

First Unitarian Church of St. Louis (FUSTL)

Policy on Special Collections

DATE OF BOARD APPROVAL: August 13, 2012

Purpose

To document First Church's practice of a periodic "Special Collection" and to provide guidelines to the Social Responsibility Committee (SRC) and Congregation members for selection of recipients of these collections.

Scope

This policy applies to the practice of designating one or more Sundays per month, each month, on which the nonpledge worship service collections are assigned to specified charities or designated church programs and to the selection of these recipients.

Guidelines for selecting recipients are as follows:

Guiding Principles

1. Our practice of donating Special Collections to the community or designated church programs demonstrates our intent "to live our faith daily to make the world a better place."
2. Recipient organizations or designated church programs support a charitable purpose that is consistent with Unitarian Universalist principles.
3. Recipient organizations are nonpartisan and nonpolitical (primarily service rather than lobbying organizations).
4. Consistent with First Church's values, special consideration is given to those charitable organizations that provide services to needy families, support children's educational access and success, offer aid to the homeless and the mentally ill, and in which church members actively participate. The primary focus of many recipients has been that of the SRC: Hunger, Health, and Homelessness.
5. Organizations are normally St. Louis-based; however, the Selection Committee may consider nominations of national or international organizations, based on the overall strength of the nomination, the organization's link to our church community, the organization's service record, and our ability to have an impact with our donation.
6. The slate of proposed recipients for any church year should reflect a variety of charitable causes and services.

7. Recipient organizations must hold federal tax-exempt status under section 501 (c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code, to ensure that recipients are organizations to which First Church, as a charitable organization, may legally donate funds.

Church program recipients, which would not have separate IRS tax exempt status but because of their mission and administration, can be identified as legitimate charitable organizations, should engage in activities that encourage church members and friends to volunteer.

If the Committee approves for nomination an organization that does not hold charitable tax-exempt status, the Committee must state that the nominee does not hold 501 (c)(3) exempt status and detail the basis on which the Committee recommends the organization as a legitimate charitable organization.

8. Organizations and church programs may be the recipients of more than one First Church Special Collection during the church year.

9. First Church has historically provided financial and other support to projects and organizations such as South Side Day Nursery, Gateway 180, the Church's Sandwich Project, Habitat for Humanity, Community Action Endowment Fund, and Trinity Hot Meals. When considering potential recipients of Special Collections, the Selection Committee will consider both the Church's historical relationships to these efforts and organizations, as well as organizations newly nominated by Members. An effort will be made to donate to various organizations that reflect our church's values and current involvements.

Process for Nominating and Selecting Recipients

1. Each year, the SRC will inform FUSTL Members of the Special Collection process, the nomination process, and criteria for nomination. Information will be made available via the Church's newsletter, Order-of-Service insert, and in Fellowship Hall.
2. Members may nominate an organization or church program via the Nomination Form, which is attached.
3. Following the submission deadline, members of the Social Responsibility Selection Committee will evaluate nominees, using the attached criteria, and select nominees that best meet criteria. In making selections for the year, the committee will pick a mix of organizations, both those with whom we historically have had relationships, as well as those with whom our connections are recent.
4. The final list of approved recipients for the following church year will be announced to the Congregation in the newsletter. Persons submitting nominations will be informed of the final decision for their nomination.

Other:

Members donating to Special Collections are encouraged to do so by check made payable to “First Unitarian Church” with a memo-line notation specifying “Special Collection.” By donating to First Church, rather than to recipient organizations, Members whose annual giving exceeds \$250 are assured of receiving calendar-year statements of pledges and all other donations to First Church.

The FUSTL Church Administrator forwards total proceeds of Special Collections to recipients, along with a cover letter. For the Christmas Eve collection, proceeds may be divided between more than one recipient.