



FOR LEADERS OF UU CONGREGATIONS

CENTER Connections

Volume XII/ Issue 2

Published quarterly by the UUA

Spring 2009

Worship Web Expanding With Help of Survey

The UUA's Worship Web was launched to provide ministers, religious educators, and lay worship leaders access to high quality resources for worship, including opening words, chalice lightings, even entire services. Now it's set to expand.

UUA Worship and Music Resources Director the Rev. Erik Walker Wikstrom invites worship leaders to take a survey about what you'd like Worship Web to add and how it can be more useful to you. Are there ways to make worship more truly multigenerational? Can worship be more than a "hymn sandwich?" How do we deepen and expand the quality of our worship? How can we incorporate new technologies?

Wikstrom plans to develop new areas on Worship Web focusing on worship theory, multicultural worship, podcasting, use of video and the Internet, dance and movement ministries, and more.

To help, take the feedback survey at uua.org/spirituallife/worshipweb. You can send your Worship Web ideas to Wikstrom at ewikstrom@uua.org.

IN THIS ISSUE

4 NOURISHING THE SPIRIT

The Future is Now For Electronic Newsletters

5 TOOLBOX

Radio a Useful Tool For Many Congregations

6 MEMBERSHIP

If Sunday Is Not Enough: Saturday Worship Services

7 LEADERSHIP

*New 'UU Primer' Published
Connecting Church Forums*

NOURISHING THE SPIRIT

Economy Poses Challenges For Congregations, UUA

These are hard but hopeful times at the First Unitarian Church of Oakland, Calif. (310 members). It's true the annual stewardship campaign was down 12 percent this winter. And it's true there will have to be cuts next year in programs and part-time staff because of that. And it's true that every few days the Rev. Kathy Huff talks with a parishioner who has been laid off or lost benefits.

Not a hopeful picture? Times have been better, notes Huff. "Certainly we're feeling the pinch. Every day someone comes in whose personal life has been dramatically changed. Some have really had to lower their pledges."

But the recession has also brought opportunities, she says. Members are recognizing that they need to volunteer to take up the slack that will be created by the letting go of part-time staff. And people are coming forward to provide pastoral care to those in need. The church is also holding sessions on how to manage personal finances.

Another bright spot is that the congregation completed a \$2 million capital campaign last spring, before the economic dam broke. While some pledges have been lost, new ones have come in, and there is still enough to proceed with the project, which will pay for earthquake retrofitting for the sanctuary. "We'll be in construction April 1," says Huff. "That feels good and it says something about the congregation feeling good about itself."

She adds, "We have an opportunity to really come together as a congregation and become clear on our priorities. This could be a wakeup call to understanding our true interdependence."

All congregations are being challenged by the economy. And those challenges will likely continue for some time. A survey by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia projects the economy will begin to pick up this summer although unemployment will remain relatively high into 2010. A survey by the Mortgage Bankers Association predicts a "very discouraging" first half of 2009 followed by a slow rebound.

What does that mean for congregations facing spring stewardship campaigns? Fall campaigns did reasonably well in many places, says Dr. Wayne Clark, the UUA's director of congregational stewardship services, partly because they took place before the economy's real nosedive. Now that the recession has settled in, will spring campaigns be a harder sell?

Clark encourages congregations to start with the basics, especially in a tough economy. "Those congregations that make a compelling case, focus on positive opportunities, and ask people directly for money will probably do pretty well," he says. "Those that start from a place of scarcity will feed the anxiety, and if they are more hesitant and reluctant to talk plainly about money, won't do as well."

Show them the pie, he suggests. "Use program budgeting by creating a pie chart showing how much goes to worship and music, religious education, outreach, etc. Show them where the money will be used and how it will make a difference. After the money comes in, then you can create the line item budget. Most people want to be inspired about what the church is

Continued on page two



INTERConnections

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: interconnections@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

Data Services
25 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108
617-948-4654, 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

Write: Don Skinner, 8800 Norwood
Leawood, KS 66206

Circulation: 617-948-4654

Continued from page one

doing. That's why they give."

