

**FAITH LIKE A RIVER:
THEMES FROM UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST HISTORY**

A Tapestry of Faith Program for Adults



BY JACKIE CLEMENT AND ALISON CORNISH

© Copyright 2011 Unitarian Universalist Association.

This program and additional resources are available on the UUA.org web site at
www.uua.org/re/tapestry

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the use of the following material:

Excerpt from *Unitarian Universalism: An Heretical History*, a DVD produced by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Rockford, IL, 1995.

"Would You Harbor Me?" Words and music by Ysaye M. Barnwell copyright 1994 Barnwell's Notes Publishing, recorded by Sweet Honey In The Rock (R). Used with permission. Visit [Ysaye M. Barnwell's website](http://www.ymbarnwell.com) (at www.ymbarnwell.com) for further information.

"Humanist Manifesto I," copyright 1933 by *The New Humanist* and 1973 by the American Humanist Association. Please note that this is no longer a current statement of humanist convictions; it has been superseded by [Humanism and Its Aspirations: Humanist Manifesto III](#) (at www.americanhumanist.org/who_we_are/about_humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_III).

Excerpt from Mark Harris, *Elite: Uncovering Classism in Unitarian Universalist History* (Boston: Skinner House, 2010); used with permission.

"Unitarian Summer — the Isle of Shoals," excerpted and adapted from Frederick T. McGill, Jr. and Virginia F. McGill, *Something Like a Star* (Boston: Star Island Corporation, 1989).

"Love and Power: The Universalist Dilemma," the John Murray Distinguished Lecture, delivered at the UUA General Assembly in Boston, June 2003, by Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt.

"Of Madmen and Martyrs: A Unitarian Take on Knoxville," a blog post by Sara Robinson, July 28, 2008; used with permission.

"The Seven Tribes," a traditional story of the Khasi people as relayed by Darihun Khriam, the first woman minister in the Khasi Hills.

"Under Our Charge — the Utes and the Unitarians" based on research by historian Ted Vetter and written for this program.

PREFACE

Thucydides wrote that history is philosophy taught by examples. If this is true, then we would do well to study the examples—the stories—from our own faith history to shape a philosophy for living our own faith. This program provides such an opportunity.

By presenting the sweep of Unitarian Universalist history and heritage through the stories of its people and events, the program invites participants to place themselves into our history and consider its legacies. What lessons do the stories of our history teach that can help us live more faithfully in the present? What lessons do they offer to be lived into the future? Engagement with our history and heritage does more than celebrate our Unitarian Universalist identity. It grounds our faith, our Principles, and our spiritual growth in a wider tradition and offers a context for deepening faith, values, and spirit.

As one in the Tapestry of Faith series of curricula for adults, this program weaves Unitarian Universalist values, Principles and Sources with four strands: spiritual development, ethical development, Unitarian Universalist identity development and faith development:

Spiritual Development. In *Everyday Spiritual Practice*, Scott Alexander defines spirituality as our relationship with the Spirit of Life, however we understand it. Our spirituality is our deep, reflective, and expressed response to the awe, wonder, joy, pain, and grief of being alive. Tapestry of Faith programs seek to form children, youth, and adults who:

- Know they are lovable beings of infinite worth, imbued with powers of the soul and obligated to use their gifts, talents and potentials in the service of life
- Appreciate the value of spiritual practice as a means of deepening faith and integrating beliefs and values with everyday life.

Ethical Development. When we develop our ethics, we develop our moral values—our sense of what is right and wrong. We also enhance our ability to act on those values, overcoming oppressions and despair. Tapestry of Faith programs seek to form children, youth, and adults who:

- Realize they are moral agents, capable of making a difference in the lives of other people, challenging structures of social and political oppression and promoting the health and well being of the planet
- Accept that they are responsible for the stewardship and creative transformation of their religious heritage and community of faith in the service of diversity, justice and compassion.

Unitarian Universalist Identity Development. Participation in a Unitarian Universalist congregation does not automatically create a Unitarian Universalist identity. Personal identification with Unitarian Universalism begins when individuals start to call themselves Unitarian Universalist and truly feel a part of a Unitarian Universalist congregation or community. Identity is strengthened as individuals discover and resonate with the stories, symbols and practices of Unitarian Universalism. Tapestry of Faith programs develop children, youth, and adults who:

- Affirm they are part of a Unitarian Universalist religious heritage and community of faith that has value and provides resources for living
- Recognize the need for community, affirming the importance of families, relationships and connections between and among generations
- Accept that they are responsible for the stewardship and creative transformation of their religious heritage and community of faith in the service of diversity, justice and compassion.

Faith Development. When we develop in faith, we develop as meaning-makers. Faith is about embracing life's possibilities, growing in our sense of being "at home in the universe." Faith is practiced in relationships with others. While faith has aspects that are internal and personal, it is best supported in a community with shared symbols, stories, traditions, and values. Unitarian Universalist faith development emphasizes each person's religious journey—each person's lifelong process of bringing head, heart and hands to seeking and knowing ultimate meaning.

While the primary focus of this program is Unitarian Universalist identity development, each strand is woven, to some degree, into each workshop.

May these workshops come to life in your hands and in the hearts, minds, and spirits of the people you teach.

Gail Forsyth-Vail, Developmental Editor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WORKSHOP 1: WADING IN – AN INTRODUCTION	12
WORKSHOP 2: AGAINST THE FLOW – ORTHODOXY AND HERESY.....	31
WORKSHOP 3: RISING TIDES – REASON AS A RELIGIOUS SOURCE	48
WORKSHOP 4: THE VERDANT SPRINGS – REFORMATION.....	73
WORKSHOP 5: GOD'S GONNA TROUBLE THE WATER – MARTYRS AND SACRIFICE	96
WORKSHOP 6: SHALL WE GATHER AT THE RIVER? – RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE.....	119
WORKSHOP 7: WE'RE ALL SWIMMING IN THE STREAM TOGETHER – COVENANT	142
WORKSHOP 8: GENTLY DOWN THE STREAM – POLITY	162
WORKSHOP 9: RISE IN THE SEA — UNITARIANISM	182
WORKSHOP 10: RISE IN THE SEA — UNIVERSALISM	200
WORKSHOP 11: AS TRANQUIL STREAMS THAT MEET AND MERGE — CONSOLIDATION	221
WORKSHOP 12: I'VE GOT TEARS LIKE THE RAINDROPS — FREEDOM.....	240
WORKSHOP 13: MIRAGES AND OASES — IDEALISM AND UTOPIANISM	258
WORKSHOP 14: THE SEVEN SEAS — GLOBALIZATION	280
WORKSHOP 15: THE WATER IS WIDE — MULTICULTURALISM.....	303
WORKSHOP 16: RIPPLES IN THE WATER — THE EVANGELISTS	329

Note: If you add or delete text in this program, you may change the accuracy of the Table of Contents. The Table of Contents is an auto-generated list; if you change content and want an accurate representation of the page numbers listed in the TOC, click the table and click "Update Field." Then, click "Update page numbers only." Click OK.

THE PROGRAM

To acknowledge our ancestors means we are aware that we did not make ourselves, that the line stretches all the way back, perhaps to God; or to Gods. We remember them because it is an easy thing to forget: that we are not the first to suffer, rebel, fight, love and die. The grace with which we embrace life, in spite of the pain, the sorrow, is always a measure of what has gone before. — Alice Walker

History is often viewed as a linear progression, where events follow events and actions occur in reaction. But history is not straightforward. This program guides participants to explore the dynamic course of Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist history—the people, ideas, and movements that have shaped our faith heritage.

