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Inspiring Generous Giving in Congregations Antidotes to Donor Fatigue

by Laurel Amabile, Director of the Annual Program Fund

The members of our congregations make our Unitarian Universalist faith what it is. As one looks out amongst the pews, the faces you see possess an energy, commitment, intelligence and engagement matched by few other groups of individuals. Along with their shared values and faith, each person that gathers together each week gives of themselves to make the celebration of this liberal faith tradition possible. Some contribute their talents and expertise in leading the congregation to greater fulfillment of its mission; others contribute their wisdom and compassion in bringing forth the very best of their fellow worshippers. Most also give generously of their wealth, whether great or small, to provide the resources necessary to support and grow the congregation that inspires them.

At times, however, these same individuals may experience what is commonly referred to as "Donor Fatigue," a situation in which these supporting members reduce or entirely cease their financial support of the congregation. Though certainly many household budgets have been challenged by the contracting economy, this drop in giving may be caused by any number of reasons: perhaps there is a lack of trust in the congregation's ability to steward the resources effectively; concerns over inadequate staff, space, or budgets; or anxiety and conflict arising from differing theological perspectives or strategic priorities.

The Challenge of the Conversation:

Frequently in our culture, the topic of money and generous giving is effectively taboo, compounding the difficulty of addressing the concerns that the members of your congregation may be experiencing. Your congregation can help to desensitizing the topic by talking about it to the members of your congregation in reflective, non-anxious ways.

Learn more on page 6

Radical Hospitality

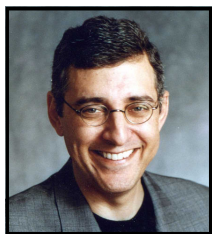
by Connie Goodbread, Lifespan Program Consultant, Mid-South District

"Hospitality is a lively, courageous, and convivial way of living that challenges our compulsion either to turn away or to turn inward and disconnect ourselves from others," write Father Daniel Homan, a Benedictine monk, and Lonni Collins Pratt, a journalist and retreat leader.

Juliet and I had been grocery shopping. I had spent \$150.00 at the grocery store and we had 10 bags of groceries in the back of the van. We were headed home and my mind was filled with the heat of the day, the ice cream in the back of the van and all of the work that I had facing me in the next couple of days, then weeks, then months.

The light was red. From the back seat Juliet says, "Memaw, what is the matter with that boy?" She is looking at a boy, maybe 17 who is standing in the median with a sign that says, "I'm starving, please help." Juliet is four so I begin, "See that paper her is holding? It says that he is hungry and needs help."

Continued on page 7



From the APF Committee Chair:
Jim Sanders

Thoughts For a Generous People

We are a Generous and Giving People:

According to the findings in the Giving USA Foundation 2010 report, “Overall charitable giving is estimated to have changed by -3.6 percent in 2009. And as has been the case for 55 years, religion received the largest share, with one-third (33 percent) of the total.”

Adjusted for inflation, 2009 giving by individuals remained relatively flat, and has been at the same giving levels for the past three years. Despite the impression that has been messaged to us via the media, our own individual feelings and concerns about the economy and even within the information provided on these pages, we have been working with congregations to alleviate the inherent fears and anxieties of the scarcity model of fundraising.

What the Fundraising Experts are Saying:

I have attended several conferences and many webinars and teleconferences over the past 18 months, and it is clear that we, as Americans, remain the most generous country in the world when it comes to supporting those causes that we care about.

What This Has Meant to Us as UU's:

As Unitarian Universalists, we have been a part of “belt-tightening” in our households, in our churches and in our Association. My impression is that reviewing how we use our resources wisely has helped us to create new ways of doing our spiritual business, to a point where we are more connected to each other than we have been for many years.

We have seen an increase in the use of web-based meetings, teleconferences and social media (e.g. Facebook and Twitter) to do the business of the Association. Our UUA Board has opened its meetings up to each and every one of us, if we so choose to participate. The districts are working in collaboration with each other in new and unique ways, sharing their resources and staff and serving each of our member congregations in new ways.

I subscribe to weekly email newsletters released by many of our districts and congregations, and see firsthand the number of leadership training opportunities that they provide.

We are working smarter, being more intentional, and creating the entry points for leadership and best practices.

The APF Committee Learns to be Creative:

I, along with our Stewardship and Development staff, work closely with the APF Representatives from our 19 districts, and our liaisons from the UUA Board, LREDA and the UU District Presidents to remain in touch with each of our 1,046 congregations across the country throughout the year.