His own prediction for an economic recovery? "I think we'll be in the soup all of this calendar year and until some time in 2010."

The UUA itself reported that income is down slightly this year and it is anticipating that income will be down significantly in the fiscal year beginning July 1—possibly by 10 percent. As of mid-February, contributions to the UUA's Annual Program Fund were down by about 2 percent from a normal year, says Laurel Amabile, APF director.

UUA staff groups were asked in January to reduce spending wherever possible. The Association has also imposed several other measures, such as ceasing printing some UUA publications, including *InterConnections* (see page 3), *The Religious Leader*, and a monthly mailing to congregations, and making them available only electronically.

Some churches have already had to make hard decisions. The UU Church of Lexington, Ky. (298), cut staff hours in January and eliminated all committee budgets following a "discouraging" stewardship campaign, says the Rev. Cynthia Cain. When a followup survey by the governing board showed that a majority of members felt their own giving was fairly high, Cain wrote on her blog, "The things that matter most (in our faith): fellowship, fun, spiritual practice, and mutual worship should not be threatened by a contracted economy. But I do think we in leadership will need to work even harder to help people act from generosity and compassion and not from fear."

The UU Church of Annapolis, Md. (536), had a fairly strong stewardship drive last fall. "We set a high goal and we didn't make it, but we did exceed our pledge income from last year," says the Rev. Fred Muir. Then in early February many congregants began to slow in their giving. As of February 9, he says, "We are \$40,000 short (on a budget of \$700,000) and discussing ways to balance this year's budget." The church has planned a capital campaign in the spring to raise up to \$3 million for a new building. Muir says that might be postponed.

First Unitarian Church in Portland, Ore. (1,080), announced in February that it would close for the month of July because it faced a projected \$185,000 deficit for the year ending

June 30. From 10 to 12 percent of members' pledges for this year are unpaid, compared to 4 percent in a normal year.

Associate Minister the Rev. Thomas Disrud says the plan is for staff members to take two weeks of unpaid leave between now and the end of June and then take the month of July as unpaid time as well. The only activities at the church in July will be by groups that rent space.

Disrud says that if the deficit shrinks because people increase their pledges or more of them pledge, the leadership would adjust the deficit measures, but "it's a significant amount to make up."

He says the church leadership decided to close in July because it wanted to be as transparent as possible about the church's financial situation. He notes that two part-time office staff were laid off last summer in anticipation of the coming deficit. "That had an effect on the rest of the staff, but people in the congregation didn't necessarily see the impact of that." He says there was no option but to reduce staff costs since those are 70 percent of the budget. "We've already reduced other expenses as much as we think we can." He adds that while smaller congregations might be able to carry on with volunteers during a financial crisis, that's more difficult for larger ones where most programs are coordinated by staff.

Disrud says they picked July because it would cause the least disruption in the church calendar. Emergency pastoral services will still be available.

Is there a silver lining to this situation? Disrud says, "I'm having very good and interesting conversations with our program heads about how we might do things differently, or more efficiently, and what things are most essential to our mission. It's a dance of fear and anxiety, but also one of hope and optimism. We're going to stay focused on our mission and we know that we will get through this."

RESOURCES

Dr. Wayne Clark has collected documents related to giving and the economy. To access them go to UUA.org and type "giving during tough economic times" into the Google box at the top right-hand corner of the page.

See the page on Worship Resources for Tough Economic Times at the UUA Worship Web: tinyurl.com/laz4nwt.



Booming Times for Churches

“All Souls Church is proud to be one of the bright spots in the current economic crisis. The worse (that) things get on Wall Street . . . the more relevant who we are and what we do becomes to our community. If we were a business, we’d say things are booming. Demand is very high right now—demand for a spiritual safe haven and for comfort during troubling times. Demand for a helping hand to those in need right here in our neighborhood. Demand for things that have real and lasting value and matter in the day-to-day lives of real people.”

A pulpit announcement last fall by Aaron Knight, cochair of the Generosity Campaign (annual stewardship campaign) at All Souls Church, Unitarian in Washington, D.C.

