

*Office of the President*  
*Unitarian Universalist Association*

February 1, 2005

Friends,

I hope you will take *Responsible Staffing*, the Unitarian Universalist Association's new "Guidelines on Screening Practices When Adding Clergy, Professional Leaders, Staff, and Volunteers," with the seriousness it deserves. Its purpose: to protect vulnerable people in our congregations—children, teenagers, and persons made vulnerable by disability, grief, or advanced age.

Though its purpose is simple, its implementation will take patient work by the multitude of boards of trustees and search and personnel committees in our congregations and UU organizations, and a (modest) financial commitment as well. My plea is that you do not let the work or the expense deter you. By implementing these guidelines and those recommended in the companion *Safe Congregations Workbook II*, your congregation or organization will indeed become the safer place it must be.

Not long ago in the Boston area the entire board of trustees of a well-known private school was indicted for failure to report the alleged sexual of one student by others. I urge you to recognize that the changed world we live, and the new duties and care expected of us.

Sincerely,

William Sinkford  
President