



FOR LEADERS OF UU CONGREGATIONS

# InterConnections

Volume XI / Issue 2

Published quarterly by the UUA

Spring 2008

## GA, UU University In Fort Lauderdale

The 2008 General Assembly will be held June 25-29 in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Information is at [uua.org/ga](http://uua.org/ga). Registration opened March 1. Rates increase on May 1. Until then, a full-time adult registration is \$290; youth \$165.

UU University, two days of workshops for lay leaders, will be June 24-25 in Fort Lauderdale immediately preceding GA. More information is on page 6 of this issue.

Access to the convention center requires photo ID. Answers to Frequently Asked Questions concerning security issues at GA 2008 can be found at [tinyurl.com/2sst99](http://tinyurl.com/2sst99).

## Black Empowerment DVD

The DVD *Wilderness Journey: The Struggle for Black Empowerment and Racial Justice within the UUA (1967-1970)*, including oral histories of the participants, is available for purchase through the Unitarian Universalist Association's Office of Congregational Services. The DVD is \$5 for one or \$20 for five. Make checks out to the UUA and order from Diane Martin, UUA, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108.

## IN THIS ISSUE

### 4 MEMBERSHIP

*Volunteers, Physical Spaces Help Create Church Vitality*

### 5 LEADERSHIP

*JUC Leaders Support, Empower Congregation*

### 6 MONEY

*Leadership Resources Help Congregations Thrive*

### 7 TOOLBOX

*Churches Teach Each Other About What They Do Well*

## NOURISHING THE SPIRIT

# Jefferson Unitarian Thrives With Welcoming Spirit

*Much of this issue of InterConnections is devoted to an in-depth look at Jefferson Unitarian Church in Golden, Colo., which has grown from 400 to 770 members in the past decade through the use of intentional welcoming practices and dynamic worship and other programming.*

**A**bout once a week a leader from a Unitarian Universalist congregation somewhere in North America calls or emails Jefferson Unitarian Church in Golden, Colo.

"They want to know how we do things," says Cyndee Dries, church administrator. "The requests run the gamut, from what our policy is on disruptive members to whether we take credit cards for pledge payments, to our job description for our volunteer coordinator. Recently someone wanted a photo of our nametag display board."

The calls come because word has gotten out about JUC. And for good reason. JUC is the 12th largest church in the Unitarian Universalist Association and the fourth fastest-growing church (among midsize and large congregations), with a growth rate of 85 percent over the past decade.

In 2006 JUC leaders shared the congregation's membership practices at a well-attended session of UU University, held preceding General Assembly. They also created and distributed more than 400 DVDs, titled *Ideas for Growth*, outlining those practices.

JUC is located on a well-traveled street on the west edge of the Denver metro area, in a suburban area. It benefits from being near the intersection of four major highways and interstates. A large street sign helps people find it. Location is one reason for JUC's

growth, but there are bigger ones. Chief among them is a welcoming culture.

Here's how it works. On Sunday mornings the first person that visitors (at JUC they're "guests") see is a minister stationed outside the front door welcoming everyone. Inside, there is a hard-to-miss welcome table staffed by at least two people, and there are one or two more greeters on the lookout for newcomers. There is often a separate greeter for families with children.

**Guests are acknowledged** five times each Sunday morning. Two times are before the service, by the minister outside and then at the Welcome table. During the service itself guests are invited to introduce themselves. When the offering plates are passed first- and second-timers are told that they are guests and are asked to let the plates pass. Then they are acknowledged again when congregants are invited to turn and greet their neighbors. And the welcome doesn't stop there. A brief Getting to Know UU session is offered after most services. Every first-time guest also gets a phone call within a week or so.

JUC wasn't always this friendly, notes Annie Hedberg, JUC's membership coordinator. She and her husband visited JUC multiple times before being made to feel welcome 10 years ago.

The change at JUC began about 1998 when interim ministers the Revs. Barbara Wells ten Hove and Jaco ten Hove arrived at JUC and began a more intentional greeting process, including greeting congregants outside. In the previous year JUC had dropped from

*Continued on page two*



# INTER Connections

## MISSION

**InterConnections** aims to be relentlessly useful to lay leaders of Unitarian Universalist congregations and the professional staff who work with them, providing information and resources that help make congregations vital.

*InterConnections* is a joint service of the UUA's Congregational Services, District Services, and Communications Staff Groups. It is made possible by congregations' Annual Program Fund contributions and the generosity of individual Unitarian Universalists to the UUA.

