



The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE MINISTRY AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP • FALL 2007

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Office of the Director—Beth Miller, A'Llyn Ettien

From the Director

There are transitions happening in MPL. As you certainly know by now, we've said farewell to Michelle Bentley and welcomed Jory Agate as Ministerial Development Director (formerly Professional Development Director). After five years of faithful ministry to our colleagues, Michelle plans to take a little time off for reflection and renewal. We send her off with gratitude and blessings as she contemplates her next steps. We are fortunate to have Jory join us with her wealth of relevant experience, and look forward to the contributions she will make in ministerial development. Angela Merkert, Ministerial Development Assistant, has also moved on and we hope to fill the position with someone in the Boston area. I feel sure we will use Angela's talents in other ways in the future. Leslie Staples, Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) Assistant, left MPL this summer to pursue a law degree, and we have happily welcomed Mohammed El-Khatib to that position. Over the next few years, we expect a couple of significant retirements. Change is hard, especially when you have to say goodbye to people you know and appreciate. Change also gives us the opportunity to reflect and perhaps revision how we do some things. We will do our best to make these transitions as seamless as possible for those we serve.

The Summit on Ministry To and With Youth, held in July, was a privilege to be part of and an amazing experience. Working with these thoughtful and creative youth and adults on aspects of a new vision was uplifting. But there were also sad

aspects. Hearing how disconnected some of our youth feel from their congregations and the religious professionals who serve them was disheartening. We have much work to do to help more of our youth become adult Unitarian Universalists. There is a link to the report further on in this issue in the piece titled Summit on Ministry To and With Youth (see page 9). I implore you to stay connected to this work as it develops and to consider what you and your congregations can do to enliven our ministry to and with our youth.

The Panel on Theological Education Survey will have been completed by the time you receive this and the deadline for grant proposals will have come and gone. I know this initiative (requested and approved by the UUA Board) is difficult for many to accept for a variety of reasons. I was there, and I can tell you that diverting funds from Star King and Meadville Lombard in order to take a close look at how the UUA supports ministerial formation, development, and excellence was not an easy thing to do. Regardless of how you feel about the funding, I encourage you to participate in this examination. There will be questions asked, experiments conducted, and, eventually, conclusions drawn that will result in decisions about future funding. Isn't it better to be a part of the process than to stand aside?

Our Professional Leaders Coordinating Committee (PLCC) is expanding. We are working with the Unitarian Universalist Retired Ministers and Partners Association (UURMaPA) and the Accredited Interim Ministers guild to include them as members of PLCC. Their

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THAN JANUARY 15, 2008.

TYPESETTING AND EDITORIAL BY
ANNMARIE G. KLYZUB, KALZUB DESIGN; KALZUBDESIGN.COM

officers will begin meeting with PLCC this spring while they work with their own members on the structure necessary to be recognized as UUA Professional Organizations. Both groups serve huge numbers of our colleagues and make important contributions to Unitarian Universalism. Having them at the PLCC table will enrich us all.

On a personal note, I am so grateful to you, my colleagues in service to our faith, and happy to be

working with and for you. I see how caring and careful you are. I know how hard it is sometimes. And I am so aware of the role grace plays in the work we do. As summer fades away and we immerse ourselves in the year, let us be mindful of the many blessings our work as religious professionals offers us, though some may be hidden at times, and especially grateful for one another. ●

—Beth Miller,
Director of MPL

Ministerial Credentialing/Internship Clearinghouse—David Pettee, Christine May, Mohammed El-Khatib, Kim Wilson

Connecting During Ministerial Preparation

Not long after I entered seminary in 1985, I was surprised to discover that there was a lot more to do to become fellowshipped as a Unitarian Universalist minister than just getting a master of divinity degree! Demonstrating how little I knew about the ministerial education process (as it was called in those days), I came to seminary pretty clueless that the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) had, among other expectations, a required career assessment, a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education, and an internship. I hadn't done the adequate preparation to fully grasp what becoming a minister entailed.

Like many of my classmates, I had to move to attend seminary. While settling into the school community, I was quick to embrace the idea that being in seminary was like being in church all week long! I was thinking about church and ministry all the time! Who needed to go to church on Sunday? I neglected to develop a relationship with a new congregation and lost precious opportunities to integrate what I was learning. It was only years later that I realized how unusually fortunate I had been to be able to bring a deep understanding of Unitarian Universalism with me to seminary because I was someone raised in the faith. Even with this privilege, for

longer than I wish to admit, I struggled to be able to articulate what I knew in my bones. The number of seminarians preparing for ministerial fellowship who were raised in a UU congregation still remains just a handful. Not much has changed these last twenty-two years.

