



# SO YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT BECOMING A RELIGIOUS INNOVATOR

UUA General Assembly | June 20, 2019



# ABOUT BECOMING A RELIGIOUS INNOVATOR

## OUR SPEAKERS:

Rev. Brock Leach, UUA Innovative Ministries

Rev. Emily DeTar Birt, Unitarian Universalist Church of Staten Island

Rev. Meg Riley, Senior Minister, Church of the Larger Fellowship UU



# HUGE NEED, HUGE OPPORTUNITY IN THE 'MEANING SECTOR'

## **Need:**

- Epidemic of alienation, distraction, and loneliness.
- Tectonic change in climate, work and technology.
- Loss of individual nurture and community connection.

## **Opportunity:**

- Help individuals find identity, grounding and purpose in communities that foster meaning together.



# WE UU'S ARE UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO MEET THIS NEED

- Focus on purpose and meaning-making rather than belief systems.
- Collected spiritual and intellectual resources gathered from all forms of knowledge.
- Clear, highly relevant values grounded in our tradition and centuries of human experience.
- We are present and deeply engaged in communities across the nation as individuals and as congregations.



# IT WILL REQUIRE NEW FORMS OF COMMUNITY

- That meet the needs of people who are not present in representative numbers, like:
  - People of Color
  - Young Adults
  - Families with Young Children
- Are more intentional about helping people find purpose and meaning together
- Do it better than commercial alternatives

# BREAKTHROUGHS MOST OFTEN COME FROM THE LEAST SATISFIED



# NEW UU COMMUNITY INNOVATIONS

**UU Community Cooperatives** creates a structure and a community of mutual support for people to make the daily decisions that put our values and our faith into practice.



UUCC Forbes Under 30 Summit Video



[UUCHC Video](#)

[UUCommunityCoops.org](http://UUCommunityCoops.org)

# NEW UU COMMUNITY INNOVATIONS

**BLUU Beloveds** invites UU's who identify as African American or of African descent into a community of service, support and participation.





# NEW UU COMMUNITY INNOVATIONS

**Sacred Fire UU** offers a unique UU methodology for social transformation since and in-depth program to train theologically-grounded, professionally-equipped social justice leaders in our congregations.

*Welcome to*

## SACRED FIRE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

[ABOUT THE TRAINING](#)

# NEW UU COMMUNITY INNOVATIONS

**JUUST Living** is a unique model of holistic living, creating community free from the ravages of addiction by empowering people to become their own solution.



# NEW UU COMMUNITY INNOVATION

**No Child Goes Hungry** provides grant money and mentorship so that community organizations can build hunger advocacy programs locally.



[Home](#)

[Grants in Motion](#)

[Who We Are](#) ▾

[Work With Us](#) ▾

[News](#)

[Contact](#)

[Donate Now](#)

[New Lesson Plans](#)

"We can do no great things. Just  
small things with great love."

Mother Teresa

Rev. Kären Rasmussen

[NoChildGoesHungry.net](http://NoChildGoesHungry.net)

# NEW UU COMMUNITY INNOVATION

**EvoVR** (Pronounced Evolver) brings spiritual practice and community to the Virtual Reality space.



# BREAKTHROUGH INNOVATIONS IN CONGREGATIONS



Power of teen leadership and community sustainability in Carlisle, MA



**DuPage Unitarian Universalist Church**

SMILE Project: A summer work experience and mentoring program for underprivileged youth in Naperville, IL



**Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston**

*Spirit. Service. Justice. Love.*

First ever community-wide LGBTQ Pride event in Reston, Virginia



# To show this poll

1

Install the app from  
[pollev.com/app](https://pollev.com/app)

