



ASSOCIATION SUNDAY 2009 ORGANIZING RESOURCES

for use in planning Association Sunday Services

The Third Annual Association Sunday *Growing Our Diversity* October 4, 2009

By participating in Association Sunday, we will strengthen our connection and combine our resources, empowering us to *Grow Our Diversity*, so that we can develop spiritual communities that are more racially, culturally, and economically inclusive and welcoming to ALL people.

We are better together!

Dear Colleagues,

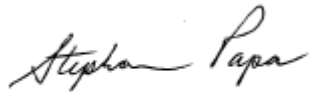
Increasing collaboration is one of the purposes of Association Sunday. In this our third year, we are practicing a little more of what we preach, and we hope you will too. President Sinkford and the two candidates for the presidency selected the focus, *Growing Our Diversity*. They also developed the potential funding purposes and subjected them to the vote of every minister, DRE, congregation president, and lay leader (for whom we have an email address) in an online survey. They took their advice in choosing the top three. (See FAQ on page 5 of these resources.)

The Association Sunday 2009 resources are also the result of developing collaboration – between Stewardship and Development and Ministerial and Professional Leadership staff. (Congregational Services and Identity Based Ministries staff contributed as well.) We worked together to create the readings and sermons for use in Association Sunday worship services, and have [linked them to these organizing resources](#).

Please use these resources to strengthen connections within your congregation, between congregations, and with our Association of Congregations. We are better together! And together we can *Grow Our Faith* and develop programs to *Grow Our Diversity*.

Please let us know if you will be celebrating Association Sunday 2009 by registering your participation, if you have not yet done so, by [visiting our website](#), or by sending an email to AssociationSunday@uua.org. For further information, or to request a paper copy of these resources, email us at the above address, or call **Devin Letzer**, the Campaign Assistant for Association Sunday, at (617) 948-6544.

Best Wishes,



Stephan Papa
Special Assistant to the President for Growth Funding
Unitarian Universalist Association

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Organizing Your Service | 4 |
| Frequently Asked Questions | 5 |
| More About The Money..... | 8 |
| Sample Announcements for Newsletters and Sundays..... | 9 |
| For Your Order of Service..... | 11 |
| Talking Points for a Presentation on Association Sunday..... | 12 |
| Introduction to <i>Connecting Congregations</i> | 13 |

Checklist for Organizing Your Service

- Put up the Association Sunday Posters.
 - Consider doing a pulpit exchange with neighboring congregations.
 - Organize the service to include lay participation.
 - Publicize the service and special collection in your newsletter and on your website.
 - In your newsletter, ask those who will be unable to attend to mail in their contributions (envelopes provided).
 - Enclose envelopes in your newsletter a week before the service, or provide the <http://www.uua.org/giving> link in your electronic newsletter.
 - Contact members of the congregation about making lead gifts.
 - Consider making a lead gift yourself, perhaps by donating one wedding fee.
 - Put information about Association Sunday funds in your order of service (publicity materials are [available online](#)).
 - Enclose envelopes in your order of service.
 - As we trust people will be inspired by it, schedule the offering for after the sermon.
 - At the service, announce your gift, and ask that each member consider a gift of \$50 or more. Remind them that this Sunday's collection is a special opportunity to connect and combine our resources for the future of our faith; ask them to give generously to help us reach our goal of raising \$1 million.
 - Indicate that all checks should be made out to the UUA, with "Association Sunday" written in the memo line.
 - Have a check made out for all cash collected; send all donation envelopes directly to the UUA within one week using the flat rate, Priority Mail envelope provided.
 - Send sermons, pictures and other materials you used to us for sharing with others.
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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, former president of the Unitarian Universalist Association; 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 was used 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

More about the Money

How was the money raised by prior campaigns' special collections used?

- Ministry Sunday in 1995 raised \$1 million for ministerial scholarships, reduction of student debt and support for retired ministers and for the families of deceased ministers;
- Mind the Gap Sunday in 2002 raised \$1 million for youth and young adult staffing, training and programming, such as campus ministries;
- Association Sunday 2007 raised over \$1.4 million to *Grow Our Faith and Our Numbers* through a national marketing campaign, support for our ministers of color and the congregations they serve, and grants for growth outreach projects distributed through district boards. Our Annual Report is available at www.uua.org/giving/associationsunday/112319.shtml.
- Association Sunday 2008 raised over \$400,000 to help *Grow Our Spirit* through grants for new Lay Theological Education programs and to support excellence in our shared ministry through a grant to the UU Ministers Association, scholarships to those preparing for our UU ministry, and increased funding to the Diversity of Ministry Team's Initiative to support our ministers of color.

What should I ask for?

Ask that each member give \$50 or more. As the goal is to raise an average of \$50 per member, some will need to give more because some will give less. Ask for an affirmation of our connection, purpose, and a spirit of generosity.

How is this Sunday collection different from other collections?