I cannot urge strongly enough the importance of maintaining and developing a deep relationship with Unitarian Universalism institutional culture through all the years in seminary. The Ministerial Fellowship Committee strongly believes that all candidates need to “be able to demonstrate an understanding of and experience with UU congregational life based on at least two years active involvement.” At each MFC interview I watch the Committee struggle to feel confident that the candidate deeply understands Unitarian Universalism, polity, and religious education—not because they have studied it, but because they have lived it out in a variety of UU settings. Truth be told, a skin-deep understanding of Unitarian Universalism is quite transparent. Do more than just become a member of a congregation! Become active! Be sure that the minister of the congregation knows who you are! There could be leadership opportunities available if you inquire, or opportunities for informal men-

toring. What is happening on the campus of any seminary, including UU schools, is very different from the reality of Unitarian Universalist congregational life. Also make an effort to become familiar with what's going on in the district where you live. Every year, there will be a number of events and opportunities that may be of interest. If you can, plan to attend General Assembly. This should be considered a priority. Those in aspirant and candidate status are afforded reduced registration rates in order to attend.

A word of caution, however: If you are thinking about serving as an officer in the congregation when you have been granted candidate status, the minister will rightfully expect you to be accountable to the UUMA Code of Professional Practice, in particular the clause, "If I am a member of or a participant in a congregation served by a colleague, I will in all ways honor the priority of his or her call to the ministry of that congregation, and I will avoid influence which other members may tend to yield to me in the light of my experience, status and prestige." Abiding by this commitment risks becoming very challenging if you are a candidate and an officer and trouble emerges with your ministerial colleague.

I am convinced that those who flourish in the ministry have developed strong collegial relationships over the years. Your friends in seminary will become your future colleagues in ministry. If you are new in seminary, find those who have been in preparation, for they are a good source of information and counsel to help you get and stay connected. It is not an overstatement to say that there will be days when only another colleague will be able to understand what ails you. The burdens of this demanding profession can't always be shared with those whom we serve. Most colleagues have had moments early in their career when their sense of ministerial authority and identity suddenly became elusive. It was only another colleague, who had been

through the fire, didn't panic, and could hear what was behind the fear and trepidation, who made these moments of difficulty pass.

For those aspirants and candidates for whom congregational involvement can be a challenge for a variety of reasons, there are other options. Develop a long distance ministerial mentorship relationship, join CLF, take an online or an intensive course, attend a Unitarian Universalist camp and conference or related retreat center, become a supply preacher or teach an adult education course! All these commitments can help establish deeper grounding in Unitarian Universalist culture and institutional life.

Finally, I am very thankful that the Kaufmann Ministerial Student Mental Health Fund is now available to assist with personal therapy expenses for aspirants and candidates preparing for ministerial fellowship. These grants are intended for personal therapy and not for help with spiritual direction and/or career assessment. Please contact me directly for further information and how to access this fund.

I hope for you that the upcoming year is rich with opportunities and deeper connection! Please feel free to call or email me should you have any questions! ●

In the faith,
David Pettee,

Ministerial Credentialing Director

Internship Clearinghouse News

For most people who contact "it," the Internship Clearinghouse (IC) is a nebulous entity: a website, maybe an email reply, a voice from somewhere in Connecticut. While no one but me sees the small office in CT that is home base for the Clearinghouse, General Assembly (GA) is always a great opportunity for clarifying what the IC is and what services it provides. These continue to expand year by year. Last year, an important goal

was to offer greater support to internship supervisors, the keystone of a good internship. Supervisors expressed interest in an email list-serve (now up and running), and many asked for UUA-led training. With excellent leadership from our UU seminary field education directors, Patti Lawrence and Nan Hobart, Jory Agate (former MFC chair), Beth Banks (minister, UU Church of Davis, CA), and David Sammons (Interim President of Starr King), we ran a training session before Ministry Days. Response was very positive and we are making plans to run it again next year.

During Ministry Days, the workshop Can I Be a Supervisor? had a stellar panel of seasoned supervisors, and the attendees and I had the opportunity to pick their brains about their supervisory styles. The opinions, wisdom, and anecdotes shared left us wanting to hear more.

Patti Lawrence, Nan Hobart, and I co-lead the GA workshop Becoming a Teaching Congregation, which we've offered before but continues to be well-attended.

For the second year the Clearinghouse offered an intern gathering at GA. It was well-attended,

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and, by all reports, the chance to get together was appreciated by interns both incoming and outgoing. They recounted experiences, some hilarious, others poignant, from their internships and the ministerial preparation process. By next year, I expect we'll need a larger room. If you'll be an intern in 2008, I hope you'll join us!

Some numbers: Seventy-one interns are either beginning internships or continuing part-time positions this fall, up about 13 percent from last year. Typically there are more interns than sites, but, for the first time this year, a significant number of sites either received no applications or did not find a suitable intern. Time will tell whether this is an anomaly or a new pattern.

Most interns have been in direct contact with me, which is helpful for us and for them. A reminder: the Ministerial Fellowship Committee requires all interns to submit a Learning/Service Agreement (LSA) to me within the first two months of the internship, which I must review and approve. If revisions are needed, I'll let you

know. Once the LSA meets all the MFC requirements, I'll sign off on it, you'll receive a letter of approval, and a copy of your LSA will go into your file in the Ministerial Credentialing Office.

I encourage everyone involved with internships to check out the new IC web page, which continues to add resources and information. You'll find the *Internship Manual*, essential reading for all interns, supervisors, and committee members, as well as the "Supplement," which informs readers about important updates, including changes in MFC policies and rules. There is also a legal opinion on the tax status of interns.

