**PLUS 1: Your Congregation**

It’s important for professional staff to know some of the story of the congregation they serve. Learn about your congregation’s past and present in PLUS 1. If you’ve already been part of this congregation for a while, challenge yourself to find out something new!

**Read**

* Read about the history of the congregation on the congregation’s website, if it’s there. If not, see if you can be pointed to a brief written account of the congregation’s story.
* Find your congregation on the [Certified Congregations](https://secure.uua.org/congregation/certlist.php) page of the UUA website. (You can use CTRL-F to find a word, or browse by region/district.) You will need this info to answer Question 7 below. *There’s fun stuff you can do on this page using the “Sort by” and “View Another Year” features. For instance, you can sort by size (membership size) and look for congregations similar in size to yours. After looking at your current year stats, you can view previous years to see how the numbers have changed.*

**Connect**

* Email, call, or speak in person with a “church elder” – someone who has been part of the fabric of the congregation for a long time. (For newer congregations, this could be a founding member.) Ask:
	+ Can you tell me about one or two of your earliest recollections of the congregation?
	+ Has there been a “defining moment” in the life of the congregation, in your opinon? If so, what?
* You might need help from others to answer some of the questions below. That’s great!

**For Your Journal**

1. What is the complete name of the congregation you serve? Has this congregation ever had a different name? What was it?
2. In what year was your congregation founded?
3. Was it founded as Unitarian, Universalist, Unitarian Universalist, or other? (The consolidation of the Unitarians and the Universalists took place in 1961. Most congregations founded before that time were founded as either Unitarian or Universalist, and most founded later were founded as Unitarian Univeresalist.)
4. In a short paragraph (no more than 150 words), tell the founding story of your congregation – how it came into being.
5. How close are you to other UU congregations? (Use the “Find a Congregation” feature on the homepage of the UUA website. Default search distance is 25 miles, but you can change it.) How close is the nearest congregation and what is the name of that congregation? How many other congregations are within 25 miles of you? Within 50 miles?
6. According to the UUA Certified Congregations webpage, what did your congregation most recently report as its membership size? RE enrollment? Average attendance?
7. What do most congregants consider the 2 or 3 most significant events in the life of the congregation over the past 10 years?
8. Name something your congregation takes special pride in.
9. Name something your congregation is struggling with. (This can be a widely-recognized issue or simply your own perspective.)
10. What’s the most interesting thing you learned in this unit? (Share with your sponsor!)

The PLUS Program will evolve over time, with units added, removed, and modified in response to user feedback, changing needs, and new information. Please take a minute to tell us what you think of any PLUS unit, to share your general experience with the PLUS program, or to ask to be notified when the next unit is available: [PLUS Feedback Survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PLUSprogramfeedback).