We have had quarterly teleconferences over the past year and this fall we had three regional training sessions, where we were able to work side-by-side with the leadership of our districts to discern the needs and unique situations in each district.

Each APF District Representative receives training and support and the necessary materials to assist you and your congregation work with your stewardship programs, so that your UUA support remains a part of who you are, not a head tax separate from your mission.

The APF Committee has several new members, two of whom are highlighted in this issue. Please join me in welcoming them to this most sacred work. They, along with our continuing members, work tirelessly all year long. They are volunteers and they care deeply for our Association and our shared faith.

We Can Help:

There are additional resources at the UUA and in our districts and regional clusters that can help you and your congregation grow in your stewardship activity.

Please contact us with your thoughts, questions or concerns. Our contact information is on the last page of this newsletter.

Until then, in faith and service,

Jim Sanders, Chair
 APF Committee

Establishing a Stewardship Development Team Structure, Function, and Responsibilities

Inspired by the resources found in Dr. Wayne Clark's guide to congregational stewardship [Beyond Fundraising](#), many congregations are envisioning a year-round program of congregational stewardship.

In order for year-round stewardship efforts to take root, skillful and dedicated leadership is essential. Your congregation might consider the formation of a new Stewardship Development Team to lead the way!

The function of a Stewardship Development Team is to help in guiding the development of a year-round stewardship plan for the sustained financial health and well-being of the congregation.

Ideally, this team would be composed of a range of committed people offering a range of interests and expertise, while also representing a diverse blend of age, race, gender, length of congregational membership, and so on. Though each team member should commit to serving this role for a span of several years, it is generally advisable to stagger the terms of the position in order to maintain a continuity of knowledge and experience as new team members join to contribute their energy and ideas.

In forming this team, draw up a convening charter and description of the roles and responsibilities to clearly define the work of the team. This may be used later to help formulate an orientation plan for new team members as terms expire. Written job descriptions should include relationships to other aspects of the life and leadership of your congregation. The team leader may not only serve as the moderator and coordinator of the group, but who might also serve as a liaison to the other key leadership bodies.

Though the roles and responsibilities of your new Stewardship Development Team must reflect the unique culture of your congregation and be adapted to its

governance structure, the following suggestions are activities that your Stewardship Development Team could undertake, comprising the basic framework of the team's functions and responsibilities:

- Schedule regular meetings - at least one or two each year - with the minister and key lay leaders to plan stewardship activities, establish fundraising budgets, and set achievable goals.
- Gather and make available a library of stewardship resources for training and educational purposes.
- Offer leadership development programs on the subject of stewardship at least twice a year with the expectation that all members of the governing body will be present.
- Periodically offer classes on personal financial management and congregational stewardship to the larger community of your congregation.
- Integrate each of the stewardship events and activities into the congregation's master calendar.
- Maintain a congregational history of stewardship development including baseline data on the congregational membership, the operating budget, details of the fundraising efforts and expenditures, the results of these initiatives, and overall financial giving and generosity.
- Assess current congregational culture and overall attitudes about money and stewardship practices.
- Monitor the progress towards the twin goals of stewardship understanding and generosity to gain a sense of the congregation's growth and maturity with regard to stewardship.
- Celebrate the team's achievements, recognizing and thanking everyone who has contributed to the ongoing success of the congregation.

Forward Through the Ages: A Demonstration Project Summary Report

In [Beyond Fundraising](#), Dr. Wayne Clark, the Director of Congregational Stewardship Services at the UUA, outlined a multi-year, systemic stewardship development program designed to promote growth and help to fulfill the mission of congregations known as Forward Through the Ages (FORTH).

Engaging many dimensions of congregational stewardship including stewardship education, joyful giving, ministry and good works, the annual budget drive and planned giving, the staff of Congregational Stewardship Services and its network of stewardship consultants have recently completed a three-year demonstration of this program in seven congregations around the country.

Learn more about FORTH and the results of this project, please read the demonstration project summary report prepared by Mark Ewert, available at <http://www.uua.org/leaders/stewardship/forth/27462.shtml>.

Paul Blackburn

Pacific Northwest District Representative to the Annual Program Fund Committee

Paul studied comparative religion as an undergraduate student and took questions of theology and religion very much to heart. Though raised in the Episcopal church - the son of a priest - it quite quickly became apparent that Unitarian Universalist beliefs and principles were a great match for what felt right for him. He first attended UU services in Hanover, NH and later joined Foothills Unitarian Church in Colorado.

