

29 January, 2014

White Paper: Share the Plate

Beginning in November of 2013, at the invitation of the staff, the Prudential Committee and other leaders have devoted time to enthusiastic discernment about a new spiritual practice of generosity at Arlington Street: *Share the Plate*.

In early January, I convened a Share the Plate “brain trust.” Participants included Shane McBride and Harlow Robinson (Prudential Committee co-chairs), Greg Haig (Prudential Committee), Laura Pattison (Jubilee), Susie Nacco (Jubilee and Treasurer), Phyllis Guiliano (Business Manager), and Art Nava (Ombudsman!). We are now poised to begin!

Beginning in February, every Sunday, we will share the morning offering with initiatives concerning Hunger, Homelessness, and Healthcare. Specifically, fifty percent of **all** donations (but not Covenant Renewal pledge payments) will go to support these causes. When we say, “the church has left the church,” we are talking about money as well as about ourselves. As always, our money and other capacity-building resources will go forth from Arlington Street in the hands of those of us who are prepared to do good work with it.

Very fittingly, the first *Share the Plate* Sunday will be on February 9th, our annual celebration of Valentine’s Day and *To Renewal House with Love*. Renewal House is the Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry’s shelter for women and children escaping domestic violence. In addition to sharing our collection plate, we will be filling a grocery cart for them. We will continue to collect donations for Renewal House throughout the month of February.

Arlington Street already has regular causes and organizations we support with our time, talent, and treasure, including the King Day of Service (January), Renewal House (February), Friday Night Supper (April and December), Louis D. Brown Peace Institute (Mothers’ Day, May),

Community Servings (Thanksgiving Day, November), and the Bethel Children's Holiday Party (December). We hope to add an organization that supports animals (in conjunction with October's Blessing of the Animals on the Feast Day of Saint Francis), and one of our immigration reform partners, among others. Our Jubilee Team, led by Susie Nacco, Laura Pattison, and Greg Haig, will be vetting organizations with which we choose to share our Sunday morning offering.

From February through June, we will invite that month's Share the Plate partners to join us for coffee hour at a table in the Parish Hall, where we can make connections, educate ourselves about their work, and learn ways we can join in doing special projects with them.

In these first months, we will be engaged in a learning and refining process of this spiritual practice. Members of the Pru, Jubilee, and I would love to hear from you! I am thrilled, and extremely proud of our beloved spiritual community for taking this extraordinary step on our spiritual journey together.

~ Rev. Kim