique challenges in realizing their potential for growth, health, and spiritual vitality. In pursuing “From Perspiration to Inspiration,” we will discover the ways that authentic leadership calls us to the effective, ethical, and spiritual use of power in our congregations.

The triennial Conference for Large Congregations provides an inspiring context for shared learning grounded in the accomplishments and real experiences of the largest Unitarian Universalist congregations in North America. It is also an opportunity for initiating and building strong lateral relationships among those congregations and their leaders — both lay and professional.



The 7th National Conference for
Large Congregations in the
Unitarian Universalist Association

Susan Beaumont is Senior Consultant with The Alban Institute. She has been involved in the development of leaders and organizations for more than twenty-five years. Prior to joining the Alban Institute, Susan spent ten years consulting with congregations, nonprofit organizations, and corporate clients. Her specialties include change management, leadership development, and conflict management. Susan has taught graduate and undergraduate classes in leadership, communication, and organizational behavior. She is an ordained minister in the American Baptist Churches, USA.



Susan's approach is to focus on the strengths and resources that leaders already possess, what they have already accomplished, and how they want to move forward. She provides models and ways of working that are tailored to congregational realities, placing emphasis on leadership vitality, relational wholeness, and organizational effectiveness.

Theme Program: From Perspiration to Inspiration: Spiritually Grounded Leadership for Large Congregations

By Susan Beaumont

Friday, March 14, 2008, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Authentic leadership calls us to the effective, ethical, and spiritual use of power in our congregations. Our work for the day will be grounded in the notion that congregations are inherently suspicious of leadership power and its potential abuses. Congregations demand effective leadership but are critical of those who act outside designated authority limits to get things done. We'll explore ways to build our own capacity for influence so that we can ultimately build participative, accountable congregations. We'll talk about ways to resist the inappropriate-influence attempts of those who seek to thwart congregational mission and direction. And, we'll discuss effective ways to use leadership influence once a reservoir of authority has been established.

Who Should Attend?

The Large Congregations Conference is intended primarily for teams of **religious professionals** (ministers, religious educators, program professionals, administrators, etc.) and **lay leaders** of congregations with 550 or more members, or growing congregations which are approaching that threshold. We encourage congregations to send teams of at least three or four people in order to derive the greatest benefit from the conference program. *As part of our institutional commitment to diversity and equality of opportunity, we ask congregations to invite and support young adults and persons of color as part of their team.*

Integrating Our Learning

In small groups or on your own, this time offers an opportunity to reflect upon your learnings and begin planning for its practical implications of for your congregation and your role within it. Questions to ponder will be provided.

How Much Does It Cost?

The registration fee for this conference is **\$480** (double occupancy) or **\$695** (single). The registration fee includes the cost of the program, three nights accommodation at the Louisville Marriott Downtown, and most meals.

Commuters can register for \$300, which includes the cost of the program and most meals.

Out-of-town participants arriving early or staying later can stay at the Marriott for \$150 a night (single or double, taxes included). You can book additional nights on the registration form.

Saturday Workshops

Indicating your workshop preferences on the registration form helps us to assign spacious rooms but does not commit you to attend the event.

SESSION 1 - 9:15 to 10:45

1A – Creating Depth in Worship

Ralph Waldo Emerson famously challenged Harvard Divinity students to preach “life passed through the fire of thought,” saying that good preachers spoke in ways that connected deeply with the lives of their congregation. How do we create deep worship that also has energy and vitality? *Rev. Dr. Michael Tino, former Director of Young Adult and Campus Ministry, UUA and organizer of The UUA’s 2007 Contemporary Worship Conference.*

1B – The Potential of Unitarian Universalism

Are liberal churches growing? This is a much debated issue in our movement right now. While our growth numbers may not seem statistically significant, in fact Unitarian Universalism is the one liberal denomination which is still at least holding steady, and it is our large congregations which contribute the greatest growth to our denomination. Rev. Cooley will share her research and ideas about what makes vital and dynamic congregations that can help our movement grow both in numbers and in relevance to the broader culture. *Rev. Dr. Terasa Cooley, District Executive of Massachusetts Bay District, UUA.*

