

March 4, 2009

Dear Friends,

We are facing a time of transition both in our nation and our Association, and we must work harder than ever before to build the beloved community. As I approach the end of my term as president of your Association, I continue to be inspired by the incredible passion and dedication of Unitarian Universalists across our country and our world, for living and growing our vibrant faith.

These past two years, I have been moved by your affirmation of our connections to one another. Through your participation in our first two **Association Sundays**, you have proven that we are, and always will be, better together.

On **Association Sunday 2007**, 626 congregations joined together and raised over \$1.4 million to *Grow Our Numbers* through:

- Our extensive national marketing campaign.
- Growth grants to our districts to help congregations share our liberal religion with those who seek it.
- The Diversity of Ministry Team's Initiative to support ministers of color.

This past fall, 580 congregations celebrated **Association Sunday 2008**, and despite tough economic conditions, raised over \$350,000 to *Grow Our Spirit* through:

- Grants available to districts, congregations, and seminaries for lay theological education programs.
- Funds enabling the Unitarian Universalists Ministers Association to expand their initiatives for continuing education for ministers through their CENTER program.
- Scholarships to students preparing for UU ministry.
- New projects of the Diversity of Ministry Team's Initiative to support ministers of color.

Association Sunday has given thousands of individual Unitarian Universalists an opportunity to affirm the value of our faith community and to act together to strengthen it. In the same spirit of collaboration, I have been delighted to plan for the third annual **Association Sunday** celebration with the two UUA Presidential Candidates, Rev. Laurel Hallman and Rev. Peter Morales. The three of us together, with input from a survey to which over 1,000 UUs responded, have selected the *Growth in Diversity* projects that your generous gifts on **Association Sunday 2009** will support.

I hope you know that *Growth in Diversity* work is tremendously important to me, and I trust it is important to you too. This is work we must do if we are truly to live our faith and to make our vision of justice and equality a reality. This year, your generous contributions to **Association Sunday** will help to develop spiritual communities that are more welcoming to ALL people by:

- Expanding the *Building the World We Dream About* curriculum and associated resources.

- Supporting congregations who are working to create a Unitarian Universalism that is racially, culturally, and economically diverse.
- Enabling UU congregations and districts to minister effectively to youth and young adults who identify as people of color or multiracial, and to their families, in the areas of spiritual development, racial/cultural identity development, and leadership development.

Laurel Hallman and Peter Morales share my passion for this work and join me in asking for your participation in **Association Sunday 2009**.

Our common religious experience treasures diversity and yearns for justice. Our anti-oppression work grows out of theology that acknowledges a common experience at the heart of our religious lives, a common experience that yearns for justice and treasures diversity. Whenever our diversity has been enlarged we have been blessed. Our spiritual journey down this road requires us all to develop the capacity to confess our own impoverishment, as well as share our wealth and gifts.

-Rev. Laurel Hallman

We can be the religion for our time and all time. This requires a constant effort to stay relevant in an ever-changing world. One way we can do this is by making sure our congregations and our ministry reflects the diversity of the world outside our doors. Join us on Association Sunday as we come together to Grow Our Faith and our diversity.

-Rev. Peter Morales

Association Sunday 2009 is scheduled for October 4th. Now is the time to register your congregation to celebrate our coming together as a whole family of congregations. Information on how to register can be found at the end of this letter. I ask that on that day (or another Sunday of your choosing), you take a special collection to support the valuable work of *Growth in Diversity*. By combining our spirits and resources, we have the power to deepen our faith and our ministry together. Thank you for all that you continue to do for Unitarian Universalism.

In faith and gratitude,



Rev. William G. Sinkford
President

To register for Association Sunday, call (617) 948-6544, email AssociationSunday@uua.org, or visit us on the web at <http://www.uua.org/giving/associationsunday/61484.shtml>.