Paul is now a member of Mid-Columbia UU Fellowship, a small, lay-led congregation in Hood River, OR that has just hired a quarter-time minister this year, supported by each of the 67 members that comprise this group of busy and committed volunteers!

Knowing that there are more than one thousand other congregations around the country serving their shared vision of Unitarian Universalism alongside their own rural community encourages them a great deal. Paul is excited to have the opportunity to share his passion and this message of camaraderie on the larger stage of the Pacific Northwest District. As he notes, "We're better together!"

The single most inspiring thing for Paul in his role as APF Representative is reaching out to and making a connection with his fellow leaders in our movement. Knowing that there are hard-working, caring volunteers at every one of the 58 congregations in the district is "a sobering, holy experience. We're each striving for the path, separately and together."

Paul views himself as the volunteer in charge of encouraging the district's congregations to generously support the UUA through their gifts to the Annual Program Fund. Already, in the first few months of his service, he has encountered a wide range of congregational situations, including various reasons why a church does or does not contribute their fair share. Paul adds that, "It has been very interesting and rewarding to engage with the leadership of these congregations to work through these issues and help the leaders of our faith figure out how to move forward on a path which exhibits their beliefs and values."

It is enormously empowering for him to contribute to causes that he believes in, and helping people see this opportunity feels very worthwhile. For Paul, having a chance to support the work we all do together as an Association of Congregations is "a beacon in our broken world; to have a chance to engage in that work is just terrific good fortune."

Paul's wife, Kristen, is a family practice physician in Hood River and for the past 14 years, he has been a stay-at-home father with their daughters. They have lived along the mighty Columbia River for 10 years where they enjoy biking, skiing and walking the children to school.

If you serve a Unitarian Universalist congregation within the Pacific Northwest District and would like to connect with Paul, please contact the Annual Program Fund office at (617) 948-6512 or by email at apf@uua.org.

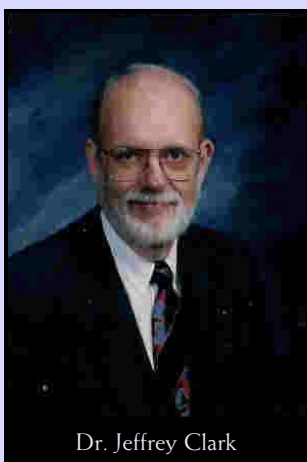


Paul with his daughters

Dr. Jeffrey Clark

Thomas Jefferson District Representative to the Annual Program Fund Committee

Jeff was first introduced to Unitarian Universalism at the First UU Church of Richmond, VA by a church member that he had been dating. After breaking up a few years later, he stayed away and explored several other churches over the following two years. However, his experience stayed in his mind, particularly the freedom, religious curiosity, and plentiful learning opportunities available at the church. He decided to return and, in his words “I haven’t looked back since. I am home.”



Dr. Jeffrey Clark

After holding a number of leadership positions at First UU and attending several General Assemblies, Jeff was interested in exploring leadership possibilities beyond the congregation. He was recommended to serve as the Thomas Jefferson District APF Representative by his minister Rev. Jeanne Pupke, and asked by Jim Key, the District President. Jeff agreed after coming to know the importance of the Annual Program Fund and of the APF Committee’s work in making sure that the denomination he loves remains vibrant, effective, and relevant.

In this vital work for our faith, Jeff has been inspired by the commitment of his fellow APF representatives in helping keep our Association strong:

“Ours is a faith that can change the world. However, to do that, we need to train ministers, we need to support existing congregations and create new ones, we need to provide education to our children and our adults, we need to develop lay leaders, we need to continue building strong youth and young adult ministries, and we need to add our voice to the public debate on the important issues of the day. All of this costs money. Contributions to the Annual Program Fund are a major factor in these endeavors. So I encourage congregations to give generously to make our faith matter in the world.

“The Districts and the UUA provide a wealth of resources to help congregations deal with all of the impacts of the recession on individual congregations. These resources can be accessed through the district offices but connections to appropriate services and resources can be obtained by contacting the District APF Representative. Since I have begun this work, I have seen that the UUA staff members are sincere in their desire to help congregations that are struggling. Congregations just need to ask for help.”

In addition to his enthusiastic involvement with the Annual Program Fund and First UU Church of Richmond, Jeff is an experimental psychologist and a member of the faculty at Virginia Union University since 1974. With his wife, Lorna, he takes great delight in their three grown children and five wonderful grandchildren.

Announcing the 2011 Stewardship Sermon Award

The Stewardship Sermon Award was established in 1984 and is given annually for the sermon most effectively exploring and promoting financial support of our Unitarian Universalist faith. It is sponsored by the Annual Program Fund (APF), the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA) and the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA).

