

# Local Representative Handbook



8/07

# **UUSC Vision Statement**

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee envisions a world free from oppression and injustice, where all can realize their full human rights.

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# **UUSC Mission Statement**

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee advances human rights and social justice around the world, partnering with those who confront unjust power structures and mobilizing to challenge oppressive policies.

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# **UUSC**

Attn: Volunteer Services, 689 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139-3302  
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# What is a UUSC local rep?

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A UUSC local representative is the direct link between the congregation and UUSC. Local reps volunteer to help UUSC and their congregations change the world. Each local rep's efforts help make UUSC's work possible.

## Goals

1. **Build UUSC membership and raise financial support.**
2. **Inspire involvement in UUSC's human rights programs.**
3. **Support your congregation's mission and social justice program.**

Each UUSC local rep makes a **one-year commitment**, renewable on a church-year basis.

# What does a UUSC local rep do?

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All UUSC local reps take part in certain core projects. When run successfully, these core projects will help you achieve your major goals. The following pages will introduce you to each of these core projects.

- **UUSC membership building**
- **Human rights advocacy and education**
- **Guest at Your Table**
- **Justice Sunday**

Local reps don't do all of this alone! All local reps are encouraged to work in pairs, as **co-local reps**. Those in larger congregations have formed UUSC teams. With a partner or a team, you can split tasks according to talents and skills so that your projects are that much more successful – and fun!

## Recruiting a co-local rep

Most local reps have taken on the position not only because of their commitment to UUSC but because someone asked them to. When you consider a co-local rep, just go right up and ask them to sign on!

# Guest at Your Table

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Guest at Your Table introduces families to UUSC, and makes UUSC's work possible by increasing vital memberships and raising funds.

Guest at Your Table is UUSC's most visible and longest running program, bringing together thousands of UU families and individuals in a shared commitment to global justice since 1975. Guest at Your Table now raises more than a half a million dollars a year to help support UUSC's human rights work!

Households in participating congregations invite guests to their table by taking home a Guest at Your Table box. Household members then contribute money to the box at mealtime over a four- to six-week period, while learning together about human rights and the work of UUSC.

Most congregations schedule their program during the season of giving: the Sunday before Thanksgiving through the Sunday following New Year's Day. Others participate in the spring during the Lenten season, ending at Easter. UUSC encourages each congregation to schedule its Guest program when best suits them.

## Resources

UUSC provides resources free of charge. A worship kit can help your congregation hold a worship service to open your Guest program and to celebrate when you collect the families' boxes. A religious education kit with lesson plans for each grade level will bring Guest into the RE program. Planning and additional resources including congregations' success stories are posted online at [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org).

## Your role in the program

In most congregations, the local rep coordinates this program. In others, the local rep supports the DRE, who runs the program, or works with the DRE and minister to plan and run the program. UUSC advises you to make an effort to work with your minister and other congregational leaders to plan and coordinate your Guest program, from special services to announcements and articles. Be creative and make it fun for everyone!

You will receive a planning packet by mail in August. Another packet will be mailed to the church. Planning packets and additional resources, including ways to make your Guest at Your Table experience successful and enriching for you and your congregation, are always available online at [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org).

## Celebration

Congregations that raise \$5,000 or more through Guest at Your Table are honored by UUSC in the *UU World* magazine.

Donations made through Guest at Your Table can be eligible for membership. See the section in this handbook for information about congregational awards for high membership levels.

# Justice Sunday

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Justice Sunday enables each child, youth, and adult in your congregation to take action together to defend basic human rights.

On Justice Sunday, congregations nationwide come together to focus on one human rights issue. A new theme is selected each year by UUSC.

Usually, UUSC suggests that you hold your Justice Sunday event or service on the last Sunday in March, but encourages you to choose the most convenient date for your congregation.

## Resources

The theme of Justice Sunday is announced in the fall. Planning resources are mailed to you and to your church in the winter and posted online at [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org). The resource packet will include everything you will need for holding a successful Justice Sunday program. Materials can be ordered online and by phone.

UUSC provides resources free of charge. These materials offer ways to lead worship and hold personal and provocative discussions with members of your congregation, especially youth and young adults, around an important human rights issue. And they provide ways for each member and friend of your congregation to take action for justice.

Many congregations run a UUSC membership campaign in conjunction with Justice Sunday. UUSC can provide membership materials including envelopes, buttons, and more -- all free of charge. These can be viewed and ordered online at [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org).

## Your role in the program

As local rep, you will work with your minister and/or social justice leadership to coordinate this program. In some congregations, the social action committee or social responsibility minister takes the lead or works closely with the local rep on this. UUSC will send a reminder postcard to your congregation in the spring, followed by announcements and reminders by e-mail in the fall and winter.