## EDITOR

**Donald E. Skinner** is a longtime journalist and an active volunteer at the Shawnee Mission Unitarian Universalist Church in Overland Park, Kansas. The editor of *InterConnections*, he reports and writes all stories unless they are otherwise credited.

Call: 800-204-2523  
Write: 8800 Norwood, Leawood, KS 66206  
Email: [dskinner@uua.org](mailto:dskinner@uua.org)

## ADVISORY BOARD

Tracey Robinson-Harris  
UUA director for Congregational Services

Harlan Limpert  
UUA director for District Services

John Hurley  
UUA director of Communications

Deborah Weiner  
UUA director of Electronic Communication

Donald E. Skinner  
Editor, *InterConnections*

Sonja L. Cohen  
Managing Editor, *InterConnections*

Joshua DeGregorio  
Production Assistant, *InterConnections*

## CIRCULATION QUESTIONS

Sarah Lawrence Chapman  
25 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02108  
[617-948-4616, data\\_services@uua.org](mailto:617-948-4616, data_services@uua.org)

*InterConnections* (ISSN 1524-184X) is published in Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall by the departments of Communications and of Congregational Services of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. It is sent free to board members and professionals on the staffs of all UU congregations.

## Getting in Touch

Call: 800-204-2523

Email: [interconnections@uua.org](mailto:interconnections@uua.org)

Write: Don Skinner, 8800 Norwood  
Leawood, KS 66206

Circulation: 617-948-4616

*Continued from page one*

400 to 300 members following a period of conflict."Our practice of greeting people had a large and positive impact immediately," says Barbara. The ministers also involved lay people in more visible greeting practices. "These changes may be the single most important thing we did the whole year," she says. The ten Hoves also helped develop JUC's Path to Membership process. (More on this below.)

When current JUC Senior Minister the Rev. Peter Morales was called in 1999, he continued the greeting practices, and he did more. From the pulpit and in other ways he encouraged the congregation to become "a truly warm, welcoming, and hospitable place for our guests," he says. "I tried to model that. We put time and resources into it. The result was that we did in fact become the welcoming place we had always wanted to be. People experienced the warmth along with the excellent programming and the social witness. More came back for a second and third visit. Fewer members left. This combination produced a lot of growth." He added, "I don't talk about growth. I talk about serving people."

**Another reason for its growth** is that JUC has both a membership coordinator and a volunteer coordinator on staff and backs them up with groups of volunteers.

Hedberg works 10 hours a week as membership coordinator, helped by a team of greeters. In addition to greeting, she also contacts people who have dropped away or are behind on pledge payments. JUC has 5 to 10 guests each week. About half fill out the guest registry on their first visit and more do it on subsequent visits, Hedberg says.

A culture change has taken hold, she says. "I used to feel I had to be there every Sunday to make sure no one left unwelcomed. Now everyone does it. We've eliminated the fear that newcomers are going to make the church feel strange. Now there's excitement and enthusiasm about sharing all we have to offer."

People at the Welcome Table stand rather than sit, she says. "When they're standing they're more available to people. It seems friendlier."

JUC takes pride in its Path to Membership class for newcomers. This is an orientation session held from 9 a.m. to

1 p.m., four to six Saturdays annually, which includes brunch and childcare. Attendance is expected, but not required, for all prospective members. The class is presented by JUC ministers, the membership coordinator, and volunteer coordinator. The class gives the guests an opportunity to say what brought them to JUC and includes sessions on UU history, principles, congregational polity, a description of the various JUC ministries, the responsibilities and benefits of membership, and the joining process.

Dries, who has been administrator for 26 years, says one of the greatest contributors to growth over the years has been a change in the nature of Sunday morning programming. Originally primarily humanist, JUC now embraces multiple theologies. "The services are consistently professional and sophisticated," she says. "Every service is planned well in advance and the theme is carried through the sermon, music, and readings."

Joys and sorrows are not spoken by individuals, but are written into a book at the side of the sanctuary and then made into a prayer by one of the ministers. Sermons are clear and to the point, says Dries. The chalice is lit each Sunday by a different congregant who shares a brief reflection about an aspect of his or her personal or congregational life. These reflections, which also fit with the theme of the service, are collected into booklets annually.

JUC has an endowment of about \$600,000. Interest from it helps fund projects not included in the operating budget, such as a meditation garden, a wayside pulpit street sign, new chairs for the sanctuary, and more.

Music is another vital part of the JUC experience. The congregation ordained its music director, Keith Arnold, in 1992 as minister of music. In addition to selecting music that augments worship themes or the appropriate season, Arnold introduced "Morningsong" a 5-to 10-minute songfest before each service to teach new hymns and create an atmosphere of worship.

