

Organizing an Event at UUCR

Prepared January 2012

Updated 2020

UUCR is a busy congregation, with many events of interest to the congregation occurring each week. There are standard procedures for planning church events, and various recommended procedures for making your event known to those who might want to attend. This document summarizes UUCR event procedures.

Planning

1. What is a “church event”? Church events are those sponsored by a church committee. If you have no committee sponsorship and cannot obtain one, then you have a *private event*.
 - Contact the church administrator (churchadministrator@uucr.org) for information about having a private event at UUCR.
 - The church’s rental policy can be found at <https://www.uucr.org/sites/default/files/document-archive/Rental%20Policy%204-18-17.pdf>
2. Begin planning early – at least two to three months in advance.
3. Be aware that any event open to the public OR intended to be a fundraiser for the church or for some segment of the church (e.g., junior high group, Partner Church committee) must be approved.
 - For public events that are not fundraisers – Lay Ministry Council approves.
 - For fundraisers, if the anticipated fund raising is less than \$250 -- the Lay Ministry Council must approve. The one exception is for fundraisers for the Religious Education program for youth, where the Religious Education Committee approves.
 - if more than \$250 -- the Church Board must approve.
 - The complete fund raising policy can be found at <https://www.uucr.org/sites/default/files/document-archive/Fundraising%20Policy%204-18-17.pdf>
4. Major church events are put on the church calendar at an annual calendar session conducted each April by UUCR’s Lay Ministry Council. If you did not get your event posted at that session,
 - Check UUCR’s online church calendar for possible dates at www.uucr.org/calendar
 - Also discuss possible dates with the Church Administrator (churchadministrator@uucr.org). She has an important overview perspective about how events occurring at the same time (or near each other in time) might impinge on each other.
5. When you have one or more possible dates cleared with the Church Administrator, obtain approval if necessary (public event, fund-raiser) from the Lay Ministry Council. A request may be received and approved by email; the current Chairs are Terrie Barr and Mark Shannon.
6. After approval of event and date by Council, complete a calendar request form at <https://www.uucr.org/committees/calendarrequest.html>. The form prompts you to consider what size room or rooms you will need, room setup, and equipment needed.
7. If you would like to schedule a Zoom meeting using one of the UUCR Zoom accounts, contact the Church Administrator at least 4 days prior to the event with the following details:
 - Name of event & organizer

- Date/Time
- Whether Zoom breakout rooms will be required

Publicizing

Events can be open to congregation members only, or also open to the public. We have a number of ways of publicizing events both internally and externally. You don't have to do all of these things, but it is recommended that you use several ways of getting folks' attention.

Internal Publicity. Here are things to do to make your event known within the UUCR community:

- ☐ Develop a brief description and **flyer** for the event. This may be used in several ways (see below).
- ☐ Write an article for **Quest**, UUCR's newsletter published biweekly. See publication dates and deadlines, and submission instructions, at <https://www.uucr.org/resources/quest-newsletter>. See Quest for examples of articles.
- ☐ **Sunday Order of Service (OOS) Announcements.** You may want to request that an OOS announcement run for 2 or 3 Sundays leading up to your event. Write a short description and email it to uucr@uucr.org by 9 am Wednesday morning to have it included in Sunday announcements.
- ☐ **Table space in Fellowship Hall** on Sunday morning. You can include this with an OOS request to the church office staff (uucr@uucr.org). Hand out your flyer (and other information) there, talk to people about the event, or solicit sign-ups for the event. Table space is usually limited, so if you think you need more than half a table, discuss this in your email to office staff.
- ☐ **UUCR Web Site** – www.uucr.org
 - Send information to webteam@uucr.org for posting on the website. Give the web team at least one week advance notice for your posting.
 - Events are posted on the "Upcoming Events" UUCR web page –see <https://www.uucr.org/upcoming-events> for examples of current posts. These can run for several months before the event. Any event submitted and entered by the Web team on the Upcoming Events page automatically moves to the home page (www.uucr.org) when the date is within one week. After the event concludes, it automatically goes away.
 - Therefore, each item carries two descriptions: a terse one (usually one sentence) for the home page notice, and a longer one that appears on the Upcoming Events page. Please include both in your request to the Web team. Keep them as simple and clear as possible.
 - Send as many details as you have: date, time, location, description, contact email, and a flyer, photo or graphic if you have one.
 - Consider providing an email address for signing up for events. Our current online event signup system is a web-based form that sends an email message to one or more people. The system does not collate responses or put them in a database; it just packages the information into an email message. The main advantage over simply asking people to send an email is the increased likelihood, with a form, that people will send all the information that is needed. Decide on who will take responsibility for receiving and processing these emails and provide that person's email address along with the announcement information.
 - Be cognizant that the web team for the current website consists of primarily one person. Be clear and accurate about your requests.