2


Start the presentation

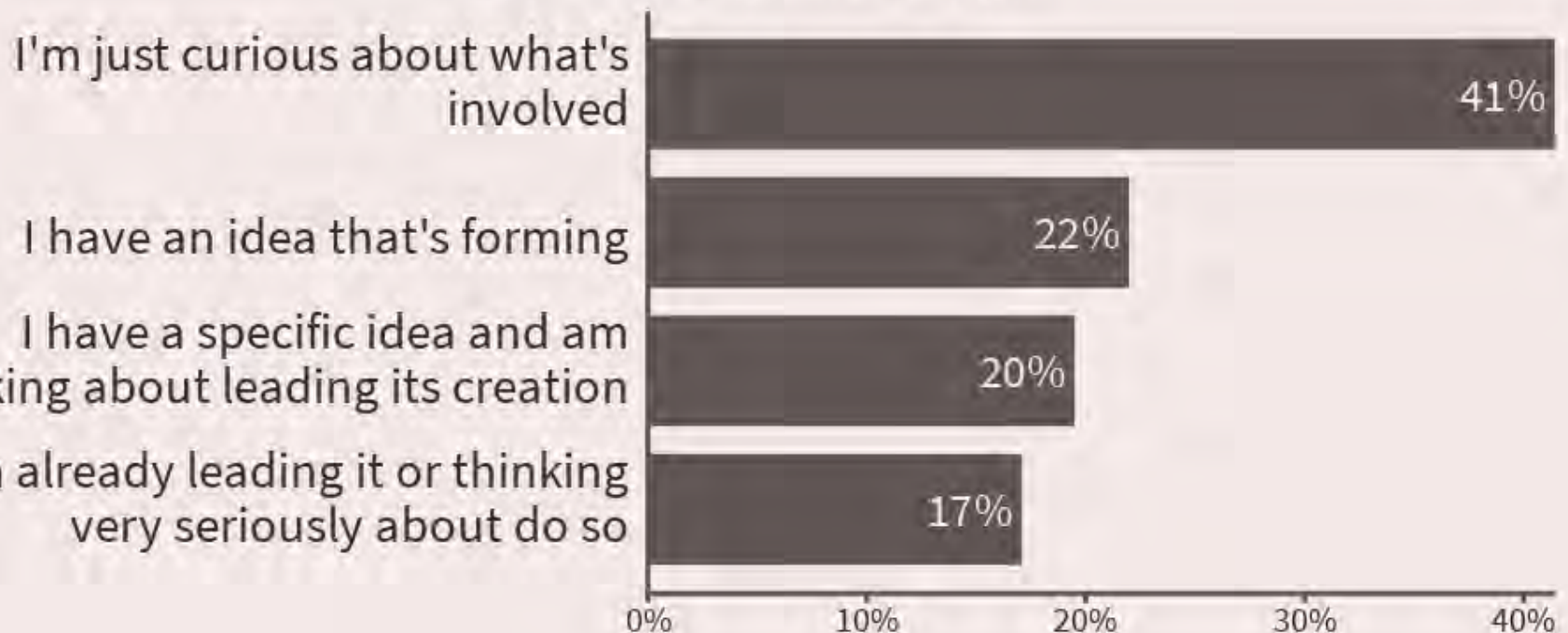
Still not working? Get help at [pollev.com/app/help](https://pollev.com/app/help)  
or

[Open poll in your web browser](#)



# I'm thinking about becoming a religious innovator AND...

 **Poll locked.** Responses not accepted.



# I'M THINKING ABOUT BECOMING A RELIGIOUS INNOVATOR AND...

I'm just curious about what's involved **A**

I have an idea that's forming **B**

I have a specific idea and am thinking  
about leading its creation **C**

I'm already leading it or thinking  
very seriously about doing so **D**



# WHAT'S IT TAKE TO BE A SUCCESSFUL RELIGIOUS INNOVATOR?

- A lot of hard work and persistence– i.e. passion/calling.
- Getting beyond your “hunch idea” and yourself:
  - From a **team** of stakeholders at the start.
  - Identify specifically **who you intend to serve**.
  - Understand **their needs and ideas**... deeply, empathically and practically.
  - **Co-create solutions** that meet their needs.

Design Thinking or Human-Centered Design

# OUTLINING YOUR IDEA

**Who do you intend to serve** (whose needs are not currently being well met)?

What do you imagine are **their unmet needs**?

