



The Spark

The Newsletter of
the Chalice Lighter
Program Committee
Winter 2021

The Central East Region Chalice Lighter Program provides grants to UU congregations and clusters of congregations for initiatives that will help Unitarian Universalism, our beloved faith, thrive and grow in spirit, justice, compassion, and outreach.

In this issue of **The Spark**, we will highlight how your donations have helped congregations in the short time since the four former districts - Joseph Priestley, Metro New York, Ohio-Meadville, and Saint Lawrence - joined to become the Central Eastern Region, combining four very different Chalice Lighter Programs into one. We will introduce you to our updated web pages where you can find out all about the program, and congregations can apply for CER Chalice Lighter grants.



As we approach the first anniversary of this pandemic, we know that you, our Chalice Lighters, have all been affected, some more than others. Yet the response to Chalice Lighter calls has not faltered during the pandemic. We are so grateful for your continued support. It is more important than ever.

You should be proud that since this became the Central East Region Chalice Lighter Program the spark of your support has allowed us to award \$400,000 in grants to 15 congregations, making it possible for them to grow and thrive by improving their facilities and adding staff, and to a cluster of congregations for an innovative UU summer camp program.

We did not receive a grant application for the 2021 Winter Call. Congregations are waiting until they have a clearer picture of their path forward. Congregations have had to navigate through unprecedented change and uncertainty. As we learn to build community remotely, buildings are taking a back seat to technology. When we can gather together, our buildings may need to be adapted so we can do so safely. Historically, the majority of Chalice Lighter grants have been awarded for buildings and staff and these types of grants will continue to play a key role. However, there is also a third category of grants, Innovative Growth Projects, that can help provide funds for congregations to adapt to this new world by creating new ways to be together in community, reach out to those who are isolated, witness for Justice and serve the needs of the broader community. Your role as a Chalice Lighter is more important than ever

The CER web pages devoted to the Chalice Lighter Program have just been completely revamped to make it easier to learn about the program, sign up to be a Chalice Lighter and to apply for grants. We encourage you to explore it and learn more about the work made possible by your support. Here is the home page:

<https://www.uua.org/central-east/programs/chalicalighter>

Thanks to you, the CER Chalice Lighter Program will be here to help congregations adapt and thrive.