

CONGREGATIONAL AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

14

Your congregation and your larger community offer many resources that no book or DVD could provide.

Imagine a Religious Education field trip to a nearby farm, complete with a tour, a conversation with the farmer about the challenges she faces, samples of the farm's produce, and a few seeds to plant at home. Imagine community forums where experts from within the congregation or from a local university or advocacy group discuss the latest developments in their beliefs about ethical eating. Imagine an organic advocate (or other issue advocate) leading the congregation's shoppers through the aisles of a local grocery store, explaining foods' origins and the future we vote for when we buy those products. Imagine visiting the cows, pigs, chickens, and goats living just around the corner, and learning about the farms they came from.

But of course, you don't have to imagine any of this. Community resources are all around you. You just have to find them.



We can begin by doing small things at the local level, like planting community gardens or looking out for our neighbors. That is how change takes place in living systems, not from above but from within, from many local actions occurring simultaneously. - Grace Lee Boggs, Chinese-American Author, Feminist, Social Activist

Websites to find resources in your community:

Farmed Animal Sanctuaries. American Sanctuary Association., <<http://tinyurl.com/farmsanctuaries>>. A rare chance to see and interact with living cows, goats, pigs, chickens, and turkeys. Farmed animal sanctuaries rescue, rehabilitate and provide lifelong care for hundreds of animals who have been rescued from or escaped from stockyards, factory farms, and slaughterhouses. This website lists farmed animal sanctuaries across the US. If you do not see a sanctuary within driving distance on this list, call one near you and ask if they know of a closer sanctuary.

EarthSave: Healthy People Healthy Planet. <<http://www.earthsave.org/chapters.htm>>. Lists forty regional chapters of EarthSave throughout the United States. EarthSave helps lead "a global movement of people from all walks of life who are taking concrete steps to promote healthy and life-sustaining food choices" that facilitate "environmental and human health." A place to find expert speakers, or go on a fact-finding mission.

Food Reference Website. James T. Ehler. <<http://www.foodreference.com/html/upcomingfoodevents.html>>. Lists, by state or by month, food festivals, food shows & food events, some of which would be appropriate for a field trip to learn more about the ethics of eating.

Organic Consumers Association (OCA).

<<http://www.organicconsumers.org/>>

Lists thousands of local businesses that support organic, fair trade, and sustainable enterprises. The grassroots, public interest website provides a wealth of information on health (including children's health), corporate accountability, fair trade, genetic engineering, and other key topics. The OCA represents over 850,000 members, subscribers and volunteers. The powerful search engine embedded in the left column of their homepage allows you to search for green enterprises in your local area.

Organic Crop Improvement Association

<<http://www.ocia.org/>>. This nonprofit, member-owned, agricultural organization certifies and provides organic products, with chapters all over the country that might be able to provide a speaker for an event, or tour guide for a local grocery store. Find a chapter near you at <<http://tinyurl.com/ociachapters>>.

Gleaning Network.

Society of St. Andrew, <<http://www.endhunger.org/>>. Today's mechanized farm equipment harvests fields quickly, but often leaves food to rot. Gleaning means gathering vegetables that remain on fields after the official harvest, so that they not go to waste. Humanitarian groups around the world glean farmers' fields and donate the food to the hungry. Some ancient cultures promoted gleaning with this humanitarian aim, and Jewish scriptures command farmers to leave the edges of their fields for the poor and for strangers. The Gleaning Network home page can connect you with organized gleaning in your area, or you can use their "Gleaning Guide How-To Handbook" to start your own gleaning program for all ages.

Where to Buy Fair Trade Certified™ Products.

TransFair USA, <<http://www.transfairusa.org/content/WhereToBuy/>> A search engine that connects you to retailers selling Fair Trade Certified™ products in your local area. A call to those establishments could result your finding a speaker on Fair Trade who can visit your congregation, or in a guided tour of that establishment with a focus on Fair Trade.

Vegetarians in Paradise.

Zel & Reuben Allen, <<http://www.vegparadise.com/directory.html>>. Lists, by state, hundreds of vegetarian educational, affinity, and dining groups across the nation, very likely including some in your local area.

Additional Local Resources

Congregations in Your Area. Consider inviting one or more neighboring congregations to a joint meal or food event, where representatives from different faith traditions discuss and celebrate their diverse values, traditions, stories, and teachings about food.

Members of your Congregation. Talk to congregants about which members have particular expertise or passion about an aspect of ethical eating, and invite those people to lead a workshop, organize an event, speak, or create a resource.

