

First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany

The Stewardship of Our Ministries

FUUSA's ministry to ourselves and to the world is what we support each year with our talents, time and treasure. Our Mission Statement, as we state it each Sunday, gives us a way to break down our contributions into five main areas.

Sunday Worship and Community *"We welcome all men, women and children who seek a religion based on the inherent sanctity of every person's free and responsible search for truth and meaning...we strive to excite the human spirit...and to sustain a vital and nurturing congregational life"*. Every Sunday throughout the year we gather together to worship, meditate, renew the bonds of our beloved community, and be inspired by the words, music, and silences we share. We gather at other times, and in other settings, to enjoy each others' company at potlucks, circle dinners, small groups, and numerous other activities. Our experiences at all of these activities are the foundation that gives us the strength and the power to create change in individual lives, in our beloved community and in the larger world. **We plan on supporting these activities with \$188,000 this year or about 41% of our budget, a 3.1 % increase over last year.**

Religious Education *"In keeping with our distinctive, non-creedal religion, we strive to excite the human spirit and inspire its development"* we offer religious education for children every Sunday from September through the middle of June. A variety of curricula are offered that challenge our youth to explore the meaning of life, their place in the world, and Unitarian Universalist values. They are provided with a safe place to discuss their own questions in a supportive environment. These classes serve as a counterweight to many of the negative messages children get from other sources. Adult classes on a variety of philosophical as well as topical issues are offered with the same sensitivity to provide a non-judgmental place for open discussion. By offering a full range of lifespan education, we are changing individual lives of children and adults for the better. **We plan on supporting these activities with \$120,000 or about 26% of our budget, a 4.4 % increase over last year.**

Pastoral Care *"to sustain a vital and nurturing congregational life"* we share each others' joys and concerns. When a member of our congregation is ill or has other troubling issues in their life, they can look to our community for support from Rev. Sam, from our Pastoral Care Associates, and from our Caring Network. Over the course of the year, hundreds of contacts are made with members who need our support. These may involve visits in the hospital or at home, transportation to medical appointments, delivery of flowers, telephone calls, and help with daily activities. **We plan on supporting these activities with \$51,000 or about 11 % of our budget, a 3.6% increase over last year.**

Social Responsibilities *"In keeping with our distinctive, non-creedal religion, we strive ... to respond to moral and ethical issues in our local, national and world communities"*. Our Social Responsibilities Council coordinates our activities to change the world and make it a better place. They lead us in three critical areas – Humanitarian Activities at the local, national and global level including donating to food pantries, cooking for the homeless, giving away the plate, and serving the prisoner community; Environmental Action through the Green Sanctuary Committee including becoming a Carbon Neutral congregation; and Peace Activities through the Peace Team by holding forums and conferences, conducting direct action, and promoting letter writing campaigns. **We plan on supporting these activities with \$51,000 or about 11 % of our budget, a 7.3 % increase over last year.**

Denominational Activities We are part of a much larger whole made up of over 1,000 Unitarian Universalist congregations throughout the country. By supporting our District and National UU organizations, we are able to have a greater impact on creating change in the world for the better. We are able to see our own success multiplied as we seek to spread our message so that others can receive the benefits we have gained. **We plan on supporting these activities with \$46,000 or about 10% of our budget, a 4.5 % increase over last year, much of it due to our increase in membership.**