

CER Chalice Lighter Grant App Other Growth

COMPLETE

#17

Please complete this form to apply for a Chalice Lighter grant for other growth projects as an existing congregation. Please refer to the [Chalice Lighters Grant Policies and Procedures Document](http://www.uua.org/cercl-policy-procedure.docx) for grant-related policy, deadlines and information about assistance in completing this form.

We highly recommend that you download the document, gather all your information and then input it all into this form when you have everything ready. You cannot store information on this form and return to it later. Do note you can use the navigation at the bottom of this page to go back and review your previous work before submitting, Do not use the browser navigation.

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173.81.67.196

* Congregation Name (only abbreviate UU)

First UU Society of Marietta

* Congregation Mailing Address

232 Third St.

Marietta

OH

45750

United States

Meeting Address (if different from mailing address)

n/a

Congregation Website

<https://fuusm.org>

* Congregation Phone Number

7403731218

* Congregation Email

revkat@suddenlinkmail.com

*** Project Manager**

Karen Binkley

*** Project Manager Number**

7403746086

*** Project Manager Email**

karenebinkley@gmail.com

*** Type of Grant**

Other Growth Project

*** Grant Summary**

FUUSM has recently experienced a decline in membership and in number of pledge units (pre-pandemic). We are demographically older. In recognition of these pressing issues, we held a congregation-wide brainstorming session on November 7, 2021, on how to attract more younger members and developed several promising ideas and a plan. In January 2022 we devoted an entire worship service to an extension of our discussion on the ideas generated in the November 7 meeting. We also used this service to launch our 2022 pledge drive (to arrange for funds for the upcoming fiscal year, which starts on July 1, 2022). Immediately subsequent to that worship service we sent out a survey asking members & friends to select the five items from this list of 38 ideas generated at the November 7 meeting according to how inspired they are by the ideas and how much they are willing to work on the ideas. We have already begun the implementation of three of the ideas from the list of 38 based on their initial appeal and practicality: the most significant of these is: organizing a FUUSM "homecoming" event to bring back members & friends who have moved away, let their affiliation with FUUSM lapse or, for some other reason, have not been attending FUUSM worship services or activities in the past three years or more. This homecoming event was launched at our February 6, 2022, worship service where several of these persons gave personal testimonials on the meaning of FUUSM to their lives. This homecoming initiative will continue through the summer and will culminate in a summer festival event scheduled for the weekend of July 30-31, drawing former FUUSM members from different locations.

