

First Unitarian Society of Plainfield
Spring 2007 Chalice Lighters Called Congregation
UU District of Metro NY



The First Unitarian Society of Plainfield was founded in 1889 and the first services were held in a piano warehouse. In 1891 members voted to build the stone structure that is our current home. It is now the oldest Unitarian Universalist church in the state of New Jersey.

As an urban UU congregation in central New Jersey, we have a special appeal to members who want to work in the front lines for social justice.

In the 21st Century, we pursue a wide spectrum of social justice work:

- Holiday dinners and a food pantry for those in need
- Faith, Bricks & Mortar, an affordable housing corporation founded here
- A community-based lecture series on social justice issues
- Counseling and referral for social services
- Partnering with El Centro Hispanoamericano to help immigrants
- A Welcoming Congregation for gays, lesbians, and all gender identities
- Hosting homeless families in turn with other churches
- Promoting diversity and racial understanding
- A place for recovering substance abusers to meet weekly
- Home to an infant and toddler care program for economically challenged families

With members from 42 neighboring towns, we know there are more people out there who need to know us. As our congregation ages and our numbers decline, getting our message out becomes more imperative. We therefore decided to design and conduct a marketing campaign to attract more visitors and grow our membership.

The main components of our campaign include:

- Implementing the "Living the Welcoming Congregation" curriculum
- Redesigning and updating our web site
- Creation of a "Brand Book" to standardize our message
- Mass mailings utilizing UUA materials
- Buying small ads in local arts programs, dance school recital programs, booster clubs, etc.
- Buying inexpensive Internet key-word search advertising
- Distributing fliers at arts centers, coffee houses, etc.
- Program tracking and follow up

The overall cost of the campaign is estimated at \$30,000. We have already raised \$5,000 through fundraisers, and plan to cover ongoing costs through fundraisers and future budgets.

How Chalice Lighters will make the difference:

- Starting with \$5,000 we raised ourselves, FUSP will seed a marketing campaign that with Chalice Lighters funds will expand to reach 40,000 households.
- Pledges will support mailings and advertising based on proven UUA appeals.
- Materials and mailing lists will simplify follow-up efforts.

How we will "give back" to other congregations:

- All results will be shared with district congregations.
- We expect to develop a model for rejuvenation of aging congregations.
- We'll document what it takes to run a campaign like this.