Visit [www.uusc.org/justicesunday](http://www.uusc.org/justicesunday) for more information.

## Celebration

Donations made through Justice Sunday are eligible for membership as long as they are equal to or greater than membership dues, and the congregation submits a complete listing of donors' gifts, with the donation(s). For more information, see the section in this handbook about congregational awards for high membership levels.

# Inspire involvement

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These are some of the ways UUSC will help you inspire your congregation to get involved in our human rights programs.

Whichever projects you choose, be sure to involve your entire congregation. Youth and young adults have as much to offer to successful social action as adults do. UUSC believes that in order to truly bring about social change, we must not only be activists but also help to train the next generation of social activists.

## Primary projects

### **Help people join the Human Rights Defenders network.**

Activists can receive regular e-mail alerts about opportunities to advocate for justice on specific issues related to UUSC's major program and advocacy initiatives. Use the sign-up sheet found online at [www.uusc.org/volunteernetwork](http://www.uusc.org/volunteernetwork) to help your congregation's members become Human Rights Defenders. Mail the completed sheets to UUSC.

### **Set up a UUSC table following your services.**

This project is a major part of educating congregants, building membership, *and* inspiring involvement. Choose carefully the dates on which you'll run your table. Most local reps will do this during Guest at Your Table and Justice Sunday, and a few more key times during the year. Many local reps do this once a month throughout the church year.

- Talk about UUSC's current work. Feature a current Human Rights Defenders action alert.
- Encourage people to become members and Human Rights Defenders.
- Sell UUSC merchandise, including holiday cards.
- Be sure to have Human Rights Defenders sign-up sheets, a UUSC member/supporter list, and current publications and membership envelopes on hand.

You can find all you'll need online at [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org).

### **Work with your social action committee to weave UUSC into the social action priorities of your congregation.**

Collaborate with your leadership to learn which social justice issues resonate with your congregation, and how best to engage the different generations of your congregation in human rights action and advocacy through UUSC.

Many local reps have found that UUSC can constitute the global aspect of their congregations' social justice programs. Others have found ways to partner with UUSC to take action within their communities, by supporting projects such as purchasing fair trade products, local living wage campaigns, or local right to water efforts. You can find more ideas online at [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org) or by contacting [volunteerservices@uusc.org](mailto:volunteerservices@uusc.org).

## **Additional opportunities**

### **Host a video viewing and discussion session.**

Video is a powerful education and organizing tool. UUSC has a number of videos on human rights issues for use by our volunteers. Use them at a UUSC table, or hold a special screening. Visit [www.uusc.org/volunteernetwork](http://www.uusc.org/volunteernetwork) or contact UUSC at [volunteerservices@uusc.org](mailto:volunteerservices@uusc.org) or 617-868-6600 for a full list of resources and help organizing a screening.

### **Participate in the UUSC Coffee Project.**

Buy fairly traded coffee, tea, cocoa, and chocolate through Equal Exchange, a worker-owned fair trade organization. Serve and sell Equal Exchange fairly traded coffee, tea, cocoa, and chocolate bars during your congregation's coffee hour and all events.

When your congregation orders its coffee and other products through Equal Exchange's interfaith program, you help UUSC assist small farmers, their families, and their communities improve their lives and protect their rights. More than 50 percent of UU congregations participate, buying fairly traded coffee, tea, cocoa, and chocolate. A portion of each UU congregation's purchase goes directly to helping farmers and their communities. Visit [www.uusc.org/coffeeproject](http://www.uusc.org/coffeeproject) to get involved today.

**JustWorks camps and JustJourneys delegations:** UUSC offers two ways for people to learn firsthand about human rights in the United States and around the world.

JustWorks camps are short-term projects that help volunteers examine and understand the causes and damaging effects of injustice. Participants work directly with people in the communities they serve, experiencing social justice struggles firsthand.

JustJourneys are unique educational travel experiences that focus on human rights and social justice issues. Participants come into direct contact with UUSC program partners and other human rights defenders. You will return inspired, well informed, and with tools to become a more effective human rights activist.

**Host a UUSC guest speaker.** Bring UUSC to the community by hosting a guest speaker for worship or a special event. Visit [www.uusc.org/rightsaloud](http://www.uusc.org/rightsaloud) for more information.

**Celebrate your UUSC members.** Learn about events to celebrate your congregation's UUSC members, on page 16 of this handbook.

**Run a human rights advocacy campaign.** In addition to Guest at Your Table and Justice Sunday, your congregation might be inspired to take part in a UUSC human rights advocacy campaign such as Drumbeat for Darfur. Partner with your social action committee, or help them form a subcommittee, to organize such a campaign.