The IC web page is also the place for internship sites to post their profiles (preferably by November) and for prospective interns to post theirs. While site profiles are public, intern profiles are accessible only to supervisors and intern committee chairs. The majority of matches between sites and interns are made through use of these profiles. We recommend that sites accept applications through

early December and select their top candidate by February 1. We ask candidates to respond one way or another within two weeks.

If you serve a congregation that would like to become an internship site, consider applying for a UUA Internship Stipend Matching Grant. The application form is available on the IC web page. The deadline for submission (for internships beginning in fall 2008) is November 1, 2007.

The internship process can be challenging and confusing at times, so please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions, concerns, or needs for guidance. And no matter how hectic life gets this fall, I hope you frequently find a moment to stop and smell the roses. ●

Yours in faith,
Kim D. Wilson,
Internship Clearinghouse
Coordinator; kwilson@uua.org;
office hours: T-W-F, 3:00–5:30;
(203) 421-0148 (voice and fax);
mailing address: 160 Princess Drive,
Madison, CT 06443

Meadville Lombard

Winter Quarter courses begin January 7
January Intensives, January 7–25
Winter Institute, February 8–10
For more information: www.meadville.edu

Starr King

Spring Semester courses
begin February 4, 2008
Online and on-campus courses
For more information: www.sksm.edu

Religious Education Credentialing & Renaissance Program—Beth Williams, Paula Welling

What's New in the Religious Education Credentialing Program

We welcome the following religious educators who have been accepted into the Religious Education Credentialing Program and are working toward various levels of achievement. Their commitment to excellence in religious education and professional development are recognized through these efforts.

Mary Jane Holden, PSW De Anna Hoyle, MDD
Celeste Plumlee, PSW Bobbie Poole, MDD
Jeanette Ruyle, MBD Annie Scott, PNW
Kimberly St.Clair, PSW

The portfolio competency requirements for all levels of the Religious Education Credentialing program have undergone significant change. Please visit the RE Credentialing Program Plan at www.uua.org/documents/recc/recred_programplan.pdf. Please note that these requirements are for new candidates only. In

conjunction with the new competency requirements, *Continuum of Competencies* has been published. This document shows the range of knowledge and skill expected by the RE Credentialing Committee for all portfolio competencies over all the credentialing levels. It also lists possible ways that a particular competency might be demonstrated at each credentialing level.

We welcome our newest member, Rev. Will Saunders, to the RE Credentialing Committee. He has represented the New Hampshire/Vermont (NH/VT) district as a UUA Board Trustee since 1993, and will serve the RE Credentialing Committee as UUA Board Liaison. ●

Renaissance Program News

The following are Renaissance program modules scheduled for the coming year:

Oct. 26–28, Administration, Angelus Oaks, CA,
Tera Little, teralittle@att.net

Oct. 29–30, Administration, Syracuse, NY, Jacki
Thompson, lepican@unitarian.ithaca.ny.us

Nov. 9–11, Administration, Tacoma, WA, Tandi Rogers
Koerger, tkoerger@uua.org

Nov. 9–11, Multicultural RE, Fort Worth, TX, Jennifer
Nichols-Payne, jnichols-payne@uua.org

Nov. 30–Dec. 1, Worship, Woodstock, CT,
Deborah Levering, cbdpc@charter.net

Feb. 22–24, Youth, Clinton, OH, Lucy Carney,
lucycarney@cox.net

Feb. 29–Mar. 2, Teacher Development, Indianapolis, IN,
Layne Richard-Hammock, laynerh@aol.com

We are pleased to congratulate the following religious educators who recently received Renaissance Recognition:

Lucy Carney, OM
Peggy Goetz, JP

Marlene Everingham, PSW
Kelly Harris, FL

Patsy Hatch-Reinertson, BC
Kym Johnson, BC
Angela Lawrence, TJ
Denise Noble, CB
Marge Thomas, OM
Jansen Wendell, JP
Kate Zabertini, PS

Kate Holland, MB
Carol Larson, NH/VT/ME
Louise Marcoux, BC
Nathan Ryan, SW
Katherine Van Leuwen, PC
Lee Ann Wester, OM

Scholarships

Here is a reminder that the Barbara Marshman and Ann Fields Memorial Scholarship is awarded annually to a religious educator who is engaged in a program of graduate study and is serving a Unitarian Universalist congregation. This \$500 prize is given through the generous contributions of those who wish to memorialize and honor the work of these two great religious educators, and through the ongoing support of the UUA. The Veridan Fund for Religious Education Excellence (VREE) Scholarship is awarded to a candidate in the UUA Religious Education Credentialing program in order to undertake a significant professional development experience. This \$3,000 annual prize is given through the generous contributions of the family, friends, and colleagues of the late Rev. Norma Veridan to honor Norma's life and ministry, and through the ongoing support of the UUA. The VREE Fund was established according to Norma's wishes to provide scholarships to religious educators who strive to strengthen religious education in our UU congregations by advancing their professional development to a new level of expertise, as outlined in the UUA Religious Education Credentialing program. The application deadline for both scholarships is May 1, 2008. Modest scholarship assistance for training in religious education leadership is also available to all religious educators serving UU congregations. Please contact Paula Welling at pwelling@uua.org for application information. ●