There are choirs for adults, youth, and children, plus a bell choir and a dozen or so small vocal and instrumental groups that people can engage with. JUC also has its second music ministry intern, Sarah Billerbeck, who is working to increase the involvement of children and youth with music.



## Corrections

Directors of Music were inadvertently left off of a list (page 8, Winter 2008 InterConnections) of congregational staff and volunteers who receive *InterConnections*.

In an article on 2008 salary ranges on page 3 of that issue, there was an inaccuracy in the reported size ranges of congregations. Congregations of 350 to 499 are now considered Mid-Size III. Mid-Size II is now 250-349.

## Prisoner Pen Pal Program

More than 300 prisoners have joined the UU Church of the Larger Fellowship seeking liberal spiritual support by mail. About half are writing to UU pen pals through CLF's Letter Writing Ministry. Dozens more are on a waitlist. For more information, visit CLF's website, [clf.uua.org](http://clf.uua.org), or write to CLF Prison Ministry, 25 Beacon St, Boston, MA 02108, [PrisMin@clfuu.org](mailto:PrisMin@clfuu.org).

# Jefferson Unitarian Church At A Glance

*Here is a quick glance at some of the numbers, features, and tools behind the success of Jefferson Unitarian Church in Golden, Colo. Find more in-depth articles about this featured church on pages 1, 4, and 5 of this issue.*

## Money:

The median pledge per pledging unit at Jefferson Unitarian Church is \$1,015. The average is \$1,467. Members are encouraged to pay pledges by electronic funds transfer (EFT), and about 40 percent do. "It's eliminated our summer cash flow problem," says Cyndee Dries, church administrator. Prospective new members are told it costs about \$1,320 annually per member (not household) to maintain JUC and its programs. The 2006-2007 fund drive raised \$744,000 in pledges, an increase of 23 percent from the previous year.

The biggest fundraiser apart from the stewardship drive is the annual auction, which nets about \$35,000 a year, with professional auctioneers. See *InterConnections*, Winter 2003, [tinyurl.com/2zf3lx](http://tinyurl.com/2zf3lx), for a story about JUC's auction procedures.

JUC has contributed its Annual Program Fund Fair Share amount per member to the UUA most years but

not for the past two. It expects to resume Fair Share next year.

## Facilities:

JUC's semi-circular sanctuary, which seats 300, was built in the 1970s. A large commons area was built in 1982. A new RE wing, chapel, and renovated offices were completed in 2005.

Being welcoming extends to the bathrooms at JUC, which come in threes—male, female, and family. That not only makes families with small children feel welcome, but also transgender people. All the bathrooms have stepstools so children can reach the faucets.

## Next Steps:

JUC recently started a young adult group—a demographic in short supply there—and also established a stewardship council. "We'd really like to find a way to not have to do an annual stewardship drive, but to do it every two or three years," says Dries. "Every year we devote four to six months to the campaign. It would be nice to develop a culture where people are motivated all year long to support the church because of its value to them rather than our having to rely on asking for money once a year."

## It Takes Courage

When people come the first time the sermon isn't as important as the contact. It's a very scary thing for some people to come to a new church. It takes courage. Many people come because of a tragedy in their life. Someone has died or they've been diagnosed with a disease, or they're going through a divorce. They're hurting. We always ask what brought them here. If you're just present to them they'll want to come back.

Annie Hedberg,  
Membership Coordinator,  
Jefferson Unitarian Church, Golden, Colo.

## Try This at Your Church:

Here are the tools that helped JUC become a 770-member congregation.

- JUC's Path to Membership resources are online, including all of the forms that JUC uses for guests and new members, the outline of its class for prospective members, and a checklist of actions to take with guests and new members. Visit JUC's website at [jeffersonunitarian.org](http://jeffersonunitarian.org) and click on "Programs" and then "UU University."

- JUC's Foundations of Fellowship program is on the front page of [jeffersonunitarian.org](http://jeffersonunitarian.org).

- JUC's bylaws are also on its website, including its policy on disruptive behavior.

- Take a virtual tour of JUC's buildings on its website.

- For JUC's complete presentation at the 2006 UU University, including its workshop, "Repelling Fewer Visitors," go to the JUC website, click on "Programs" then "UU University."

- Better yet, buy a copy of JUC's *Ideas for Growth* DVD on welcoming guests and integrating members. The DVD, professionally made at JUC, takes viewers on a how-to video tour of JUC's membership practices. The DVD is \$8 from the UUA Bookstore at [tinyurl.com/ys6qux](http://tinyurl.com/ys6qux).



