

# 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!