The program offers maximum flexibility, allowing congregations to customize a series of workshops to fit their interests and needs. Workshops are organized thematically rather than chronologically so groups can choose areas of interest to them. Just as congregations can customize the overall program, facilitators can tailor an individual workshop by selecting from a variety of different kinds of activities.

While our history is largely influenced by and centered in Europe and North America, this program includes a broad range of stories, people, and locations.

The authors hope this program inspires both facilitators and participants to continue to explore our shared and diverse heritage.

GOALS

This program will:

- Introduce the rich history of Unitarian Universalism from the beginning of our theological heritage to contemporary times
- Explore our inheritance of theology, practice, and institutional organization as manifested in various times and places in our history
- Present some of the events, historical settings, and people that influenced Unitarianism, Universalism, and Unitarian Universalism
- Demonstrate connections between historical events, people, and stories and current Unitarian Universalist values, symbols, organizational structures, and traditions

- Engage participants with primary source materials
- Encourage participants to explore the history of their own congregations
- Give participants the tools and inspiration to research more deeply topics of particular interest
- Offer participants a way to enter into the story of Unitarian Universalism so that it becomes personally relevant.

LEADERS

A team of two or more adults, either lay leaders or religious professionals, should facilitate these workshops. Although consistency of leadership offers many advantages, every workshop need not be led by the same facilitators. Seek leaders who are:

- Knowledgeable about Unitarian Universalism
- Committed to the Unitarian Universalist Principles, to the congregation, and to the faith development components of this program
- Willing and able to thoroughly prepare for each workshop
- Effective at speaking, teaching, and facilitating group process
- Flexible, and willing to modify workshop plans to support the full inclusion of all participants
- Able to listen deeply and to encourage participation of all individuals
- Able to demonstrate respect for individuals, regardless of age, race, social class, gender identity, and sexual orientation
- Able to honor the life experiences each participant will bring to the program.

While knowledge of Unitarian Universalist history is helpful, it is not a requirement for effectively leading this program. Willingness and ability to adequately prepare for each workshop, to research answers to questions raised by participants and to encourage participants' own research is far more valuable to creating a good learning and faith development experience for participants than is extensive knowledge of Unitarian Universalist history.

PARTICIPANTS

This program is intended for adults. It can be adapted for youth or for a multigenerational program that

includes youth and adults. The workshops are equally suitable for first-time visitors and long-time congregational members. Facilitators should be attentive to the differences in knowledge and life experience participants bring to the group, particularly if the group includes a wide age span.

Workshops can accommodate any number of participants. Workshops of fewer than six participants can do small group activities in the full group, or skip some small group activities. If the group has more than twenty-five participants, you will need at least three facilitators.

INTEGRATING ALL PARTICIPANTS

People with obvious and not-so-obvious disabilities may need accommodation in order to participate fully. In addition to accommodating the accessibility needs of participants who request them, you are urged to follow these basic **Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters**:

- Prepare a few large print copies of all handouts.
- Write clearly and use large letters on newsprint. Use black or brown markers for maximum visibility (red and green are difficult for some to see).
- Make a printed copy of information you plan to post on newsprint, to give to any who request it.
- Face the group when you are speaking and urge others to do the same. Be aware of facial hair or hand gestures that may prevent or interfere with lip reading.
- In a large space or with a large group of people, use a microphone for presentations and for questions and answers. If a particular activity will likely make it difficult for speakers to face those who are listening (e.g., a fishbowl, forced choice, or role play activity), obtain a microphone you can pass from speaker to speaker.
- In a brainstorm activity, repeat clearly any word or phrase generated by the group in addition to writing it on newsprint.
- If the group will listen to significant amounts of material read aloud, be ready to provide printed copies to any hearing impaired participants so they can read along.
- During small group work, position each group far enough from other groups to minimize noise interference.

- Keep aisles and doorways clear at all times during a workshop so people with mobility impairments or immediate needs can exit the room easily.
- Offer a variety of seating options—for example, straight chairs, soft chairs, chairs with arms, and chairs without arms—so participants can find seating that best suits their needs.
- When re-arranging furniture for small groups or other purposes, ensure clear pathways between groups.
- Enlist participants' vigilance in removing bags, books, coffee cups, and other obstacles from pathways.
- Use the phrase "Rise in body or spirit" rather than "Please stand."
- Use language that puts the person first, rather than the disability—for example, "a person who uses a wheelchair," rather than "a wheelchair-user"; "a child with dyslexia," rather than "a dyslexic child"; "people with disabilities" rather than "the disabled."
- Do not ask individuals to read aloud. Request volunteers or read the material yourself. When possible, ask for volunteers before the workshop and give each volunteer a copy of the material they will read.
- Ask participants in advance about any food allergies. Add to your group covenant an agreement to avoid bringing problem foods or to always offer an alternate snack.
- Ask participants in advance about any allergies to scents or perfumes. If participants have allergies or sensitivities, invite members of the group to refrain from wearing perfumes and add this agreement to your covenant.

The Unitarian Universalist Association website and staff can offer guidance for including people with specific disabilities; consult the [UUA Disability and Accessibility webpage](#).

Participants bring a wide range of learning styles and preferences. With this in mind, the workshops offer a variety of activities. Review each workshop's Alternate Activities. Plan each workshop to best suit the group.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

This program comprises 16 two-hour workshops (including a ten-minute break).

Each workshop can stand alone or be combined with others for a series up to 16 workshops. You are urged to begin with Workshop 1, Wading In — An Introduction. Concluding activities appropriate to any set of workshops can be found in Workshop 16, Ripples in the Water — The Evangelists.

You might present a short series organized around one of these themes:

Freedom of Belief

WORKSHOP 2: Against the Flow — Orthodoxy and Heresy

WORKSHOP 4: The Verdant Springs — Reform(ation)

WORKSHOP 5: God's Gonna Trouble the Waters — Martyrs and Sacrifice

Prophets and Social Justice

WORKSHOP 12: I've Got Tears Like the Raindrops — Freedom

WORKSHOP 13: Mirages and Oases — Idealism and Utopianism

WORKSHOP 16: Ripples in the Water — The Evangelists

Diverse Community

WORKSHOP 6: Shall We Gather at the River? — Religious Tolerance

WORKSHOP 14: The Seven Seas — Globalization

WORKSHOP 15: The Water Is Wide — Multiculturalism

Institutionalism

WORKSHOP 9: Rise in the Sea — Unitarianism

WORKSHOP 10: Rise in the Sea — Universalism

WORKSHOP 11: As Tranquil Streams that Meet and Merge — Consolidation

Unitarian Universalist Identity

WORKSHOP 3: Rising Tides — Reason as a Religious Source

WORKSHOP 7: We're All Swimming in the Stream Together — Covenant

WORKSHOP 8: Gently Down the Stream — Polity

All workshops follow this structure:

Introduction. The Introduction summarizes the workshop themes and content and offers guidance for implementing the workshop.

Goals. Goals provide the desired outcomes of the workshop. As you plan a workshop, apply your

knowledge of your group, the time and space you have available, and your own strengths as a leader to determine the most important and achievable goals for the workshop. Choose the activities that will best serve those goals.

