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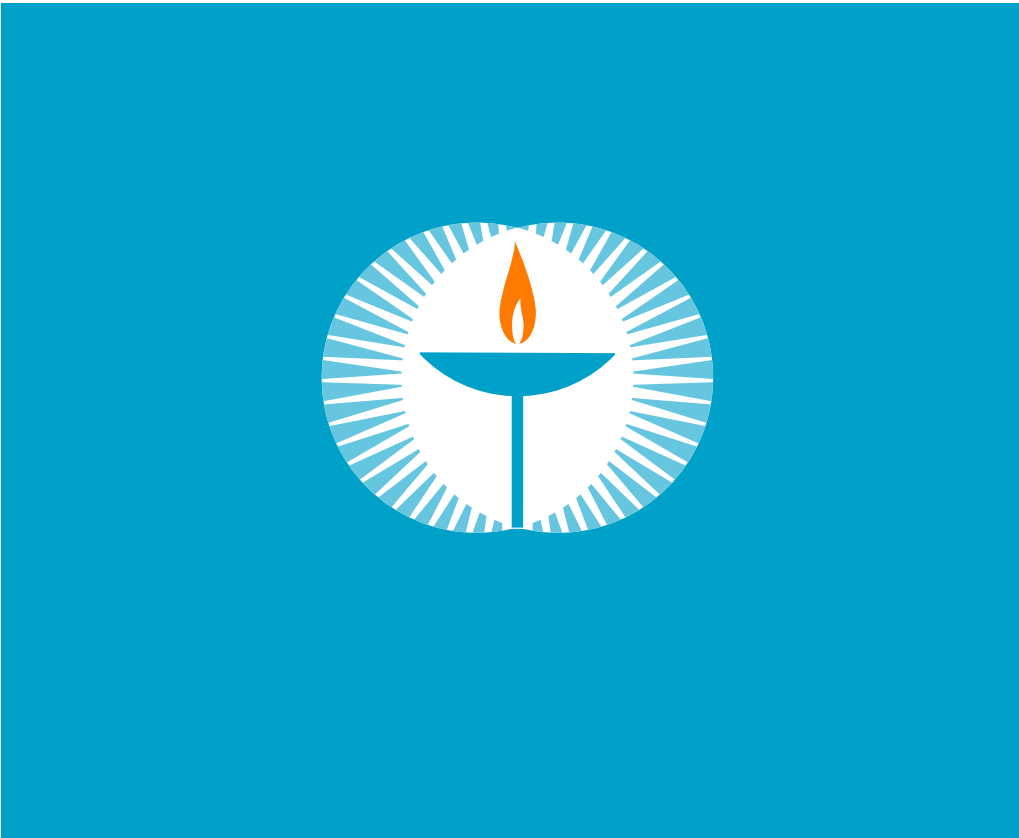


