

## The Folk Process and Congregational Polity: Rebuilding Rock Tavern Through Music

“Stronger connections among congregations will strengthen ‘the community of autonomous congregations’ that is essential to the flourishing of congregational polity within each church and throughout the movement.” (Interdependence: Renewing Congregational Polity, Commission on Appraisal, Unitarian Universalist Association, 1997)

The UU Congregation at Rock Tavern (NY) was destroyed by fire on September 12, 2006. (Visit their website <http://www.uucrt.org> for details)

So what does the above definition have to do with the rebuilding of the meetinghouse in Rock Tavern? Congregations know the answer. Take, for example, helping to rebuild through music.

The UU Fellowship of Poughkeepsie (NY) recognized that the Rock Tavern Congregation “provided a friendly venue to many folk artists over the years” and thanked them by holding “a benefit folk concert and raffle to help them rebuild” on November 12, 2006 (quoted from the folk concert flyer). Some members of the UU Congregation of Central Nassau (Garden City NY) were in the audience and thought – what a wonderful event! We have a coffee house series. We can do this, too! At the same time, UUs and friends in New York City who have been very involved in working on the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast and had hosted several successful fundraisers heard about the congregation in Rock Tavern. A chance conversation led to the decision to have a [fundraiser coffee house](#) at the UU Congregation of Central Nassau on January 21 to benefit the rebuilding of the Rock Tavern congregation.

Strong connections among congregations lead to even stronger interconnections, not only among congregations but beyond – for example, all the way to the Gulf Coast – think [Gulf Coast Fall Chalice Lighters](#) call! (Note: It’s not too late to give . . . ) Through music, and what UU Pete Seeger calls “the folk process,” we’re moving forward as a district. It’s a win-win. We support each other. We share the good news of Unitarian Universalism. We have a wonderful time together with good music from a wealth of musicians and lay leaders who are generous of spirit. And we each get to do a small part to help with the rebuilding of a worthy congregation in our District.

Congregational polity offers us a wonderful opportunity to build community within the Metro NY District. An added bonus: this is a step in the process of building community across our borders.

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