—Beth Williams,
Religious Education Credentialing Director

Transitions—John Weston, Emily Schwab

Survey Coming

Two search years have passed since the publication of *Responsible Staffing*, the UUA's recommendations to congregations and other hiring bodies (including the UUA Board and the MFC) on the prudential measures they should take when calling a minister, hiring staff, and recruiting volunteers who will be in close proximity to children, youth, and vulnerable adults. The UUA and I are interested in understanding the effect of *Responsible Staffing* on ministers' experience in search, and I am committed to tweaking the process so that search committees behave in the spirit of the title—responsibly. If you were in search in the past couple of years, you may already

have received the net-based survey. Please take the time to give us the information we need. ●

Search Season Coming

Colleagues considering search this year should be aware that congregations are being encouraged to post their Congregational Record no later than October 31, and to request access to the Ministerial Records (MR) of interested ministers no later than November 30. Now is the time to familiarize yourself with the 2007 edition of the *Settlement Handbook*, to compose your MR, and to get your packet in order! ●

Transitions Office Web Addresses

The UUA website is under revision, making a number of things hard to find. Here is a guide for the perplexed, among whom we sometimes number ourselves:

For the Transitions Office website: www.uua.org/transitions, click in the “Related Contents” box for particular documents.

For the *Settlement Handbook for Ministers and Congregations* (2007 ed.): www.uua.org/documents/mpl/settlementhandbook.pdf.

For the Opportunities for Ministry list: h5.uua.org/ministry_opps.asp.

For the Ministerial Settlement System: www2.uua.org/. ●

The Year in Ministerial Settlement

The 2006–2007 season produced sixty-three ministerial settlements—up seven over 2005–2006, up four over the 2001–2007 average, and up twelve over the annual average of the decade before that. Twenty-nine men and thirty-four women were called or hired to positions new to them, whether their first or their fifth. Their median age over the past two years is fifty-two—eight years older than the ministers coming into new positions in the early ’90s.

Two of these are ministers of color/members of historically marginalized communities, and an estimated eleven are members of the GBLT community; two ministers occupy both categories. No co-ministry teams were called this year, after a precedent-setting four the previous year.

For those colleagues departing a position, the long-time median tenure has been seven years. (The Alban Institute considers a pastorate “long” when it endures seven years or more.) Over the past fifteen years the mean has decreased by half a year (to 8.4) and the median increased by approximately the same amount (to 7.4). These changes appear to reflect fewer very long and very brief ministries.

Over the past several years positions in ministries previously occupied come open by virtue of (voluntary) resignation (55 percent), pressured termination (22 percent), or retirement (20 percent) of the settled predecessor, with disability and death together amounting to 2–3 percent. The rate of resignations is up over both five and ten years, pressured terminations are down over both periods, and retirements, while up over five years, are level with ten years ago.

Probably the most remarkable feature of the last year is the difficulty search committees had in identifying their candidate. Close to 20 percent of congregations in search last year will be back at it this fall. ●

The Year in Interim Ministry

The total number of interim ministries in being this year is ninety-three—thirteen less than last year’s extremely high demand. Thirty-one of these ministries are in their second year—a sign of the number of congregations unable to find a settled minister to start this year and a testimony to the growing repute of two-year interims. ●

—John Weston, Transitions Director

Ministerial Development—Jory Agate

Introducing the New Ministerial Development Director

It is wonderful to join MPL as the Ministerial Development Director and serve our colleagues in their professional development needs. I come to the UUA after serving as the Minister of Religious Education at the First Parish in Cambridge for the past ten years. Before that, I was on staff at the UUA as the Youth Programs Director for six years. It feels great to be back at my old stomping grounds. I have served on both the MFC and the UUMA’s CENTER Committee as well as other denominational committees and programs.

I wish to thank Michelle Bentley for all of her five years of service to the UUA and UU ministers, and wish her the best as she embarks on new adventures.

Please be sure to be in touch with me if you need assistance on any of the following:

- Continuing education counsel and/or financial assistance;
- Sabbatical planning;
- Evaluation and assessment;
- Notification on the death of ministers;
- Preliminary Fellowship requirements; or
- Mentoring and peer support.

In addition, know that I am an MPL staff liaison to the UUMA’s CENTER Committee as well as the Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

I hope you will see me as a resource for your personal professional development and know that I am here with a listening ear when you are in need of support or counsel. I look forward to serving you. ●

In faith,

—Jory Agate, Ministerial Development Director

Managing Your UUA Retirement Plan

We in the Office of Church Staff Finances remain concerned about the inadequate retirement plan account balances of many of our colleagues, and we also remain committed in our work to help you continue to appropriately plan for your retirement. *The single most important thing that you can do to prepare for your retirement is to maximize your contributions into the plan.*

The limit on pre-tax voluntary contributions for 2007 is \$15,500. A person over age fifty can contribute an additional \$5,000 in “catch-up” contributions for an annual total of \$20,500. These voluntary contributions are in addition to your congregation’s contribution of at least 10 percent of your wages.