## MEMBERSHIP

# Volunteers, Physical Spaces Create Vitality

Sue Parilla, Jefferson Unitarian Church's volunteer coordinator, helps people find places to connect within the church. "I ask them, 'What's missing in your life? What would you like to do here? You came here for a reason. What is it?'"

She keeps profiles on each new member—on paper. "I tried doing it in a database but it's harder to share that way and takes more time. Doing it on paper I can share information with other people more easily." And she encourages every committee to have entry level jobs so that new people can easily join in.

Prospective members are asked to fill out a new member profile and to make a financial pledge before signing the membership book. They are also asked to sign up to volunteer once a quarter as a greeter, nursery or coffee attendant, or usher through the Foundations of Fellowship program, a program to get new folks involved in the church, says membership coordinator Annie Hedberg. Details of the Foundations of Fellowship program are listed under "Quick Links" on JUC's website at [jeffersonunitarian.org](http://jeffersonunitarian.org)

Acknowledging the joys and sorrows in the lives of friends and members as well as recognizing their volunteer acts also helps create a strong church community at JUC. When a prospective member participated in the New York City Marathon, Parilla and a minister both contacted her. "She says it felt good that people at JUC noticed what she did," says Parilla, who works 20 hours a week.

When fourth-grader Jack Dale and founding member Bob Drew inflated balloons for a church event last year they both got thank you notes.

With 770 members, organization is important at JUC, even down to the nametags. The nametag system is carefully designed to track guests. Nametags for returning guests are kept in a flat cabinet with doors. Guests can pick their nametags out of the cabinet before a service. After the service they drop their nametags into a basket. A volunteer puts the tags away while recording which guests were at church

that week. Members and friends pick their nametags off a three-panel rotating kiosk and return them there.

**The right physical layout** can be an asset in stimulating growth and vitality. At JUC, the church's front door opens into a wide entrance hall. At the end of the short hall is the welcome table where visitors get a friendly welcome and a temporary nametag.

Turn left from the welcome table and the sanctuary is right there. Walk straight ahead and you find yourself in a large open foyer and commons area. The foyer/commons, where coffee hour is held, is approximately 3,000 square feet and can hold several hundred people. It enables Parilla and membership coordinator Annie Hedberg to easily move around and talk with people. There is no claustrophobic "cattle chute" at JUC.

"It's hard to overestimate the value of our foyer in growing the church," says Hedberg. The space immediately outside the sanctuary doors is reserved for new people. All others are encouraged to move deeper into the commons for their conversations.

JUC's most recent capital improvement was the addition of a religious education wing and a chapel in 2005, plus the remodeling of offices. Before that, a large commons area and patio were added in 1982.

Each capital project has brought in more new members. "Our new RE rooms showed people we were serious about religious education and we were soon full," says Hedberg. To relieve overcrowding in the sanctuary, JUC went to three morning services for 14 months, at 8:30, 10, and 11:30. Fewer came to the early and late services and in November JUC went back to two services, at 9:15 and 11. "It was hard to get staff and volunteers for three services," says Hedberg.

Going back to two services was possible because JUC removed its seating, which consisted of two- and three-person pews and replaced them with chairs. "We found people will sit closer together on chairs than they would in our pews," says Hedberg.

For the past six months, average

attendance on Sunday morning has been more than 630 people, including worship and youth and adult RE.

The congregation's next challenge is how to respond to even more growth. Services are running 75 percent full. Many RE rooms are full or nearly so. There is no room on the site for another expansion. Parking is limited. The site has 143 spaces plus access to a parking lot at a city park a half block away.

**Future possibilities** for JUC include starting a new congregation or helping an existing one realize its growth potential in the metro area. "There are an endless number of people looking for this religion here. We're convinced of that," says Hedberg. LeeAnne Dale drives 20 miles one way to attend JUC with her son Jack. She first sought it out when Jack's classmates began to raise questions about religion. The first time she attended, in 2006, "I knew right away this was where I should be," she says. "I walked in the door and ushers greeted me and I met Annie (Hedberg) right away. And I loved the sermons." Some months later, when she was laid off from her job, it helped that people at church noticed that change in her life, she says. "They still check on me and I appreciate that."

*This issue of InterConnections profiles Jefferson Unitarian Church in Golden, Colo., one of our Association's fastest-growing congregations. The profile was planned before the church's senior minister, the Rev. Peter Morales, announced in January that he would be a candidate for president of the UUA. (President William G. Sinkford's second term ends in June 2009, when the General Assembly will elect a successor.) A later issue of InterConnections will profile First Unitarian Church of Dallas, whose senior minister, the Rev. Laurel Hallman, also announced her candidacy for president in January.*

*Learn more about the 2009 UUA elections at [uua.org/elections](http://uua.org/elections).*



## LEADERSHIP

# JUC Leaders Support, Empower Congregation

Professional and volunteer leadership has helped Jefferson Unitarian Church make good use of its natural assets—a committed, engaged congregation, a good location, and a presence in the community.