Each Sunday's offering indicates how important a congregation is to its members. In addition, many of our congregations are taking special collections to support outside groups. We applaud this generosity and effort to acknowledge our connection with others. And we hope that, in the same spirit, your Association Sunday service will affirm our connections across our entire family of congregations—and promote the good we can do together. This Sunday is different because it affords us the opportunity as individuals to support our companion congregations and our entire Association. No other groups do that!

How will participating in Association Sunday affect our congregational fundraising?

We believe that having a yearly service affirming our common bonds and giving individuals the opportunity to contribute to our growth will *encourage* support of the local congregation. As members feel more connected and experience more of the value of our religion and its larger purpose, their spirit of generosity will also grow.

Why raise money for growth?

- We have the same number of members as we had at consolidation in 1961; the US population has increased exponentially; our influence is not as great as it was in the past;
- More UUs are needed to help heal our wounded world;
- Most people still don't know who we are, what we stand for, and how to find us; we have a responsibility to share our faith and to fulfill its promise by living it.
- To do these things, we need new programs; we need to broaden our faith by *Growing Our Diversity*.

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Announcement for Newsletters and Sundays

(1)

Introduction to Association Sunday!

Plan now to be in church on Sunday, _____, when we join with thousands of Unitarian Universalists across the nation celebrating our shared commitment on Association Sunday. In this service, we will strengthen the bonds of our common purpose and combine our resources to make Unitarian Universalism a stronger voice for liberal religious values in our country. We are better together!

Through Association Sunday, we increase our spirit and influence. Now more than ever, our values are needed to help heal the wounded world. So, we will be taking a special collection for the growth and vitality of our congregations. Funds raised will be used for important *Growth in Diversity* projects. We hope each person will contribute \$50. If you can't attend, please send in a check - envelopes will be available at your church. To donate online for Association Sunday, please visit <http://www.uua.org/giving>.

Short: (2)

Association Sunday is Coming!

Join together with thousands of Unitarian Universalists in affirming our common bonds and purposes on the third annual Association Sunday! Our liberal faith is needed to help heal our wounded world, and now is the time to pool our resources to help *Grow Our Diversity*, through new programs to develop spiritual communities that are more welcoming to ALL people. Funds raised by this Sunday's collection will be used by the Unitarian Universalist Association as part of the ongoing effort to *Grow Our Faith*.

With your participation in Association Sunday, we will continue our efforts to build the beloved community. Through this year's *Growth in Diversity* funding initiatives, we will 1. expand the [*Building the World We Dream About*](#) curriculum and associated resources and training, 2. support 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, and 3. enable 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.

Come ready to give generously to help grow our diversity and faith; we are better together!

Longer: (3)

Association Sunday is Coming!

Join together with thousands of Unitarian Universalists in affirming our common bonds and purposes on the third annual Association Sunday! Our liberal faith is needed to help heal our wounded world, and now is the time to pool our resources to help *Grow Our Diversity*, through new programs to develop spiritual communities that are more welcoming to ALL people. Funds raised by this Sunday's collection will be used by the Unitarian Universalist Association as part of the ongoing effort to *Grow Our Faith*.

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Come ready to give generously to help grow our spirit and faith!

We are better together! And nothing has shown this better than the successes of the first two Association Sunday celebrations. 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 lay theological education programs, help the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association expand their initiatives for continuing education for ministers through their CENTER program, and offer scholarships to students preparing for UU ministry. Through this incredible show of generosity, we have already taken a giant first step towards *Growing Our Faith*. Let us again celebrate our connections and work to continue this important progress through an even more successful Association Sunday 2009.

Your Association of Congregations is deeply grateful for your contributions to the Annual Program Fund each year, and truly couldn't function without them! But on this special day, we ask you to give generously in support of the visionary growth projects that will secure the future and vitality of our faith, and that cannot be funded by the operating budget alone. Come celebrate with us on Association Sunday, because we are better together!

Follow-Up: (4)
(Follow-up post Association Sunday)

Together, we're growing our diversity and our faith! Deepest gratitude to all who participated in our annual Association Sunday service. Your contributions will help to increase the vibrancy of our movement and make our increasingly relevant message of peace, justice, and religious inclusiveness more readily accessible to the world, at a time when it is sorely needed.

Through this year's *Growth in Diversity* funding initiatives, we will 1. expand the [*Building the World We Dream About*](#) curriculum and associated resources and training, 2. support 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, and 3. enable 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.

Thank you again for your exceptional support. And even if you missed Association Sunday, you haven't missed your opportunity to be a part of it. *Now is the Time* to contribute! Visit uua.org/giving or call toll free (888) 792-5885, because we are better together.

More information about Association Sunday can be found at:
<http://www.uua.org/giving/associationsunday/index.shtml>.

Or, call (617) 948-6544 or our toll free number, (888) 792-5885.