But maximizing contributions is only one way to increase your retirement account balance. Once those dollars are in your account, you want them to produce good returns. A recent review of the plan showed that 21 percent of participant account balances had only one fund in them, and 28 percent had only two funds.

Our plan offers twenty-three fund options. Of those twenty-three funds, 29 percent of the plan’s assets are divided between only two funds: the Managed Income Portfolio (MIP) (15 percent) and Walden Social Equity Fund (14 percent). These funds are among the poorer performers within the plan. While the whole plan’s average return for 2006 was 10.77 percent, Walden Social Equity’s was 8.77 percent, and the MIP, a money market-type account, was 4.08 percent.

Many plan participants report that they were told these funds were recommended to them a number of years ago when the plan first began, and they never considered changing them.

While there are many theories on the best ways of investing, authorities most often agree that *appropriate diversification* is critical in getting the best return on investments. In most cases, one or two funds do not provide that diversification. Some experts agree that four or five funds, spread among the different categories, provide sufficient diversification.

Again, the UU Organizations Retirement Plan offers twenty-three fund options. There is some research suggesting that when one is presented with too many choices, one becomes paralyzed and does nothing. This is where the Freedom Funds can help. The Freedom Funds are life-cycle funds linked to one’s anticipated year of retirement: 2010, 2020, 2030, and 2040. Each of the Freedom Funds is managed by a professional fund manager, with an allocation mix among stocks, bonds, and short-term investments that changes as time goes on: more aggressive when

you are younger, becoming more conservative as you near retirement. Pick the fund with a date closest to your target retirement date, and you’re done.

Because the Freedom Funds are properly allocated, and because they change over time, most investment experts agree that if an investor wants to own just one fund, choosing the appropriate Freedom Fund is a good way to achieve suitable diversification.

Much more detailed information is available from Fidelity at www.fidelity.com/atwork or at (800) 343-0860. Please do not hesitate to contact Joyce Stewart in the Office of Church Staff Finances at (617) 948-6421 or jstewart@uua.org with any plan related questions you may have. ●

UU Group Insurance Plans: New Renewal Date—January 1, 2008

Those of you familiar with the UU Group Insurance Plans (UUGIP), providing insured coverage for dental, life, and long-term disability, will remember that the renewal date has been October 1 for some time. With the advent of our new UUA Health Plan and its renewal date of January 1, the UUGIP’s renewal dates have been changed to January 1 as well. Current rates have been extended to December 31, 2007. We hope this change will make it easier for congregational leaders in their administration of all the insurance plans offered through the UUA.

Our insurance broker is currently soliciting competitive bids for UUGIP coverage. As of this writing we do not know what the new rates will be, but by the time this is published, it is likely we will know them. We will be sure that you know too, as soon as possible.

Other important UUGIP information:

There is no open enrollment period for dental, life, and long-term disability insurance in UUGIP. Employees have a one-time option to enroll within the first thirty days of employment or following a qualifying event. Late enrollment applications will be subject to penalties or proof of insurability.

It is advantageous for employees to pay long-term disability premiums out of their after-tax earnings, thus making benefits received exempt from federal income tax. One way to accomplish this if the employer/congregation has paid the premiums from church funds is to add the amount of the annual long-term disability (LTD) premiums to the employee’s wages reported on the W-2 Form in Box #1.

The UUGIP is completely separate from the UUA Health Plan. UUGIP dental, life, and disability is insured through a commercial insurance company. We process enrollments, collect premiums, and review plan performance. The UUA Health Plan is owned and managed by the UUA Employee Benefits Trust, which oversees all activities of the administrator (Highmark Blue Cross), determines benefits, sets rates, controls all aspects of eligibility, and manages the Trust's funds.

For additional information about UUGIP, contact Tracy Withy-Browne at twithy@uaa.org or (617) 948-6401.

UUA Health Plan 2008 Open Enrollment

What a difference a year makes. Last October the UUA Health Plan was wrapping up its first enrollment and gauging whether we had the critical mass to launch coverage for 2007. This year, we can report that the Health Plan exceeded enrollment goals by more than 20 percent, grew throughout 2007, and now covers 228 congregations—nearly one-third of all congregations with eligible employees—plus UUA staff, eleven Districts and affiliated UU organizations, and a fair number of community ministers. We reduced by half the number of staff who were without health insurance in the prior year.

The Health Plan's financial performance has been excellent, enough so that the Trustees of the Plan have authorized an open enrollment for 2008. This means that all eligible employees who missed the last open enrollment, or who did not enroll when they were hired or expanded their hours during 2007, have the opportunity to enroll

without evidence of insurability and without preexisting condition limitations for a January 1, 2008 effective date. We expect the open enrollment period to begin the first week in November and continue until November 30.