1C – Eight Spheres of Spiritual Growth

Spiritual growth involves more than just the head and the heart. In this workshop Rev. Erik Walker Wikstrom, author of “Spirit in Practice” (a new curriculum from the UUA’s Tapestry of Faith series), will present a holistic model exploring spiritual growth in terms of eight “spheres” of a person’s life. *Rev. Erik Wikstrom, Senior Minister, First Parish in Brewster, Massachusetts.*

1D – Healthy and Growing on the Other Side of Large

Growth and health literature to date still relies on the simple designation of ‘corporate’ or ‘large’ to define the congregation with average weekly attendance over 400. There are significant gaps in our understanding of what growth and health look like on the other side of that designation. In this workshop I’ll present a model that I’ve developed for purposes of my own consulting practice that outlines the healthy role of pastor, board and staff team in various large sized congregations. We’ll examine the common reasons why large congregation’s get stuck at various transition points as they grow into and beyond the corporate sized label. *Rev. Susan Beaumont, Senior Consultant, The Alban Institute.*

1E – The Multi-Site Option

We will explore the various ways congregations are using this new model to expand their options in worship, programming, and growth. The workshop will present an overview of the model and share some particulars of some congregations, including First UU Church of San Diego. *Rev. Ken Brown, District Executive of Pacific Southwest District; Dr. Angela Merkert, UU congregational consultant; and Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube, Senior Minister of the First UU Church of San Diego.*

1F – Money, Stewardship and Faith

Wayne will share a coming-of-age story designed to move congregations beyond the restrictive myth of scarcity that pervades so many of our Unitarian Universalist faith communities. Drawing upon his recently published book, *Beyond Fundraising: A Complete Guide to Congregational Stewardship*, Wayne will help participants focus on the reality of abundance. Hard-copies of the Powerpoint slides will be distributed. *Dr. Wayne Clark, UUA Director of Congregational Stewardship Services.*

1G – Governance à la Mode

Many UU congregations have sought to discover the perfect governance model in an effort to improve their organizational effectiveness. But our efforts to reduce micro-management have often been frustrated by a shift to micro-governance! It seems that *models* may be less important than understanding the essential *modes* of governance. *Rev. Stefan M. Jonasson, UUA Director for Large Congregations.*

SESSION 1 - 9:15 to 10:45 (Continued)

1H – Large Church, Large Impact: Are You the Next Jericho Road Community?

The Jericho Road Project, founded by the First Parish of Concord, engages hundreds of congregant volunteers in social justice collaborations with neighboring community nonprofits in need. This movement builds the nonprofits’ professional capacity and results in community-wide transformation in the congregation and surrounding towns. Could your congregation be next? *Rebecca Johnson, Ministerial Intern, First Parish in Concord, Massachusetts.*

SESSION 2 - 11:00 to 12:30

2A – Creativity in Worship

Creating contemporary worship means thinking creatively about worship in our congregations—how we plan it, what it looks and sounds like, and how we organize it. We will engage in some creative exercises to get us thinking about worship in new ways. *Rev. Dr. Michael Tino, former Director of Young Adult and Campus Ministry, UUA.*

2B – Fear and Loathing in the Large Church

Leaders in the large church need to deal effectively with anxiety caused by fear of change. Healthy strong leaders are critical to growth. How does the system help or hinder leadership? How do our fears keep us from being the leaders we could and should be? *Rev. Dr. Richard Speck, District Executive for Joseph Priestley District, and Connie Goodbread, Lifespan Program Consultant for Mid-South District.*

2C – Both Ministers and Educators: A Facilitated Conversation

In large congregations, it is common for religious education to be included in the portfolios of a variety of ministers -- MREs, Associates, Assistants and even Senior Ministers. Many find themselves struggling with how to do this work well and what their place is. Is religious education part of your ministry? If so, then join us for this facilitated conversation about the place of ministers as religious educators. *Rev. Dr. Barry Andrews, Minister of Religious Education, UU Congregation at Shelter Rock, Manhasset, New York.*

2D – Beyond the Glass Ceiling

While the Unitarian Universalist Association has about as many large congregations, proportionately speaking, as the average Protestant denomination in America, it has proportionately fewer *very large* congregations. Few of our congregations have managed to sustain themselves much above the 1,000-member mark and only a tiny handful have ever grown beyond 1,500 members—and none have remained that large for more than a generation. Is there a “glass ceiling” beyond which UU congregations cannot sustain themselves? What might it take to break through that glass ceiling? *Rev. Stefan M. Jonasson, UUA Director for Large Congregations.*