**Ask UUSC staff for help.** UUSC staff can assist you with events and activities benefiting UUSC, or organizing involvement in our work. Reach out to us and let us know how we can help!

# Build UUSC membership and financial support

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As UUSC's membership grows, so does our ability to make a difference in the world. Throughout the year, we work to recruit new members, help members renew, and inform and involve the UU community about our programs.

The following will introduce you to your role in **building the strong membership base and financial support that make our human rights work possible.**

## Primary project

**Guest at Your Table.** As discussed earlier in this handbook, Guest at Your Table is one of the most important membership and fund raising projects all year for UUSC. In addition to the information in this handbook, UUSC will send you additional information in the fall to you help organize a successful program in your congregation.

## Additional opportunities

**Your own membership efforts.** Most local reps actively build their congregation's UUSC membership base throughout the year. They do so in many ways. You can choose which of these you would like to work on yourself, which you would like to work on with a co-local rep, or which you would like to enlist congregants to help with.

**Run a UUSC table.** See the tips for doing this, on page four of this handbook.

**Run your own telemarketing campaign.** Many local reps have found that making personal calls to congregants whose UUSC memberships have expired can be the best way to keep their UUSC membership base strong and active. Before you get started, contact your regional coordinator or, if you don't have one, contact [volunteerservices@uusc.org](mailto:volunteerservices@uusc.org) for help.

**Run your own direct mail campaign.** Sending personalized letters to each member of your congregation can also be a very effective way of building membership. When crafting your letter, be sure to communicate clearly what UUSC is, what UUSC does, and why UUSC membership is important. Sharing your own personal reasons for being involved with UUSC will make your letter much more effective. And be sure to include a UUSC membership business reply envelope with each letter. You can order them and other resources online at [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org).

UUSC runs telemarketing and direct mail campaigns throughout the year. We will keep local reps updated on when these campaigns happens so that you can plan your activities to complement ours.

## Membership development tips for success

In addition to the core projects introduced in this handbook, local reps in congregations across the country have found the following tips to be effective. More information about each of these can be found online at [www.uusc.org/volunteernetwork](http://www.uusc.org/volunteernetwork).

**Set goals** for yourself and your congregation. UUSC's congregational awards for membership and giving can be great for this. Learn more online or in this handbook.

**Make sure gifts are sent** to UUSC in a timely manner so that they can be counted toward membership in the same fiscal year.

**Review the UUSC member/supporter lists** sent to you throughout the year to follow up with people whose membership will soon expire or has recently expired. And help ensure the information UUSC has is correct by sending corrections to [volunteerservices@uusc.org](mailto:volunteerservices@uusc.org).

**Be an example.** As a UUSC local rep, you are an example of commitment to justice and UU principles. It is a lot easier to ask others to join UUSC when you are a member. This is why each local rep is expected to keep their UUSC membership up to date.

**Explain why you choose to support UUSC.** When people ask you what UUSC is and what it does, they are really asking you to tell them why you personally are a UUSC member and why you have chosen to give to UUSC. Explain why UUSC is a great organization that puts UU values into practice for human rights.

**Ask people to join.** A personal letter from someone within the congregation can reinforce the messages members receive from UUSC. Send a mailing once a year to all of your congregation's members urging them to put their belief in UU principles into action by becoming UUSC members. The letter might come from you, your minister, social action committee chair, or board president (or a combination).

Addressing the letter by hand and using stamps rather than bulk mail postage paid, will personalize the mailing and make people more likely to open it. Signing it by hand will also help. And consider taking the time to write notes to members you know well or who are longtime UUSC supporters.

Include a UUSC membership envelope with each letter, and consider including a UUSC fact sheet. You can order both free of charge online at [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org).

If you'd like to be sure you've got the most current information, you can contact [volunteerservices@uusc.org](mailto:volunteerservices@uusc.org) to request an additional list of your congregation's UUSC members and supporters.

**Inspire your members with information and action.** In order to build membership and inspire commitment to our human rights work, teach congregants of all ages about UUSC and its role in their faith. Organize participation in UUSC actions to strengthen commitment and connection.

**Make it something special.** Make becoming or renewing membership special for members of your congregation. **You can:**

- Thank new and renewing members.
- Celebrate UUSC membership as a commitment to our world and to UU principles.
- Recognize UUSC members during a worship service.
- With permission, print the names of UUSC members in orders of service or newsletters.
- Create an eye-catching poster listing your UUSC members for all in the church to see and celebrate.

**Help the congregation make a commitment to UUSC together** and be honored by UUSC at the same time! A budgeted donation is a great way for the congregation as a whole to make a commitment to UUSC and our shared principles. Submit to your church board a budget request to give to UUSC through a church budget line-item of a specific amount. See the pages in this handbook on UUSC's congregational awards, or visit us online, for information about qualifying gifts.

