

Plate Collection Guidelines

The Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Society of Ridgewood has granted the Social Responsibilities Council (SRC) the authority to use the Offertory Collection at Sunday services to collect money for social justice causes, as determined by the SRC, once a month during the regular congregational year.

Since there are more organizations that would like to participate than there are available Sundays, this document is to set forth the process by which the SRC functions in this regard.

I. Guidelines for the Application Form

The SRC accepts applications from any organization via a Plate Collection Request Form which can be found on the USR website under SR Council or at the SRC table on Sunday mornings. The form needs to be delivered to the SRC mailbox and will be considered at the next available SRC meeting. To be considered, an application must be received at least 3 weeks before an SRC meeting to allow time for distribution to SRC members prior to that meeting. (SRC meeting dates are posted on the USR website).

Note: It is understood that there may be emergency requests during the year. These emergency requests will need to be considered in light of the current schedule. If the request is to be honored, this may require replacing an existing scheduled collection or requesting a “special plate collection” from the USR Board on an additional Sunday.

II. Guidelines for Process

The SRC creates awareness of the Monthly Plate collection process through:

- Announcements in the USR monthly newsletter
- Postings on the USR website
- Eblasts
- A statement about the process which is read at the time each recipient receives the collection on the Sunday selected

When a cause is approved, the person(s) that made the recommendation in coordination with a SRC member, will be responsible for the following:

- Publicizing the collection in the newsletter and Order of Service.
- Making the announcement prior to the plate collection(s)*
- Notifying the USR administrator of the name and address where the check should be sent.
- Submitting a follow up article for the newsletter indicating the amount of the collection and thanking the congregation.

***Suggested script for plate collection**

One collection per month is dedicated for our outreach programs. These causes are discussed and voted on by the SRCouncil at each quarterly meeting. If you have a suggestion for a future plate collection plate, please complete a request form available at the SR table or online at the USR website, uuridgewood.org. Requests are due 3 weeks before the SRCouncil meetings.

Today's collection will be for..... (Introduce the person speaking about the cause) If you are writing a check, make it payable to USR with the organization in the memo line. Thank you.

III. Guidelines for criteria in selecting recipients

The criteria below are intended to help SRC members think about the broad range of potential ways an organization might be evaluated.

Consistency with Our Mission and USR Focus

- Does the organization help us fulfill the USR mission to be "a beacon for justice and love" in the world?
- Does the organization support the work of one or more of the SR Council committees or any organization founded by an SR Council committee?
- Will there be synergy with other efforts within USR?
- Is there synergy with UUA, UNO, ICUU, USC, UU NY Metro District, LMDNJ, or other affiliated organizations?
- Will this organization/issue help promote USR in the larger community?

Urgency

- How urgent is the need?
- Will our contribution make a difference?
- Can we offer the assistance at a time when it would really help?

New or Repeating Causes

- Have we given to this organization before?
- When was the last time?
- Do we want to repeat this giving now? Every year?
- Will the congregation continue to be motivated to give?
- Is the issue a new issue that is important for us or is it very similar to the issue covered by other organizations?

The Requesting Person

- Is the requesting person a member/friend of USR?
- Is this a person who has made other requests and have we been able to help before?
- Is this a person we want to support because she/he has provided USR with resources and continued effort?

IV. Guidelines for Voting

The SRC makes its selection based on the approved criteria. Each voting SRC member present at that meeting votes, through a secret balloting process, for the organizations to receive the plate collection during the available months.

“Voting SRC members” means:

- An SRC Committee Chair (one vote per committee)
- The current Chair/Chairs of the SRC

The information on the application form shall be the basis for discussion and voting. No personal presentations to the SRC shall be allowed. If the application is made by a member of the SRC, she/he may participate in the discussion, but not bring in additional information that may disadvantage other applicants not so represented.

Approved September 25, 2012