



University Unitarian Church
Proposal for Social Justice Dedicated Plate Dedication

As of September 2011

At UUC, we dedicate the plate collection on one Sunday of each month to a social justice cause or organization with which we work. Please return this proposal to Social Justice Coordinator Jennifer Bright at the church office or via email at jenniferb@uuchurch.org. (Electronic submissions are preferred.) Dedicated Plate proposals are reviewed by the Social Justice Steering Committee periodically throughout the year. Please allow a *minimum* of two months between your submission and your desired plate collection date.

Criteria for Social Justice Sunday Plate recipients:

- **Provides direct benefit for those experiencing injustice or need.** We are looking for causes that have their “fingers in the earth” - concrete outcomes that the congregation can connect with.
- **Strengthens or expands existing social justice ministries of UUC.** Not every plate needs to be sponsored by an existing social justice group, but if it is, the group should use this as an opportunity to enhance its work. Plate collections should have a clear connection to UU principles.
- **Supports a diversity of causes over the course of the year.** Over the course of a church year, the committee will look to have a mix of cause, building a “portfolio” that includes:
 - local and global perspectives
 - causes with demonstrated support from the congregation, as well as some issues that are new or even less comfortable for us.

Please provide the following information.

1. Contact person’s name
2. Contact person’s phone/email
3. Does your proposal relate/connect to an existing UUC group or committee? If so which one? If not, would you be interested in trying to start one related to this issue or cause?
4. Proposed Plate recipient
5. Organization’s Web site
6. Contact person at the organization, for more information
7. Is the proposed recipient a nonprofit organization? Please indicate whether they are a:
 501(c)3 charity 501(c)4 lobbying/advocacy org Other (please explain)

Please answer the following questions about your proposal.

8. What does this organization do?
9. In what ways does this organization reflect and promote UU principles and values?
10. What would the funds be used for? Do you have a specific amount that you are trying to raise?
11. How will this plate collection strengthen or expand your group’s social justice work, specifically? What is the positive outcome that you visualize *for your work*?
12. What else could be done on the Sunday to educate and engage the congregation with this organization or issue, in addition to the plate collection itself? (e.g. testimony during service; table at coffee hour; informational materials that can be handed out; etc.)
13. Are there other ways that UUC members and friends could get involved with this group?
14. Additional comments?

Thank you! The Social Justice Steering Committee will be in touch.



Organizing a Social Justice Dedicated Plate Collection University Unitarian Church

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Dedicated Plate proposals are reviewed and approved by the Social Justice Steering Committee. If your proposal is approved, here are some things to think about and plan for. Feel free to think creatively about how you would like to engage the congregation in the cause!

General tips for a successful Dedicated Plate Collection:

- Prepare in advance. Having articles or announcements in the Gateway and Order of service prior to the worship allows people to think about the cause you want to support, and get excited.
- Take full advantage of your networking power. How often can you reach 800 people, especially when the vast majority of these people are already very interested in Social Justice! (After all we are Unitarians.) Provide different ideas on how people can get more involved, volunteer, contact their representatives, connect with others, participate. Make sure you have thought through all these aspects and are presenting tailored solutions to people at the coffee table. You will be amazed on how much return you'll get for your efforts.
- Follow up. People might be excited about your cause, but then quickly get back to their routine and the millions things they have to do. Most people need to be followed up with.

Scheduling: You will work with the Social Justice Coordinator to schedule your Sunday. We try to schedule at least one quarter out, and we have to take into account other things happening at the church, so please understand you may not get your first choice of Sundays.

- **Contact: Jennifer Bright, (jenniferb@uuchurch.org).**

Lay testament or other activities during the worship service: There should be a lay testament during the service, explaining the cause or organization that you're asking the congregation to support. This can be a member of your social justice team, or someone from the recipient organization. Lay testaments should be about three minutes in length. If you are interested in incorporating the theme into the worship service in other ways – a reading, a theme in the sermon or music – you will need to discuss that with the Ministers, who make all decisions regarding worship. **Some tips:**

- Experience shows that in worship, where you have only few minutes to make your point, a tangible/concrete pitch is most successful: "This is how your money will be used." Also, show why you care! If you can show your honest emotions about a cause you are passionate about, people connect. Focus on telling the story rather than asking for money.
- **Please coordinate lay testaments any other worship components directly with the ministers, Rev. Jon Luopa (revjml@uuchurch.org) and Rev. Alicia Grace (agrace@uuchurch.org).**

Order of Service insert: Plan to create an insert for the Order of Service, with information *both* about the UUC social justice group that is sponsoring the plate, and about the organization you are supporting – including how the congregation can support them in other ways. **Some tips:**

- You will need to have the text in to the office at least one week in advance. Office staff can help you get the text formatted for the right size (half of a landscaped 8.5x14" sheet), and getting the insert printed. Past examples are available to inspire you.
- You will need to a volunteer stuff the inserts into the Order of Service, which can be done that Friday afternoon, Saturday, or early Sunday (allow 45 minutes). You will also want a volunteer on Sunday morning to re-fill Orders of Service between worship services.
- **Contact: Jennifer Bright to coordinate, (jenniferb@uuchurch.org).**

Coffee hour: There are two ways to highlight your cause at coffee hour. You can have an information table with more information, and your invited lay testament guest. **Some tips:**

- Backing up your pitch with handouts and other information that you can present at a table during coffee hours is important. Having knowledgeable people that can answer questions around your cause during coffee hours will enable people to commit at a greater level.
- If you are organizing or recruiting volunteers for your effort, this is a great way to get people to sign up.
- **To reserve a coffee hour informational table:** Donna O’Leary (churchoffice@uuchurch.org).

Church office phone number: 206-525-8400.