When sending in any congregational gift, please clearly note the nature of the gift (i.e., line-item budget donation) and send it in time to be counted toward the correct fiscal year.

## **UUSC merchandise**

UUSC offers merchandise for direct sale or consignment online at [www.uusc.org/store](http://www.uusc.org/store). You can order merchandise on a consignment basis to sell at special events like alternative gift fairs during the holiday season, UUA district meetings, and others.

Ordering your merchandise on a consignment basis means that you do not pay for the merchandise in advance. You simply submit all payments for sold items, and any unsold items, within one month following your sale. You will receive additional instructions with your order.

UUSC merchandise purchases do not count toward membership – yet another reason to always have plenty of UUSC brochures and membership envelopes on hand!

## **UUSC holiday cards**

UUSC offers holiday cards for sale each year. The designs and greetings written inside are fitting for UU holiday celebrations.

Selling UUSC holiday cards is a simple way to involve your congregation in social justice, and can be a great way to supplement your Guest at Your Table program. The proceeds from holiday card purchases strengthen UUSC's work. By helping to sell these cards, you've helped your congregation support UUSC programs while helping your family and friends spread the UU message of peace and compassion.

UUSC will send you a colorful flyer with pictures and descriptions of each card, an order form and business reply envelope, and all the information you'll need to coordinate card sales in your congregation.

# Educate yourself and your congregation about UUSC

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UUSC can provide you with sources of fresh information about our work, stories about the people whose lives are affected by our programs, and ways to get involved.

## Resources for local reps

**UUSC conference calls.** Each month, UUSC staff members host conference calls for local reps. Calls are toll-free, last one hour, and take place on the first Monday of each month (except July and August). You are welcome to invite congregational leaders to participate. Details are e-mailed prior to each call.

**UUSC Local Rep Bulletin.** UUSC sends a monthly bulletin to all local reps by e-mail or regular mail. The bulletin includes an updated listing of your congregation's UUSC members and supporters, helpful information about current local rep projects, opportunities for congregational involvement, and summaries of the most recent UUSC conference calls, which are e-mailed or snail mailed to all local reps.

## Resources for UUSC members and supporters

**UUSC eWire.** Our e-mail bulletin includes reports on social justice issues, news from our courageous program partners around the world, and information on advocacy opportunities through which you can help to advance human rights and social justice.

**Human Rights Defenders.** By becoming a Human Rights Defender, you receive regular e-mail alerts about opportunities to advocate for justice on specific issues related to UUSC's major program and advocacy initiatives.

**Rights Now.** UUSC sends our print newsletter out to all members three times per year.

**www.uusc.org.** On UUSC's website, you'll find updated information about all of our programs and projects, firsthand accounts from staff members on our blog, UUSC Hotwire, and a growing online community to help connect members, volunteers (including local reps), and other activists.

## Primary projects for educating your congregation

**Publishing articles about UUSC.** Your congregational newsletter can be an invaluable tool for communicating with your congregants. Work with the appropriate people to publish at least three articles about UUSC in your congregational newsletter per year, if not one per month. Consider also your congregation's website, bulletin, and orders of service.

Take your time in writing your article. Be conscious of your words, and make sure that the information you provide is correct and up to date.

Use the resources available to you at **www.uusc.org**, in the Local Reps Bulletin sent to you each month, and UUSC print publications.

Articles usually focus on one of these topics:

- UUSC in general (especially if your congregation is not familiar with UUSC).
- UUSC's current work relating to issues in which your congregation is engaged.
- Opportunities to take action with UUSC.
- Special projects such as Guest at Your Table or Justice Sunday.
- Celebrating a UUSC congregational award, Guest at Your Table success, growing UUSC membership, or JustWorks or JustJourneys participants, etc.

Find sample articles online at [www.uusc.org/volunteernetwork](http://www.uusc.org/volunteernetwork).

**Using UUSC print publications and membership collateral.** UUSC offers an array of print publications about our work and the organization in general. We also offer special items such as UUSC member buttons and stickers.

All of these items can be viewed and ordered from UUSC, free of charge, online at [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org). You can also do so by contacting UUSC directly by fax at 617-868-7102, by e-mail at [orders@uusc.org](mailto:orders@uusc.org), or by phone at 617-868-6600.

Please place your order at least four weeks before your event so we can ensure that your materials arrive on time. Otherwise, UUSC will incur increased shipping costs in order to rush your shipment to you.