JUC's 15-person leadership team of coordinators, caretakers, religious educators, and administrative staff includes five ministers: senior minister the Rev. Peter Morales; the Rev. Nathan Woodliff-Stanley, minister of social responsibility; Minister of Music the Rev. Keith Arnold; part-time Minister of Pastoral Care the Rev. Tracey Wilkinson; and the Rev. Dr. Nadine Swahnberg, a community minister and psychotherapist who provides relationship and spiritual counseling as needed. The staff also includes volunteer coordinator Sue Parilla and membership coordinator Annie Hedberg. Another reason for JUC's vitality is Cyndee Dries, who has been the administrator for 26 years and holds much of the congregation's institutional memory.

**Mountain Desert District** executive the Rev. Nancy Bowen says JUC "leads with vision toward its mission. I know that its leaders struggle with the same concerns and fears as other leadership teams, yet they consistently go for it by expanding their ministries to members and to the world. The membership is encouraged and empowered to create more goodness in the world. The leadership leads and the membership accepts the opportunities and challenges of an engaged faith. It's a winning combination."

Morales is a significant reason for JUC's ability to thrive and grow, says Hedberg. A newspaper editor before entering the ministry in midlife, this is Morales' first congregation. He was at JUC from 1999 until 2002 when he left for two years to serve the Unitarian Universalist Association as director of District Services. He returned to JUC in 2004.

Hedberg says Morales inspires people: "He makes them feel better about themselves and about making the

world a better place." Services at JUC sometimes have an element of drama. A service in November on immigration policy featured barbed wire as a prop and faux immigration agents who removed a member of the congregation in the middle of the sermon.

Morales credits exceptional lay leadership, community involvement, good welcoming practices, and "a foundation of good to excellent programming" with JUC's growth and vitality. He notes that JUC has always had committed leaders, but for 20 years when the church did not grow, that was not enough.

"It was only when we committed ourselves to being more welcoming and to playing a larger role in the wider community that our energy was unleashed," Morales says.

Morales believes UU congregations will grow when Sunday morning guests feel at home. "I'd like to see our churches look at their culture," he says, and notes that the majority of Sunday guests have already checked out a church on the internet before they visit. "The question they are asking is not 'Do I agree with these people?' They are asking if they belong here. 'Do I feel welcome here?'"

**How big a factor** does he believe he has been in JUC's growth? "First and most important is that I believed in this congregation and in what we could do together," Morales says.

He continues: "Organizationally, I believe a key thing that I did was to get out of the way. This church, and the overwhelming majority of our churches, have an enormous amount of idealism, commitment, and talent. I encouraged people to initiate things. I cheered them on. But I did not try to do it for them."

Morales says he helped the congregations realize its vision of what it wanted to become. Once they started to see results their confidence grew.

"Our growth is the result of our living out our values," he says. "It is not a matter of technique. It is a matter of religious passion and commitment."

## Social Justice, RE Create Meaning for Many at JUC

Many people seek out a church in order to do social justice work with others. Jefferson Unitarian Church has always been involved in the community and that took on added importance five years ago when a \$100,000 gift from a congregant enabled the congregation to bring the Rev. Nathan Woodliff-Stanley on staff as minister of social responsibility. After the Rev. Richard Gilbert served as interim minister in 2002-03, JUC adopted his model of social action task forces and currently has eight. Woodliff-Stanley also coordinates the adult education program at JUC. For more on JUC's social justice ministry see *InterConnections*, Fall 2007: [tinyurl.com/2k6mtc](http://tinyurl.com/2k6mtc).

JUC sent two delegations to Guatemala for work programs through the UU Service Committee. Last year more than 400 JUC members and children participated in a weekend of service projects as part of the annual stewardship drive. JUC is also a Green Sanctuary congregation certified through the UU Ministry for Earth.

The program of religious education for children and youth at JUC is called Youth Religious Education. It operates on a trimester system and has a summer program. Children are not in the adult worship services at JUC except for occasional intergenerational services. Instead they spend 15 minutes in Children's Chapel, then 45 minutes in their classrooms. The congregation is conducting a search for a new director of religious education.