Leaders of your Congregation. Invite your Minister, Director of Religious Education, and Social Action Committee to be involved in the CSAI process. Ask ministers: if they could speak on any aspect of ethical eating, what would it be? Then direct them to the forthcoming Worship Supplement. Ask DREs or RE Committees about age-appropriate ways to help children explore ethical eating. Invite the Social Action committee to share their wisdom about the types of events that tend to work the best in your congregation, and ask what resources they know in your congregation and community.

Marginalized ethnic, racial, and cultural groups.

All people have opinions about food, but some voices are seldom heard. Ask questions about experiences of people of various racial, ethnic, class, age, and religious groups in your region.

Food Banks, Soup Kitchens, Social Agencies and Social Workers.

Ask what food-related issues affect the most marginalized members of your area, and how your congregation could get involved in addressing the problems. Ask how the financial crisis beginning in the fall of 2008 changed the hunger landscape in your community, and what can be done.

Local Government. Talk to local officials about hunger, sustainable agriculture, labor conditions, animal welfare, and climate change. If they don't have plans in place to address these issues, connect them to community organizations that do. Let them know you'll stay in touch to find out how they are faring.

Be creative! And remember to have some fun as you learn about ethical eating. What can you learn at a Tex-Mex restaurant or during a visit to an Asian-American market? What is the purpose of a pagan "cakes and ale" ritual, or a Christian "love feast"? How are Jewish dietary laws (*Kashrut*) similar to and different from Muslim dietary laws (*Dhabiha Halaal*)? The local resources for exploring ethical eating are virtually endless.



The Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) has many justice- and witness-related resources available for interested congregations and individuals. Most of them can be accessed through the Social Justice section of the UUA website <<http://www.uua.org/socialjustice/>>. For advocacy-related resources, including information on current legislation, contact the UUA Washington Office for Advocacy (see info on cover).

The “Green Sanctuary” Program <<http://tinyurl.com/greensanctuary>>. Path for individual & congregational study/action in response to environmental challenges. Originated with the Seventh Principle Project (later named the UU Ministry for Earth) in the early 1990s; in 2001 it formalized as a program for congregational accreditation. Many Green Sanctuary congregations have pursued projects relating to food ethics/environmental justice, including community gardening, CSAs, local food movements, and congregational commitments to reduce their “food footprint” by eating lower on the food chain.

Inspired Faith, Effective Action <<http://tinyurl.com/faithaction>>. A Social Justice Workbook for Congregations, by the UUA Advocacy and Witness team. Outlines why and how to ensure that (1) religious grounding is central to con-

gregation-based justice work; (2) work builds relationships, is strategic, effective, and accountable to those most affected by injustice. It’s a blend of theory and practice, designed to inspire faith and create effective action. An excellent resource for your congregation’s Ethical Eating Task Force!

GROUNDWORK <<http://tinyurl.com/antiracism>>A critical part of ethical eating is addressing underlying systems that perpetuate racial injustice. One tool for learning more is *GROUNDWORK*, an Anti-Racism training and organizing program for UU youth and young adults. *GROUNDWORK* trainers are available to facilitate dialogue, education, training and organizing in congregations, schools and community groups.

UU Programs

The Social Justice Empowerment Program.

<<http://tinyurl.com/empowerjustice>> Managed by the UUA’s Office of Advocacy & Witness, the Social Justice Empowerment Program can help your congregation assess the quality of its justice programs and to make strategic decisions about direction and focus. Or design your own workshop using the extensive Handbook you’ll find online.

UUA Public Relations Manual (PDF, 112 pages) <<http://tinyurl.com/uucommunications>> Attracting media to your public witness events brings community awareness to the issues you are

working on and work you are doing. This guide will help you attract and relate to the media.

Diverse & Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM) <<http://www.druumm.org>>. A support and advocacy People of Color organization of the UUA, DRUUMM mobilizes in an anti-racist collective that unites to: work for self-determination, justice and equal opportunity; empower various ministries of DRUUMM members; celebrate diverse People of Color heritages; overcome racism through resistance; and transform and enrich Unitarian Universalism through DRUUMM’s multiracial, multicultural experiences.

UU Allies for Racial Equity (UU ARE) <<http://www.uuallies.org>>. An organization whose mission is to participate in the anti-racist transformation of Unitarian Universalism and our world by confronting racism in ways that are accountable to communities of color and creating opportunities for white UUs to understand white privilege and unlearn white supremacy. ARE provides educational opportunities for integrating anti-racist analysis into social justice work as well as consultation making this work accountable to communities of color.