**Teaching new UUs about UUSC.** If your congregation offers an orientation packet or course to new UUs, work with the appropriate people to include information about UUSC. Teach your congregation's new members how we can put UU principles into action through UUSC. Show them how they can get directly involved in UUSC's work, and encourage them not only to become members of your UU community but members of UUSC.

**Speaking about UUSC.** Local reps speak from the pulpit and to small groups in committee meetings. Your congregational leadership can be instrumental in planning any UUSC project, service, or event. Consider inviting your church president to deliver a pulpit editorial about UUSC. And consider offering to speak with adult forums, youth and young adult groups, and even small group ministries about human rights and UUSC's special role in UU spiritual life.

**Staffing a UUSC table following services.** This should be done once a month, following services and at congregational or district events. Feature membership envelopes, current publications, and advocacy opportunities. Partner with your social action committee to coordinate your social action involvement efforts.

# Celebration

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Celebration is essential to motivating and inspiring people. Celebrate your congregation's successes, congregants who become members or participate in UUSC's work, and especially those who help achieve those successes.

Your efforts as a local rep will be even more successful if you take the time to do just a few of the following activities.

- **Send personal thank-you letters** to new UUSC members, to Guest at Your Table participants, or others who take action with UUSC.
- **Give a UUSC gift** such as a t-shirt or pewter chalice jewelry. You can find these and more in UUSC's online store at [www.uusc.org/store](http://www.uusc.org/store).
- **Make a phone call.** Sometimes a simple phone call to tell a person how much you appreciate them can mean quite a lot.
- **Celebrate publicly.** Has someone in your congregation supported UUSC in exceptional ways or for many years? Is there someone without whom your work just wouldn't be the same?
- **Host an event.** Hold a special appreciation dinner or luncheon to celebrate your congregation's UUSC members. Make it an annual event that people will look forward to and feel honored to attend. Feel free to call on UUSC for help!
- **Place announcements** in your church newsletter celebrating successes such as Guest at Your Table or Justice Sunday participation.

**Use your creativity!** Whatever the token or act, it should shine with your own personal touch and be tailored to the receiving person. For instance, if the person is shy or private, you might send a note rather than making a public display or announcement.

# UUSC congregational awards

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Through congregational awards, UUSC honors the congregations sustaining our work through exceptional levels of giving and membership.

We publicly thank and recognize these congregations for their generous support, diligence, and commitment, which help make our work possible. Congregations are honored in *UU World* magazine and UUSC's annual report, and online at [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org).

Include information about the congregational awards in your pitch to your church board for a budget line-item donation or to your ministry for Guest at Your Table and Justice Sunday involvement.

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**Congregational awards for membership** (banner and chalice society awards) honor exceptional levels of individual UUSC memberships within a congregation. UUSC membership percentages are calculated based on membership numbers published by the UUA.\*

**Spirit of Justice Chalice Society** honors those extraordinary congregations with 100 percent UUSC membership, with engraved pewter chalices for first honors, and certificates in subsequent years.

For the following banner societies, congregations receive banners for first recognition, and streamers to attach in subsequent years.

**Beacon of Justice Banner Society** honors congregations with 75 – 99 percent UUSC membership.

**Vision of Justice Banner Society** honors congregations with 50 – 74 percent UUSC membership.

**Creating Justice Banner Society** honors congregations with 25 – 49 percent UUSC membership.

\* Calculation of congregational membership awards: The total number of UUSC memberships that begin and expire during UUSC's fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) is compared with the total number of congregation members published by the UUA.

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**Congregational corporate giving awards** recognize congregations that formalize their commitment to justice and human rights through a gift to UUSC from their operating budget. Award recognitions are calculated using membership numbers published by the UUA.

Congregational corporate giving does not qualify the congregation or its members for UUSC membership. Only individuals, not congregations, can be UUSC members.

**Helen Fogg Chalice Award** celebrates those extraordinary congregations that contribute \$25 or more per member each year. Honorees receive an engraved pewter chalice for first honors, certificates in subsequent years.

**James Luther Adams Award** recognizes congregations that give \$1 or more per member. Honorees receive a certificate suitable for framing.

# How do UUSC local reps do it all?

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## Planning your time

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Being a local rep *can* fit into your busy life. The following will give you a basic idea of how to plan your time, depending on the number of projects you take on, the size of your congregation, and the amount of help you get from others.

