

## **Thoughts on Money**

**Submitted by Rev. Jim McConnell, January 2018**

After some considerable thought, I believe it time for a sea change in our use of Money at BUUF. Presently, we are operating like a household, striving to keep our expenses within the moneys we take in from pledges and plate donations. This would make sense if we were a household. We are not household. We are a religious community with a unique and important message. We are the only congregation in the county that practices a progressive, modern religion that does not rely on a worn-out mythology to define the spiritual dimensions of life. We have an important job to do. We are on the rise. We need to amend our programs accordingly. It will take money to do this.

So, it is my proposal that we, for a three-year period, spend an additional 8,000 dollars a year, drawn from our endowment, to enhance our programs in the following areas.

### **Music:**

1. We need to start budgeting for live music every Sunday. Further, we need to start paying Candace for the additional time she spends on those Sundays when she accompanies our musicians in special music numbers. I have been paying Candace when we go over the budgeted 2-3 times a month.

2. I think we should start paying Gretchen for performing and organizing special music numbers. Since Gretchen organized the Music Chat Group and started supervising special numbers, the quality of our services has increased by an order of magnitude.
3. We need to develop Beth Lafleur as a paid reserve pianist, if she is willing. (Perhaps schedule her to play once a quarter or so and at those times when Candace cannot make it there.) Beth played for both services on Christmas Eve, for which I paid.

### **Young Adult Group:**

1. When my wife, Patty, visited on Christmas Eve, she noticed all the young kids running about. She thought we were making a big mistake by not having a young adults group. We need such a group. I think the group should be something like a monthly “Date Night” for which the fellowship would provide quality child care for the little ones and religious instruction for the kids over 5-7 while the adults do something like a potluck, discussion of current events or go out to a movie or even dancing. I propose that the group have a paid organizer who would be responsible for facilitating the group’s decision-making process and to keep information flowing freely.

## **Expand Guest Speakers Budget:**

1. When Dr. Darryl Heller spoke last month, it was one of our most successful services. We had great special music (Ella's Song) plus we had a speaker that was able to bring inspiration, depth, and sensitivity to the issue of Racism in America. I paid Darryl a 200.00 speaking fee. It was well worth it. We had 26 adults in Circle Talk that day. I am privileged to know several accomplished people, who are leaders in areas such as Women's rights, Labor rights, Economic justice, Immigration rights, issues surrounding terrorism, and Environmental issues. 200.00 dollars is probably not enough for these individuals. However, they are usually filled with such zeal that they are willing to speak for a small fee. (They would probably speak for free but, since they are a part of my circle of friends and acquaintances, I feel better about asking them when there is a small monetary reward.)

## **Video and Web Site:**

1. We have a talented video artist in Nico Rojas. I think we should pay him a little bit to make a promotional video for our web site. We already have some script. Also, I think we need to pay a little more attention to the web site. It is how most people find BUUF. We really need to have our best foot forward.

**Raise:** Next June I will be beginning my 10<sup>th</sup> year at BUUF. I enjoy this congregation and I love you all. I will be asking for a 10 percent raise on my housing allowance. (about \$1,000.00 per year)

There is a time to be frugal and a time to take a *Leap of Faith*. Now is the time to leap. There are many in our area who need and would welcome a way to liberal faith. This is something that only we can provide. It will take a little money to do the job better. The bottom line is that we have the sacred task of helping to create an environmentally friendly world community where everyone has a voice, makes a decent living, has a strong social safety net, and has the time to do the work of spiritual development.

Right now, our country seems to be in the hands of fear mongerers, bigots, racists, and haters. It is our job to stand against this hate and divisiveness by helping people to find the spiritual power within themselves to stand up for the inherent worth and dignity of every person and for our beautiful blue planet.

Peace,

Jim

**P.S.** You already have my stole proposal.