In addition to an RE Committee, JUC has the Committee of Unitarians Raising Kids (CURK). "While the RE Committee might focus mostly on Sunday morning, CURK thinks more broadly about what families need at JUC," says volunteer coordinator Sue Parilla. "It helps coordinate social justice activities involving children, recommends adult education classes for parents, and organizes social events."

## Social Justice and You

Keep up with UUA social justice programs, including the Social Justice Empowerment Program, Socially Responsible Investing, Identity-Based Ministries, the Welcoming Congregation program, and the Washington Office for Advocacy, online at [uua.org/socialjustice](http://uua.org/socialjustice).



## FORUM

The article in *InterConnections*, "(Un)welcoming Churches: How Do Visitors See Us?" (Winter 2008) inspired me to write. While traveling, I was in the neighborhood of a fairly large UU church on a Sunday and decided to visit. There was no greeter. I eventually was directed to a membership table which was not staffed. I tried to smile at people, but not one person would make eye contact. Visitors were not welcomed at any point in the service. Despite my attempts to appear friendly, I was allowed to depart with almost no human contact.

I thought the minister might care how his church appeared, so I wrote a letter. No one responded. My conclusion was that this church was a closed community, with no interest in welcoming new faces.

—Jessica Milstead, treasurer,  
Davies Memorial UU Church,  
Camp Springs, Maryland

I take issue with the statement attributed to Helen Bishop (Q & A, *InterConnections*, Fall 2007), that "Most states do not allow people under 18 to vote on matters that are legally binding." Religious congregations in this country have every manifestation of governance including no voting rights for the laity, or governance rights restricted to males (or some other status).

While there are laws in many states relating to religious organizations (such as Vermont and the District of Columbia), I am not familiar with any that speak to governance issues and I doubt that any state judge would be willing to cross the line of First Amendment separation of church and state and interfere in a congregational governance dispute. In addition, many of the laws in those states that do have laws relating to religious corporations or congregations would not pass constitutional muster if challenged.

—Stephen L. Finner, director of music, UU Church of St. Johnsbury, Vermont (36 members).

## Spread the Word

Don't worry about copyright: Make all the copies of *InterConnections* you want for others in your church. You can also read it online at the UUA's website [uua.org/interconnections](http://uua.org/interconnections).

## MONEY

# Leadership Resources Help Congregations Thrive

Many of the resources listed here have been mentioned before in *InterConnections*. Consider this a reminder of some of the most useful resources to be developed by the UUA and others. New books from Skinner House, of particular usefulness to congregations, are also included.

**UU University** will be held for the third time this June 24-25, immediately preceding General Assembly in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. This year it will focus on developing leaders to lead congregations where there are multiple theologies, and on exploring the ways congregations can engage in respectful interfaith work. The keynote speaker is the Rev. Dr. Nick Carter, president of Andover Newton Theological School. Carter has a background in interfaith work and in responding to diversity. More information is at [uua.org/events/uuuniversity](http://uua.org/events/uuuniversity).

**New Stewardship Guide:** *Beyond Fundraising, the Complete Guide to Congregational Stewardship* is the UUA's newest and most recommended guide to raising money. Written by Wayne Clark, the UUA's director of Congregational Stewardship Services, the guide invites congregations to move from "the restrictive myth of scarcity" to "a reality of abundance." The book is \$18, available at [uuabookstore.org](http://uuabookstore.org). Read a review of it in the Spring 2007 issue of *InterConnections*: [tinyurl.com/yqv43q](http://tinyurl.com/yqv43q).

**Help for Small Congregations:** The Rev. Karen Brammer is the UUA's Small Church Specialist. Contact her at [kbrammer@uua.org](mailto:kbrammer@uua.org). Subscribe to *Small Talk*, a free newsletter for small congregations edited by the Rev. Jane Dwinell, at [spiritoflifepublishing.com](http://spiritoflifepublishing.com). At the same website find the 2007 book, *Big Ideas for Small Congregations*, which Dwinell wrote with Ellen Germann-Melosh about issues that are central in the lives of small congregations: leadership, money, facilities, staff, etc.

**UU Video:** Looking for a video about UU history and theology to help people who are new to Unitarian Uni-

versalism, and adult education classes, better understand the faith? Until recently choices were few and dated. Now there's *Our American Roots: A Living Faith*, a 10-part video with study and discussion guide. *A Living Faith* is hosted by the Rev. Marlin Lavanhar and is available for \$75 through the store at his church, All Souls Unitarian Church, Tulsa, at [allsoulschurch.org/shop](http://allsoulschurch.org/shop). For something shorter, there is the new 12-minute DVD, *Voices of a Liberal Faith*, created by the UUA as an introduction to Unitarian Universalism. A copy was mailed to every congregation. Additional copies are \$5 from Susanna Whitman, Congregational Services Staff Group, UUA, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA, 02108; [swhitman@uua.org](mailto:swhitman@uua.org).