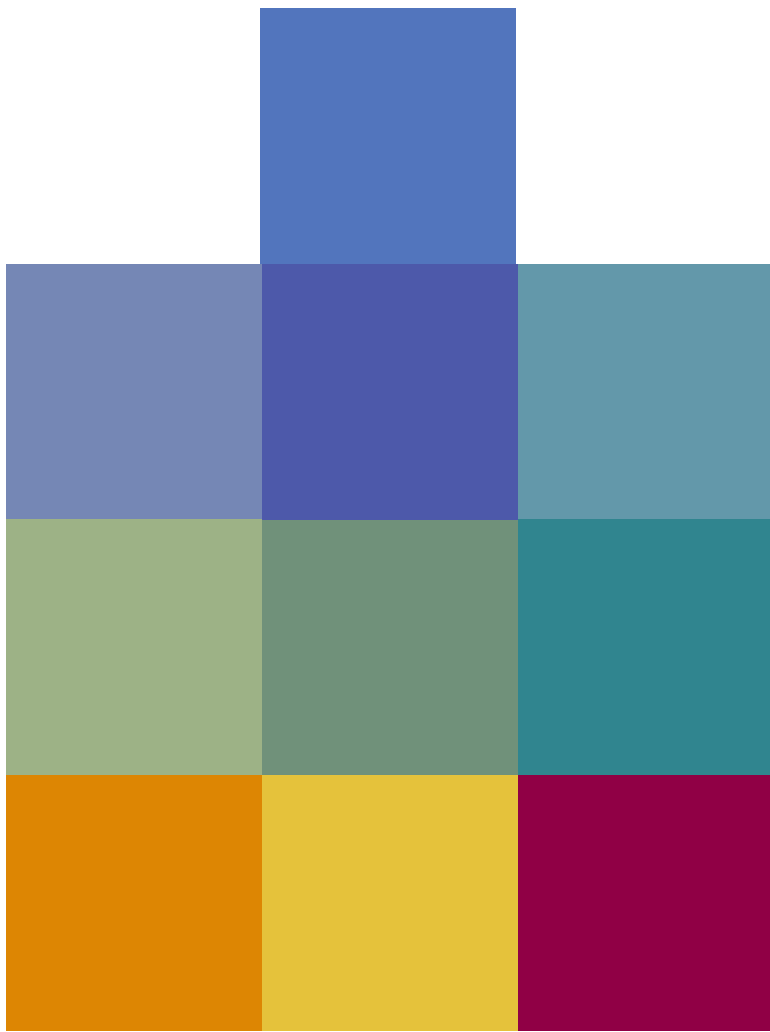


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FOR LAY LEADERS OF UU CONGREGATIONS

INTER Connections

Volume VII / Issue 1

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Certification Report Due By Feb. 1 to the UUA

Your congregation's Annual Certification Report and Directory Update is due at the UUA before February 1. You are encouraged to file this report electronically, if possible. Go to www.uua.org/congregation and log in to your account, or if you don't have one, create one. The number of delegates a congregation can send to General Assembly is based on this report as is its Annual Program Fund Fair Share contribution to the UUA and to the districts for the next fiscal year. It is also important to update your directory information at the same time.

If it is not possible to file a report electronically, you can get a paper form by contacting Peg Sullivan at 617-948-4641.

UU World Available On Audiotape

A recorded version of *UU World* is available at no charge to people who cannot read the printed magazine because of vision impairment.

For more information, contact Deborah Greenstein, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108; 617-948-6451, dgreenstein@uua.org.

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Dinner for Eight is a staple for bringing people together.

7 MONEY

Should a congregation borrow money from its members?

LEADERSHIP

Congregational Web Sites: Our New Front Door

When *InterConnections* last wrote a comprehensive article about church Web sites in 1998, 40 to 60 percent of our congregations had them. Now the figure is over 90 percent.

Increasingly, it's the way that visitors find us. Many congregations report that most of their visitors, even if they've learned about the church or fellowship in another way, have checked it out on the Internet before making that first visit. Web sites are our new front door. They not only tell visitors about our theology, they tell them what kind of service to expect and even what to wear.

And like a front door it's important that a Web site be welcoming. That means it must be attractive and up-to-date. But not so attractive that it's hard to read, says Deborah Weiner, director of the UUA Office of Electronic Communication. "The key to good Web site design is ease of navigation and clear information that is attractively, but not elaborately, presented."

Some tips from Weiner: Focus on the elements that a seeker from outside your congregation will be looking for. These include name of congregation, location, time of service, brief history, programs offered (and how to find out more), and something that shows what the "inner soul" of the congregation is about.

Weiner notes: "I particularly love what some congregations have done to create a sense of welcome and show their character." She likes the Web site of the River of Grass Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Southwest Ranches, Fla. (141 members), "that shows users their navigation path and

conveys a sense of the congregation's liveliness through its simple, clean site (www.riverofgrass.org).

"I am also impressed with the changes that the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston, Tex. (504), has made (www.firstuu.org). The pages are welcoming and inviting, using a template for consistency. Materials are kept up-to-date and are focused on basic information."

Ted Pack, webmaster at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stanislaus County, Modesto, Calif. (130), adds, "You can look at some Web sites and make the assumption that the designer thought artistic design was more important than the information on the page," he said.

Use a text size that most people, including those with imperfect vision, would find readable. And be consistent. "Every page on our site (www.stanuu.org) has the same look, the same colors, the same heading, the same footing. This is visually reassuring to viewers."

Some congregations have struggled with who has authority to put items on the Web site. One person wrote to the UUA's PR-L (public relations) e-mail list a year ago: "The problem is politics. One person in the church seems to believe she should have anything she wants posted on the Web site, and where she wants."