At the time this article was prepared, 2008 rates and benefits, including planned enhancements, were being finalized. All congregations will receive paper and email communications as details are settled. Details will also be available on the Health Plan website at www.uaa.org/leaders/healthplan. Here are some important enhancements we can tell you about immediately:

- In response to numerous requests, we are lowering the threshold for participation to 750 hours worked per year, down from the current 1,000 hour requirement. We hope the expanded eligibility reaches many of the staff who still do not have coverage.
- Responding to input from seminarians, we will clearly define as eligible all interns in candidate status, who work at least 750 hours per year for a UU congregation, whether paid or unpaid, or as a community minister.
- We will permanently add the second High Deductible Plan that we tested in 2007. The plan offers enhanced prescription drug coverage, but does not qualify for a Health Savings Account.

Be sure to watch for Health Plan mailings and emails, and check the Health Plan website beginning November 1 for final 2008 details and enrollment instructions. All questions can be directed to Jim Sargent, UUA Health Plan Director, at (617) 948-6405 or jsargent@uaa.org. ●

—Ralph Mero,
Church Staff Finances Director

Resources & Possibilities

MFC Update

The Ministerial Fellowship Committee will meet November 29–December 2 in San Francisco. Meetings are open to the public on Sundays from 1:00 p.m. until all non-confidential business is complete.

Rev. Jory Agate resigned her position as MFC Chair effective August 31 to begin serving the UUA as the Ministerial Development Director (she will continue working with the MFC as one of the staff liaisons). Phyllis Daniel, former MFC Chair, has returned to chair the Committee's two meetings this fall; a new chair will be appointed to begin service in January.

The Committee continues work on drafting major rule revisions, and is soliciting and incorporating feedback before final changes are voted. For a current draft of rules being proposed, send a request to mfc@uaa.org.

The September meeting saw twenty-four candidates: six men and eighteen women. Leela Sinha and Claire Phillips-Thoryn served as liaisons to candidates.

The Committee welcomes Mohammed El-Khatib, the new MFC Assistant. Questions or comments to the Committee may be addressed to mfc@uaa.org. ●

Leading Congregations into a Multiracial, Multicultural Future: Now Is the Time

The successful February 2007 national conference reinforced how essential it is for UUs to continue this important work as we seek to build just and inclusive communities through our commitment, rooted in Unitarian Universalist identity, theology, and values.

Plan to join us February 22–24, 2008 at the Doubletree Hotel in San

Jose, CA, to meet other congregational leaders from throughout the United States and explore together what we can do to lead. See the Congregational Services web page at uua.org for conference and registration information. DVDs of the 2007 conference are available for \$5.00. Contact congservices@uua.org for more information. ●

Spiritually Grounded Leadership for Large Congregations

The triennial Large Congregations Conference, for lay leaders and staff of congregations with 550 members or more, will be March 13–16, 2008, in Louisville, KY, at the Marriott Louisville Downtown. Keynote speaker will be Susan Beaumont, Senior Consultant for the Alban Institute and specialist in large congregation health and dynamics. A wide range of large congregation-appropriate workshops will be offered. Please watch the web for updates by checking uua.org, clicking “I Am Interested In,” and selecting “Events.” ●

An Invitation to New UUMN Certification Program Candidates

Our certification program for Music Leaders is up and running, with a three-year design that may be completed in 3–5 years. Current candidates include:

Kimberly Debus—UU Congregation of Saratoga Springs, NY

Sharon Douglas—UU Church of Southeastern Arizona, Sierra Vista, AZ

Mary Ann East—UU Church in Reston, VA

Vicky Gordon—UU Congregation of Binghamton, NY

Tim Hall—UU Fellowship of Montgomery, AL

Phil Hildreth—UU Congregation of Marin, San Rafael, CA

Connie Jahrmarkt—UU Congregation of Phoenix, AZ

Catherine Massey—UU Church of Las Cruces, NM

Emma Jean Moulton—The First Parish in Milton, MA

Beth Nakao—Orange Coast UU Church, Costa Mesa, CA

Ruben Piirainen—UU Church West, Brookfield, WI

Sparkie Radcliffe—Unitarian Church of Harrisburg, PA

Rebecca Sloan—UU Fellowship of San Luis Obispo, CA

Dan Smith—UU Fellowship of Raleigh, NC

Gwen Stamper—Sugarloaf Congregation of UUs, Germantown, MD

Nancy Starr—Oak Ridge UU Church, Oak Ridge, TN

Candidates must be members of UUMN, have served a congregation as a professional musician for at least one year, and must have the potential and desire for excellence in music ministry. The program involves three years of coursework, with nine courses to be completed. Courses will be offered at August UUMN conferences and at regional or national workshops.

This program is designed for all musicians serving our congregations: keyboardists, vocalists, folk singers, jazz musicians, and those who work with musicians of all ages in choral and instrumental ensembles. Upon completion of all coursework, musicians will be certified by the UUMN as accredited Music Leaders in our churches.

Tuition is \$350 per year, in addition to UUMN conference fees and other applicable workshop fees. It is our expectation that congregations, understanding the significance

of this program, will affirm musicians’ participation in the accreditation process and provide appropriate funds for these expenses. We hope you will consider this path of professional growth and enrichment. For questions, or to request an application, contact Donna Fisher, UUMN/LDB Administrator, at uumn@uumn.org. The application deadline is January 10, 2008. ●

UUA Seminarians of Color

We offer a special welcome to our sisters and brothers who identify as persons of Asian/Pacific Islander, African, Native American, Arab, Latin, and mixed race descent.