Learning Objectives. Learning Objectives describe specific participant outcomes that the workshop activities are designed to facilitate. They describe what participants may learn and how they may change as a result of the experience of the workshop.

Workshop-at-a-Glance. This useful table lists the core workshop activities in order and provides an estimated time for completing each activity. It also presents the workshop's Faith in Action activity and Alternate Activities.

Workshop-at-a-Glance is not a road map you must follow. Rather, use it as a menu for planning the workshop. Many variables inform the actual completion time for an activity. Consider the time you will need to form small groups or relocate participants to another area of the meeting room.

Spiritual Preparation. Each workshop suggests readings, reflections, and/or other preparation to help facilitators grow spiritually and prepare to facilitate with confidence and depth. You may invite participants, in a workshop Closing, to engage in the same spiritual practice for the following workshop so that they, too, will arrive at the workshop centered and ready to engage with the material and the group.

Review Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters before each workshop.

WORKSHOP PLAN

The workshop elements are:

Welcoming and Entering. This section offers steps for welcoming participants as they arrive.

Opening. Each workshop begins with a short opening ritual, including a welcome, chalice-lighting, and reading or song. Shape the opening ritual to suit your group and the culture and practices of your congregation.

Activities. To provide a coherent learning experience, present the core activities in the sequence suggested. Activities address different learning styles and include individual, small group, and whole group exploration.

Plan a ten-minute break near the halfway point of the workshop. Arrange for beverages and snacks if you wish.

Each activity presents the materials and preparation you will need, followed by a description of the activity followed by detailed directions for implementing the

activity with your group. Accessibility guidance is provided, in an Including All Participants section, for activities that have unusual physical circumstances or for which a reminder about inclusion may benefit leaders. Please consult the Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters in the Integrating All Participants section of this Introduction for suggestions to meet some common accessibility needs.

Faith in Action. Each workshop suggests an activity for the group to do outside the workshop meeting times. This is an opportunity for participants to apply workshop themes to action that can transform our congregations and our world.

Workshop Closings suggest download the Faith in Action section and combine it with the Taking It Home section as a handout. (Note: You can customize Faith in Action, Taking It Home or any other component of a Tapestry of Faith program. Download it to your own computer and edit it with your own word processing program.)

Closing. Each workshop offers a closing ritual that signals the end of the group's time together. Like the Opening, the Closing grounds a shared learning experience in ritual. Shape your closing ritual to fit the group and the culture and practices of your congregation.

Leader Reflection and Planning. Find time as co-facilitators to discuss these questions after each workshop to strengthen your skills and your understanding of the group.

Alternate Activities. Workshops offer Alternate Activities to substitute for a core activity or add to the workshop. An Alternate Activity may need more time than a parallel core activity or require Internet access. It may use a different approach to presenting core material or extend learning in a direction not offered in a core activity.

Review Alternate Activities along with the core activities when planning a workshop. Select the activities you feel will work best for you and the group. Keep in mind the benefits of a well-paced workshop that includes different kinds of activities.

Resources. Workshops include the following resources you will need to lead the workshop activities.

- Stories — Narratives from the sources of our Unitarian Universalist tradition that illuminate and support the workshop activities.
- Handouts — Sheets you will need to print out and copy for participants to use in the workshop.

- Leader Resources — Background information and/or activity directions you will need during the workshop.

LEADER GUIDELINES

Leaders should be attentive to the different life experiences and knowledge participants bring to the group, particularly if the group spans a wide age range. Some participants may be quite knowledgeable about Unitarian Universalist history and able to add detail and new perspectives to the materials provided. Others may be well versed in world history and able to provide context and background. Some participants may have been involved in some of the events described and can offer firsthand accounts. Others may be new to Unitarian Universalism or to the study of history. Help the group to share the floor respectfully and honor all members' individual contributions and questions.

IMPLEMENTATION

This program is flexible. The design does not assume the same participants will come to each workshop. You can offer the workshops in a variety of combinations and sequences.

Offer on-site childcare or in-home babysitting to include adults with young children. Evening workshops can be a challenge for participants who do not drive, who do not drive after dark, or who live a long way from the congregation. Arranging for carpools can help.

BEFORE YOU START

Determine the calendar schedule for workshops.

Once you have determined which workshops you will offer, choose dates and times for all the workshops. Enter the information on the congregation's calendar.

Choose a meeting space. Find a comfortable room in which you will be able to display materials as digital slides or newsprint. Make sure the space is accessible for participants who use wheelchairs or other assistance devices. Reserve the space and any equipment you may need for all the workshop dates and times you have chosen.

Arrange for childcare. Make arrangements with qualified childcare providers and reserve a room for childcare.

Promote the workshops. Use newsletters, websites, printed and verbal announcements, adult religious education brochures, and special invitations to publicize the workshops. Personally invite potential participants at worship, new member orientations, and religious education programs and meetings. You may also choose to promote the workshops more broadly with a

listing in your local newspaper or on your local community access television channel. If participants pre-register, you may wish to send reminder letters, postcards or emails with the date, time, and place of the first meeting.

PRINCIPLES AND SOURCES

Unitarian Universalist Principles

There are seven Principles which Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Unitarian Universalist Sources

Unitarian Universalism draws from many Sources:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit
- Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

FACILITATOR FEEDBACK FORM

We welcome your critique of this program, as well as your suggestions. Thank you for your feedback! Your input improves programs for all of our congregations. Please forward your feedback to:

Faith Development Office
Ministries and Faith Development
Unitarian Universalist Association
24 Farnsworth Street
Boston, MA 02210-1409
religiouseducation@uua.org

Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation:

Number of Participants:

Age range:

Did you work with (a) co-facilitator(s)?

Your name:

Overall, what was your experience with this program?

What specifically did you find most helpful or useful about this program?

In what ways could this program be changed or improved (please be specific)?

Did you enrich the program with any resources that you would recommend to others?

What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your life going forward?

What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your congregation going forward?

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM

We welcome your critique of this program, as well as your suggestions. Thank you for your feedback! Your input improves programs for all of our congregations. Please forward your feedback to:

Faith Development Office
Ministries and Faith Development
Unitarian Universalist Association
24 Farnsworth Street
Boston, MA 02210-1409
religiouseducation@uua.org

Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation or group:

Your name:

Overall, what was your experience with this program?

What specifically did you find most helpful or useful about this program?

In what ways could this program be changed or improved (please be specific)?

What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your life going forward?

What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your congregation going forward?

WORKSHOP 1: WADING IN – AN INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going? — Paul Gauguin

This workshop explores Unitarian Universalist history as one current in the stream of human history, with its own themes of thought and action that swirl, eddy, and bubble to prominence at different points in time. A selection of stories from our faith heritage offers not only a grounding of knowledge, but also insights into contemporary issues, practices, challenges, and trends in our faith movement.

The workshop presents an overview and a time line which will help the group place events in historical context as they are explored in future workshops. Because the activities in this workshop provide a foundation for subsequent workshops, there are no alternate activities.