- **One hour per month** to join UUSC's monthly conference calls. You'll hear directly from UUSC staff, and you can ask questions or share what's happening in your congregation. Many local reps have found the calls to be inspiring not only thanks to the featured speakers, but also for the opportunity to connect with other volunteers nationwide.
- **One-half to one hour per month** to compose a UUSC article or column for your church newsletter or website.
- **One to two hours** (once or twice) **per month** to staff a UUSC information and merchandise table during your congregation's coffee hour.
- **One-half to one hour per month** to stock a UUSC literature rack and post announcements on your church bulletin board(s) or website.
- **About one hour, a few times a year**, to write a pulpit editorial that takes just minutes to deliver during a service. Or you can work with your minister or another congregant to help them do so.
- **Seasonal hours also apply.** More time is required to organize and oversee events and campaigns such as Guest at Your Table (usually in the fall) and Justice Sunday (usually in the spring). Many UUSC local reps also will plan an annual event to celebrate their congregations' UUSC members. And opportunities for involvement in UUSC's work, beyond membership, will exist throughout the year. You choose those that are right for your community.

For any project — especially Guest at Your Table — allow time to plan, organize, make announcements, publish articles, and to collect and send the gifts to UUSC with all necessary information.

# Saving time by finding help

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Building relationships is an important part of social justice work. You will be more successful the more support you have from your congregation's membership and leadership.

Divide your campaigns into parts and then ask for help with specific tasks. On the following pages, you'll learn how to collaborate with the following people:

- **Co-local reps and helpers**
- **UUSC staff**
- **Your minister and D/MRE**
- **Your congregation**

## Co-local reps and helpers

As noted on page one, you are encouraged to work with a **co-local rep**.

Or you might find a number of willing helpers. Just two or three reliable volunteers will make your projects that much more successful and rewarding. Many local reps chair **committees of UUSC helpers**.

Each person takes a task, such as:

- Coordinating Guest at Your Table
- Coordinating the Coffee Project and merchandise sales
- Helping staff a UUSC table
- Publishing newsletter articles

Other local reps can be helpful by sharing ideas that worked well for them. Some may want to work with you to host an event benefiting UUSC or featuring a UUSC speaker. Join UUSC's monthly conference calls to connect with local reps, or contact UUSC to learn about local reps in your area.

## UUSC staff

UUSC's senior associate for member development supports all local reps. UUSC staff provide materials, event planning, and general assistance, and will speak at your congregation and district meetings when possible.

### You can contact UUSC staff in the following ways.

volunteerservices@uusc.org      617-868-6600  
www.uusc.org/volunteernetwork      800-766-5236

UUSC  
Attn: Volunteer Services  
689 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139-3302

## Your minister and director/minister of religious education

Support from your minister and D/MRE will be invaluable, whether you are the first local rep in your congregation or part of a long tradition of engagement with UUSC. When beginning your work as local rep, introduce yourself to these leaders.

Ensure that your plans support the church's mission and social justice program. Partner with them to plan Guest at Your Table, Justice Sunday, and any other UUSC projects your combined creativity can invent. Ask to have a UUSC guest speaker deliver a pulpit editorial or sermon during a special service. Be proactive!

### Tips for discussing UUSC with your minister and D/MRE

- **Listen** to their thoughts on UUSC's role within your spiritual community.
- **Show** how UUSC can help strengthen the church and already existing social action efforts.
- **Provide** written UUSC materials before meetings or events.
- **Be enthusiastic** and well informed about UUSC's mission, work, and role in UU culture and history.
- **Be specific** about how the congregation and minister can support UUSC and be involved in defending human rights (such as Guest at Your Table, Justice Sunday, legislative advocacy campaigns, and more).
- **Be polite**, respectful, and persistent!

**Introduce yourself!** In person is best, either impromptu or by scheduling a meeting. If this is not possible, send an e-mail and try to schedule a meeting for later in the year.

1. Explain that you are the congregation's new UUSC local representative.
2. Ask if the minister is familiar with UUSC. Describe UUSC and why you care enough to volunteer your time and energy to promote its work.
3. Talk about opportunities for the congregation to get involved.
4. Ask for permission to set up a UUSC table, bulletin board, or literature rack in your church.
5. Find out how you can work together to organize and plan Guest at Your Table and Justice Sunday programs.
6. Ask if you can keep them updated on UUSC's work through mail, e-mail, or personal visits.
7. Close by thanking your minister for his/her time and letting him/her know that you will stay in touch.

**Stay in contact throughout the year.** Some ministers might meet with you a few times a year. Others might prefer that you e-mail them. Keep them updated about UUSC's work, current accomplishments, and things to come. Let them know that you are listening to them as much as you ask that they listen to you regarding UUSC's role in your congregation's spiritual life. Remember their comments and suggestions, and share them with UUSC.

## Your congregation

Build relationships with the leadership and membership. Make yourself known as the face of UUSC within your congregation.

Stay involved and connected with the life of the congregation. Consider attending a social justice committee and board meeting. Be sure that you understand the structure and mission of your congregation and its social justice program, as well as relevant decision-making processes. This way you'll be able to see how you fit into these bodies. And you might even partner with your social action committee on any efforts to organize involvement in UUSC campaigns.

