

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 a stronger 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 enable us to have more of an influence on our country. *Now is the Time* for our congregations to grow stronger and more effective together, because our religious values are needed to help heal our wounded world.

What are Association Sundays?

Association Sundays are a request by the UUA for all congregations to recognize and support, both spiritually and financially, the national work of the Association. We envision a day each year – an “Association Sunday” – during which thousands of UUs across the nation simultaneously celebrate 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 innovative programs of the Association of Congregations.

What happens on Association Sunday?

On October 4, participating ministers and lay leaders across the country are invited to speak to their congregations about the Unitarian Universalist Association and the campaign to grow Unitarian Universalism. We ask that you hold a service and take a special collection on that day to support the UUA’s *Growth in Diversity* funding initiatives. And that you help inspire your congregation to generously support this important growth effort.

What does *Growing Our Diversity* mean?

Let us continue our efforts to *Grow Our Faith*, and in so doing build the beloved community. Through this special service and collection to fund *Growth in Diversity* programs, we can develop spiritual communities that are more racially, culturally, and economically inclusive and welcoming to ALL people.

How is Association Sunday different from other UUA fundraising efforts?

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.

[Read more](#) about the relationship between Association Sunday and the Annual Program Fund.

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

The third annual Association Sunday is scheduled for **October 4, 2009**. The programs that Association Sunday 2009 will fund were determined through a historic collaboration between YOU, via a survey to which over 1,000 Unitarian Universalists responded; the Rev. Bill Sinkford, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association (2001-2009); and the two candidates for the UUA presidency, Rev. Dr. Laurel Hallman and Rev. Peter Morales. This year, your generous contributions will help us to develop spiritual communities that are more welcoming to ALL people by:

- Expanding the [*Building the World We Dream About*](#) curriculum and associated resources and training.
- Supporting congregations that are working to create a Unitarian Universalism that is racially, culturally, and economically diverse; a part of this support will be in the form of grants.
- 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.

Future Association Sundays will be devoted to *Growth in Witness* and *Growth in Leadership*.

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. You can help to inspire generosity in your congregation by making a large lead or matching gift and announcing it prior to the service.

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.

The top congregations from each district in both overall giving and per-member giving average will be recognized and listed as *Empowering Congregations* in our Annual Report on Giving.

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

What have past Association Sunday celebrations accomplished?

The first Association Sunday in 2007 was historic; 626 congregations joined together, more than have ever celebrated a common service together, and raised over \$1.4 million to *Grow Our Numbers* through our national marketing campaign, growth grants to districts and our Diversity of Ministry Initiative. This past fall, 580 congregations celebrated Association Sunday 2008 and transcended tough economic conditions to raise over \$400,000 to *Grow Our Spirit*. Thanks to your generosity, we will now be able to offer grants to districts, congregations, and seminaries for developing lay theological education programs, help the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association expand their initiatives for continuing education for ministers, and offer scholarships to students preparing for UU ministry.

More detailed information about how the money raised by previous Association Sunday celebrations is available online.

How do I sign up?

There are a number of simple ways that you can register your intent to participate in Association Sunday 2009. (All registrations should have the prior approval of your minister or board president, depending on your congregation's specific procedures for managing special services and collections.) Please note that even if you have participated in past Association Sundays, you will still have to register your intent to participate again in 2009.

- * Register online at <http://www.uua.org/associationsunday>.
- * E-mail us at associationsunday@uua.org.
- * Call us at (617) 948-6544.

Once you sign up, you can visit our website for a variety of resources to help you plan a successful service.

A Note about Scheduling

Affirming our common bonds and pooling our resources to *Grow Our Faith* is what is important. It is not necessary for us to schedule our Association Sunday on the exact same day for us to feel the power of that connection. If you anticipate that weekend will not be best for your congregation, please feel free to schedule another date. What is important is connecting intentionally.

Participating in Association Sunday can be a spiritual and empowering experience any Sunday of the year.

“My hope is that Association Sunday will become a regular part of every congregation’s church year.”

– Rev. Bill Sinkford

“I invite your participation in Association Sunday. It is a bold step we can take together.”

– Rev. Laurel Hallman

“We can be the religion for our time. We can only do this together...as an Association. This is why I enthusiastically support Association Sunday.”

– Rev. Peter Morales

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