InterConnections to Go Fully Electronic by Summer 2009

When the economy takes a dip all of us have to make adjustments. That’s true for the UUA as well as congregations. Income to the UUA is down this year and is expected to decline further next year, possibly by 10 percent or more. (See *UU World*, Spring 2009, page 43.) As a result the UUA is taking several cost-saving measures. One such measure is that *InterConnections* will no longer be published on paper or distributed by mail.

After this issue *InterConnections* will become entirely an electronic publication, saving \$27,000 a year for the UUA. We won’t print and mail a quarterly newsletter, but we will keep on writing about ways you can be even more effective in the work you do for your congregations.

We regret having to do this, knowing that many of you prefer to read the newsletter in paper form. But the transition to the Web should make *InterConnections* even more useful and timely. Bookmark our website,

UUA.org/interconnections, and watch your inbox for email updates.

There’s something you have to do to make sure you don’t miss out on new articles. Visit our website at **UUA.org/interconnections** and click on “Sign up to get an email notification.” In that way you will be notified each time we publish something new.

In the months ahead we will be asking your church administrator or other officer for the email addresses as well as street addresses of congregational leaders. That way we’ll be able to send new *InterConnections* content to newly elected congregational leaders, too.

Please know that the content of *InterConnections* will not change. It will continue to offer the same relentlessly useful information you have become accustomed to over the last 11 years.

As we plan our transition to Web-only publication, we’d be grateful for any ideas you might have about how we could make *InterConnections* even more useful. Email Don Skinner at **dskinner@uua.org**.

Linking Mother’s Day To Unitarian Universalism, And as a Day of Peace

Looking for a way to involve your congregation in social justice this spring, educate the larger community about the true meaning of Mother’s Day, and keep the pressure on the Obama administration to end the war?

Last Mother’s Day Sara Sautter, director of religious education at Shawnee Mission UU Church in Overland Park, Kans., got more than 500 people to stand along a busy street in a peace vigil. Sautter had a media hook that worked—that Unitarian Julia Ward Howe, who wrote the “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” later turned antiwar and founded Mother’s Day as a day of peace.

The group that Sautter formed last year, Julia’s Voice, is gearing up for another event this year in conjunction with All Souls UU Church in Kansas City, Mo., and she is hoping many other congregations will organize events in their communities.

Go to **juliasvoice.org** for a start-to-finish tool kit, including a DVD, on how to organize such an event. Sautter says, “All of the news media we talked to last year were just transfixed by this idea of a woman who wrote a pro-war song then went on to found Mother’s Day as an anti-war event. And they also focused on the idea of turning Mother’s Day away from a day of commercialism back to a day focused on peace. This is a chance to educate our communities about the true meaning of Mother’s Day and to identify Unitarian Universalism as a denomination that stands for peace.”

Heritage Trip Booklet

Bringing a youth group to Boston? Check out the new Heritage Trip booklet for Coming of Age and other group trips. It includes a virtual tour of UUA headquarters at 25 Beacon Street. Available at **tinyurl.com/cvzrpr**. Email **info@uua.org** or call 617-948-4652.

Share Your Thoughts

Is there a story you’d like to see in *InterConnections*? Want to brag on something your congregation is doing? Let us know! Send us your comments at **interconnections@uua.org**.



Hone Your Cutting Edge To Reach More People

How's your cutting edge? There are new ways to reach each other and prospective members using a blog, Facebook, Flickr, Second Life, Twitter, YouTube, and other new media. Listen to the UUA's new podcast by going to the iTunes store online and searching for "Unitarian Universalist Association." Podcast topics include UUA President William Sinkford's pastoral letters, a presentation on marriage equality, and interviews with UUs.

Find out more about new media at tinyurl.com/564uww, by emailing pw_specialist@uua.org, or calling 617 948-6103.

Ethical Investing Workshop

A conference on Ethical Investing for UU Congregations will be held May 9 at All Souls Church, Unitarian in Washington, D.C. Check the church website, all-souls.org, for more information.