For Your Association Sunday Order of Service*

Welcome to Association Sunday!

Today we are joining thousands of Unitarian Universalists in affirming our common bonds and purposes on the third annual Association Sunday!

Our liberal faith is needed to help heal our wounded world, and now is the time to pool our resources to help *Grow Our Diversity*, through new programs to develop spiritual communities that are more welcoming to ALL people. Funds raised by this Sunday's collection will be used by the Unitarian Universalist Association.

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Welcome, and let us celebrate!

More information about Association Sunday can be found at: <http://www.uua.org/giving/associationsunday/index.shtml>. Or call (617) 948-6544 or our toll free number, (888) 792-5885.

*[Order of Service inserts are also available online \(PDF\)](#).

Talking Points for Presentation on Association Sunday 2009

- Today we celebrate Association Sunday to affirm our common bonds and purposes with UU congregations across the continent and beyond. Honoring that connection and common vision can be a spiritually fulfilling and empowering experience.
 - In our liberal religious community, we help one another develop spiritually; our Association helps us do this more effectively. We are better together, as an Association of Congregations, and together we can have more of an influence on our country, which dearly needs more inclusive, spiritual values.
 - We need to deepen and extend our racial, cultural and economic diversity as well. The focus of Association Sunday this year is on *Growing Our Diversity*. This may look different in different areas, but through this combined effort we can continue to build the beloved community.
 - We need to *Grow Our Faith* in one another, in Unitarian Universalism, and in the good we can and should do for others.
 - We need to *Grow Our Diversity*: racially, culturally, economically; we need to create spiritual communities that are more welcoming to ALL people.
 - Ours is a message that can appeal to everyone, regardless of background. We need to improve our ability to share it with others.
 - As President Bill Sinkford has said, “*Now Is the Time.... to Grow Our Faith....* To let the world know we are here, and to welcome those who seek our community of peace, justice, and love. Now is the time for our congregations to grow stronger and more effective because our religious values are sorely needed to help heal a wounded world.”
 - To do this effectively we need to connect, feel the power, affirm our common bonds and purposes, and combine our resources to *Grow Our Diversity* and *Grow Our Faith*.
 - As a congregation, our goal is to contribute an average of \$50.00 per member – and to raise \$1 million overall for leading-edge projects to help *Grow Our Diversity*.
 - Through this year’s *Growth in Diversity* funding initiatives, we will expand the [*Building the World We Dream About*](#) curriculum and associated resources and training, support 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, and enable 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.
 - Today as part of the UUA’s comprehensive campaign, we have an opportunity to shape the future of our faith. Please give generously.
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Introducing the Connecting Congregations Program for Association Sunday

What is the Connecting Congregations program?

Connecting Congregations is a way of affirming that we are an Association of Congregations and that through Association Sunday, we are not simply strengthening our connection to a building in Boston, but to one another—to other congregations all over the world to which we are connected by faith. We're setting aside a day to celebrate our connections.

When you [sign up to participate in Association Sunday](#), you can also sign up for the Connecting Congregations program, wherein you will be matched with another participating congregation. You will be provided with information about that congregation, including their website address and the name and email address of their main Connecting Congregations program contact person.

We ask that on the day of your Association Sunday service, you light your chalice for all of our Unitarian Universalist (UU) Congregations but most especially for the congregation to which you've been matched through Connecting Congregations. Sample chalice lightings can be found in our Worship Resources.

You may also want to set aside a moment during your service to share some history about the congregation for which you're lighting your chalice, as further means of connecting with Unitarian Universalists in another part of the county. Try looking for specific connections, like the size of your congregation, founding dates, maybe the fact that both ministers went to the same theological school, etc.

In addition to turning your focus towards one another through your chalice lighting, you may also consider issuing a friendly "challenge" to your connected congregation as motivation to help Grow Our Faith and raise funds for important Growth in Diversity initiatives.

Suggested challenges may include increasing your Association Sunday donations over prior years or increasing the overall participation from your congregation over prior years. Or, come up with a challenge of your own!

Be creative with your participation! Think about setting up a laptop to "Skype" each other on a specific date, or make a video saying hello to your partner.

Try to get your Religious Education classes involved. Maybe they can take a group picture in their classroom to send to the church with which you've been matched. Have them write a letter or make a small present to send! Or, get your children involved in worship.

Your level of participation is completely up to you. You are free to invest just as much of your time as you are able. A small commitment to reaffirm our bond as UU congregations can lend great spiritual rewards.

Can I choose my own Connecting Congregation?

Yes! There is a space on the [registration form](#) for you to indicate that preference. All we ask is that you let us know the name of the congregation you've chosen and that you are sure that the other congregation agrees to the match! If possible, try to choose a congregation in a different district or a different area of the country so as to better bridge the divide of the physical distance between us.

If you choose to let us match you with a congregation, we will let you know of your match on or before September 1, 2009.