2E – Using Video to Expand Your Ministry

The First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque has been using video recordings of the sermon in many ways; from worship leader training to support of lay-lead churches to organizing video assisted worship for church members both on-site and in small towns (multi-venue worship). This workshop will feature an introduction to this exciting project and what its leaders have learned from it so far. *Rev. Christine Robinson, Senior Minister and Rev. Ron Hersom, Acting Assistant Minister, of the First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque.*

2F – How Much Can We Afford to Keep?

A new perspective is offered for congregations planning their next annual budget drive. Wayne explores the difference between fundraising and stewardship. He probes the concept of giving as an act of worship and his belief that receiving precedes giving. Implications for your next annual budget drive will be discussed. Hard-copies of the Powerpoint slides will be distributed. *Dr. Wayne Clark, UUA Director of Congregational Stewardship Services.*

SESSION 2 - 11:00 to 12:30 (Continued)

2G – Policy Governance at Work

We will seek to understand and discuss participants' experiences with moving to policy governance, while sharing the process First Parish in Concord has used to: (i) generate greater clarity on our strategic direction; (ii) better define roles of staff and lay leaders; and, (iii) help the focus of Board meetings be on and stay on long-term direction versus operational matters. *Don Leopold, Sherbrooke Consulting and vice-chair of First Parish Standing Committee; Rev. Gary Smith, Senior Minister; and Rev. Jenny Rankin, Minister—all from First Parish in Concord, Massachusetts.*

2H – STAND for Justice

This interactive workshop explores the possibility of shifting UU identity by casting an integrated view of social justice and racial justice. How are we relevant in the multicultural society? What results are produced when we practice right relations, reconciliation, and accountability across racial and class boundaries? Join in the discussion. *Dr. Paula Cole Jones, Lead Consultant, JUUST Change Program, UUA.*



SESSION 3 - 2:15 to 3:45

3A – Contemporary Worship for All Ages

While we might seek to make our worship more contemporary in order to appeal to specific groups of people, good worship invites all people in. We will explore four ways of looking at congregational diversity—age, ability, cultural background and multiple intelligences—to create diverse worship that appeals to many people. *Rev. Dr. Michael Tino, former Director of Young Adult and Campus Ministry, UUA.*

3B – Matching Spiritual Gifts to Leadership Needs

The Apostle Paul waxed eloquently about the varieties of spiritual gifts, while modern theories of personality type remind us about differing temperaments. There are more than enough different types of individuals to meet every conceivable need. So why is it that we so often find mismatches between leadership roles and the people who fill them? How can we better link people's natural gifts to their work for our congregations, so that congregations are well-served and volunteers are deeply satisfied? *Rev. Stefan M. Jonasson, UUA Director for Large Congregations.*

3C – The Role of the Second

Few positions are characterized by greater ambiguity -- or offer more opportunities for creativity -- than that of the "second" minister in larger congregations. What is the appropriate role for such ministers? How can the "second" be most effective in his or her ministry? A seasoned second minister will offer insights and observations. *Rev. Daniel Kanter, Associate Minister of the First Unitarian Church of Dallas.*

SESSION 3 - 2:15 to 3:45 (Continued)

3D – Employment and Covenant: The Nature of Employment Relationships in Congregations

Participants will explore the fundamental nature of employment relationships within covenant community. We'll look at the inherent tensions between church membership and employment relationships and we'll look at the basic pieces of feedback and accountability required for good staff team performance management. *Rev. Susan Beaumont, Senior Consultant, The Alban Institute.*

3E – Marketing Strategies for Growth

Marketing is about attracting guests by providing programs and services that they want and need. In this session we'll discuss how to create a successful marketing plan for your congregation, and we'll share the many new resources that the UUA has available to help congregations be successful in their outreach efforts. *Valerie Holton, UUA Marketing Outreach Director.*

3F – Capital Campaigns: If You Build It, They Will Come ...