Small Congregation Tips On Drive Time CD

A CD with useful information for small congregations is available at no charge from your district office. *Drive Time Essays Volume 3—Small Congregations* is composed of short essays about many aspects of life in smaller congregations. Find your district office at uua.org/dist.

Small, Midsize, Large Congregation Resources

Comprehensive resources for your congregation on governance, growth, membership, and other areas are available on three web pages at UUA.org for small (up to 150 members), midsize (150 to 550), and large congregations (550-plus). Find them at:

- uua.org/smallcongregations
- uua.org/midsizecongregations
- uua.org/largecongregations

New Wordings Sought For Seven Principles

How do you tell children about their faith? Skinner House Books is seeking new, original wordings of the UU Seven Principles suitable for children. One version will be selected to be published as a hardcover illustrated book.

Send submissions to Mary Benard, senior editor, Skinner House Books, UUA, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108 or mbernard@uua.org.

NOURISHING THE SPIRIT

The Future Is Now for Electronic Newsletters

For the good old days, when a group of congregants would get together and fold and address a few hundred church newsletters, then lug them down to the post office. And wait two days for everyone to receive them. And then two weeks or a month later do it again.

That way of doing things has changed for many, perhaps most, congregations as the printed newsletter has given way to an electronic one. These days a majority of congregations seem to have their newsletters posted electronically, either by email distribution or posted to the church website, although most still print a few copies for those without access to computers and for Sunday morning visitors.

There are many good reasons for making this switch—saving money, saving trees, saving time, getting news into the hands of readers earlier, the ability to do a newsletter in color and to make last-minute changes and make corrections more promptly. Some might say it is eminently more findable—always there on the computer—rather than buried under a stack of paper on the corner of the desk.

"My feeling is that most congregations are providing their newsletter electronically now," says Barb Brown, who until recently was newsletter editor at the Emerson UU Chapel in Ellisville, Mo. (87 members), a St. Louis suburb. The Chapel's newsletter went electronic several years ago.

The big question for church leaders is whether readers are staying as connected and informed with an online newsletter as with a printed one. Brown, who is comoderator of the UUA-sponsored email list UU-editors, for newsletter editors, notes, "After listening to other editors and to congregants at annual meetings, going electronic hasn't really changed how much or little people read the newsletter. Some people read all of it and some simply read the parts in which they are interested, whether it's in black and white on a printed page, or really nice full color on the computer screen."

Consider this when going electronic:

- Leave no one behind. Continue to mail print copies to those who can't access an online newsletter and keep some on hand on Sunday morning.
- Delete personal "joys and sorrows" and personal contact information from online newsletters or post it in a password-protected area of the website.
- Send it as a PDF (Portable Document Format), which is a universal file format that most all computer users have the ability to access.
- Keep the size of the electronic files small so that people with older, slower computers can receive them.

The newsletter of the 247-member First Unitarian Church of Toledo, Ohio, went electronic in October, primarily so that it could add color, graphics, and better photos. "We had a perfectly good newsletter before, but we think people nowadays expect to see content presented in a more visually interesting manner than black and white," says Allan Brown, a member of the church's communications group. "We were also wanting to celebrate our new building and our new minister, Beth Marshall." The newsletter design is coordinated with the church's new business cards and letterhead.

Judith Ramey, director of communications for the Unitarian Church of Evanston, Ill. (410), says the church's newsletter is posted using the PDF format. For a time it was also posted in the body of email messages in a format called "Plain Text." We eliminated that because it required a lot of staff time to do that and as an editor, I thought it lacked appeal," she says.

Use caution when going electronic, says Paul Riedesel, former communications chair at First Universalist Church in Minneapolis, Minn. (801). "I don't doubt that 20- and 30-somethings strongly prefer electronic communications, but feel no less strongly that any push to go all-electronic would be a communications disaster for most congregations. The bigger the congregation, the greater the need for systematic communication."



TOOLBOX

Radio a Useful Tool For Many Congregations

If you're a new UU in Rochester, N.Y., there's a good chance you learned about Unitarian Universalism from something called *LifeNow!*

The inspiration of the Rev. Scott Taylor, *LifeNow!* is a collection of lively interviews with UUs about their values and how they live them out. He took the idea from *This American Life*, the Chicago Public Radio program. Taylor and his wife, the Rev. Kaaren Anderson, are co-ministers of First Unitarian Church in Rochester (907 members).