Once you've introduced yourself to key leaders and committees, introduce yourself to the congregation as a whole by making an announcement during services or posting a letter in your newsletter. The following sample might help.

Dear [Rev. or Social Action Committee or congregation],

I am proud to announce that I am serving as [your congregation's] Unitarian Universalist Service Committee local representative. I am committed to helping us all put our values into action through UUSC's human rights work. I hope you will join me in this worthy task!

UUSC fills a unique role in UU culture and history. Its human rights work is grounded in our UU principles affirming the worth and dignity of every person. With UUSC, we can put our principles into action working for long-term solutions to human rights challenges in the United States and around the world.

Our involvement in UUSC's important work, and our commitment to this work through UUSC membership, is vital. I hope you will join me in building up our congregation's UUSC membership, involving our members of all ages in UUSC's human rights work. Help our congregation demonstrate its commitment to social justice and to our Unitarian Universalist beliefs.

I look forward to seeing what UUSC and [your congregation] can do!

Yours,

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[your congregation's] UUSC local representative

# Frequently asked questions

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The following are answers to just a few of the most frequently asked questions. Visit [www.uusc.org/volunteernetwork](http://www.uusc.org/volunteernetwork) for more.

## FAQ: UUSC membership

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### Why should I become a member of UUSC?

UUSC membership **puts Unitarian Universalist values into action**. UU principles affirm the worth and dignity of every person. Inspired by Unitarian Universalist values, UUSC is your voice for human rights in the United States and around the world.

UUSC **keeps its membership informed** on domestic and global human rights issues. As a UUSC member, you will receive our newsletter, *Rights Now*. You will also receive special action alerts and invitations to help you take your commitment to UUSC's important work beyond membership.

There is **strength in our numbers**. Our membership affects our influence in the United States and abroad as we advocate for justice and confront oppressive power structures. Each member strengthens UUSC's ability to be a powerful voice in global politics to bring about positive change in many communities.

Membership dues **help UUSC continue our work to defend human rights**. Because UUSC neither accepts government funding nor receives funding from the UUA, UUSC member support is vital to our work. UUSC member support makes possible our support of local leaders and groups working to make a difference around the world and in the United States. And it makes possible our own initiatives such as the Drumbeat for Darfur campaign and the UUSC Coffee Project.

Your annual membership support **enables UUSC to support partner organizations** that understand human rights challenges intimately and can address them with long-term solutions. Joining UUSC helps strengthen the larger progressive voice for human rights and social justice, and ensure that that voice rings loudly in key global debates.

**UUSC memberships help UU congregations**. You can help your congregation win recognition within the entire UU community. Make sure you include your congregation's name (city and state will help, too) with every donation to UUSC. That way UUSC can include your membership and donations when calculating our congregational awards.

In addition to all of this, **UUSC members receive a discount from Beacon Press**, through the online store at [www.beaconpress.org](http://www.beaconpress.org). See your membership card or call UUSC for details.

## How do I become a member?

It's simple! When UUSC receives your membership gift, we automatically credit you with membership. You must note with the donation if you are a youth, student, or senior. Your membership begins on the date you give your gift and is valid for one year. Membership can begin on any date throughout the year. For example: If you date your gift January 1, your membership will run from January 1 through December 31.

Your congregation gets credit, too, so include your congregation's name with your gift.

You can make your gift in a number of ways:

- By visiting our website at **www.uusc.org**.
- By mailing your gift to: UUSC, PO Box 835259, Boston, MA 02283-5259.
- Through Guest at Your Table.
- By becoming a First Responder and make a regular monthly donation automatically using your credit card.

You can also give the gift of membership to a friend or loved one!

## What is a membership gift?

In order to earn membership, your gift must be unrestricted. This means it must be a general gift to UUSC, and not to a specific program or relief fund. For example: if you give \$40 and note that it is for our work in India, you will not become a member. But if you give \$40 to UUSC, you will become a member.

## To become a member of UUSC, a person gives a minimum of:

\$40 for regular membership  
\$20 for senior membership

\$75 for dual regular membership  
\$10 for student/youth membership

*All individual and family unrestricted contributions of \$100 or more are eligible to be matched dollar for dollar by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, N.Y.*

## How do I know if I am a member? Will you remind me?

UUSC includes membership expiration dates on membership cards and the address label on each issue of the print newsletter, *Rights Now*, which is sent three times per year. We often include this information in our mailed appeals, which are sent up to six times during the year.

# FAQ: UUSC

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## What does UUSC do?