*** What is the cost of the entire project?**

\$35,000

* Describe your project

A Chalice Lighter grant would serve FUUSM as a springboard to launch our program for congregational growth, which we have already begun with some inchoate ideas for increasing our membership and eventually the income of our budget. Our growth objectives are to expand the numbers of those involved in worship services and in congregation-related community activities. Among these numbers we hope to attract young families with children so that our RE program can be strengthened and sustained. Of the 38 ideas we developed during our November 7 2021 brainstorming session (attached to this application), we have already achieved two of these items : including FUUSM in the Marietta Festival of Lights and including our building in the Marietta Trolley Tour. A third idea is more substantial and long-lasting—our “homecoming” program which began with our worship service on February 6, 2022; this initiative will continue throughout the spring and early summer in 2022 with the promotion and arrangements to bring people back to FUUSM for a special late-summer social event after their hiatus of non-involvement. Since there is minimal understanding about what Unitarian-Universalism is in our region, we shall seek assistance from a professional branding and marketing organization about how to reach a broad audience in order to explain UU and how it differs from other religious organizations in an effort to engage people who are disenchanted with traditional religious organizations. But we still need help to obtain information and skills on developing other ideas to attract new members, especially younger people. Our initial thoughts are to promote and publicize environmental programs, which have been a demonstrated strength of our congregation through the activities of our Green Sanctuary Committee, the largest committee in our society. One project will soon culminate in the delivery of a solar bench to be placed near a multi-use trail, which people may utilize to charge electronic devices. The other project, our ongoing arrangement for placing pollinator plants on a riverbank on the west side of Marietta, will “bear fruit” in spring & summer 2022 but will require continuous maintenance and attention. Both these projects involve cooperation with the City of Marietta. We have also served in advocacy role to oppose the continued permitting of Class II injection wells by a state agency (for burying brine waste from hydraulic fracturing for oil and gas -our county has the second highest number of such injection wells in the state and the highest amount of brine waste injection in the year 2019). We are trying to publicize this issue (in the face of a lack of transparency by the state) and to seek partners among those affected by spills and other accidents which endanger their water sources. All of these environmental projects require additional assistance of volunteers and at the same time can appeal—if they are broadly promoted—to those people with commitments to environmental causes. In 2014 a large banner outside our sanctuary building declared our congregation’s commitment to marriage equality. We think that this public declaration accounted largely for the increase in our membership, attendance, and pledging in that year. We need to identify and connect with other LGBTQ+ organizations in the region and develop programs, support systems, and outreach to this community. One of our members has organized a Facebook group for parents of LGBTQ+ children. We need to build relationships with such groups and arrange initiatives and programs to bring such people into our congregation. We shall present this initial progress as we send out bids to marketing and promotions firms in the region once our Chalice Lighter grant application is approved. Upon receiving bids, we shall evaluate the most affordable and effective company to meet our needs. Our needs will be described as assistance in branding, building partnerships, outreach, new program ideas consistent with our mission and with advancing objectives in anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and multi-cultural priorities. We shall also seek assistance from our consultant on improving our web site (for example, showing persons involved in FUUSM activities rather than our building on the front page) and on developing greater visibility on social media. Over the three-year grant period we shall use the following metrics to assess the effectiveness of our initiatives for congregational growth: number of new members (including age and other demographic characteristics), attendance at worship services, attendance and enrollment in RE programs, number of new programs developed, number of participants in sustainable activities in the larger community, and growth in donations and pledges to our budget. We have developed a five -year budget projection, which is included in this application. While the first two years of this budget period show an increase in our deficit, years four and five indicate a reduction of this deficit under the assumption that, with the help of the Chalice Lighter grant, increases in new members and resultant gradual increases in donations will be realized.

* How will this impact your growth?

With the advice our consultant, we anticipate that new programs, partnerships, promotional efforts will result in growth in our membership, especially younger persons, and resultant increases in our donations so that our budget deficit is reduced, as described above.

We prepared a PPT presentation to a business consulting class at Marietta College about our plans for growth (attached) They were to give us some advice, but that did not materialize.

* Please briefly explain how you believe this grant will help your congregation.

Growth in membership and an increase in diversity of our membership (in age, race, gender preference, and other demographic characteristics) will help to strengthen our congregation for the long term and to provide a strong financial base for our operations budget.

Funds from the Chalice Lighter grant and FUUSM-provided funds will be used in the first year of this three-year project in the amount of approximately \$15,000 to pay for the consultant. In the second and third years \$10,000 each will be spent on new programs--for advertising & promotion, social media consultant, publication materials.

*** Year 1**

\$5000

*** Year 2**

\$5000

*** Year 3**

\$5000

*** When do you want/expect to being using your grant?**

2023-03-01

*** Describe how your grant application relates and/or contributes to regional growth.**

Our congregation is a member of the Appalachian Cluster, which is comprised of UU congregations in the Appalachian region of Ohio, and West Virginia. Our minister and some Board of Trustees members attend meetings of this cluster; meetings are also held virtually in coordination with our Central East UU primary contact person. Information about the new programs, partnerships, and promotional activities will be shared with this cluster with the expectation of serving as a model for other UU congregations with similar demographics and challenges. Information on our new programs and promotions will also be shared with congregations in the Central East Region with help of our primary contact person.