LifeNow! is a joint project of First Unitarian and First Universalist Church in Rochester (133). Anderson and a team have done some 40 interviews, recorded on CDs. Anderson hosts, produces, edits, and directs, and invites church members to take CDs home and share them with friends. They are also available as podcasts. The idea is working, says Anderson. "Many people say it is their primary way of inviting folks to church, as it is easier to pass off a *LifeNow!* show rather than a sermon, and say to folks—if you like the show, you'll like the church."

LifeNow! is one of several ways UU ministers and others have found to use radio and the Internet to spread the gospel of Unitarian Universalism. Originally *LifeNow!* recordings were broadcast on Air America, but when that became too expensive (\$12,000 annually) they were made available through First Unitarian's website at lifelowradio.org, and at church.

LifeNow! topics are diverse. One on grief featured a man whose son died. One on simple living was with an underemployed member who described how to live with few resources.

Anderson's hope is that other congregations will help support *LifeNow!* by being "sponsoring congregations." They'd get their own identification line on the interviews and could distribute them in their own churches. The Unitarian Church of Evanston, Ill., is the first church to sign on. The *LifeNow!* name and format are copyrighted.

There have been similar programs. The late Rev. Carl Thitchener created

the *Liberal Religious Hour* in 2004, recording more than 40 interviews that were broadcast on radio stations in upstate New York. The program went into hiatus with his death in 2008, but many of the messages continue to be available at the website of his and the Rev. Maureen Thitchener's congregation, the UU Church of Canandaigua, N.Y. (77), uucc.us. Other liberal religious programming is at uuplink.org, a UU online radio site begun by Rick Babb and based in Canton, Ohio.

Another program is the Rev. Chuck Freeman's *Soul Talk Radio*. Begun in 1996 on a community FM station, it has since moved to the Internet at progressiveblendradio.com. Freeman, who serves as minister of Live Oak UU Church in Cedar Park, Tex. (164), a suburb of Austin, says it's hard to show that programs like his contribute directly to church growth. "It's like drops of water. As more of us do this it creates an awareness of liberal religion in the larger community."

In Oklahoma the Norman UU Fellowship (24) is attempting to start a local progressive radio station. It filed for a license with the Federal Communications Commission during a one-week window last October, and is waiting for approval.

At Camp Springs, Md., the Rev. John Crestwell, minister of Davies Memorial UU Church (115), began the *Barbershop Radio Show* in 2005, offering 12-to-15-minute interviews with political figures who support liberal religious values. The program started on the radio but has moved to a podcast to save the \$1,000 a week that radio was costing. Whenever possible Crestwell plugs Unitarian Universalism. "I think it's very important for UUs in the public eye, whether authors, poets, or others, to be identified with their faith." He says up to 1,000 people listen to his podcasts each month.

RESOURCES

Listen to *LifeNow!* recordings at lifelowradio.org or download them as podcasts.

Association Sunday Seeking Projects, Planning Third Event

About 580 congregations have held 2008 Association Sunday events since October, raising more than \$350,000 thus far. Congregations can continue to hold Association Sunday events into the spring. The 2008 funds will be used to support programs developed by congregations, districts, and seminaries that focus on spiritual and theological deepening for lay leaders. Applications may be submitted for funding of curricula and other programs until Oct. 1, 2009.

The third annual Association Sunday will be Oct. 4, 2009. Funds collected this coming fall will be used for curricula and other activities that deepen the UUA's focus on multiculturalism. To register your congregation as a 2009 Association Sunday participant, visit uua.org/associationsunday, call (617) 948-6544, or email associationsunday@uua.org.

Office of Legacy Gifts Can Help Explain Giving

The UUA Office of Legacy Gifts has fliers and booklets explaining topics such as charitable bequests, gift annuities, umbrella giving, and wills to help congregations in talking with members about different ways of giving. You can find this information online at uua.org/giftplanning or request a sampler kit at giftplans@uua.org or 888-792-5885.