- ❶ **Bulletin Boards.** These are physical sites around the building where you can post your flyer. Not all boards are used for events. Ask the church administrator which boards are appropriate to use for your event. Do NOT tape flyers on walls, doors, etc.
- ❷ **Pulpit Announcements.** Some Order of Service Announcements are featured as pulpit announcements each Sunday at the discretion of the board member reading announcements. If you wish to ask that yours be featured, email the office (uucr@uucr.org) to find out the name and email of the board member doing announcements that week, and make a request directly to that board member. You may also request to make a brief pulpit announcement yourself at the start of the service. These are vetted by the senior minister (minister@uucr.org), whose approval depends upon time constraints and other considerations for the service. Pulpit announcements must take no more than one to two minutes.
- ❸ **Facebook.** UUCR has a Members and Friends Facebook Group where you can publicize internal events. The "Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville: Members and Friends" group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/UU.Rockville/> is for messages to other UUCR members and friends. It is recommended that all members and friends join this group for announcements and discussion about congregational activities. You should publicize UUCR-internal events in the Members and Friends group page, and generally not on the Facebook [uu.rockville](https://www.facebook.com/uu.rockville/) page (see below). Anyone can join the group, post to the wall, create an event, or add a picture or video, just like most other Facebook groups. Note that there are people monitoring content added to the Facebook group; if we find that objectionable content is added we will restrict who is able to post to Facebook. All content on Facebook is viewable by the general public.
- ❹ **All-church email.** These are used sparingly -- usually if there is an unusual circumstance such as a weather-related date change for your event. Contact the church office staff (uucr@uucr.org) to request an all-church email. The administrator may decline the request at her discretion.

Publicizing an Event That Will Be Open to the Public Here are some things you can do to make your event known to the public.

- ☪ **Local UUs and religious organizations.** The church office maintains an email list of UU congregations in the greater Washington area. Most have newsletters and all have websites. If you want to contact the organizations by email and submit a short article, event description and/or flyer for posting, direct the email and content to UUCR's office staff (uucr@uucr.org) and request they forward it. UUs for Social Justice -- <http://uusj.net/wp/> – can be reached by email to info@uusj.org.

- ☪ **Facebook:** In addition to the Members and Friends Facebook group (see above), UUCR has The "Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville" Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/uu.rockville>. The uu.rockville page is best for announcements being promoted to the general public; internal discussion is better on the "Members and Friends" group. For example, we may publicize that child care is available for an event on the uu.rockville Facebook page, but a discussion about which rooms are better for providing childcare is better suited to the Members group. Note that there are people monitoring what gets added to the Facebook content; if we find that objectionable content is added we will restrict who is able to post to Facebook.

- ☪ **Montgomery County Media:** Community events can be submitted to MyMCMedia.org.
<https://www.mymcmedia.org/submit-an-event/>

- ☪ **Eventbrite:** Free events may be advertised on Eventbrite for no charge.
<https://www.eventbrite.com/organizer/overview/>

- ☪ **PAID Newspaper Advertising.** Paid advertising is generally only feasible for major events. The cost of paid ads must be covered by the budget for your particular event, or by the budget of the UUCR committee sponsoring the event. UUCR does not have a general advertising budget that contributes to publicizing events.

Paid newspaper ads come in 2 general types: classified ads and display ads. All local papers will be happy to help you place ads. If you create a little display ad, papers can generally receive it in any format and faithfully reproduce it.

Classified Ads:

- o **Washington Post:** <http://www.washingtonpostads.com/place-an-ad>

UUCR does have an advertising account with the Washington Post. That means you can arrange an ad and have them bill the church directly. However, before placing the ad, notify the office staff (uucr@uucr.org) that you are using the account, and tell them what budget will pay for it.