Prevent that situation with written procedures, says Bob Mathwich, webmaster at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Cherry Hill, N.J. (290). He has written two 2,000-word documents about the congregation's Web site. The first document covers the

Continued on page two

We Are

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MARTA FLANAGAN

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
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IS A CIVIL RIGHT.
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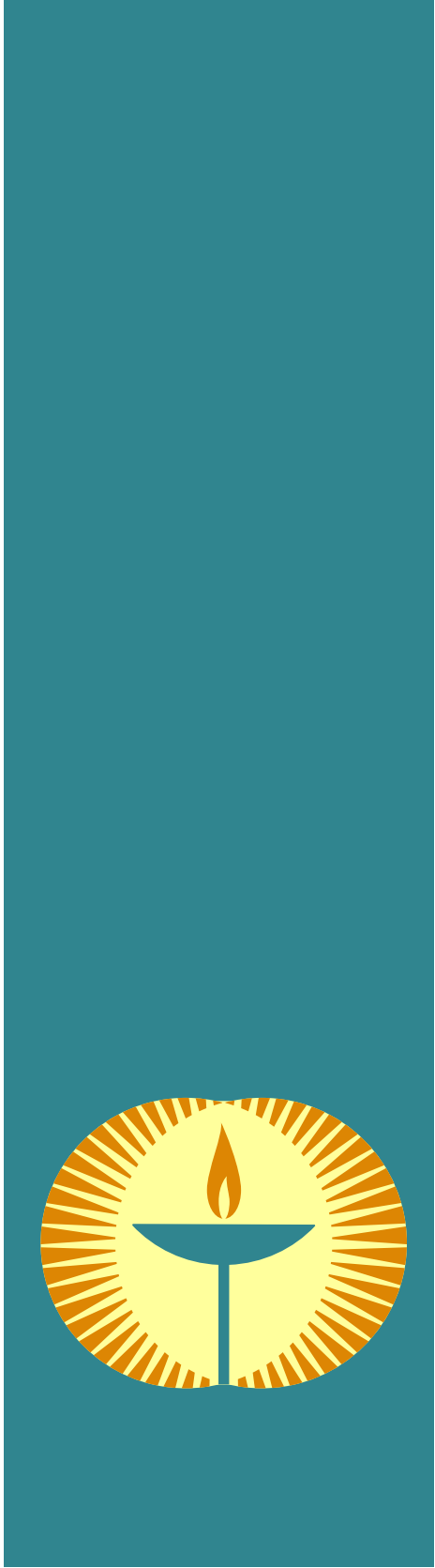
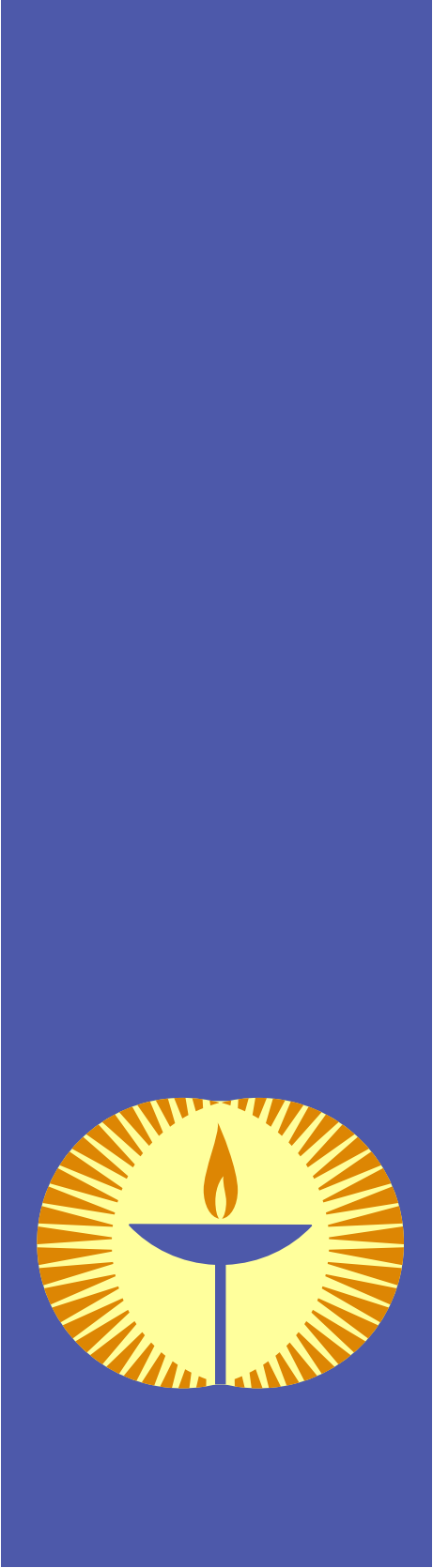
DIFFERENT BELIEFS,
ONE FAITH
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Where there is **wonder**,
there is **room to grow**.

When there are **questions**,
there is **a place to share them**.



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