Keep Up with Health Plan Changes at UUA.org

For changes in the UUA health plan, which covers many staff of congregations, go to uua.org/leaders/healthplan. Changes include moving from five-year to one-year "age bands" to minimize rate increases, ways to make it easier to keep dependent children on the plan, and lowering the deductible on the "High Deductible" plans.

InterConnections On the Web

Read *InterConnections* online at uua.org/interconnections. You can also sign up to receive email announcements whenever new articles are available. Sign up at lists.uua.org/mailman/listinfo/interconnections-l.



Sex Ed, Immigration Among Upcoming UUA Actions of the Month

Each month, the UUA's Washington office implements an "Action of the Month" to help congregations engage together in social justice campaigns. Upcoming campaigns are:

- March: Sexuality Education—Call-in days to Congress will coincide with lobby visits from participants in the Sexuality Education Advocacy Training taking place in Washington, D.C., from March 21–24.
- April: Environmental Justice—Events culminate in Earth Sunday services on April 26.
- May: Immigration—Projects will be announced as they are developed.

For more information on all of these efforts visit uua.org/socialjustice or email socialjustice@uua.org.

Sharing Your News With the Community

New staff member? Now there's a guide and sample media kit explaining how to let the larger community know about your new minister, religious educator, etc. Go to tinyurl.com/5r1w5p, email pw_specialist@uua.org, or call 617-948-4652.

Helping First-Time Visitors Feel at Ease

Want to put first-time visitors at ease? Check out what the Unitarian Society of Germantown, Pa. (and many other congregations) is doing. A button on the entry page of its website, usguu.org, brings visitors to an inside page about "Your First Visit," answering questions about appropriate dress, where to park, what happens during worship, etc. The website notes that people who might not have attended church in years can be put at ease by knowing what to expect.

Give UU World Magazine To People Who Are New

Are you looking for another way to help prospective members experience Unitarian Universalism? Try giving returning visitors copies of *UU World* magazine to show them how Unitarian Universalists carry out their faith in the world.

Congregations can buy *UU World* subscriptions for \$8. Contact *UU World* circulation at circulation@uua.org or 617-948-6502.

MEMBERSHIP

If Sunday Is Not Enough: Saturday Worship Services

What do you do when two Sunday services are not enough? That's the situation Fox Valley UU Fellowship in Appleton, Wisc. (599 members), faced in 2001. Despite two services, the sanctuary and religious education classes were still too full. "We take seriously the rule that if the sanctuary is 80 percent full it's time to think about another service," says the Rev. Roger Bertschausen.

That's when the fellowship added Saturday to the schedule, beginning a service at 4:30 p.m. From the beginning it was a success, Bertschausen says. "It started strongly and built over time. It's been a really successful thing for us." An average of 85 adults and 60 children and youth attend the Saturday service. Two years ago the congregation added a third service on Sunday. The 8 a.m. Sunday service draws an average of 35 adults (there is no RE at that hour). The numbers at 9:15 and 10:45 a.m. are 90/30 and 100/35.

Bertschausen says Saturday attracts people who have to work on Sunday, youth and young adults who want to sleep in, seniors, and a lot of families. "By 4:30, daytime activities are winding down," says Bertschausen. "They come to church and then they can go out to eat afterward. It seems to be a really good time for them. And there's a fair amount of youth sports on Sunday morning now." Another reason: "About half our congregation is ex-Catholic. They're used to going to Mass on Saturday afternoon."

First UU Church of San Diego (819) started a Saturday service in October, but it's doing less well, says the Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube. "People love the service, although we have an attendance of only 30 or 40." He believes the 4 p.m. start time may be too early. "We'll be going to 5 p.m. in April. "We think there's a market there."

Are there drawbacks to Saturday services? "It is more time for me, but it's not a big deal," says Bertschausen. "Most of my time goes into writing the sermon, and whether it's for three or four services doesn't matter. This actu-

ally frees up Saturday night for me because I have to write my sermon before then. And I get to bed earlier and I can enjoy Sunday morning more." He also gave up teaching classes on Sunday evening. "That was part of the tradeoff." One drawback: Saturday weddings have to be done by 3 p.m.

