



Report from the UU Women's Federation: GA 2014

... advancing justice for women and girls and promoting their spiritual growth

This is my first report to the General Assembly since becoming UUWF president immediately following last year's GA. Since then, the [Board of Trustees](#) has met in person twice – in September 2013 and this past April – as well as meeting most months via conference call.

At the September meeting, the Board adopted four priorities to focus on during the next three years:

- Increase the visibility of our Equity and Justice and Margaret Fuller Grants Programs and Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley Scholarship Program, as well as improving the accessibility of the products and project templates resulting from the two grants programs.
- Support women in local congregations.
- Highlight/develop/expand our on-line presence.
- Explore and develop our new relationship with UUWF's affiliated community minister.

In addition to my own appointment as president, there was one other leadership change during the past year. Gretchen Ohmann, a member of the Berrien UU Fellowship, St. Joseph, MI, joined the board in July as Vice President/Communications and Fundraising.

Affiliated Minister

The most exciting development in UUWF's ongoing activities is the work of the Rev. Marti Keller, who was appointed UUWF's affiliated minister last October.



We see this ministry as parallel to the UUA's "[Congregations and Beyond](#)" initiative, which refocuses the UUA as both an association of congregations and the epicenter of a liberal religious movement. While our affiliated ministry benefits our traditional members, it also extends beyond congregations to embrace the many other women who identify as UUs and see themselves as participating in the UU movement.

Structured to support UUWF's mission, Rev. Keller's affiliated ministry focuses on three areas. Her **legislative ministry** centers on UUWF's key [public policy priorities](#): reproductive justice, immigration reform, economic justice, domestic violence, and sex trafficking as these issues impact women and girls. She works with the UUA and other partner organizations in public witness and grassroots organization around these issues,

contributes a [weekly blog](#) to UUWF’s website, and a column to the newsletter, and provides ongoing information and advice to the president and board on advocacy initiatives.

The affiliated ministry also strives to **deepen the work of the Federation’s three [fundraising programs](#)**. Rev. Keller’s proactive professional connections with UU seminaries and theological schools, as well as with UUMA, LREDA, UUMN, DRUUMM, and her colleagues on staff at the UUA, is helping to strengthen the application pool and funding panel membership.

Rev. Keller’s third goal references Dr. Cynthia Grant Tucker’s groundbreaking book “Prophetic Sisterhood,” which told the story of the mid-19th century female Unitarian ministers who became the voice of liberal religion in the Midwest until after World War I. Rev. Keller seeks to create and sustain a **New Prophetic Sisterhood**, ideally comprising 100 ordained and fellowshipped UU women ministers. She envisions these women supporting her ministry’s other goals and participating in a new demographic study of women in UU ministry today, which will explore positions, mobility, opportunities, pay, and theological preferences.

Funding Programs

At this GA we are proud to highlight “Amigas de Amado,” a project we awarded an [Equity and Justice Grant](#) in 2012. Women from the UU Congregation of Green Valley, Arizona, are



using their \$5,000 grant for activities that help empower marginalized Hispanic women and girls in their congregation’s home community of Amado. Their work has included hosting craft/art workshops as a venue in which self-esteem issues were addressed; assisting at a local youth center’s after school homework sessions – critical for young girls who may not have English-speaking parents or guardians in their homes – and teaching English as a second language, in both formal

classes and as part of their other activities. Especially rewarding has been the relationship the UU women have established with the local Hispanic church, where they are helping the congregation renovate a camp for their children.

Our [Margaret Fuller Grants Program](#) supports UU women doing scholarly and accessible work in UU religious feminisms. Here in Providence we are featuring Rev. Susanne Nazian’s 2013



funded project, a book about “The Woman’s Congress,” an event held in conjunction with the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair. A significant number of Unitarian and Universalist women helped plan and participated in the Congress, and Rev. Nazian’s book will partially focus on the concepts and ideas these women put forward and how their contributions reflect a

feminist theology from a UU perspective.

This year's recipient of a Margaret Fuller Grant is Dr. Carla Walter of Mountain View, CA, for her workbook/curriculum, "Dancing in the Spirit of Recovery."

Our [third funding program](#) is named for the late Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley and gives scholarships for general support to individuals who identify as women of color, Latina, or



Hispanic and who are either aspirants or candidates for the UU ministry or are enrolled in the UUA's religious education or music leadership credentialing programs. Since creating this program in 2009 we have given scholarships to a dozen women, and this year's recipient, Ranwa Hammamy, is preparing for the ministry at Union Theological Seminary.

UUWF's GA 2014 Events

In closing, we'd like to invite you all to UUWF's events during this GA.

On Friday, we'll be hosting a reception from 4:30-6pm in the Grand Ballroom of the Biltmore Hotel. Join us at our "Happy Hour Conversation" for light refreshments and a chance to meet with UUWF members from across the country. The brief program will include a presentation on "The Women's Congress" project, described above. Reservations are required – you can make yours at the UUWF booth (#129) in the display area.

On Saturday, from 12:30-1:15pm we're presenting a workshop, "Partnering for Social Justice," in Narragansett C in the Omni Hotel. The program will feature presentations by our affiliated minister, as well by women from the UU Congregation of Green Valley, on their "Amigas de Amado" Equity and Justice Project.



Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kirstie Lewis".

Kirstie Lewis, PhD
President