


First Unitarian Universalist Church Columbus, Ohio		Policies and Procedures
Chapter: II. Congregational Responsibilities		Source: Carole Wilhelm
Title: Caring Committee		
Approved by: Governance Documents Committee		Date Approved: April 2010
Effective Date: April 2010		Date of Last Review: April 2010

Policy: Established in 1982, the Caring Committee seeks to be aware of and respond to joys and sorrows of church members and friends.

Procedures: There are many facets of the committee which have procedures.

Caring Cards The process for receiving, confirming, and disseminating information, as well as for preparing the Joys and Sorrows cards is updated frequently. A notebook will be kept by the committee which gives step-by-step details to volunteers, all of whom receive these directions. Included here is general procedural information.

1. Caring cards are prepared weekly for signing at the Sunday services. The cards recognize life transitions, accomplishments, injuries, hospitalizations and deaths.
2. Requests for caring cards can be completed in three ways.
 - a. A quick-link on the church website allows anyone to complete a Joys and Sorrows request form.
 - b. Individuals can complete a hard-copy form available at the Caring Table.
 - c. Individuals can call the church office.

For the latter two, requests will be transferred to the form on the church web site.

3. This form is a notification of need for attention and is distributed electronically to: ministers, chaplain, director of religious education, neighborhood network coordinators, caring committee chairperson, caring card coordinators, administrative assistant, and newsletter editor.
4. There is a Saturday 5 pm deadline for receipt of information to be prepared for pulpit announcements and card preparation. Information needs to be verified as sometimes there are issues of confidentiality. Exceptions to the deadline occur when a member is in serious condition or has died or when a memorial service will be held before the following Sunday. Usually the announcement is made but the card is sent the following Sunday.
5. Cards requested by ministers will always be sent. However, when any other request is received and the recipient is not listed in the church directory, the Caring Table volunteer or the caring card coordinator must inquire about a connection to our church. Such requests will be decided on a case-by-case basis.
6. Cards will not be sent to family and friends of church members. They will be sent to the church member who requests a card for a specific situation related to that family member or friend. Examples of exceptions include cards for individuals active at First UU in the past, sympathy cards to a member's family, or cards for various reasons to ministers' families.
7. New member cards will be sent at the time individuals sign the membership book.

8. Birthday cards will be sent to those celebrating 80th, 85th, 90th and each year thereafter. Flowers for senior birthdays will be given. Permission will be sought in both cases. The Caring Committee does not provide a birthday cake but will work with family to help secure volunteers who will serve and clean up. The family is encouraged to have family members participate in honoring the individual.
9. Cards, if requested, will be sent to those celebrating 25th, 50th and 60th anniversaries. If someone wishes to provide an after-service party for an anniversary, outside the policy years, the Committee will have a card at the serving table for people to sign.
10. The Ministers Appreciation Committee, incorporated into the Caring Committee in 2006, remembers and recognizes significant life dates of professional ministers and attempts to publicly acknowledge appreciation for their ministerial work. Caring cards will be sent for all significant life dates; flowers will be given on the 5th years of birthdays and anniversaries.
11. Cards will be sent to families having a naming/dedication ceremony for children.
12. Only the Caring Committee will send Spring cards to shut-ins and those who have lost a spouse or child.
13. Holiday cards will be sent in December to staff, former members and friends who have moved away during the year, former ministers, and former members who stay in touch. These cards will include the family members of the recipient if they were involved in the church. Only the Caring Committee will send cards to families and spouses of those deceased since sending Spring cards.
14. If requested, the Committee will send a card to acknowledge grief and loss for those whose beloved pets die, but there will be no announcement from the pulpit or in the Discoverer.

Neighborhood Network Volunteer Coordinators organize a network of church members (approximately 25 Area Contacts in 12 geographic areas) to assist fellow church members in times of emergency or when other support systems are not available. Examples of assistance include transportation for medical appointments, meals, errands, child and pet care.

1. Requests can be made by members themselves, ministers, friends, family and the Caring Committee via phone calls or the Joys and Sorrows form, available as a link at the top on the church website.
2. Coordinators notify the appropriate Area Contact after receiving a request. The Area contact is responsible for calling the person needing assistance to determine what services are needed. They then call a volunteer in their area to make arrangements to handle the request.
3. Coordinators monitor the Joys and Sorrows forms to identify those who may need help.
4. Coordinators follow up with Area Contacts after requests are made and send thank-you notes to volunteers.

Memorial Services Volunteer coordinators contact families who are holding a memorial service at First UU Church for a member who is deceased. They explain that the Committee offers to help with arranging for greeters, setting up a memorabilia table, and organizing a reception after the service.

1. The Caring Committee will cover the cost of guest books.

2. Members and friends will not be charged for the use of Fellowship Hall. This was approved by the Board (11/04).
3. Food and beverages, appropriate to the time of day, are provided with donations from the congregation and Committee budget. The family is asked to provide anything in addition or to donate money for what they request.

Medical Equipment Loan A volunteer coordinator maintains a list of orthopedic and medical equipment that members are willing to loan on a short-term basis.

1. Those wishing a loan should contact the coordinator who phones individuals in the area having the needed item. He or she connects them to make arrangements.
2. The coordinator follows up to be certain the equipment is returned.

Presentations or Workshops The Committee offers one event per year, open to all, with no charge.

1. The presentation or workshop is intended to be educational in nature and related to life's issues.
2. Members of the congregation with professional expertise are sought to do the presentation or workshop, when possible.

Finances A restricted Fund Account established for donations to the Caring Committee was approved by the Finance Committee (2/05).

1. Funds in the account will be only for Caring Committee use as it sees fit.
2. Decision to purchase any item will be made by vote of the Committee.
3. Any person on the Committee will be allowed to purchase items to be paid for out of the account, once such expenditure is approved by the Committee.
4. Authorization to draw upon the account will be given only by the Chair, who must sign any request for reimbursement.
5. If excess money (from the general budget) is spent during the year, the difference comes from income to the Restricted Fund. If there is money left over in income, that amount is added to the fund balance for the following year (from the bookkeeper, 6/07).

Other Church Groups Three groups are under the Caring Committee's umbrella; there is no financial or leadership responsibility for them.

1. The Ministers' Appreciation Committee (11/06).
2. The Funeral Consumer's Alliance (3/07).
3. The Cancer Support Group (4/07).