UU Service Committee (UUSC) <http://www.uusc.org/content/economic_justice> & <http://www.uusc.org/content/environmental_justice> The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee advances human rights and social justice around the world, partnering with those who confront unjust power structures and mobilizing to challenge oppressive policies. On their economic justice site, you can get involved in programs like the UUSC Small Farmer Fund and the UUSC Coffee Project, while learning more about fair trade, workers’ rights, and the living wage. On their environmental justice site, learn about the human right to water and get involved in the water crisis, climate change, and shareholder accountability. UUSC resources for learning, advocacy, and direct service abound!

UU Ministry for Earth (UUMFE) <<http://www.uuministryforearth.org>>. Formerly known as the Seventh Principle Project and now an affiliate organization of the UUA with the purpose to inspire, facilitate and support personal, congregational, and denominational practices that honor and sustain the Earth and all

beings. UUMFE provides educational and worship resources, publications, and suggestions for practical actions to help reduce our impact on the planet. Programs emphasize eco-spirituality, environmental justice, and sustainability. UUMFE launched the Green Sanctuary Program in the early 1990s, and transferred its management was transferred to the UUA Office of Congregational Services in 2008 to increase congregational awareness and denominational commitment.

UU United Nations Office (UU-UNO)

<<http://www.uu-uno.org/>>. The UU-UNO promotes the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all, as reflected in the United Nations Charter. Through targeted education, advocacy and outreach, they engage Unitarian Universalists in support of international cooperation and the work of the United Nations. UUUNO promotes the “Friends of the World Food Program,” a US-based non-profit organization dedicated to building support for the World Food Program (WFP) and other hun-

ger relief efforts. See <http://tinyurl.com/foodfriends>.

UUs for a Just Economic Community.

<<http://uujec.org>>. UUJEC’s mission is to engage, educate and activate UUs to work for economic justice. It provides study packets on economic globalization and “The Great Turning from Empire to Earth Community,” conferences and e-news to keep members posted on ways they can be active toward a fair economy.

UUs for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

<<http://www25.uua.org/ufeta/>>. UFETA supports Unitarian Universalists in their efforts to meet the moral challenge of living with ecological sustainability and without supporting cruelty to animals. UFETA works to help individuals and congregations move from the mere celebration of the “interdependent web of existence” into practices that affirm species interdependence in personal and social, economic and political life. Its website includes resources for informed consumption, news of congregational initiatives, action alerts, and materials for religious exploration, social activities, social justice, and worship. Worship resources include “The Blessing of the Animals Resource Packet” and past winners of the Schweitzer Sermon Award.

UU Organizations



bodies of member Protestant and Orthodox denominations to work together to protect and restore God's Creation. The UUA is not a member of the Working Group, but UUs are active in the various programs and projects of the Program Office.

Forum on Religion and Ecology <<http://fore.research.yale.edu/main.html>>

This is the largest international interfaith project of its kind. With its conferences, publications, and website it is engaged in exploring religious worldviews, texts, and ethics in order to broaden understanding of the complex nature of current environmental concerns.

Green Faith <<http://www.greenfaith.org/stewardship/food.html>> . A New Jersey-based national organization that provides resources and consulting on faith and environmental issues for congregations, including food.

Gleaning Network. Society of St. Andrew, <<http://www.endhunger.org/>>. Today's mechanized farm equipment harvests fields quickly, but often leaves food to rot. Gleaning means gathering vegetables that remain on fields after the official harvest, so that they not go to waste. Humanitarian groups around the world glean farmers' fields and donate the food to the hungry. Some ancient cultures promoted gleaning with this humanitarian aim, and Jewish scriptures command farmers

to leave the edges of their fields for the poor and for strangers. The Gleaning Network home page can connect you with organized gleaning in your area, or you can use their "Gleaning Guide How-To Handbook" to start your own gleaning program for all ages.

Interfaith Resources

PROCEED WITH CAUTION, CARE, & COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION

Unitarian Universalists in hundreds of congregations are about to examine what "ethical eating" means on a personal level and in our relationships with others.

Our journeys will differ: we begin in different places, proceed along different paths at different rates, and may arrive at different ends. Such journeys are inherently difficult because the factors that influence our relationship with food – culture, family, values, religion, resources, health – are personal and complicated. And such journeys are more difficult because in community, sharing diverse perspectives on personal matters can lead to defensiveness.

Change brings conflict. Our principles call upon us to support one another as we seek answers. **Compassionate Communication**, based on Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication method, is a tool for resolving differences. As each person has his or her needs met, issues are resolved. The Core Team for this Study/Action issue **recommends that your congregation's Ethical Eating Task Force review some of the following "Compassionate Communication" resources** before expanding its programming to the entire congregation. Consider offering a workshop on Compassionate Communication to other congregational leaders and interested members as well.