Before leading this workshop, review the Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters in the program Introduction. Make preparations needed to accommodate individuals who may be in the group.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Invite participants to meet one another and create a covenant of participation
- Introduce the themes and structure of the program
- Demonstrate that knowledge of history offers insights applicable to contemporary issues
- Offer an overview and a time line to serve as reference points during the course.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Identify their own interest in learning about Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist history
- Hear several stories about how the lives of some individuals and the direction of some congregations were changed by learning more about their history

- Share their own stories about how their lives were changed by learning more about history
- Gain an overview of the time frame of events covered in this program
- Build a covenant of participation for the duration of the program.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: W.H.G. Carter and a Step Toward Reconciliation	25
Activity 2: Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?	25
Activity 3: Time Line of UU History	20
Activity 4: Building a Group Covenant	25
Faith in Action: Sharing Insights from UU History	
Closing	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Reflect on a time when you learned something new about the history of your congregation, or about Unitarian Universalism, that shifted your sense of identity as a Unitarian Universalist.

What feelings were associated with the shift? If you heard a story of achievement and courage, did you feel unexpectedly proud? If you heard a story about a time when our forebears fell short of Unitarian Universalist ideals, you may have felt chagrined or sad. Perhaps, if you learned a story of a wrestling to find the right thing to do in the face of difficult choices, you might have felt a connection to the struggles of others. Recall the circumstances of your new learning and the feeling you had in response.

You may wish to ask participants to engage in this same spiritual practice so that they, too, arrive at the workshop centered and ready to engage with the material and the group.

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Sign-in sheet and pen/pencil
- Name tags and markers
- Leader Resource 1, [Schedule Template](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Leader Resource 1, Schedule Template. Copy it for all participants.
- Create and post a workshop agenda on newsprint. The Workshop-at-a-Glance section provides time estimates.
- Create a welcome table near the entrance. Set out name tags and markers, the sign-in sheet and pen/pencil, and copies of the schedule.

Description of Activity

Welcome everyone to the workshop as they enter. Ask them to sign in, make name tags, and pick up the schedule handout from the welcome table. Draw their attention to the posted agenda for this workshop.

Including All Participants

Write the agenda in large, clear lettering and post it where it will be easily visible to all participants. Provide name tags large enough and markers bold enough so names will be easily visible.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Optional: Decorative cloth

Preparation for Activity

- Set up a worship or centering table with the chalice and (optional) decorative cloth.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice with these words from the Rev. Lee Bluemel, used with permission:

We light our chalice,
This ancient symbol of communion and equality,
Symbol of mystics and heretics,
Reformers and refugees,
Artists, activists and Unitarian Universalists
everywhere.

ACTIVITY 1: W.H.G. CARTER AND A STEP TOWARD RECONCILIATION (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[W.H.G. Carter and a Step Toward Reconciliation](#)" (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story.
- If you plan to invite volunteers to read the words in the story spoken by Walter Herz, Leslie Edwards, Starita Smith, and Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed, make copies for the additional readers. If possible, invite readers in advance and provide them with copies of the story.

Description of Activity

Introduce the story with these or similar words:

History is not "what happened," but what is remembered and recorded, or forgotten and ignored. It is about point of view. The historical adventure is a process of discovery and rediscovery for each person, for each generation. Studying Unitarian Universalist history together will give us opportunities to encounter anew the stories of our faith and consider what to make of them and what to do because of them.

In this series of workshops, you may hear stories that are familiar to you. Some have been well documented and passed along to us as the truth of our past. They include women, men, youth, events, movements, and conflicts that created our inheritance and form our collective Unitarian Universalist story.

Also included are lesser-known stories from our faith tradition. You may hear a story of a forgotten person, someone whom history has left outside the mainstream. You may hear a familiar story, but told from an unfamiliar perspective. Some of the stories re-open chapters from our history which have been pushed to the side, perhaps because Unitarian Universalists were uncomfortable about what happened and what it might reveal about ourselves or our forebears.

It's important to remember that this program is not a comprehensive survey of Unitarian Universalist history, nor does it offer the final word on any of these stories. This program explores Unitarian Universalism as one current flowing in the stream of religious history. We will

see certain themes, whirlpools and eddies of thought and action that appear and re-appear in different times and places. We will have opportunities to engage personally with our history by sharing own stories, reflections, and questions.

We will explore difficult stories, where the actions of our predecessors, seen through the lens of time, fall short of our contemporary hopes and ideals. Former UUA President the Reverend William Sinkford, speaking of our past efforts to bring justice to all, reminded us that whether we succeeded or failed is perhaps less important than the fact that we stayed engaged. By returning together to difficult stories—such as the story we will hear now—we contribute our own engagement to the ongoing stream of our UU history.

Read aloud the story of W. H. G. Carter and the Cincinnati congregations, inviting several volunteers to read the different parts.

After the reading, offer a time of response and discussion, guided by these questions:

- Had you heard this story from our UU history before, or is it new to you?
- What thoughts, and feelings, arose as you listened?
- What questions are you left with?

Including All Participants

Do not put any participant on the spot to read aloud. Use only volunteers and, if possible, give them the material in advance.

Ask readers to speak slowly and clearly so all can hear.

ACTIVITY 2: WHERE DO WE COME FROM? WHAT ARE WE? WHERE ARE WE GOING? (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Litany — Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?](#) (included in this document)
- Copies of *Singing the Journey*, supplement to *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook
- Optional: Audio or video of people singing Hymn 1003, "Where Do We Come From?" and a player

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1, Litany — Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?
- Arrange for three volunteers to read aloud. Give them their assignments and a copy of Handout 1 in advance.
- Optional: Invite an accompanist or a vocalist to help you teach and lead Hymn 1003 in *Singing the Journey*.
- Optional: Set up equipment to play audio or video.

Description of Activity

Introduce the activity with these or similar words:

There are many ways we can connect to our Unitarian Universalist heritage. One is by hearing stories such as "W.H.G. Carter and a Step Toward Reconciliation." Another is by seeing the ways we, ourselves, take our place in the long line of Unitarian Universalists. To connect our lives to theirs, we share our stories with one another, stories that reflect experiences when we found ourselves knowing better what it is to be a Unitarian Universalist.

Invite participants to take a few moments to think about a time when knowing something about the history of Unitarian Universalism made a difference to them personally or to their congregation.

After a few moments of silence, explain that together you will create a litany, sharing stories about personal connections to our collective history and using a chant as a refrain between the stories. Tell the group you have brought some stories to share aloud, and, interspersed with these, volunteers will be invited to share brief stories of their own.

Distribute copies of *Singing the Journey*. Lead participants in Hymn 1003, "Where Do We Come From?" Sing together, with the help of a vocalist or accompanist if you have made those arrangements, or read the words aloud together.

Distribute the handout. Read aloud, or invite volunteers to read, each of the brief stories. After each story, sing or say the refrain in unison. As the handout prompts, after several stories have been read aloud, invite volunteers from the group to share their own stories.

ACTIVITY 3: TIME LINE OF UU HISTORY (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)
- Pens/pencils (for handouts); markers (for posted display)
- Optional: Newsprint or other display paper, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Download Handout 2, Time Line of UU History. Find out major events in your congregation's history and add them to the time line.
- Decide whether you will provide the time line as a re-usable handout, post it in the meeting space, or both.
 - For a handout, copy the time line for all participants. Identify a place in the meeting room where participants can leave their handouts between workshops.
 - To post the time line, print out Handout 2 and transfer its contents to newsprint sheets or other display paper. Arrange the time line on a wall where it can remain for the program's duration. If you cannot leave the time line posted, identify a place where you can store the pages between workshops.
- Familiarize yourself with the time line's contents.