An independent human rights organization, UUSC works to promote economic justice and environmental justice, defend civil liberties and democratic processes, and respond to humanitarian crises. Our work is made possible by the activism and general support of our members and supporters. By focusing on specific areas of human rights issues, UUSC is able to be a strong and effective catalyst for positive change in the world.

Advocacy, education, and experiential learning are integral parts of all our work. We educate and mobilize U.S. residents on human rights issues. We offer experiential learning opportunities through our JustWorks camps and JustJourneys delegations. We strengthen local grassroots organizations, advocating at the local, state, national, and international levels for policies and practices that promote human rights.

## How can I learn more about UUSC's work?

- Read UUSC's print newsletter, *Rights Now*. All UUSC members receive the newsletter three times a year.
- Sign up for UUSC *eWire*, our e-mail bulletin. You will receive reports on social justice issues, news from our courageous program partners around the world, and information on advocacy opportunities through which you can help to advance human rights and social justice.
- Visit [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org) often. You will find news, firsthand accounts on our weblog *UUSC Hotwire*, and resources for building membership and organizing involvement.
- Read your local representative's UUSC articles in your congregation's newsletter.
- Visit your congregation's UUSC or social action table for new UUSC action alerts and publications.
- Sign up to become a Human Rights Defender. Join other activists who receive regular e-mail alerts about opportunities to advocate for justice on specific issues related to UUSC's major program and advocacy initiatives.
- Local reps and congregational leaders (especially ministers and social action chairs) can participate in UUSC's monthly conference calls for volunteers.

## What does UUSC mean to Unitarian Universalism?

UUSC puts the principles of Unitarian Universalism into action through our human rights and social justice work in the United States and around the world. Our work upholds the inherent worth and dignity of every person; defends the right to participate in democratic processes; supports the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all; and allows us to live our respect for the interdependent web of all existence through advocating for justice in solidarity with peoples around the world.

UUSC works with congregations to make a difference in our world. Becoming involved with social action, such as through UUSC's campaigns, is a great way to strengthen and even grow a congregation.

UUSC involves children, youth, and young adults in social action and inspires them to fight for human rights. Every Guest at Your Table campaign, Justice Sunday service and action, JustWorks and JustJourneys experience represents inspiring and educational opportunities for the next generation of social activists to gain hands-on experience with domestic and international human rights work.

UUSC is part of UU history. The most recognized symbol of the UU faith, the flaming chalice, came from the beginnings of UUSC. It all started during World War II in February 1939, when Martha and Waitstill Sharp, American Unitarian Association (AUA) representatives, sailed for Europe "to see what could be done."

They arrived in Prague as the Nazi troops were marching into the city, which held 250,000 refugees. Martha worked primarily with refugees; her persistent efforts enabled many to cross borders safely, one by one. Meanwhile, Waitstill set up an underground escape route, about which little is known to this day. Their rescue list included intellectuals and anti-Nazi political leaders, and other relief agencies often referred their "hot cases" to the Unitarians.

In May 1940, the Unitarian Service Committee was established as a standing committee of the AUA. In April 1941, USC adopted as its seal a flaming chalice symbol, designed by Hans Deutsch, a refugee from Paris who had been a noted painter and musician, while he worked in the Lisbon office. This represented the first use of the flaming chalice symbol by the denomination.

In June 2006, Martha and Waitstill Sharp became the second and third U.S. citizens to be honored as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Israel. The couple was posthumously honored for their work to save Jews, dissidents, and children during World War II. Martha Sharp is the first woman from the United States to receive this distinction, which recognizes non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust.

### **Why should my congregation and I support both UUSC and the UUA?**

Although our missions and purposes are both grounded in UU principles, UUSC and the UUA are very different. UUSC is not part of the UUA and receives no financial support from the UUA. UUSC is an international human rights organization, putting into action the principles of Unitarian Universalism and the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The UUA is the backbone of the UU faith, working to strengthen and grow Unitarian Universalism in the United States.

Because both organizations are grounded in the principles of Unitarian Universalism, we sometimes work together to put those principles into action. And even if UUSC, the UUA, and numerous other organizations were doing exactly the same work, there would still be work to be done.

### **What is a UUSC "program partner"?**

A UUSC program partner is a grassroots organization that receives support from UUSC in the form of: grants, technical assistance in capacity-building, and facilitation of networking and building advocacy skills. Partners are one part of UUSC's three-part approach to human rights work: partner support, education and action, and legislative advocacy.

## How can my congregation get involved?

Your congregation can become involved in UUSC's work by participating in:

- The UUSC Coffee Project
- JustWorks camps and JustJourneys delegations
- Guest at Your Table
- Justice Sunday

Visit [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org) for information about even more ways to get involved!