

## **Appreciating Church Volunteers**

by Richard Duda, UUCPA Conflict Resolution Team

Churches are volunteer organizations, and, in adapting to budgeting realities, our church is becoming even more of a volunteer organization. And that is not a bad thing. When we work together, we give of our time and talent, and we receive the very real psychic rewards of sharing our time with other people who share our values.

Is there a downside? Well, none of us is perfect, and from time to time volunteers make mistakes. Examples abound: things may not get done on expected schedules, names can be misspelled, or wires can get crossed. If you are expecting someone else to do things a certain way, and they either don't get done on time or don't get done in the way you had expected, it is normal to feel upset, annoyed, irritated.

But if you have ever spent a lot of time and effort on something and then received criticism as your reward, you know how deeply that can hurt. While we should not disrespect anyone, professionals can take criticism objectively – it comes with the territory. Things are different with volunteers.

Our third UU principle calls upon us to encourage spiritual growth in our congregations. One good path toward spiritual growth is to cultivate greater appreciation for the work of our staff and volunteers. Who knows – with a growing culture of appreciation, the things that you do for the church may be appreciated as well.

*The UUCPA Conflict Resolution Team was formed to help our congregation to deal with disagreements among members. If you would like help with a church-related issue, please send an e-mail to [conflict@uucpa.org](mailto:conflict@uucpa.org) or speak to a member of the team. The current team members are Joe Chee, Richard Duda, Susan Owicki, and John Pierce.*