Description of Activity

Say, in your own words:

The study of history—the record of events that have happened in the past—can be approached in many different ways. While this program explores history thematically, grouping stories and information around broadly defined subjects, it is helpful to have a time line of events for reference. This is particularly important as we explore the paths of Unitarianism and Universalism separately, prior to their convergence and consolidation into one faith tradition.

Indicate the Time Line of UU History. Allow participants to identify events familiar to them and new information.

Invite participants to add congregational and personal information to the time line. When was the congregation established? The building built? Does their own family

heritage include Unitarians, Universalists, or Unitarian Universalists? Where on the time line do these individuals belong?

ACTIVITY 4: BUILDING A GROUP COVENANT (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- For your own use, list the elements of covenant that you would like to suggest as the facilitator. You might include:
 - Start and end on time.
 - Practice respectful dialogue.
 - Honor diversity of opinion and approach.
 - If you desire confidentiality, ask for it.
 - Share the floor.
 - Learn something new.
- Write the title "How We Agree to Be with Each Other" on blank newsprint, and post.

Description of Activity

Read aloud, or say in your own words:

Our Unitarian Universalist tradition is covenantal. Walter Herz offers this definition of a covenant: "the common understandings, agreements, and promises made, one to another, that define our mutual obligations and commitments to each other as we try to live our faith and vision." Because much of this program will touch on our Unitarian Universalist understanding of covenant, and because covenants are foundational in Unitarian Universalist faith communities, let us establish a covenant before beginning our work together.

Invite participants to suggest guidelines for how they will be with each other during these workshops. Use these questions:

- When you are in a faith-centered group, what do you need in order to feel comfortable, safe, and able to be yourself?
- What are your growing edges when you are in a group? What is hard for you? What are your limits?
- What gifts do you bring to a group?

- Some workshops may raise themes or historical events which may make some participants uncomfortable. How can the group address in its covenant the need to keep the workshop safe and productive for all?

Write all suggestions on newsprint. Then, add any items from the list you prepared. Ask participants if they have concerns about or difficulty agreeing to any item listed. Discuss those items and amend the covenant by consensus, as needed.

On a new sheet of newsprint, rewrite the covenant title and list the agreed-on items. Read the covenant aloud and ask for verbal assent from each participant.

Save the written covenant to post in future workshops.

CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Faith in Action from this workshop and/or Spiritual Preparation from Workshop 2

Preparation for Activity

- Download and customize Taking It Home as a handout. You may wish to add the Faith in Action activity suggestion from this workshop and/or the Spiritual Preparation questions for the next workshop.

Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Announce the date, time, and place of the next workshop and any other "housekeeping" information. Request or remind volunteers if you want participants to read material aloud or perform other roles at the next meeting.

Invite participants to gather around the chalice. Distribute copies of *Singing the Living Tradition* and lead the group to read in unison Reading 456, "We extinguish this flame," by Elizabeth Selle Jones. Extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: SHARING INSIGHTS FROM UU HISTORY

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Litany — Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?](#) (included in this document)

Description of Activity

Create and implement a plan to share a story from Activity 1 of this workshop with your congregation, perhaps with the youth group; a children's, youth, or adult religious education group; during worship; or via the congregational website or newsletter. Think about how you can share the story in a way that communicates the importance of knowing more about Unitarian Universalist history.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

After the workshop, co-leaders should talk together to evaluate this workshop and plan future workshops. Use these questions to guide your shared reflection and planning:

- What parts of the workshop worked well and which did not? Why? How was the success, or lack of success, related to the topics? How was it related to the types of activities?
- How can we use this experience to make future workshops more effective? What would we change if we were to lead this workshop again?
- What was left unfinished in the workshop that should still be addressed? How and when will we address it?
- What strengths did we each bring to the workshop?
- As co-leaders, when did we work well together?
- What might help us be better leaders in future workshops?
- What do we need to prepare for the next workshop? Who will handle which tasks? Who will lead which activities?

TAKING IT HOME

Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going? — Paul Gauguin

Consider where your personal Unitarian Universalist identity comes from. What has it made of you? How does it lead you into the future? Write your reflections in your journal or engage friends and family members in conversation.

STORY: W.H.G. CARTER AND A STEP TOWARD RECONCILIATION

Adapted from "A Step Toward Racial Reconciliation" by David Whitford, *UU World*, May/June 2002, used with permission.

Reverend W.H.G. Carter was a big man with a big personality. Light-skinned, six-feet-two, a man of charm, energy, imagination, and learning, he towered over his wife, Beulah, who was only five feet tall, and their 15 children. He trained as a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal church, following in his father's footsteps, but never served as a minister in that denomination. He disagreed with many beliefs of the African Methodist Episcopal church, starting with the divinity of Jesus. As an adult, Reverend Carter worked as a photographer, a mural painter, a teacher, a postal worker, a funhouse operator and a real estate speculator. Like his maternal grandfather, William Henry Gray—a free-born African American—Carter was a political activist. He sold a tip sheet to horse race gamblers, kept a roulette wheel in his church (to make the point that gambling in and of itself was not sinful), and operated a friendly neighborhood pool hall (no swearing allowed).

Reverend Carter moved with his wife and children to Cincinnati in 1918. That same year, Reverend Carter founded a Unitarian Church in Cincinnati. Called the Church of the Unitarian Brotherhood, it was probably the only African American Unitarian church in America at that time. Along with overseeing the work of the Unitarian church he founded in Cincinnati's West End, he ran four times as a Republican candidate for the city council, although he never won. He founded a fraternal order called the Grand Order of Denizens, whose initials spelled G.O.D, and was a dedicated provider of food, money, clothing, and advocacy to poor blacks in Cincinnati.

At the time, other Unitarians knew about the church and its founder, but turned their backs because the church was African American and poor. Twenty years later, a representative of the American Unitarian Association came to investigate, but the conclusion of the official report was, "I do not recommend Unitarian fellowship for Mr. Carter or subsidy for his movement." In other words, there was no ministerial degree for Reverend Carter, and no money for his church. Shortly afterwards, the Church of the Unitarian Brotherhood closed down.

Fast forward 80 years. It's 1998, and the Reverend Sharon Dittmer tells the story of W.H.G. Carter's Church as part of her sermon at the North Hill Fellowship in Cincinnati. Sitting in one of the pews that day was

Walter Herz, a church historian. He had never before heard this story of how prejudice had shut down an African American Unitarian congregation, right in his own city, until Reverend Dittmar gave her talk that day. It surprised and intrigued him, but also made him deeply sad.

Leslie Edwards was also surprised to hear about Reverend W.H.G. Carter in a sermon. "That's my grandfather you were talking about," said Mr. Edwards to a hushed congregation during the discussion afterward. "I never thought I'd hear his name mentioned in a Unitarian church." Mr. Edwards was a member of the board of Northern Hills Fellowship.

"We can't let this drop," Mr. Herz said. "We ought to find out more about this family." So Mr. Edwards and Mr. Herz decided to find out more. What they found out sparked an extraordinary act of reconciliation involving two mostly white Unitarian Universalist congregations, five generations of a remarkable African American family, a city scarred by police brutality and race riots, and Unitarian Universalism as a faith.

Mr. Herz and Mr. Edwards shared with their congregation what they had learned about Reverend W.H.G. Carter— what kind of person he was, how he had lived his life, and the whole sad story of what had happened to his African American Unitarian church. Other church members started wondering what to do. The most important part, they decided, should be an apology to the Carter family. They felt that, as a congregation, they wanted to admit what they called the "stain on the Unitarian Movement and on our local Unitarian Churches occasioned by our rejection of Carter's Brotherhood Church sixty years ago."

