

Dear Berrien UU Fellowship Friend,

Your support and donation are requested for an investment in BUUF leadership.

In 2015, Berrien Unitarian Universalist Fellowship was at a breaking point. Sunday Service attendance had dwindled. The congregation was aging and there were no children in Religious Education. Members were not sure of the BUUF mission. It seemed we were close to giving our building, property and generous endowment to the UUA. Instead we decided to create a plan for sustenance, and draw on our endowment to promote positive change and growth.

Through a nearly year-long process, BUUFers discerned a renewed purpose and direction. The mission statement was revised, and the congregation voted to invest in the fellowship's future. Endowment funds were withdrawn to support the purchase of a solar array, sanctuary chairs, website revision, and marketing to promote a 5-year growth plan of increasing Sunday Service attendance, children's RE participation, and membership.

Since 2016, goals of attendance and RE participation have been met. Membership is expected to trend favorably over the next 2 years.

Now BUUF is at a tipping point. For many years it has been a congregation of older adults with only a few younger families. Over the past two years, attendance and participation of younger adults and families has increased as hoped.

BUUF survived its breaking point. Now **it's time to build on the progress we've made and invest in a new generation of leadership.** The UUA and MidAmerica Region offer many resources to assist with congregational growth and leadership training.

MidWest Leadership School

MidWest Leadership School is a week-long intensive program in UU leadership and group dynamics. Led by lay and ordained staff with a deep understanding of UU congregations, this program

- develops both youth and adults into congregational leaders
- provides leadership tools and skills
- deepens Unitarian Universalist identity

MWLS is an extremely intense week of workshops, discussions, intimate small groups, worship preparation, personal theological exploration and growth.

In exchange for the student's wholehearted commitment to a strenuous schedule, MWLS offers a life-changing and **congregation-nourishing opportunity.**

MWLS will take place this summer about 300 miles from BUUF, on the campus of Luther College in Decorah, Iowa.

Adult School

MWLS is intended for those in—or soon to be in—an active lay-leadership role. **Students learn about consensus building, conflict management, congregational growth, and social justice issues.** *MWLS staff encourages congregations to send teams and has structured the Congregational Fee accordingly.*

JULY 15-21, 2018 (Sunday–Saturday)

Sunday: Check-in 2-4 pm, program begins 5 pm

Monday–Friday: Meals and activities are scheduled from 7 am to 9 pm daily, with breaks.

Saturday: Depart noon

Student Commitment

MWLS is an intense program with little free time. The week is filled with intellectual and emotional rigor.

Cost is \$590 per student and includes registration, lodging and meals.

Congregational Commitment

The Congregational Fee is paid by the congregation as a sign of support for the participant's leadership development; in many cases, congregations pay part or all of the tuition fee as well.

Congregational cost is \$700.

Total Cost for MWLS is \$2280 for 2 students

\$700	Congregation
\$590	Student 1
\$590	Student 2
<u>\$400</u>	Transportation (car rental, if needed; gas, tolls)

\$2280

The Proposal

The BUUF Board would like to raise \$1200 in special donations to send Katharine Lion and Beth La Fleur for UU leadership training at MWLS, then request matching funds from BUUF's Endowment. In the future, funds will be budgeted for this expense. The 2018-2019 budget will include \$2300 to support MWLS attendance by other adults next year.

Endowment withdrawals are restricted. Endowment interest provides about 20% of BUUF's operating income each year. Because drawing on the Endowment principle reduces BUUF's future earnings potential, **Endowment withdrawals must be approved by a majority of members entitled to vote, and approved unanimously by the Endowment Committee.**

The Vote

Immediately following service Sunday, May 20, 2018, a special congregational meeting will be held and motion called for an endowment withdrawal for July 2018 MWLS attendance. This endowment withdrawal vote is not related to, nor does it replace, BUUF's June 3 Annual Meeting. *This motion must be approved by a majority of voting members, but all interested persons may participate by [submitting this survey](#), or by attending the May 20 meeting.*

The Board invites all BUUF members and friends to seriously consider this request and respond to the survey, or attend the May 20 special meeting. If you favor the growth and sustenance of BUUF in its mission--*that every individual searching for spiritual meaning has a welcoming and caring religious community dedicated to diversity of thought, social and environmental justice, and peace for all*—then **we urge you to support this endowment request for leadership training, and donate any amount toward investing in a new generation of BUUF leaders.** Donation commitments are requested by May 20; fulfillment is requested by June 30.

Please complete this survey or attend the May 20 special congregational meeting immediately following service. Vote yes to withdraw matching endowment funds for leadership training, and pledge your financial support for BUUF's

growth initiative. Pledging a special donation is easy. You can indicate an amount in the survey, put a note in the offering basket, email Treasurer@BerrienUU.org, or talk with Harvey Johnson. Pledge fulfillment for this special donation is requested by June 30.

With Gratitude,

Your BUUF Board of Trustees

Lisa M. Fuller, President

Harvey Johnson, Treasurer

Katharine Lion, Secretary

Ellen Higdon, Co-Treasurer