**New Books from Skinner House:** These books are available from the UUA Bookstore, [uuabookstore.org](http://uuabookstore.org).

*Worship That Works: Theory and Practice for Unitarian Universalists*, Wayne Arnason and Kathleen Rolenz. A guidebook for revitalizing our worship life, full of insight, vision, and practical advice. Delves into the elements of the worship service and offers tips for innovation and improvement. Arnason and Rolenz are co-ministers at West Shore UU Church in Cleveland, Ohio. They visited UU and other congregations while on sabbatical, collecting material for this book. (Skinner House, 2007) Item 5268 \$16

*Come Into the Circle: Worshiping with Children*, Michelle Richards. A comprehensive how-to guide for creating meaningful religious experiences for children. Includes suggestions on the form, style, and elements of worship, plus an extensive collection of opening words and chalice lightings, meditations and prayers, stories, songs, sermons, and even complete orders of service to help you get started planning your worship. Richards is an RE program consultant for the Central Midwest District and formerly was RE director for the UU Fellowship of Elkhart, Ind. (Skinner House, 2008) Item 4917 \$15



## TOOLBOX

# Churches Teach Each Other About Their Strengths

Davies Memorial Unitarian Universalist Church at Camp Springs, Md., has done pretty well at creating a church home that is welcoming to people of color. It hasn't been as good, says its minister, the Rev. John Crestwell, at welcoming folks who are bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender.

Down the road a half hour, the UU Church of Silver Spring, Md., has the opposite situation. It has what its minister, the Rev. Elizabeth Lerner, calls "a healthy proportion" of people who are BGLT. And while it has some members and friends of color, it would like to do better.

Lerner, whose church has 375 members, says, "I have felt challenged in terms of how our multiculturalism has gone at church. But BGLT is our big success story. We've been a Welcoming Congregation for ten years. We have lots of BGLT folks in leadership. We're really at that place where someone is not thought of as gay, but just as that great voice in the choir."

Davies has a congregation of 150, of which about a third are people of color. But there are few BGLT people. "We're working on it, but we're not there yet," says Crestwell.

**Crestwell and Lerner** decided their congregations could learn from each other. And that's why on Saturday, October 20, people from both congregations gathered at the Silver Spring church for worship, discussion, lunch, and small group conversation. And then on Saturday, November 10, members of both congregations gathered at Davies. Crestwell and Lerner had prepared their congregations for these sessions, called "Letting the Springs Flow," with a worship service in advance.

The Silver Spring gathering had a panel discussion on how important the Welcoming Congregation program has been for that congregation. At Davies there was a PowerPoint presentation on racial diversity. And more conversation.

"This was all very free flowing," says

Crestwell. "The synergy between our congregations was great." He says they hope that both churches have been inspired by each other's work to "continue down the path to be welcoming to all people."

Lerner adds, "This was a totally different model than anyone had seen before. It wasn't experts talking to us. It was us talking to and learning from each other. These sessions could have been considered burdensome, but the opportunity to come and share something that we do well helped people to be motivated."

Before the sessions took place Davies had begun the process of becoming a Welcoming Congregation. Crestwell says those conversations are continuing.

Lerner says, "We gained a group of lay people who feel newly equipped with knowledge and newly fired up to engage on this issue. A few people came away saying 'I think we're going to do it this time.' We're talking about doing different workshops and about holding conversations with our members who are part of multicultural families about why they're here." Silver Spring is also starting an ADORE group. Davies has a similar group. ADORE, A Dialogue On Race and Ethnicity, was organized at All Souls Unitarian Church in Washington, D.C., as a monthly discussion of race and ethnicity and ways to dismantle racism. ([dmuuc.org/adore.html](http://dmuuc.org/adore.html))

Lerner adds, "I hear from our members of color that they're more fired up about welcoming other folks of color now. This process has made them feel more certain that other people like themselves can be welcomed and find a place here."

## RESOURCES

*Welcoming Congregation is a Unitarian Universalist Association program through the Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Concerns, designed to help congregations become intentionally welcoming to BGLT people. More information is online at [tinyurl.com/2a82cp](http://tinyurl.com/2a82cp).*

## \$1.3 million Raised By Association Sunday

Association Sunday is a success, says the Rev. Stephen Papa, special assistant to the president for Growth Funding. More than 650 congregations held Association Sunday services from October through this winter. Association Sunday contributions totalled approximately \$1.35 million as of the beginning of February. The funds will help support the UUA's current national advertising campaign, an initiative to support ministers of color, and growth grants for individual congregations.