But will they stay? Sometimes, there is no direct connection between a capital campaign and congregational growth. Sometimes, congregations actually lose members. Wayne makes a case for a comprehensive approach to capital campaigns. He explains how to increase your chances for growth after the completion of a campaign. Hard-copies of the Powerpoint slides will be distributed. *Dr. Wayne Clark, UUA Director of Congregational Stewardship Services.*

3G – Transitions in Governance and Organization

As William Bridges suggests; change is with us all the time; it is the transition that often gives us problems. In creating governance and organizational models that fit larger congregations we deal with issues of power and authority; mission and vision. This workshop will look at how to manage these transitions and create governance and organization that truly supports our vision and mission. *Rev. Ken Brown, District Executive of Pacific Southwest District, and Dr. Angela Merkert, UU congregational consultant.*

3H – Spiritually-Grounded Social Justice Programs

What gives our social justice work the strength and resilience we need in these troubled times? Only a deep spiritual grounding, say Kate Lore and Rev. Marilyn Sewell. Come hear about the power of what they call engaged spirituality. *Rev. Dr. Marilyn Sewell, Senior Minister and Rev. Kate Lore, Minister of Social Justice, First Unitarian Church of Portland, Oregon.*



4A – Welcoming Worship

Worship is the public face of any congregation, and thus must welcome the newcomer. Powerful worship also includes ways in which people feel connected to one another. How do we balance intimacy and welcoming in our worship? How do we honor the different places that people come to us from? *Rev. Dr. Michael Tino, former Director of Young Adult and Campus Ministry, UUA.*

4B – Congregations Come First

If congregations really were to come first in the work of the Unitarian Universalist Association, then how would the needs of our larger congregations best be served? Join members of the UUA's Congregations Come First Team to learn about the team's initiatives and ideas, while offering your own. *Laurel Amabile, Director, Annual Program Fund, UUA.*

4C – Growing Edges in Religious Education

Both within Unitarian Universalism and other denominations, large congregations lead the way in creative and innovative religious education programming. What trends can be observed? What innovative approaches have been discovered -- or re-discovered. What can we learn from mainline and even conservative denominations? And what are the staffing implications? *Rev. Stefan Jonasson, UUA Director for Large Congregations.*

4D – Extending Your Ministry with an Executive Director

Participants will learn how to use a non-clergy church executive to lead and support administrative, financial, human resources, facilities stewardship and board/staff relationships that complements and strengthens existing staff/volunteer structures. *Jill A. Warren, Executive Director, Birmingham Unitarian Church, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.*

4E – LifeNow! Radio – Taking to the Airwaves

Is there a place for Unitarian Universalism on the commercial airwaves, where we might communicate liberal religious values more widely? Can we develop compelling programming that the public will perceive as relevant to their lives? Can doing so help us to grow? Come learn about LifeNow! Radio, an exciting initiative in Rochester, New York. *Rev. Kaaren Anderson and Rev. Scott Tayler, Senior Co-Ministers, First Unitarian Church of Rochester, New York.*

4F – Creating a Planned Giving Program

Planned giving is an important element of a comprehensive financial management plan. A well-conceived planned giving program encourages congregants to give financial support for the long-term fiscal stability of a faith community. This workshop is designed for congregations that do not currently have an active planned giving program. Hard-copies of the Powerpoint slides will be distributed. *Dr. Wayne Clark, UUA Director of Congregational Stewardship Services.*

4G – Staffing Transitions and Challenges

As congregations grow there is an expectation of more options in programming and thus the need for more staff. Yet, many of UU congregations struggle with how additional staff fits with our shared ministry concept. We will deal with how to build a staff team that works with the ministry teams in a UU congregation. *Rev. Ken Brown, District Executive of Pacific Southwest District, and Dr. Angela Merkert, UU congregational consultant.*

4H – International UU Women – Creating a UU Global Village: Global Literacy, UU Women's Activism, and the Meaning of Convocation

Learn about the work UU women have done and are doing to improve women's lives worldwide. Find out about the exciting program in Houston in 2009 and how you can participate. Become more aware of your personal and congregational global connections. Learn how you can become a more competent and empowered citizen of our UU global village. *Rev. Dorothy May Emerson.*