**What's your "hunch idea"** that will address those needs?

Let's Take Three Minutes

# AN EXAMPLE

**Who do you intend to serve** (whose needs are not currently being well met)?

College-age students struggling to identify their purpose in life.

What do you imagine are **their unmet needs**?

Getting clear on what matters in life, understanding where their talents and passions intersect, helping them enact their purpose in the company of others.

**What's your "hunch idea"** that will address those needs?

An alt-college ministry that introduces them to the elements of well-being, the key sources underlying the seven principles, a personal exploration of purpose, and shared justice experiences.



# To show this poll



1

Install the app from  
[pollev.com/app](https://pollev.com/app)

2

Start the presentation

Still not working? Get help at [pollev.com/app/help](https://pollev.com/app/help)  
or

[Open poll in your web browser](#)



# WHO DO YOU INTEND TO SERVE?

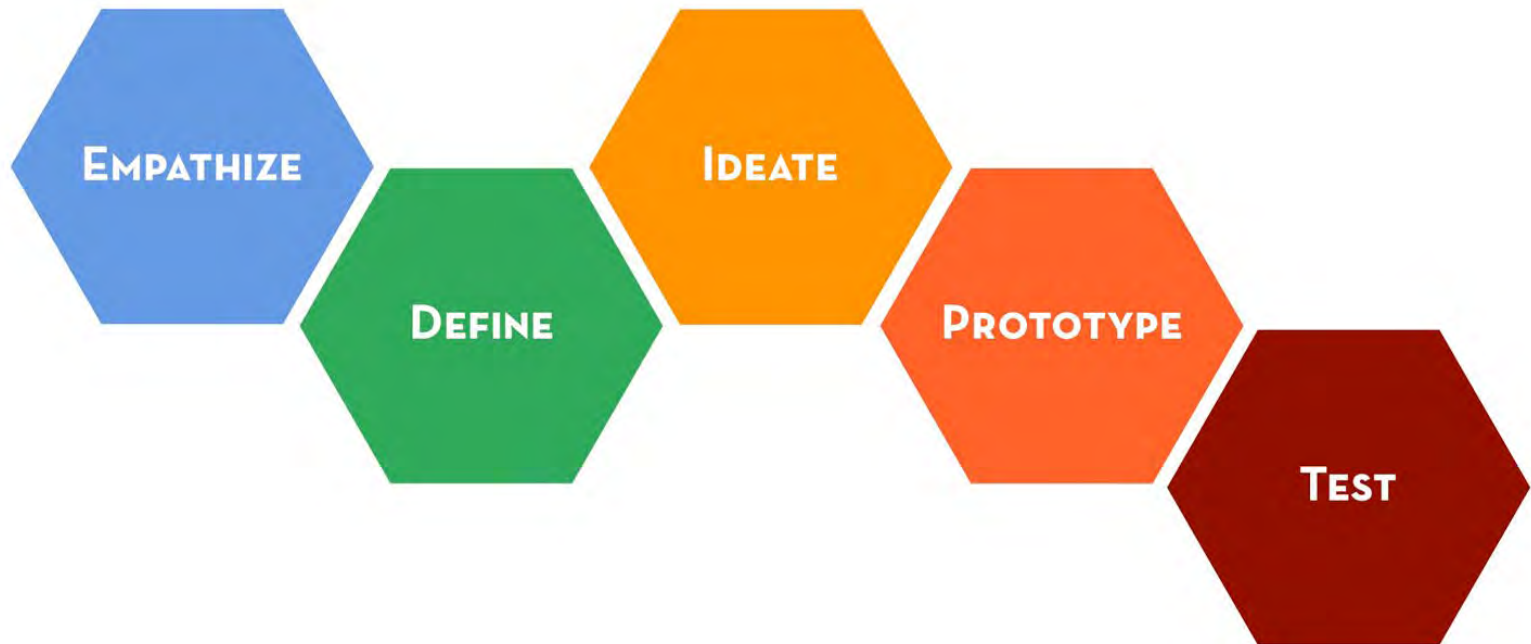
- 2 Creating learning communities with learning leaders
- 3 RE app that is accessible to kids and fortifies their developmental stage and senses that are appropriate according to Rudolph Steiners 12 senses indica
- 4 UUs motivated to live out or 5th principle and want to make a difference at the federal level
- 5 Communities of color
- 6 New members looking for opportunities
- 7 SBNRs
- 8 Uu young adults
- 9 People looking for opportunities to serve right in their neighborhoods
- 10 Teens and college students
- 11 Adults in re-start mode after a major life upset
- 12 Church boards and ministers
- 13 Organizations to reconceive their mission and/ identity
- 14 Queer families
- 15 Homeless youth
- 16 Congregation who fail to attract younger people
- 17 Families
- 18 Next person who comes to a service for the first time
- 19 Young working families
- 20 Elderly UU congregants with pastoral care needs
- 21 Congregations looking to improve their relationships among their congregants
- 22 Military recruits in basic training
- 23 Activist community and the unhoused, both groups suffer from enormous unaddressed trauma and wishing to feel seen, heard
- 24 Families with young kids
- 25 Emerging youth/young adults
- 26 UUs in my community and church looking for a broader range of spiritual experiences
- 27 Hungry kids
- 28 Homeless in Napa. Only fed between Monday morning and Friday afternoon.
- 29 Young adults in tech community in our city
- 30 The differently abled, especially invisible disabilities
- 31 Congregation members
- 32 people who want to die with dignity
- 33 Youth of our congregation
- 34 Knowledge seekers who thrive in covenantal community with spiritual focus
- 35 Faith-curious Young Adults
- 36 College and young adults
- 37 high school students of color
- 38 Social activism networks
- 39 Young Families
- 40 Spiritual but not religious
- 41 Independent UUs who don't want/can't access a congregation
- 42 Unitarian Universalists
- 43 Homeless youth
- 44 transgender young adults
- 45 Women in reentry.
- 46 Young families
- 47 Families with young children
- 48 Young adults 24-35
- 49 Elementary School Children
- 50 LGBTQ
- 51 Busy young adults