Mr. Herz and Mr. Edwards's church set up a weekend of activities. They invited more than 100 members of the Carter family. An African American minister, Reverend Mark Morrison-Reed, came down from his Unitarian Universalist church in Toronto and gave a Sunday morning sermon which he called "The Burden of Guilt." Here's part of what he said:

Remembering the past with regret can strengthen the resolve to do the only thing we can do together to shape a more just tomorrow. For in that moment when the one person feels hurt and the other feels sympathy, a bond is established. That connection can be built upon. And as the relationship grows, we can move beyond avoidance, guilt, and self-hatred, and let go of the anger and recrimination to embrace the only things that can sustain us over the long haul— the love of God, which we find in one another, and our shared vision of tomorrow...

Nobody knew if it would really happen, if one of the Carter family members might accept the apology. Then another person rose to the pulpit. She was Starita Smith of Denton, Texas, a mother with two grown children, and a great-granddaughter of W.H.G. Carter. As she began to speak, people still were not sure. She said she was skeptical about "apologies to black people for everything from slavery to neglect of Africa. We read the headlines and we say, 'So what changes now?'" She said she expected more from Unitarian Universalists. She continued:

You are supposed to be the most liberal of the mainstream denominations. It is very meaningful to me that you took the initiative to acknowledge a history that must be embarrassing for you, and to attempt to make amends in the present for what was wrong in the past....

But we must also acknowledge that racial reconciliation, true racial reconciliation, requires commitment.... I hope you will reflect on this weekend often and let it galvanize you. I hope that it will cause you to go beyond the comfortable friendships you have with your black Unitarian friends to attempt to bring honesty, light, and compassion into the thorny arena of race relations beyond the boundaries of your church.

We Carters encourage you to continue to look into your hearts, ask difficult and complex questions, and take action. We accept your apology.

The silence in the sanctuary was broken by a sudden burst of applause. Starita Smith found herself in the arms of the church's minister, Reverend Sharon Dittmar. The minister's black robe enveloped them both. "When the hug seemed to go on a beat or two too long," Starita Smith later wrote, "it dawned on me that she was crying and leaning on me for support."

HANDOUT 1: LITANY — WHERE DO WE COME FROM? WHAT ARE WE? WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Stories in this litany are used by permission.

"A Child Discovers She's Not Alone" by Rev. Pat Guthmann Haresch

I remember in my UU childhood, I went to a grade school where there weren't any other UU kids, and sometimes that felt isolating. My grade school was Horace Mann Elementary and there was a big portrait of him in the hallway by the administrative offices. One day my mom said, "Well, there is another UU at your school," and she told me about Horace Mann being Unitarian and his historical importance. Every time I went to the gym, I saw his portrait, and was filled with pride, and didn't feel alone."

SING Hymn 1003 or SAY the lyrics in unison.

"A Congregation Finds Strength and Inspiration" by Rev. Jackie Clement

Plenty of churches struggle with tight budgets and pledge shortfalls, and one of the churches I served as interim minister was no exception. When the congregation learned the amount they would have to raise in order to settle a new minister spirits were pretty low. It didn't seem possible. But then we found a story in the church archives. In 1893 the church needed 4,000 dollars worth of repairs. Can you imagine how much money 4,000 dollars was at the end of the nineteenth century? To raise the money the church decided to hold bean suppers. One problem was that the church had no water, so water had to be carried in buckets from a nearby home and heated on a stovetop boiler. Another problem was that a bean supper went for 10 cents! But they did it; they raised 4,000 dollars, one dime at a time. If they could do that, the current congregation could raise what was necessary to call a minister. And they did!

SING Hymn 1003 or SAY the lyrics in unison.

(Facilitator: Invite a participant to share a story.)

SING Hymn 1003 or SAY the lyrics in unison.

"A Call to Work for Women's Rights" by Sara Eskrich

I tell people that I've always been a feminist. However, it was in my young adolescence, when a member of my congregation performed a monologue of the life of Olympia Brown that I really heard my call to feminism. I realized that my budding feminism was firmly rooted in my faith tradition. The fight of the Rev. Olympia Brown to become the first ordained minister, as well as her integral role in the women's suffrage movement, gave me a religious and moral framework within which to discuss and act on the importance of women's rights in my heart and soul.

SING Hymn 1003 or SAY the lyrics in unison.

"The Flaming Chalice" by Alison Cornish

Growing up as a Unitarian Universalist, I remember our worship services being without rituals, save for the singing of hymns. In college, I attended a fairly conservative UU congregation, where the liturgy was largely unchanged from the nineteenth century. So it was a surprise to see, in my first "adult" congregation, a chalice being lit at the beginning of every service. I thought it must be something this church, in its independence and creativity, chose to do.

It was many years before I learned the true story of the flaming chalice symbol, designed by Hans Deutsch to be used by the Unitarian Service Committee (USC) on their documents as they worked to secure safe passage for World War II refugees. That historical story I knew much about—from the records, it seems very likely that safe passage from Austria for my great-aunt, and possibly my grandparents as well, was the work of the Unitarian Service Committee.

I cannot light a chalice or see a chalice lit without thinking about the work of the USC, the saving work it represents, and my connection to this faith.

SING Hymn 1003 or SAY the lyrics in unison.

(Facilitator: Invite a participant to share a story.)

SING Hymn 1003 or SAY the lyrics in unison.

(Facilitator: Invite a participant to share a story.)

SING Hymn 1003 or SAY the lyrics in unison.

HANDOUT 2: TIME LINE OF UU HISTORY

You can download a document of this timeline here: [Timeline of UU History](http://www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/uu_history_timeline.doc) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/uu_history_timeline.doc) (PDF) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/uu_history_timeline.pdf)

Date	Historical and Religious Events	Unitarian	Universalist	Unitarian Universalist
230 C.E.			Origen, <i>Of Principles</i>	
260		Sabellius		
		Paul of Samosata		
325	Council of Nicea	Arius		
431	Council of Ephesus reaffirms doctrine of trinity			
451	Council of Chalcedon reaffirms doctrine of trinity			
543			Justinian's edict condemns Origen's doctrine	
544			Church Council declares universal salvation a heresy	
927-70		Bogomils (followers of Paul of Samosata and Manichaeism; precursors of Cathars, Waldenses, Anabaptists)		
1328-84	John Wycliff			
1453	Constantinople falls to Muslim Turks			
1455	Gutenberg Bible			
1517	Martin Luther publishes 95 <i>Theses</i> , launching the Reformation			
1527	Charles V's sack of Rome	Martin Cellarius publishes <i>On the Works of God</i> , earliest antitrinitarian book		
1531		Michael Servetus, <i>On the Errors of the Trinity</i>		
1534	Church of England separated from Rome			

