



Welcome to
Innovation in RE
and Faith Development
April, 2017

Please turn off your camera and mute yourself.

Then, introduce yourself in the meeting Chat Box!



Housekeeping

Audio problem? Mute audio on your computer. Then call in by phone.

After this webinar, please consider sharing your thoughts on innovation. This information will help develop support and resources. To share input, please use the Google form link we'll provide.

Recorded webinar will be posted at www.uua.org/re/teachers/webinars



Innovation in RE and Faith Development

A webinar presented by the UUA
Ministries and Faith Development
staff group

April, 2017



Tracy Beck

Director of Religious
Education, First Unitarian
Church of Des Moines



Joy Berry

DLRE, UU Asheville
Staff, Fahs Collaborative
Center for Innovation
LREDA 21st. C. Committee

Host: Jessica York, UUA Director of Faith Development

Tech Support: Kareem Watson, Office Administrator



Opening Words



So that we might, together, shine

By Rev. Erik Walker Wikstrom,
on the UUA WorshipWeb



Why Innovation?





Innovate? Who, Me?

**Religious Educators are always innovating:
See it, name it, claim it!**

**The MAJORITY of current innovation in
faith development happens in the laboratories
of congregations & RE programs...**

...yet we often feel we are just treading water.



Innovation as a Landscape

Great ideas that change systems and change lives can't be accomplished alone.

Change in congregations is complex: requires new kinds of leadership, resources, communication, teambuilding, and thinking.

When we recognize that innovation is essential, and what it requires, we increase the chance that we will have the tools to succeed.



What Have We Learned?

Every innovator in the field has something to share that they learned in the process

In April 2016, a group of innovative religious professionals gathered to share their wisdom and takeaways from their own approaches

Today we are pleased to share with you some of the learnings from that gathering



Innovation Projects: Within, Among, Beyond

WITHIN

Self-knowledge & tools for self-development

AMONG

**Multigenerational or integrated faith
development in congregations**

Systems thinking for teams

BEYOND

Community-based models



Participants

Tracy Breneman Director of Religious Exploration at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Northern Westchester & Director of Religious Education at First Unitarian Society of Westchester, Westchester, NY

Crystal Mann Member, Core Organizing Team of The Sanctuaries, Washington, DC

Lauren Wyeth Director of Children Youth & Family Ministries at First Universalist Church, Minneapolis, MN

Tracy Beck Director of Religious Education at First Unitarian Church of Des Moines, IA

Joy Berry Director of Lifespan Religious Education, UU Congregation of Asheville, NC

Tom Capo Minister, DuPage UU Church, Naperville, IL

Anne Principe Interfaith/UU Community Minister in Lynn, MA

Kenny Wiley Director of Faith Formation at Prairie UU Church, Parker, CO



Participants, continued

Sara Lewis Director of Lifespan Religious Education at Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Olympia, WA

Jan Taddeo Minister at UU Congregation of Gwinnett, Lawrenceville, GA

Anna Bethea Director of Religious Exploration at Unitarian Universalist Church of Tallahassee, FL

Duncan Teague Founder of the Abundant LUUv; member of UU Congregation of Atlanta (UUCA), GA

Heather Concannon UU Community Cooperatives and member, Lucy Stone Cooperative, Boston, MA

Deborah Weiner Interim Director of Lifespan Religious Education at Unitarian Universalist Church of Reading, MA



Virtual Presenters

Jamil Scott Acting Director of Religious Exploration, First Unitarian Society of Denver, CO

Meg Roberts Consulting Minister, Comox Valley Unitarian Fellowship, Vancouver Island, BC, Canada

Natalie Fenimore Minister of Lifespan Religious Education, Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock, NY



Sharing the Wisdom

**Selected Projects from
the Innovation Roundtable**

Crystal Mann

**Member, Core Organizing Team of
The Sanctuaries, Washington, DC**



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**Interim Director of Lifespan Religious
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Sharing My Story...

A Congregational Re-Visioning for Integrated Faith Development

**Joy Berry
UU Congregation
of Asheville, NC**



How We Came Together (and Stayed Apart) in Church: A Snapshot of UU Asheville in 2015



Upstairs:
Adults (not teaching)
Worship & Choir
Social hour/coffee
Sign-up Tables
Membership

Time for all ages
20 min.
once a month



All Ages
Full Worship
4-5 times a year



Downstairs:
Children & babies
RE Teachers (Parents)
RE Staff & Child Care
RE Classes &
Youth Group
Playground/Garden
Kids' Social Justice



committees,
social justice,
covenant &
affinity groups



Adult
RE



Re-Visioning Faith Development: Our Shared Work, Through the Lifespan

Faith is **caught, taught, bought, sought**
by INDIVIDUALS...
But as a community, Faith is
WROUGHT: WORKED, SHAPED, MADE
TOGETHER

From “It Takes a Village”...
to “It Makes a Village”

From K-12 Religious Education...
to Faith Development for all ages

From siloed and separate churches...
to integrated ministry, vision, mission

From RE teaches the kids...
to WE are growing in faith together,
learning from and with each other

From TRANSACTIONAL...
to TRANSFORMATIONAL

Integrated Faith Development for All





Sharing My Story...

**Wednesday Evening
Faith Development**

**Tracy Beck
First Unitarian Church
of Des Moines, IA**



Sharing the Wisdom: Takeaways

Innovation = Change

- Doesn't happen in a vacuum
- Can't be championed by just one person
- Happens in addition to daily work
- Integrative strategies can reduce burnout
- Allies are ESSENTIAL: to support change in the long term, and soothe the anxiety it provokes
- Overwhelm/overwork kill the innovative spirit
- Self-care for innovators is absolutely required - but may look different



Supporting You in Innovation

- Funding
- Learning
- Coaching



Resources for Innovative Religious Educators



Funding Sources for Projects in Faith Development:

21st Century
Committee of
LREDA

Unitarian Sunday
School Society



Resources for Innovative Religious Educators



Looking for a covenant and conversation group that focus on the unique challenges and concerns of innovation?

Change Maker Mondays is a virtual “innovation circle” where religious educators meet monthly. We discuss one new idea, and learn how to do one new thing, together. Each monthly meeting includes hands-on, how-to learning and spirited discussion.



SHARE YOUR WISDOM RE: INNOVATION!

About Innovation in general:

- Faith Development that is “innovative” is...
- We know Innovation requires support! These include...
 - ★ A mindset that is...
 - ★ A process that is...
 - ★ A strategy or plan that is...
 - ★ A congregational system that is...
 - ★ A work team that is...
 - ★ What other kinds of support does innovative require?

About YOU:

- My capacity as a religious educator is fed or enhanced by:
- The challenges to innovation that I specifically face are:
- The tools or resources I personally need to successfully innovate include:

Share, via [Google form](#), after the webinar and help us support you!



Closing Words

*this is the role of a teacher:
to awaken*

*this is the role of a leader:
to incite*

*this is the role of a student:
to learn the answers
within and without*

-- Mary Anne Radmacher





Upcoming Webinar

May 2017

What's a Religious Educator to Do (in the Summer)?

Register online for
Tuesday, May 16, 1 pm Eastern
or Wednesday, May 17, 9 pm Eastern
www.uua.org/re/teachers/webinars



Thanks for attending this
Faith Development Office webinar.

This webinar has been recorded
and will be posted online at
www.uua.org/re/teachers/webinars