To be eligible for consideration, the sermon must have been delivered before a Unitarian Universalist congregation between January 1, 2010, and February 13, 2011. The sermon should explore and promote financial support of Unitarian Universalism and should directly address money as it relates to affirming our Unitarian Universalist faith, vision and future. All Unitarian Universalist professional religious leaders, as well as those studying for professional leadership in their second year or beyond, may be considered for this award.

Sermons are judged through a blind process by a panel of UU professional religious and lay leaders. The recipient will receive a \$1,000 cash award at the 2011 General Assembly in Charlotte, North Carolina and will see their sermon featured on the websites of the UUA, UUMA and LREDA.

For more information about the award and submission requirements, please email the APF office at apf@uua.org, call us at (617) 948-6512, or visit <http://www.uua.org/giving/awardsscholarships/stewardshipsermon/index.shtml>.

Inspiring Generous Giving - Continued from page 1

Reflecting on our Views Toward Money and Giving:

- Having a year-round stewardship program to connect the topics of money, giving, and faith in people's minds can help to establish and cultivate openness to giving and generosity within their lives.
- Establishing and communicating clear expectations for congregational membership and giving: a culture of generosity springs from an inspiring vision and high expectations for participation.
- Facilitating conversations and small group discussions about money and its relationship to individuals, families, and the larger community can help in reducing anxiety in talking about giving and generosity.
- Offer programs to help develop personal financial skills and decision-making about how one's money can be used, such as personal finance sessions, debt reduction workshops, or introductions to planned giving.

Vision, Leadership and Accountability

People give to congregations for many reasons, both rational and emotive, that are unique to each person. However, there are complementary themes that emerge from conversations with generous supporters of the work of heart and mind found in Unitarian Universalism. You can re-inspire your members' generosity by addressing the three concepts of vision, leadership and accountability.

Finally, clarifying and communicating the vision of your congregation and the role that financial generosity plays in its ongoing well-being, active engagement of the ministry and lay leadership in stewardship processes, and recognition and accountability all play tremendously important roles in strengthening the stewardship activities of any organization.

Vision

- Clarify and be able to communicate the vision of your congregation and the role that financial generosity plays in its ongoing well-being.
- People want to make a positive difference in the world and to be part of something that changes lives for the better.
- Examine what the message for giving to the congregation is. Is it inspiring? Does it say "Live the Vision!" or "Pay the Bills?"

- How does generosity and giving contribute to the formation of your congregation's faith identity? Does it express itself as a spiritual practice of generosity or a mandate of obligatory giving?

Ministry and Leadership

- Examine the public perception of your ministry and leadership in their ability to bring the congregation's vision and mission to life.
- Donors choose to give to organizations that have demonstrated their capacity with competent, effective, trustworthy, and accountable leadership.
- How involved is the ministry in leading and promoting effective stewardship and generosity within your congregation?
- The lay leadership and staff can also play an active role in advocacy and stewardship, particularly if one has integrated stewardship into leadership development training and workshops.

Recognition and Accountability

- Support is given to organizations that are perceived to be strong, successful, and worthy of their gifts. Fiscal responsibility is critical to the success of the efforts of congregational stewardship!
- Report back to your membership on how contributions are used and the difference that has been made as a result of their generosity.
- Thank people often and celebrate the achievements that they have made possible.

Encourage Generosity by Asking

Though exceptionally generous individuals may give unsolicited gifts to the organizations that they believe to be capable and worthy of their support, it is much more common that people must be invited to exhibit their generosity. Your members must be asked to make a gift to your congregation!

Making a compelling case to encourage their gifts further enhances the generosity that is demonstrated; helping your fundraising "ask" to resonate with people's hearts and minds, inspiring their giving.

For more information about donor cultivation, relationships, and motivation the staff of the Annual Program Fund would like to recommend the following resources:

[Giving - The Sacred Art](http://www.uuabookstore.org/), Lauren Tyler Wright (available at <http://www.uuabookstore.org/>)

[Not Your Parents' Offering Plate](#), J. Clif Christopher

[Passing the Plate](#), Christian Smith & Michael O. Emerson with Patricia Snell

[The Spirituality of Fund-raising](#), Henri J. M. Nouwen

"Fundraising Fundamentals" Blog: <http://fundraisingfundamentals.wordpress.com/>

Radical Hospitality by Connie Goodbread - Continued from page 1

Juliet, "Where is his Mommy?"