1535	Calvin, <i>Institution of Christian Religion</i>			
1539				
1542	Inquisition assigned to Holy Office by Paul III			
1543	Copernicus, <i>Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestorum</i>			
1545-63	Council of Trent (Counter-Reformation)			
1549	Book of Common Prayer, Church of England			
1553		Servetus burned at the stake, Geneva		
1550	Council of Venice			
	Church of Strangers, London			
1566		Frances David preaches against the doctrine of the trinity		
1568	Edict of Torda			
1579		Death of Frances David		
1585		Rakow Press established		
1591		Socinian church in Krakow destroyed by mob		
1605		Racovian Catechism		
1611	King James-authorized English translation of Bible is published			
1619	First Africans arrive in Virginia w/same status as English indentured servants			
1620	Plymouth Plantation founded			
1628	Massachusetts Bay Colony founded as a self-governing theocracy			
1635	Colony of Rhode Island			

	established			
1637			Samuel Gorton driven out of MA for religious radicalism in espousing universal salvation	
1638	Diet of Dees			
1642-60	English Civil Wars			
1647	John Biddle, <i>XII Arguments Drawn Out of the Scriptures</i>			
1648	Cambridge Platform			
1649	Act for Religious Toleration passed by Maryland Assembly			
1654		John Biddle banished to Scilly Isles		
1658		Polish Diet banishes Socinians		
1681	William Penn receives royal tract of land, founding the Pennsylvania colony			
1703		Thomas Emlyn imprisoned in Dublin		
1730s, '40s	The Great Awakening			
1736	Charles and John Wesley arrive in Georgia			
1741			George de Benneville emigrates to Pennsylvania	
1742		Charles Chauncey, <i>Enthusiasm Described and Cautioned Against</i>		
1743			Christopher Sower bible	
1753			George deBenneville, <i>The Everlasting Gospel</i>	
1759			James Rely, <i>Union</i>	
1770			John Murray emigrates to the American colonies	
1774		Essex St. Chapel		

		established in London		
1776-83	American War of Independence			
1777			Caleb Rich organizes General Society to ordain ministers	
1778				
1779			First Universalist congregation in the Americas, Gloucester, Massachusetts	
1785			Universalist Conference at Oxford, Massachusetts	
1787		King's Chapel ordination of James Freeman		
			Elhanan Winchester, <i>The Universal Restoration</i>	
1790			Judith Sargent Murray, <i>On the Equality of the Sexes</i>	
			Philadelphia Convention adopts declaration of faith	
1791		Joseph Priestly's library burned in Birmingham, England		
1793	Fugitive Slave Law		New England Convention of Universalists	
1796		First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia		
1800-40	Second Great Awakening			
1802		Oldest Pilgrim church in America (f. 1620, Plymouth, Massachusetts) becomes Unitarian		
1803	Louisiana Purchase		Winchester (New Hampshire) "Confession of Faith"	

1804	"Jefferson" Bible			
1805			Hosea Ballou, <i>A Treatise on the Atonement</i>	
1805		Henry Ware, Sr. appointed as Hollis Professor of Divinity, Harvard		
1811		Harvard Divinity School established		
1812	War of 1812			
1817			Restorationist Controversy begins	
1818		Dedham case		
1819	Toleration Act in New Hampshire, "Disestablishment"	Channing preaches "Unitarian Christianity," Baltimore, Maryland	<i>Universalist Magazine</i> weekly paper established	
1820		Berry Street Conference		
1821		<i>The Christian Register</i> first published		
1825	Erie Canal completed	British and Foreign Unitarian Association founded		
		American Unitarian Association founded		
1827		Unitarian Sunday School Society founded		
1831	William Lloyd Garrison began publishing <i>The Liberator</i>			
1832		First recorded meeting of Unitarians in Montreal		
1833	Disestablishment of Congregational churches in Massachusetts	Lydia Maria Child, <i>An Appeal in favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans</i>	General Convention of Universalists in U.S. founded	
1838		Ralph Waldo Emerson preaches "Divinity School Address"		
1840-60	4.2 European immigrants, mostly German and Irish,			

	arrive in the U.S.			
1841		Theodore Parker preaches "Transient and Permanent in Christianity"		
		Church of the Disciples established in Boston		
1842		First permanent Unitarian church in Canada established in Montreal		
1843			Universalist church established in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada	
1844		Meadville Theological School established, Meadville, Pennsylvania		
1845		Margaret Fuller, <i>Women in the Nineteenth Century</i>		
1846			Adin Ballou, <i>Christian Non-Resistance</i>	
1848	Seneca Falls Convention			
1852		Western Unitarian Association founded	Tufts College established, Medford, Massachusetts	
1856	Antoinette Louisa Brown Blackwell ordained		St. Lawrence University and Theological School established, Canton, New York	
1859	Charles Darwin, <i>Origin of the Species</i>			
1860-90	10 million Northern European and 1 million Scandinavian immigrants arrive in the U.S.			
1860		Thomas Starr King arrives in California		
1861-64	American Civil War			
1862			Universalist Publishing House established	
1863			Ordination of Olympia	

			Brown	
1865		National Conference of Unitarian Churches founded		
1866			Universalist General Convention	
1867		Free Religious Association founded		
1869			Women's Centenary Aid Association	
1870			Centennial Convention (Gloucester, Massachusetts)	
1880		Women's Auxiliary Conference		
1884		James Freeman Clarke, <i>Ten Great Religions</i>		
1887		Western Conference, <i>The Things Most Commonly Believed Today Among Us</i>		
1888			Universalism declared the "6th largest denomination in the U.S."	
1889			Young People's Christian Union	
1890			Universalists establish churches in Japan	
1893	World Parliament of Religions held at the Columbian Exposition of the Chicago World's Fair			
1896	U.S. Supreme Court's <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> decision legalizes racial segregation	Young People's Religious Union		
1900-17	New wave of immigration, primarily from Southern and Eastern Europe			
1900	International Congress of Free Christians and Other Religious Liberals			

1902		Beacon Press established		
1904		Starr King School for the Ministry established, Berkeley, California		
1915	D.W. Griffith's movie <i>The Birth of a Nation</i> - revived the KKK			
1917-18	U.S. Involvement in WW I			
1917	Walter Rauschenbusch, <i>Christianizing the Social Order</i>		Universalist Declaration of Social Principles drafted by Clarence Skinner	
1919	19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote			
1919-33	Prohibition			
1925	Scopes Trial	National Conference and AUA merge		Universalists consider merger with Congregationalists
1929	Stock market crash, start of the Great Depression			
1937		New Beacon Series of religious education materials launched		
1933	First Humanist Manifesto			
1936		"Unitarians Face a New Age" published		
1937				Universalists consider merger with Unitarians (previous overtures 1899, 1925)
1939		Unitarian Service Committee organized		
1940			Universalist Service Committee organized	
1941-45	U.S. Involvement in WW II			
1942		Norbert Capek dies at Dachau	Universalist Church of America	
1944		Church of the Larger Fellowship organized		

1945			Humiliati founded	
1949		Unitarian Fellowship Movement founded		
1953				Council of Liberal Churches (federation of Unitarian and Universalist publications, education and PR)
1954-55	<i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>			
1956	Interstate Highway Act/start of urban renewal			
1961				Unitarian Universalist Association formed
1961		Canadian Unitarian Council organized		
1962				Canadian Unitarian Council officially relates to UUA
1962-65	Second Vatican Council			
1963				Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
1964-73	U.S. Involvement in Vietnam War			
1965				James Reeb and Viola Liuzzo die at Selma, Alabama
1967				Black Unitarian Universalist Caucus organized
1973	Second Humanist Manifesto			
1977				Women and Religion resolution passed at General Assembly
1985				Principles and Purposes adopted
1995				Principles and Purposes amended

LEADER RESOURCE 1: SCHEDULE TEMPLATE

WORKSHOP TITLE	DATE/TIME
1 Wading In — An Introduction	
2 Against the Flow — Orthodoxy and Heresy	
3 Rising Tides — Reason as a Religious Source	
4 The Verdant Springs — Reform(ation)	
5 God's Gonna Trouble the Water — Martyrs and Sacrifice	
6 Shall We Gather at the River? — Religious Tolerance	
7 We're all Swimming in the Stream Together — Covenant	
8 Gently Down the Stream — Polity	
9 Rise in the Sea — Unitarianism	
10 Rise in the Sea — Universalism	
11 As Tranquil Streams That Meet and Merge — Consolidation	
12 I've Got Tears Like the Raindrops — Freedom	
13 Mirages and Oases — Idealism and Utopianism	
14 The Seven Seas — Globalization	
15 The Water Is Wide — Multiculturalism	
16 Ripples in the Water — The Evangelists	

FIND OUT MORE

This is a general bibliography for Unitarian Universalist history. The Find Out More sections of individual workshops offer thematic resources.