Every month (fourth Sunday, 7:00 p.m., EST), we gather in continental community by conference call to nurture, support, and inform regarding the ministerial credentialing journey. Often we invite ministers and theologians of color to participate and provide guidance, wisdom, and mentoring. If you are interested in sharing with us, contact Dr. Denise E. Hall at dhall@iliff.edu or (970) 978-1597. ●

Summit on Ministry To and With Youth

On July 16–20, 2007, fifty-four youth and adults (approximately half and half) gathered in Boston for the Summit on Ministry To and With Youth to imagine and shape a youth ministry that serves all Unitarian Universalist youth. Ministry and professional leadership development around youth ministry was an important theme for the Summit, and participants were chosen accordingly, including: Rev. Lee Barker, Meadville Lombard; Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs, UUMA; Rev. Beth Miller, MPL; Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker, Starr King School for the Ministry; Judith Frediani, LREDA/LFD; Sylvia Bass West, LREDA/CUC; Mandy

Keithan, LREDA; and many other UUMA and LREDA representatives.

The past two years of studying youth ministry in the consultation process highlighted particular areas for focus. Participants were grouped into six working groups, charged with developing visions, objectives, and activities relating to these theme areas:

- Meeting the Spiritual Needs of Youth
- Welcoming All Youth in a Multicultural World
- Building a Multigenerational Faith
- Organizing Youth Ministry for Success (Structure)
- Moving Beyond a One-Size-Fits-All Ministry
- Preparing and Supporting Adults for Youth Ministry

We need your support to move these visions into reality! For more information and the full Summit report, visit www.uua.org/aboutus/governance/boardtrustees/youthministry/. ●

Community Ministry Sunday

The UU Society for Community Ministries (SCM) has declared February 3, 2008, Community Ministry Sunday; a time to recognize your own congregational leaders, lift up the nine-to-five ministries of lay members in the world of work, and honor UU ministers past, present, and future who carry our liberal religious message beyond parish walls.

This special Sunday is inspired by the Four Chaplains of the USS *Dorchester*, who, on February 3, 1943, gave up their life vests that others might live. Arms linked, they prayed together and went down with the ship. The selfless actions of Rabbi Alexander Goode, Father John Washington, Rev. George Fox,

and Rev. Clark Poling are a legacy to all who believe it is possible to live together regardless of race, class, or creed. (For more information about the four chaplains see www.immortalchaplains.org.)

SCM asks congregations to reflect upon the role Unitarian Universalists play in these times as catalysts for justice, peace, and interfaith collaboration. Resources for planning your Community Ministry Sunday observance will be available at www.uusc.org. Please share your own litanies, sermons, or prayers for our growing collection of community ministry worship resources.

We recommend *Sacred Service in Sacred Space: Three Hundred Years of Community Ministry in Unitarian Universalism*, Kathleen R. Parker. ●

Covenant Group Ministry Resources

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is pleased to announce the development of Covenant Group Ministry resources, supporting members of the UU community in the search for connection with each other and the larger global community; the quest for meaningful engagement with life's most challenging questions; and the pursuit to engage more effectively with local, national, and global social justice initiatives.

Through the Covenant Group model of intimacy and ultimacy, participants will be inspired to take action on human rights issues that affect our global community. Individuals will find the strength and courage to take simple action steps or lead social justice projects that will ultimately help to change the world.

Covenant Group resources focus on major UUSC program areas, such as civil liberties and the humanitarian crisis in Darfur. Modules offer instruction and structure for groups seeking meaningful exploration

around UUSC social justice issues. UUSC covenant group resources are suitable for:

- New covenant groups or small group ministry circles seeking to link social justice work with community building and faith development;
- Social justice committees seeking to create connections and community amongst members; or
- Adult education groups.

To download these free resources, visit www.uusc.org/congregations/covenantgroups/. ●

Sources: New UU Cantata

For twenty-five years running, the Unitarian Universalist Musician's Network (UUMN) has gathered in early August for its annual conference, sharing resources, honing skills, swapping ideas, and celebrating our community. Approximately 200 of 700 members came together at the 2007 Conference in Clearwater, FL, where, in addition to the annual business meeting, the education of our credentialing candidates, and the networking implied in our name, we were blessed to learn and present the new UU Cantata: *Sources*. This impressive and inspired work, with text by Rev. Kendyl Gibbons and music by Rev. Jason Shelton, celebrates the many sources of the Living Tradition that we as UUs share. Joined by keynote speaker Rev. Dr. William F. Schulz, percussion group Heritage OP, and a 16-piece orchestra, the UUMN mass choir hosted a community concert at the Clearwater Church with many members of local interfaith groups in attendance. It was a magical event featuring an important new musical piece written specifically for Unitarian Universalists.