*** Attach Long-Range Plan**

long_range_plan_update_for_chalice_lighter_app.docx

*** When was the long-range plan approved by your board?**

February 15, 2022

*** When was the long-range plan approved by your congregation?**

February 20, 2022

*** Dates of the Most Recent Complete Church Year**

2021-2022

*** Dates of the Prior Church Year**

2020-2021

*** Dates of the Church Year 2 Years Prior**

2019-2020

*** Number of Certified Members - Most recent church year**

107

*** Number of Certified Members - Prior church year**

106

*** Number of Certified Members - 2 years prior church year**

119

*** Number of friends - Most recent church year**

40

*** Number of friends - Prior church year**

50

*** Number of friends - 2 years prior church year**

50

*** Average Sunday attendance - Most recent church year**

30 live, 10 Zoom

*** Average Sunday attendance - Prior church year**

15 live, 20 Zoom

*** Average Sunday attendance - 2 years prior church year**

66

*** Number of children enrolled in RE - Most recent church year**

5

*** Number of children enrolled in RE - Prior church year**

7

*** Number of children enrolled in RE - 2 years prior church year**

11

*** Average Sunday RE attendance - Most recent church year**

2

*** Average Sunday RE attendance - Prior church year**

0

*** Average Sunday RE attendance - 2 years prior church year**

4

*** Number of local visitors - Most recent church year**

10

*** Number of local visitors - Prior church year**

not available

*** Number local visitors - 2 years prior church year**

not available

*** Number of new members - Most recent church year**

3

*** Number of new members - Prior church year**

11

*** Number of new members - 2 years prior church year**

4

*** Number of members dropped/resigned - Most recent church year**

7

*** Number of members dropped/resigned - Prior church year**

10

*** Number of members dropped/resigned - 2 years prior church year**

0

Number moved away or died (if available) - Most recent church year

4

Number moved away or died (if available) - Prior church year

1

Number moved away or died (if available) - 2 years prior church year

2

If year-to-date information indicates a significant change from prior years in any category, please briefly explain in the space below.

We have observed a decline in our membership (pre-pandemic) in recent years. We attribute this to diminished visibility in our community and loss of members from moving away & death.

*** Number of pledge units - Most recent church year**

115

*** Number of pledge units - Prior church year**

105

*** Number of pledge units - 2 years prior church year**

110

*** Total amount pledged - Most recent church year**

\$115,980

*** Total amount pledged - Prior church year**

\$109,560

*** Total amount pledged - 2 years prior church year**

\$116,199

*** Total income (all sources) - Most recent church year**

\$119,252

*** Total income (all sources) - Prior church year**

\$109,488

*** Total income (all sources) - 2 years prior church year**

\$143,393

*** Total expenses - Most recent church year**

\$142,085

*** Total expenses - Prior church year**

\$147,148

*** Total expenses - 2 years prior church year**

\$173,500

*** 2 years ago year-end financial statement**

budget_with_formulas_5_19_20.ods

*** Last year year-end financial statement**

budget_2020_2021_zero_balance.ods

*** Current year's budget**

202223_budget.xlsx

*** Estimated Budgets for the next 5 years**

five_year_budget.docx

Additional upload, if needed

brainstorming_ideas_november_2021.docx

Additional upload, if needed

fuusm_financials_19942022.xlsx

Additional upload, if needed

fuusm_presentation_to_mc_business_consutling_class.pdf

Additional upload, if needed

Additional upload, if needed

Additional upload, if needed

*** Long-range plan. Have you attached your plan and included current or planned programs on anti-racism, anti-oppression and multiculturalism, if any? This could also be called the strategic plan. (uploads are on page 2)**

Yes

*** Financial information: Have you attached year-end financial statements, current budget, and proposed 5-year budget projection? (uploads are on page 2)**

Yes

*** Evaluation. The Project Manager must provide an annual grant implementation report, including quarterly membership statistics and weekly attendance, using the form on the CER website. The annual written report will describe the efficacy of the grants, using whatever indicators the congregation believes are meaningful. The grant annual report should include the congregation's annual report, if one is produced. Do you agree to write and submit these evaluations and report?**

Yes

*** UUA Honor Congregation. Grant recipients must be and remain UUA Honor congregations. Is your congregation a UUA Honor Congregation?**

Yes

*** Communication. Do you agree to send a copy of your newsletter during the period of the grant to the Grant Manager identified in the letter notifying the applicant of the grant award?**

Yes

*** Authorized by (Board Chair/President)**

Karen Binkley

*** Date**

2022-07-29

*** This application approved by:**

Board of Trustees

*** Date Approved**

2022-07-27