

UU Congregational Finance and Stewardship Resources

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One of the most frequently asked questions of late has been how to find good online resources to help UU congregations with issues regarding finances. The bad news is that we have not yet gathered a collection of what is best and most helpful for congregations on the subject. This is a rather odd thing given how hot a topic this is at the moment. I understand that Laurel Amabile, of the UUA Annual Program Fund, is attempting to make a project of this. It will be a great service to us all when she completes it. While we wait, here below are my favorites (Note: my focus is online resources. For a good selection of what UUs are reading in paper on the subject visit our UUA bookstore, <http://www.uuabookstore.org>):

The closest thing we have at the moment to a thoughtful collection of online materials for UU congregations on money issues is the one maintained by **Wayne Clark**, our UUA Director of Congregational Stewardship Services, <http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/congregationalstewardship/index.shtml>. This listing includes a group of resources by various authors that Wayne has been collecting, *Giving During Tough Economic Times*. While this is available in various places, I recommend this spot as the most reliable place for the most current version, http://www.uua.org/documents/congservices/stewardship/tough_economy_giving.pdf. Wayne's own book is our current UU "bible" on congregational stewardship: *Beyond Fundraising: A Complete Guide to Congregational Stewardship*. This is, alas, not available online. You can peruse it online thanks to google books, http://books.google.com/books?id=5KNMdceTUYEC&dq=Clark+%22A+Complete+Guide+to+Congregational+Stewardship%22&printsec=frontcover&source=bn&hl=en&ei=boUHSovdGp2uMeZusZgG&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=4.

Laurel Amabile, Director of the UUA Annual Program Fund, has gathered a nice, well-edited collection of materials to assist congregations with their own fundraising. This also includes resources about money and life, some focused on financial education for children and young adults, <http://www.uua.org/giving/annualprogram/119273.shtml>. Laurel has begun to sponsor online seminars for congregational leaders on stewardship and money. Transcripts of the online discussion are found at www.uua.org/giving/qa. Another resource, the *APF Quarterly*, features material about the APF. It also features a wide range of content for congregational stewardship and fundraising, including tips, best practices, and resources for annual stewardship teams, religious educators, ministers, and lay leaders, www.uua.org/giving/annualprogram/51886.shtml.

On UUA.org the more or less **official entryway to UUA resources on the subject** is through the three topics of “canvass,” “fundraising,” “giving and generosity” within the “handpicked resources” section, <http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/55644.shtml>. Right now these are a rather odd mix of congregational resources and material about the UUA’s own efforts to raise money. They are not presented with much sense of priority. Nobody has made any wise judgments about what might be most helpful to congregations. However, be diligent. If you scroll down on these lists, especially in the “articles” section there are a lot of good materials especially articles from the back issues of *Interconnections*, our excellent UUA resource publication.

For a more direct entrée into **Don Skinner’s collection of articles on financial issues** for congregations one needs to go to his listing in the archived, old UUA website, <http://archive.uua.org/interconnections/money/>. The tragedy here is that this list is no longer being kept up to date but this is overall our most substantial body of online material specifically aimed at helping UU congregations with money issues. Don Skinner says that he aims to be “relentlessly useful” and he is.

We have a good collection of **worship materials** at <http://www.uua.org/spirituallife/troublededeconomy/index.shtml>. For those who might want to preach on the subject, your best bet is probably to search the internet for recent UU sermons. Most of the best known UU ministers post their sermons weekly. I personally believe that this current economic crisis is likely to lead us into fundamental rethinking concerning our faith orientation and what it means to be a community of faith. For some very UU-friendly materials on this my favorite spot is Krista Tippet’s American Public Media podcast from her “Speaking of Faith” radio show, *Repossessing Virtue: Wise Voices on the Economic Crisis*, <http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/first-person/repossessing-virtue>.

A favorite UU guru at the moment on the subject of money is **Mike Durall**, author of a number of books and consultant to many UU congregations. His own website is www.vitalcongregations.com. (Good URL, huh?). Unfortunately, this does not contain many—or any—online resources. However, Mike has rather specialized in writing hard-hitting consulting reports for congregations. Some congregations have had the courage to put these online and they give a flavor of his approach. See, for example, www.uunashua.org/gov/interim-rpt.pdf. I also got news last week that Ohio Meadville District had Mike as its keynote speaker at their district assembly and have placed a podcast of that online, <http://www.ohiomeadville.org/resources/omdpodcasts.html>. I believe we are on the verge of an explosion in the quantity and quality of online UU audio and video resources and this is a first hint of what is emerging.

Another UU guru on congregations and money is **Dan Hotchkiss**, a UU and a Senior Consultant at the Alban Institute. He very helpfully keeps up-to-date a list of his writings, including links to online versions of articles wherever they exist, <http://danhotchkiss.com/>.

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