# THE POWER OF WE

"Humans rarely think for themselves. Rather, we think in groups. Just as it takes a tribe to raise a child, it also takes a tribe to invent a tool, solve a conflict, or cure a disease... What gave *Homo sapiens* an edge... is our unparalleled ability to think together in large groups."

-- Yuval Noah Harari, *21 Lessons for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

# DESIGN THINKING STEPS



# ESSENCE OF DESIGN THINKING

- Focus on **who** you intend to serve
- Deep understanding of **their needs**
- A process of **failing fast and frequently** through a process of prototyping rough solutions and testing and improving them in rapid succession.

## To Learn More:

- Next workshop here at 4:30 today.
- Two-part Design Thinking webinar, August 20 & 22 at 2pm Eastern. Register by email to [brock.leach@icloud.com](mailto:brock.leach@icloud.com)



# ARE YOU A RELIGIOUS INNOVATOR?

- A lot of hard work and persistence– i.e. passion/calling.
- Getting beyond your “hunch idea” and yourself.
- Getting clear about your boundaries, motivations, and the depth of your call:
  - What am I willing to invest in time and money?
  - Am I willing to fail for the sake of learning?
  - Am I motivated by making a difference or having autonomy?
  - What is my purpose in life that beckons me to this work?
  - What resources can I draw on to renew that sense of calling?

# DISCERNMENT EXERCISE

## Kareem Aboulenaga's Six Questions:

- Why is this work important to society?
- Why is this work important to you?
- Why are you the right person to be carrying out this work?
- Why is this work important to society **right now**?
- Why is this work important to you **right now**?
- Why are you the right person to be carrying out this work **right now**?