For more information about *Sources*, contact Rev. Jason Shelton at jasonsheltonmusic.com or visit the UUMN website (uumn.org). ●

CENTER: The Continuing Education Arm of the UU Ministers' Association

After a reflective year in which the committee and stakeholders considered CENTER's charge, we are envisioning a new shape for Ministry Days workshops. Professional development has been provided mainly through the recruitment of colleagues to provide workshops at UUMA Chapter meetings and retreats and during Ministry Days, but, in listening to our colleagues, it became clear that ministers want to go deeper with professional development and would like longer workshops during Ministry Days. In addition, many are interested in learning to mentor or in being mentored. The request for workshop proposals this fall encourages members to use these themes.

Mentoring has a role all along the path of ministry, from seminary, to Preliminary Fellowship, throughout the years of ministry, and into retirement. The committee is especially interested in hearing from those with experience and expertise in this area, as it may be a major focus in coming years.

Professional Development includes the full scope of ministerial development over a career: preaching, stewardship, pastoral skills, special needs of the community minister, use of modern technology, self care, and more. There are always new skills to enhance our work, help us develop in our faith, and keep us from becoming stagnant.

For CENTER information and articles and essays by colleagues, visit www.uuma.org/center. ●

Online Safe Congregations Course

Introducing a free online course for congregational leaders: Balancing Acts—Keeping Children Safe in Congregations. This groundbreaking course was developed collaboratively by the UUA, the Liberal Religious Educators' Association, and the New England Adolescent Research Institute, with financial assistance from the Fund for Unitarian Universalism. It offers information, policies, and procedural suggestions for creating a congregation where children and youth will be safe from sexual abuse. It can be done anywhere with an internet connection, and takes two to three hours to complete, but can be taken in multiple segments. For members of a faith community, the Balancing Acts resource provides essential tools for a comprehensive approach to safety and prevention.

To access the course go to www.neari.com/trainingcenter/, click "Online Training Course," and follow the instructions for Balancing Acts. ●

National Advertising Campaign for Unitarian Universalism Has Begun!

By the time you read this, the first national advertising campaign promoting Unitarian Universalism in over fifty years will have begun.

The first full-page ad ran in *Time* magazine, the oldest and most recognized news publication in America, in the issue that hit newsstands on October 5 (cover date October 15). Additional ads will hit newsstands on October 26 (cover date November 5), November 23 (cover date December 3), and December 21 (Person of the Year Edition, cover date December 31).

Time magazine has a weekly circulation of 3.25 million and a weekly readership of 21 million.

Look for the ads and take pride in the fact that we are sharing the good news of our faith with those seeking a liberal religious home.

Read Bill Sinkford's announcement at www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/marketing/index.shtml.

Responses to frequently asked questions can be found at www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/marketing/faq/index.shtml.

Resources to help congregations welcome visitors can be found at www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/marketing/44869.shtml. ●

Wanted: UU Penpals for UU Prisoners

Looking for a social justice project that UUs can do alone or in groups, in their own homes, whenever it's convenient? Over 300 prisoners have joined the Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) seeking liberal spiritual support by mail. About half are writing to a (non-incarcerated) UU penpal through CLF's "Letter Writing Ministry," but dozens more CLF prisoner-members are still on the waitlist.

All letters to/from prisoners are sent by mail (so UUs without web/email can participate), and all letters from prisoners are forwarded through CLF's prison ministry (prisoners are told only their penpal's first name). The CLF's prison ministry staff makes penpal matches and remains available for advice/support. Individual UUs are welcome to apply, or a group from the same congregation can apply and ask to be matched at the same time to form an ongoing study/support group.

For Letter-Writing Ministry guidelines and an info-application packet, visit www.clfuu.org/prisonministry or write to CLF Prison Ministry, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108 or prismin@clfu.org. ●

Association Sunday

Certainly one function of ministry is to bring people together. Association Sunday is bringing ministers and congregations together to affirm our common bonds and purposes, and to grow our faith.

Over 500 congregations are participating. The District Staff have been instrumental in garnering support. Around fifty UUA staff members are visiting congregations to participate in services on Association Sunday. Some congregations are planning joint services that Sunday. The Mountain Desert District, whose annual meeting is that weekend, has designated their Sunday service for this purpose. Literally embodying our connection, several ministers are

exchanging pulpits in the Saint Louis area and in D.C., and the six ministers of the Coastal Cluster Group of the Thomas Jefferson District are having a pulpit rotation on their Association Sunday. Responding to feedback from ministers and lay leaders, the administration has initiated several new programs such as a growth plan, consultation with ministers of growing congregations, the new marketing campaign, and a new partnership with District Boards who will distribute 25 percent of funds raised by each district through Association Sunday for growth grants to congregations. (Fifty percent is designated for the national marketing campaign in *Time*, and 25 percent for support of ministers of color and the congregations who call them.)

Association Sunday has tapped into a positive energy, which is increasing the feeling of connection, collaboration, and hope. It is palatable, inspirational, and growing. Association Sunday is raising funds for the projects of the Now Is the Time comprehensive campaign and it is raising awareness of our covenant and purpose. It is growing our faith in one another, and what good we can do for others. ●

—Rev. Dr. Stephan Papa,
Special Assistant to the President for
Congregational Giving and Growth
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The Religious Leader

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