

Association Sundays

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do we need Association Sundays?

Unitarian Universalist congregations are self-governing entities whose connections to one another sometimes seem tenuous. We need Association Sundays to strengthen the bonds of common purpose among congregations. Even more importantly, we need to combine our resources in order to make Unitarian Universalism the voice of liberal religious values in the world.

We need to bring our congregations together to pursue our mission of affirming the "inherent worth and dignity of every person." These Association Sundays will strengthen our connection, and combine our resources, enabling us to have more of an influence on our country. *Now Is the Time* for our congregations to grow stronger and more effective because our religious values are needed to help heal the wounded world.

What are Association Sundays?

Association Sundays are a request by the UUA for all congregations to recognize and support, both in spirit and financially, the national work of the Association. We envision a day – an "Association Sunday" – during which thousands of UUs across the nation are simultaneously celebrating

our shared commitment to Unitarian Universalism.

Like *Ministry Sunday* in 1995 (which was a request to support the financial needs of ministers and seminary students) and *Mind the Gap Sunday* in 2002 (which was focused on supporting Youth and Young Adult Ministries), each Association Sunday will include a worship service based on a particular theme, and congregations will be asked to host a special collection to support the Association of Congregations.*

* Association Sunday is different from The Annual Program Fund (APF) and Friends of the UUA; those programs help to pay for the operating budget of the UUA. Special projects require additional funding and that's the purpose of Association Sunday.

When is Association Sunday, and what will its funds support?

The first Association Sunday is scheduled for October 14, 2007. Funds raised this year will support national marketing and growth outreach projects. A portion of the funds will be set aside for grants to congregations who wish to enable their own growth projects.

Four subsequent Association Sundays (one per year) will

be devoted to the following themes: growth in spirit, growth in diversity, growth in witness, and growth in leadership.

UUA President Bill Sinkford believes strongly that "now is the time" to share our faith message with a national marketing campaign. An awareness campaign will help seekers looking for a liberal religious home to find us. This is an opportunity for us to support the work that individuals, congregations, and the UUA are currently doing to share the "good news" of Unitarian Universalism in the larger communities we serve.

As planning for national marketing and growth outreach projects gets underway, the UUA will be providing congregations with many resources to help welcome newcomers. For example, the UUA is currently producing a new DVD explaining Unitarian Universalism to newcomers. The UUA will have this DVD ready for congregations to use this fall.

Note: Resources are currently available on the UUA website in the "uncommon denomination" section to help congregations focus on hospitality and membership. Go to: www.uua.org/cde/ and www.uua.org/programs/congservices/uncommon/hospitalityhome.html. And,

of course, District staff are available to assist with more resources and regional workshops.

How will the money be raised?

We ask that each member and minister contribute individually as part of a special collection during services on Association Sunday.

The Association Sunday staff will provide each congregation with pledge envelopes, talking points, worship materials, and other tools to make it easy for congregations to participate. Congregations that raise an average of \$50 per member will be listed as *Empowering Congregations* in our Annual Report on Giving and at a special display at General Assembly.

If you or members of your congregation wish to make a leadership contribution, matching gift, stock gift, or bequest to benefit Association Sundays, please contact us:

AssociationSunday@uua.org

The Reverend Stephan Papa, 610-902-3090

Cherisse Haakonsen, 617-948-6544.

How can my congregation register for Association Sunday?

Each congregation has a different way of managing special services and

collections, so it is important that you check with your minister and Board before taking any steps to register. Once you have followed the guidelines set out by your congregation, please:

1. Have your minister or board President register with the Stewardship and Development Office by emailing AssociationSunday@uua.org by May 1, 2007;
2. Schedule Sunday, October 14, 2007 for your "Association Sunday" service;
3. Send us a picture of your congregation. We'd like to use it in online and/or as a poster.
4. Spread the word about Association Sunday among members of your congregation. Newsletter articles, pulpit announcements, and emails are all good ways to share your enthusiasm for this project. Contact the Association Sunday staff to request brochures, sample newsletter articles, and other publicity materials.

If that Sunday is not available, can we choose another?

Yes! To discuss choosing another date for your Association Sunday, please contact Cherisse Haakonsen, Assistant for

Congregational Giving, at AssociationSunday@uua.org or 617-948-6544.

Once my congregation agrees to participate, what resources will you provide?

A resource packet containing the following tools are available online; a print copy will be sent upon request:

Publicity materials:

Association Sunday poster, promotional pieces for newsletters.

Worship materials: Words for the offering, opening words, chalice lightings, readings, mediations, music, sermons, prayers, testimonials, and other suggestions for the Association Sunday service.

In addition, we will make the following items available: pledge envelopes, order of service covers, tracking sheets.

These materials are available online at:

<http://www.uua.org/giving/associationsunday/16307.shtml>

Who can I contact for further information?

Send an email:

AssociationSunday@uua.org or call the Reverend Stephan Papa, Special Assistant to the President for Congregational Giving and Growth Funding, at 610-902-3090, or Cherisse Haakonsen, Assistant for Congregational Giving, at 617-948-6544.