Plans are underway for the next Association Sunday, which is planned for October 12. Register online for it at [uua.org/associationsunday](http://uua.org/associationsunday). Association Sunday is planned as an annual event for the next several years. Funds raised at the next Association Sunday will support improved theological education for lay leaders and for promoting excellence in professional ministry.

## Useful Congregational Life Articles on [uuworld.org](http://uuworld.org)

*InterConnections* is not the only source of articles about congregational life. Visit [uuworld.org](http://uuworld.org) weekly for articles on church life and other topics. You can also receive a weekly email notifying you of new articles. Here are recent [uuworld.org](http://uuworld.org) articles of special interest to lay leaders. Search for them by headline on [uuworld.org](http://uuworld.org).

- "UU congregations home to diverse musical groups"
- "Winterfaith series honors diverse religious holidays"
- "Congregations welcome transgender people"
- "Oregon church plants a parking lot" (grass-porous paving)
- "UUA health plan ends successful first year"
- "Sinkford urges churches to seek international partners"
- "Report on youth ministry urges new vision"
- "Scouting alternatives draw UU youth" (Spiral Scouts, Navigators USA)
- "Confessions of a prodigal volunteer" (burnout)

## Music Certification

Find out about the certification program for Unitarian Universalist music leaders at [uumn.org](http://uumn.org). Or contact the UU Musicians Network administrator at [uumn@uumn.org](mailto:uumn@uumn.org), 800-969-8866.



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

In this feature we seek out answers to questions of broad interest, drawing on experts in congregations, the UUA, and elsewhere. To submit a question, write to *InterConnections*, 8800 Norwood, Leawood, KS 66206, or email [interconnections@uua.org](mailto:interconnections@uua.org).

**Q** We'd like to consider hosting a ministerial intern next year. What are the considerations in doing that?

**A** About 75 congregations and community ministry sites host interns each year, says the Rev. Kim Wilson, the Unitarian Universalist Association's Internship Clearinghouse Coordinator.

In an internship, a ministry student has an opportunity to practice professional skills under the guidance of an experienced minister. Each candidate for UU ministry is required to complete a supervised internship. Interns have an opportunity to test their vocational calling, work in multi-staff situations, and integrate theory with practice, says Wilson. Most applicants will have completed a year of seminary before an internship.

An internship is six to nine months, if fulltime, or it can be part time over two congregational years. Supervisors must be UU ministers in final fellowship with the UUA. Interns will need to engage in five areas of ministerial competence—pastoral work, prophetic outreach (social justice), teaching, practical arts (administration, working

with staff, etc.), and worship—during their internships.

Internships are a way for a congregation to give back to the Association and to support ministerial development, says Wilson. It may not be appropriate to have an intern during a ministerial transition, during a capital campaign or other financial challenges, when a sabbatical is planned, when the minister supports having an intern but the congregation does not, or when there is major conflict in the congregation.

Expect to pay interns \$1,300 to \$1,750 per month (more is permitted) based on the size of the congregation. Congregations that are new to internships may apply for a grant of half of the recommended stipend amount. The grant application deadline is November 1. Congregations and interns choose each other from online lists. Most internships start in August or September. Congregations are encouraged to have their profiles online by the previous September or October. After March it becomes more difficult to find an intern, says Wilson. Most congregations that put their names forward do end up with interns, she says, although a few do not for geographical reasons.

For more information go to [tinyurl.com/ytfg3r](http://tinyurl.com/ytfg3r). Contact the Rev. Kim Wilson, Internship Clearinghouse Coordinator, at [kwilson@uua.org](mailto:kwilson@uua.org) or 203-484-5081.

**Q** I've been a member of our assistant minister's Ministerial Relations Committee for a year now and am wondering if there are any published guidelines or suggestions in *InterConnections* or elsewhere about the role of committee members on a MRC and how we can be most effective in supporting our minister.

**A** The Winter 2004 issue of *InterConnections* includes an article on Committees on Ministry, the new name that many congregations use for the function that you are describing. You can find it at [tinyurl.com/ynrfpx](http://tinyurl.com/ynrfpx).

The article notes that Committees on Ministry are often focused now on the many ministries of a congregation, such as religious education, social justice, etc., and not just on a specific minister. A Committee on Ministry moves away from putting sole responsibility or blame on the minister for the ministry of the congregation.



For Lay Leaders of UU Congregations

Unitarian Universalist  
Association of Congregations  
25 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02108-2800

Non Profit  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Mechanicsburg, PA  
Permit No. 63