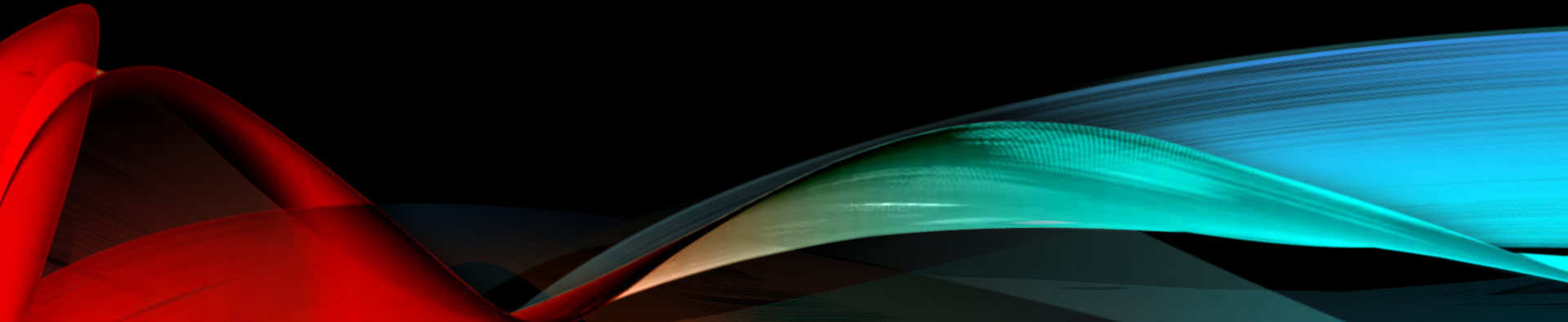
# AVAILABLE SUPPORT FOR INNOVATORS

- **Further Learning:**
  - Innovation and Implementation courses at no/low cost
  - Accelerators and incubators
- **Early Stage Funding:** The 4F's– UU Funding Panel, Faithify, Friends and Family
- **Navigation, Connection, Mentoring:**  
Contact Brock at [brock.leach@icloud.com](mailto:brock.leach@icloud.com)
- **Religious Innovators Network** in partnership with CLF:  
Contact Network Coordinator Eli Snider at [esnider@clfuu.org](mailto:esnider@clfuu.org)

See FAQ's and Key Resources handouts here  
and on the UUA GA app.

# ABOUT BECOMING A RELIGIOUS INNOVATOR

Q&A + PANEL CONVERSATION





# To show this poll

1

Install the app from  
[pollev.com/app](https://pollev.com/app)

2

Start the presentation

Still not working? Get help at [pollev.com/app/help](https://pollev.com/app/help)  
or

[Open poll in your web browser](#)



# WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE?

- 2 Thank you for this space
- 3 UU Talks is like TED talks for UUs serves UU Congregations and groups with Fundraising, Outreach and Publicity
- 4 I am an accredited interim minister and I spend much of my time creating the space and opportunity for congregations to innovate- so it is not 'my' inno
- 5 Do you have any knowledge or experiences with creating an app?
- 6 Is there already a way to connect a UU to another UU with a similar enough idea so that possibly can synergize the idea
- 7 Do you know if an organization like Faithify would help fund an idea that takes the principles of UUism and take them out into the larger world, but isn't
- 8 Do you help religious initiatives abroad
- 9 [www.tinyurl.com/UUcrowdfunding](http://www.tinyurl.com/UUcrowdfunding)
- 10 Could we have brainstormed ideas? 5 members of my congregation are here.
- 11 Amy Climer is an inspired consultant that is another great resource for creative innovation
- 12 What is your advice to someone with a project in mind that is so large, it will be too expensive to fail, such as the first Unitarian Universalist University?
- 13 Are you aware that the DuPage UU Church are here in the room?
- 14 Is it better to start out under an established 501c3 or begin pulling one together yourself?

# YOU CAN DO THIS!

- Pick-up FAQ's and Key Resources handouts here or on the UUA GA app.
- Sign up here to join the Religious Innovators Network
  - Or contact Network Coordinator Eli Snider at [esnider@clfuu.org](mailto:esnider@clfuu.org)
- Contact Brock for help with navigation, connection, and mentoring:
  - [brock.leach@icloud.com](mailto:brock.leach@icloud.com)



# SO YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT BECOMING A RELIGIOUS INNOVATOR

UUA General Assembly, June 20, 2019