

President's Message

January 2008

I hope that your holidays were filled with love and joy, and that the start of the new year has been kind to you. For myself, it was wonderful to have some lower-paced time at the end of December to spend with friends and family. But now January is well under way, and District activities are again picking up speed. I wanted to take this opportunity to tell you about some of the current and upcoming events:

- After a year and a half of outstanding service, our Acting Program Consultant for Lifespan Faith Development, Debby Herman, has decided to step down from that role at the end of this fiscal year on June 30. You may remember that Debby agreed to take this position after Karen Lapidus, the PC for LFD that we shared with Ohio-Meadville District, needed to resign due to personal reasons. Debby has worked tirelessly for the St. Lawrence District, and has very clearly defined this role and its value to our congregations. She will be greatly missed. At its November meeting, the SLD Board approved the hiring of a half-time (20 hrs/week) Program Consultant with benefits to continue and expand this position. We're very pleased to continue to grow this role, and you'll find more information about the search in this packet.
- The 2008 Annual District Assembly is taking shape under the able direction of a working group coordinated by Linda Friedman. The DA theme is "Sustainable Earth – A Call to Action", and it will take place on Friday and Saturday, April 25 and 26, in Binghamton (Friday) and Owego (Saturday). The keynote address and several workshops will focus on the theme of sustaining the earth, and there will also be workshops on social responsibility and spirituality. Later on Saturday afternoon we'll have the District Annual Meeting and a bridging ceremony for our youth. The working group is also planning some new exciting events to conclude DA. Plan to join us for this great opportunity to meet other UUs from throughout New York State, and look for the flyer in this packet and a detailed brochure in February.
- Many of our congregations participated in Association Sunday in the fall of 2007. The UUA is just beginning to release the results of that campaign, which appears to be very successful. The funds raised by that event are targeted for a national marketing campaign, outreach for our ministers of color, and for congregational growth projects. The latter funds will come back to the Districts, and under the leadership of Tom Chulak, we hope to use our growth funds to hire a part-time Growth Consultant to be shared with Joseph Priestly, Metro, and Ohio-Meadville Districts.

- In District leadership news, I'm happy to tell you that the Board has appointed Rev. Priscilla Richter of Schenectady as the Ministerial Settlement Representative, following the recommendation of the SLD UU Ministers' Association, and has appointed Rev. Frances Manley of Niagara Falls to fill a vacant seat on the Board, following the recommendation of the Nominating Committee.

Finally, in this packet you will find news of many other exciting District events, including conferences, trainings, and workshops. I hope you will consider participating, and will make sure that everyone in your congregation knows about these activities. All of our committees, consultants, coordinators, and staff work very hard every year to make the very best programming available to you. We're anxious to hear your suggestions for future programs. And of course, if you ever want to get involved in any District activity, if you want to help us in our mission to serve, connect and grow SLD congregations (while getting better connected yourself and growing in service to others), please contact me, Tom Chulak, or any of our leaders.

In fellowship,

Ernie Hall