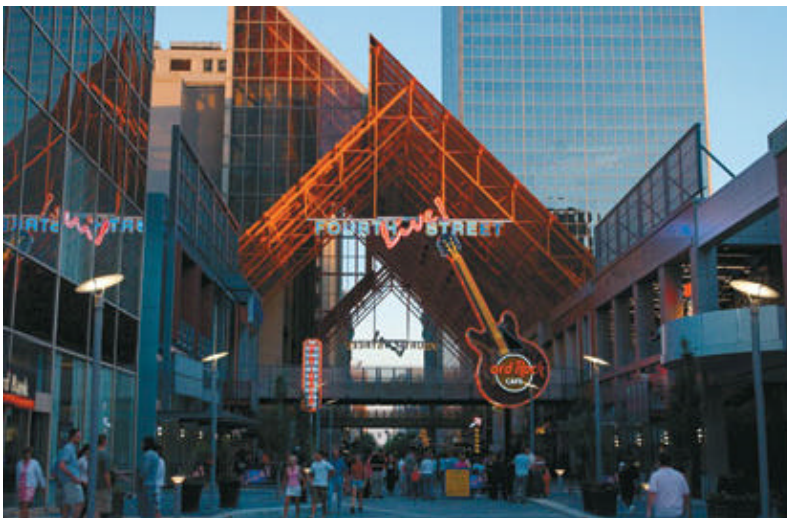


Is There a Large Congregation in Louisville?

Not a Unitarian Universalist one. The site was chosen for its location, local interest, and the quality of the accommodations! We think you will enjoy staying at this new, downtown hotel.

Louisville is known for its thoroughbred horse racing, bourbon, bluegrass music, sporting events and more!

Home of the Kentucky Derby, Louisville has a wide selection of restaurants and attractions. We will be guests at the brand new Louisville Downtown Marriott hotel. This premiere convention hotel provides "pedway" connection to Louisville's bustling new Fourth Street Live district. Take in the lively sports scene at Champion's Sports Bar & Restaurant or enjoy the sun-drenched cuisine of BLU Italian Mediterranean Grille. All within steps of Louisville's attractions like Waterfront Park, Louisville Slugger Museum, Louisville Glassworks and the new Muhammad Ali Center and just minutes from Churchill Downs, home of the Kentucky Derby.





Conference Schedule

Thursday, March 13

2:00-6:00	Registration
5:00-6:00	Reception
6:00-7:00	Dinner
7:00-7:30	Welcome & Orientation
7:30-8:30	Opening Worship
8:30-9:30	Social Hour

Friday, March 14

8:30-9:00	Introduction & Sing-a-long
9:00-12:00	Theme Program
12:00-2:00	Lunch
2:00-5:00	Theme Program
Evening	On your own in Louisville

Saturday, March 15

8:30-9:00	Worship
9:00-9:15	Introduction to Workshops and Announcements
9:15-10:45	Workshops – Session 1
11:00-12:30	Workshops – Session 2
12:30-2:15	Lunch
2:15-3:45	Workshops – Session 3
4:00-5:30	Workshops – Session 4
6:00-7:30	Dinner
7:30-9:30	After-dinner Event

Sunday, March 16

9:00-10:45	Plenary: Large Congregations and the UUA
10:45-12:00	Closing Worship

Testimonials from Past Conferences

“Every piece of the conference gave me concrete, actionable items as well as lots to reflect and read about.”

“Exciting and challenging!”

“Great weekend, great conference. We can hardly wait to get back home and share all this excitement!”

“Very valuable, very rich, energizing!”

“Excellent food, well organized and smoothly run.”

“The things I learned are too numerous to count!”

“Extremely useful!”

“Fabulous!”

The National Conference for Large Congregations in the Unitarian Universalist Association is a program of UUA Congregational Services and the Large Congregations Staff Team. Like the host of other services for congregations, this conference is possible, in part, because of congregations’ generous support of the Annual Program Fund of the UUA.

Inquiries about this conference, and other services for large congregations, should be directed to Rev. Stefan Jonasson, Director of Services for Large Congregations (sjonasson@uaa.org / 204-889-4746) inquiries about practical arrangements should be directed to Susanna Whitman, Growth Services Programs Manager (swhitman@uaa.org / 617-948-4270).

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