Bridget Kramer, director of religious education at Fox Valley, says a Saturday service means finding more volunteers, but that hasn't been a serious problem. "It's more difficult, but not that difficult."

The bulk of the middle and high schoolers attend the Saturday service. "That works well because they don't have to get up on Sunday morning. After the Saturday service they often gather for social events.

Bertschausen issues a caution: "Don't add a Saturday service unless your staff is already fairly compensated or you are willing to take away some other responsibility." He adds, "A Saturday service is more likely to succeed if you frame it as permanent rather than an experiment." The primary additional cost for a Saturday service at Fox Valley is for the paid pianist and heating and cooling. The choir sings monthly at all four services.

Fox Valley is planning to build a larger sanctuary in a few years, but will likely keep the Saturday service, which attracts different people, he says.

The First Unitarian Society of Madison, Wisc. (1,565), holds a third worship service at 4:30 Saturday, as does First Unitarian in Des Moines. After several years the Saturday service was only marginally successful, says Madison's senior minister the Rev. Dr. Michael Schuler, "but the people who were attending felt so strongly about it they recruited others. After four years it was clearly sustainable."

From 90 to 120 adults attend on Saturday, compared to 350 to 425 at each of the Sunday services. RE attendance is roughly equal at all three services.

An extended version of this article is online at uua.org/interconnections.



LEADERSHIP

New 'UU Primer' Published

The UUA's newest resource for prospective members is *Welcome: A Unitarian Universalist Primer*, a 78-page book describing Unitarian Universalism theology, worship, practice, and history. Small enough (4 x 6 inches) to fit in welcome or new member orientation packets, *Welcome* joins *The UU Pocket Guide* as a key resource for those new to the faith. Both are published by Skinner House Books, an imprint of the UUA.

Welcome is more introductory in nature and focuses more on worship than *The Pocket Guide* does, says Patricia Frevert, the UUA's director of publishing and the editor of *Welcome*.

"When I was first introduced to Unitarian Universalism more than 20 years ago," Frevert says, "I was sometimes confused by the vocabulary and the acronyms. Over time, I discovered that many other denominations had a wider range of introductory resources than we did. Then, one day about a

year ago I was having lunch with a couple members of the Skinner Board. We agreed that there was a need for a new introduction for newcomers, and we talked about what it should be—small, attractive, inexpensive, and totally transparent, something you would understand even if you had no other knowledge of UUism. *Welcome* came out of that conversation."

The new primer includes concise explanations of how and why we practice religious education and social justice. It also has possibly the best brief description of Unitarian and Universalist history.

Frevert says *The Pocket Guide*, published in 1988 and in its fourth edition, will likely be updated at some point.

Welcome: A Unitarian Universalist Primer is \$5, with a 20 percent discount for 10 or more copies from the UUA Bookstore, uuabookstore.org; 800-215-9076. *The Pocket Guide* is \$7 and is also discounted for multiple copies.

Connecting Church Forums

Many UU congregations would feel incomplete without their "forum," a time on Sunday morning or at other times of the week when they invite local political and social justice leaders and others to speak on topics of the day.

To help support these forums, and to encourage more of them, an effort is underway to help them communicate with and learn from each other. The Forum Organizing Project grew out of a new forum at the First Church in Jamaica Plain Unitarian Universalist in the Boston metro area (104 members). Started 18 months ago, the forum has held 35 events, hosting nationally known speakers on issues including global warming and holding other events such as a slow-food potluck and community singalongs.

The Jamaica Plain forums are usually held on Friday evenings and are an example of what other congregations might do, says Andree Zaleska, who has been hired to organize the forum network. She says the Jamaica Plain

forum events drew more than 4,000 people in the past year. Anywhere from 50 to 250 people attend each time. The forums are a way to strengthen the church as well as the larger community, she notes.