"I don't know Juliet."

"Where is his home?"

"I am not sure he has a home."

"Where does he sleep?"

"I don't know."

"What is the matter with him, Memaw?"

"The sign says he is hungry and needs help."

"Ah, poor thing."

"Ah, poor thing indeed, Juliet." I say.

"He needs help, Memaw. Poor thing."

Juliet says, "Ah, poor thing" a lot. She says this when she sees the stray cat that lives in our neighborhood that I won't let her pet. She says it when she sees a dead bug. This is her budding empathy.

"Yes, Juliet, if that boy's sign is true, people should not be driving by him while he starves, pleading for help." I think of the bags of groceries in the back of the van.

"Juliet, would you like to go home and make that boy a sandwich?"

"Yes, Memaw." Juliet is very excited about the idea. She is gleeful and bounces up and down clapping her hands and grinning from ear to ear.

We get home; put the groceries away. I pulled a chair up to the kitchen countertop so that Juliet can help make the sandwich. We make him ham and cheese and put both mustard and mayonnaise on it because we are not sure what he likes. Juliet suggests chips and a can of mandarin oranges, because they are her favorite. I suggest an apple instead. We add two bottles of water and a juice box, cookies, and Juliet thinks he will need a napkin.

In the van on the way back to the corner where the boy is standing with his sign, my mind is filled with all of the jaded thoughts that you can imagine. "This is probably a scam." "What if he is dangerous?" "Is this a wise thing to do?" "I have never done anything like this before." "... are there no work houses, are there no prisons..." Thinking all of the things that make me an adult and a skeptic and wary of the motives of others in this world.

In the back seat, Juliet, my little warrior princess, whom I will hand this broken and desperate world to.

A world where I have worked hard and done the best that I can to make a difference and in spite of all that work is still broken. Juliet, the hope of the world, sits in all her glee looking for the boy.

"Memaw. Is the boy gone?"

"No, see he is leaning on the sign." We turn the van around so that I can get in the lane that will pull right up next to him. The light is red. I roll down the window and hand out the bag. "The sandwich has mayonnaise on it so you need to eat it right away." I say as I hand the boy, and he is a boy, the bag. We look at each other. He has none of the things in his face that I expect to see. He doesn't look drugged out or drunk. He certainly doesn't look dangerous. He has a nice face. He has tears in his eyes, "I will. Thank you ma'am." He takes the bag, runs behind the van and across the street to sit on a wall. He opens our bag and hungrily begins to devour the sandwich.

"He was hungry, Memaw." Juliet says from the back seat. "Ah, Poor thing."

Yes, Juliet he was hungry. Whatever else is going on in this drama, his sign had been true. He was hungry.

With tears in my eyes, all I can think is, "Ah, poor thing."

I am not the hero of this story. This story points out many of my flaws. I had never done anything like that before. I would have driven right by that boy. I will not finish the work I have started. There is no one lifetime that is long enough to fix all of the things that are broken in this world. I will hand over a broken and fragile thing to my grandchildren. I was handed a broken and fragile thing, too.

The boy is not the hero of this story. He is however an example of just how broken and fragile the world is.

Juliet, my little Jiminy Cricket, is the hero. She told everyone that we came in contact with that day and the next about the boy. Her story about him and the sandwich is sweet and sad because it includes that he might not know where his mommy is and he might have no home. The story ends with "Ah, poor thing." We go by that corner a lot so every time we come near she asks about the boy. "Where is that boy, Memaw?"

"I don't know, Juliet." And the conversation begins all over about mommy and home and the sandwich. And always ends with, "Ah, poor thing."

"Hospitality is a lively, courageous, and convivial way of living that challenges our compulsion either to turn away or to turn inward and disconnect ourselves from others."

- Father Daniel Homan and Lonni Collins Pratt -

Contact Us!

We love to hear from our congregations!

Please feel welcome to contact us with any questions or concerns that we might address for you.



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To contact any of these outstanding volunteers, please call the Annual Program Fund office at (617) 948-6512.

Giving to the Annual Program Fund

When sending your contributions to the Annual Program Fund, please be sure to:

1. Make all checks payable to "UUA Annual Program Fund"
2. Note your congregation's ID number on the check
3. Include any statement stubs with the payment
4. Send your contributions directly to our banking lockbox at:
UUA Annual Program Fund
P.O. Box 843153
Boston, MA 02284-3153
5. To minimize paperwork, please ensure that checks for other UU entities and programs are not sent to this address.
6. Accept our thanks for all that you do to support Unitarian Universalism!