Questions for Individual or Group Reflection:

1. What makes the ethics of food a difficult topic for many of us to discuss?
2. What outcome do I want when I engage in discussion with someone with whom I disagree?
3. How do we remain in right relationship during a difficult discussion?
4. How can leaders promote compassionate communication in the congregation?
5. How do culture, economics, and families of origin affect the different ways we see food?

Resources

Rosenberg, Marshall B. *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*. Chicago: Puddle-Dancer Press, 2001. <<http://www.cnvc.org>> This method of teaching effective, peaceful communication offers practical tools and experiential learning about how to talk to others with compassion and success. It focuses on empathetic listening and feelings. Used in conjunction with Leu, Lucy: *Communication Companion Workbook: A Practical Guide for Individual, Group or Classroom Study (Nonviolent Communication Guides)*. A simple method with powerful results, easily used by congregations negotiating challenging conversations about food and ethics.

d'Ansembourg, Thomas. *Being Genuine: Stop Being Nice, Start Being Real*. Chicago: Puddle-Dancer Press, 2007. This guide for teaches communication skills based on respect, expression of true feelings, and identification of wants. Its goal is to help readers learn how to manage difficult discussions and issues with ease. Topics include identifying feelings and needs without blame, honest and respectful self-expression, facing conflict with ease, and finding balance.

Rosenberg, Marshall B. *The Basics of Non Violent Communication: An Introductory Training in Non Violent Communication*. Albuquerque, 2001. 2 DVD set approximately 2 hours and 20 minutes, about 50 minutes per session. DVD set from a one day workshop with Marshall Rosenberg. Using the basics of non-violent communication, Mr. Rosenberg demonstrates how to discuss challenging issues in a way that meet everybody's needs.

The Center for Nonviolent Communication <<http://www.cnvc.org/>>. A global organization helping people connect compassionately with themselves and one another through Nonviolent Communication language. Site offers many resources, training opportunities, and newsletter.

UU Speak Peace <<http://uuspeakpeace.org/web/>>. Compassionate Communication Consciousness for Congregations: Growing in our First Principle as Social Change Agents. Supporting UUs learning and practicing Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication and other interpersonal peacemaking skills and approaches. Monthly Teleconference Call 11/7/08, 12/5/08, 1/2/09 open to all. Call-In Number: 269-320-8200, Access code: 355148.



Earth Ministry <<http://www.earthministry.org>>

programs inspire and mobilize Christian Communities to play a leadership role in building a just and sustainable future. Their resource on this topic, *Food and Faith: Justice, Joy, and Daily Bread* includes study guide for groups and individuals. http://www.earthministry.org/food_faith.htm

Eco-Justice Notes by Peter Sawtell, Executive Director, Eco-Justice Ministries

<<http://www.eco-justice.org/e-list.asp>> This is a free, weekly e-mail newsletter. Each issue comments on a relevant theme or event from a distinctly non-dogmatic faith perspective. Covers broad eco-justice concepts as well as the justice implications of specific issues (including food/faith). Links to back issues are included on this page. Some newsletters address food specifically.

Eco-Justice Program Office of the National Council of Churches. <<http://www.ncccojustice.org/resources.html#foodandfarmingresources>> The Eco-Justice Program office works in cooperation with the NCC Eco-Justice Working Group to provide an opportunity for the national

UNDERSTANDING THE STAKES

BOOKS, ARTICLES, FILMS, & WEBSITES
ON CORE ISSUES OF ETHICAL EATING

This section identifies what's ethically at stake in our food choices, in several areas:

- 1) Climate Change and Environmental Degradation,
- 2) Human Rights, Social Equity, & Environmental Justice, including
 - a. Hunger and Malnutrition,
 - b. Trade, c. Labor,
 - d. Neocolonialism,
 - e. Environmental Justice, and
- 3) Animal Rights and Human Responsibilities.

Remember to use or adapt the "Menu Plan," pages 8-11, to help keep things simple.

The "Consumer Choices" section (pgs 52-61) deals with how our food choices impact these stakes.

Pick and Choose

The tastes and needs of the Association's member congregations will forever vary. This Guide identifies hundreds of books, films, articles, and websites. It is unlikely that you will have time to extensively sample the full buffet of the pages that follow. So take the cafeteria approach to this section. **Pick several resources at most: the ones likely to generate the most significant engagement for your group.** To help, we've identified "Highly Recommended" resources (those the Core Team imagines congregations will find most accessible, most broadly appealing, most comprehensive, and most helpful to congregational programming) and "Recommended Supporting Resources" (equally valuable resources which may be less broadly appealing, less recent, less easily adapted to congregational programs, or of most use to persons wishing to dig deep into specific issue areas).