Zaleska invites congregations that hold forums, or that want to learn more about forum possibilities, to contact her at forumorganizing@gmail.com or at 617-541-0500, ext. 302. Zaleska has a list of about 100 forum groups at UU and other churches. Go to jamaicaplainforum.org to find out if your church's forum is listed.

Zaleska notes that the network will be useful for helping speakers who are on tour find places across the country to speak, and in spreading the word about timely forum topics. She hopes that forum groups can share information and learn from each other about how to reach out to their larger communities, and how to organize forums. The Forum Organizing Project is supported by funding from the UU Funding Program and other sources.

Fire-Suppression Hood May Be Necessary For Your Church Kitchen

Installing a new kitchen range or remodeling your congregation's kitchen space? Be aware that you may be required to add a range hood with fire suppression features. That's what the UU Church in Meriden, Ct., found when it redid its converted farmhouse.

Such hoods have long been required in restaurants. The church's new hood, which cost around \$2,000, is designed to trigger a wet chemical spray when it senses an unsafe fire around the stove. Greg Cassells, a representative of CookSafe, which made the hood, notes that increasingly jurisdictions are requiring such hoods for noncommercial uses, including churches.

The church's property chairman, John Grunwald, says the hood is tied into the building's fire alarm system. The hood enables the church to get a limited food license to supply food to church functions, he says.

New Books Available From Skinner House

In Between: Memoir of an Integration Baby, by the Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison-Reed. Personal account of growing up black during the era of the civil rights movement and becoming one of the first black UU ministers. \$18.

Come Sing a Song with Me: A Songbook for All Ages, by Melodie Feather, for the UU Musicians Network. Twenty-five popular songs from *Singing the Living Tradition* and *Singing the Journey*, in simple child-friendly arrangements. \$14

Coming of Age Handbook for Congregations, by the Rev. Sarah Gibb Millspaugh. Described as "a treasury of tools for the religious educator of adolescents . . . filled with workshops for youth, small group ministry sessions for parents, social action projects, and rites of passage. Participants will explore theology, spirituality, and history through discussion, drama, music, writing, and art. \$30

All of these books are available from the UUA Bookstore, uuabookstore.org; 800-215-9076.

Ethical Eating Guide

Find the new resource guide for the congregational Study Action Issue on Ethical Eating, from GA 2008, at tinyurl.com/6re2wp.



INTER
Connections

For Lay Leaders of UU Congregations

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

NONPROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
MADISON, WI
PERMIT NO. 2223

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.

Q We're doing some housecleaning at church and we have a question about how long we should be keeping our legal and financial records. Is there a recommended time period that a church should hang onto its financial records?

A This is something each organization needs to decide on its own, says Tim Brennan, the UUA's treasurer and vice president of finance. He recommends that congregations seek legal counsel locally before discarding records. He also suggests two websites that give some guidelines about records retention. One is here: tinyurl.com/bmbfwh.

The general recommendations from the above source are seven years for accident reports, contracts and leases, and cancelled checks, and four years for bank statements and purchase orders. Items to be kept permanently

include audit reports, capital stock and bond records, cash books, and depreciation schedules. See the website for a much more detailed list. For another recommendation on records retention go to nonprofitlaw.com.

Q How can we learn about ministries that our congregation might engage in outside of the United States?

A The UUA's International Resources Office can help your congregation design and implement sustainable and transforming international ministries. Find out more at uua.org/fwb or contact the Rev. Eric Cherry at echerry@uua.org.

Q Is there something we can do this spring as our high school seniors graduate to keep them connected to Unitarian Universalism?

A The Bridge Connections program of the UUA's Young Adult Ministries office helps keep young adults connected to UU communities and campus groups as they move out of their home congregations. All congregations received a packet on the program in February, including cards to give to senior youth. More information is at tinyurl.com/bbddbh or email youngadults@uua.org.

Q We'd like to evaluate the need for security measures at our congregation. Are there any resources for that?

A The Unitarian Universalist Association has created a page of security resources at tinyurl.com/5hrl3a or, on the front page of UUA.org, type "sanctuary security" into the Google search box.