For the duration of this program, you may wish to borrow these key resources from your congregational library or your minister. Some can be purchased from [inSpirit: The UU Book and Gift Shop](#).

General Unitarian, Universalist and Unitarian Universalist History

Buehrens, John A. and Forrest Church, [A Chosen Faith: An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism](#) (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998)

Bumbaugh, David, [Unitarian Universalism: A Narrative History](#) (Chicago: Meadville Lombard, 2000)

Cassera, Ernest, ed. [Universalism in America: A Documentary History of a Liberal Faith](#) (Boston: Skinner House, 1997)

Emerson, Dorothy May, ed. [Standing Before Us: Unitarian Universalist Women and Social Reform, 1776-1936](#) (Boston: Skinner House, 1999)

Harris, Mark W., [The A to Z of Unitarian Universalism](#) (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004)

Howe, Charles A., [For Faith and Freedom: A Short History of Unitarianism in Europe](#) (Boston: Skinner House, 1997)

Howe, Charles A., [The Larger Faith: A Short History of American Universalism](#) (Boston: Skinner House, 1993)

Morris, Leslie Takahashi, James (Chip) Roush, and Leon Spencer, [The Arc of the Universe is Long: Unitarian Universalists, Anti-Racism and the Journey from Calgary](#) (Boston: Skinner House, 2009)

Morrison-Reed, Mark D., [Black Pioneers in a White Denomination](#) (Boston: Skinner House, 1992)

Parke, David, ed., [The Epic of Unitarianism: Original Writings from the History of Liberal Religion](#) (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957)

Wright, Conrad, ed. [A Stream of Light: A Short History of American Unitarianism](#) 2ed. (Boston: Skinner House Books, 1975; 1989)

Websites

[Unitarian Universalist Historical Society](#), including the [Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography](#)

[Unitarian Universalist Religious Education History Group](#) (at www.uurehistory.org/)
[Unitarian Universalist Women's Heritage Society](#) (at www.uuwhs.org)

Links to [Unitarian Universalist history videos](#) can be found on the UUA website.

WORKSHOP 2: AGAINST THE FLOW – ORTHODOXY AND HERESY

INTRODUCTION

*He drew a circle that shut me out —
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in. — Edwin
Markham, American poet (1852-1940)*

This workshop introduces the terms "orthodoxy" and "heresy" and explores how, throughout history, many of our forebears' have defined their faith in reaction to prevailing powers and dominant ways of thinking. Participants learn about times when tension between ideas or groups led one idea to be declared "heresy" in relation to mainstream or orthodox thinking or practices. Finally, participants consider whether contemporary Unitarian Universalism embraces some "orthodoxies" in theology, in values, or in culture.

Before leading this workshop, review the Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters in the program Introduction. Make preparations to accommodate individuals who may be in the group.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Examine the meaning of heresy in relation to orthodoxy
- Demonstrate that a theme of heretical thought and action in our faith history recurs in and helps define Unitarian Universalism
- Explore the cultural, political, and intellectual dynamics at several points in history when our forebears were considered theological outsiders, or heretics.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand contemporary Unitarian Universalism's relationship to historical heretics not as a direct theological link, but as a sympathetic connection based on the value of theological questioning and the principle that "revelation is not sealed"
- Learn about Arias, an early heretical figure in Western Christian history, and why he was a theological outsider

- Consider what it means to include or exclude others from a community of faith on the basis of their ideas or beliefs
- Explore whether and if so, how, one might apply the terms "orthodoxy" and "heresy" within contemporary Unitarian Universalism.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Heresy Word Association	25
Activity 2: Arius the Heretic	35
Activity 3: How Open Is Open?	35
Faith in Action: Orthodoxies and Heresies	
Closing	10
Alternate Activity 1: An Heretical History	25
Alternate Activity 2: Who's In, and Who's Out?	25
Alternate Activity 3: What Makes a Creed?	30
Alternate Activity 4: The Racovian Catechism	45

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Give some thought to these questions so you will arrive at the workshop centered and ready to engage with the material and the group:

- When in your life have you felt excluded or marginalized?
- On what basis were you made to feel an outsider?

You may wish to ask participants to engage in this same spiritual practice so that they, too, arrive at the workshop centered and ready to engage with the material and the group.

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Sign-in sheet and pen/pencil
- Name tags and markers
- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1, [Schedule Template](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Create and post a workshop agenda on newsprint. The Workshop-at-a-Glance section provides time estimates. Create a welcome table near the entrance. Set out name tags and markers, the sign-in sheet and pen/pencil, and copies of the schedule.
- Make copies of the Time Line of UU History handout (Workshop 1, Handout 2), if you need some. Place time line handouts on the welcome table.
- Optional: Post the Time Line of UU History display.

Description of Activity

Welcome everyone to the workshop as they enter. Ask them to sign in, make (or pick up) name tags, and pick up the schedule and time line handouts from the welcome table. Point out the posted agenda for this workshop.

Including All Participants

Write the agenda in large, clear lettering and post it where it will be easily visible to all participants. Provide name tags large enough and markers bold enough so names will be easily visible.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Optional: Decorative cloth

Preparation for Activity

- Set up a worship or centering table with the chalice and (optional) decorative cloth.
- Optional: Invite a participant in advance to act as chalice lighter or reader to make the workshop more participatory.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice with these words of the Rev. Jay F. Abernathy, Jr., used with permission:

This is the flame of freedom.
The hope that glows through all darkness.
The light of truth.
It is our flame — the symbol that unites us with one another and with the heritage passed down the centuries — it is our flame.
A simple candle, humble light.
Known the world over and throughout the ages.
Kept aflame in the hearts and minds — the souls — of countless brothers and sisters in the human family.
It is our flame, it is their flame;
We shall continue to light it —
A free congregation of truth and hope.

Including All Participants

Remind volunteer readers to speak slowly and clearly so all can hear.

ACTIVITY 1: HERESY WORD ASSOCIATION (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 1, [Definition of Terms](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 1, [Background — Heresy](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1, Definition of Terms, for all participants.
- Print out Leader Resource 1, Background — Heresy. Familiarize yourself with the material so you can present it.
- Arrange for volunteers to read aloud the definitions in Handout 1, Definition of Terms and, if possible, provide them with the handout.
- Post a blank sheet of newsprint.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to free-associate with the word "heresy." Record contributions on newsprint. Allow about five minutes for brainstorming.

Then, distribute Handout 1, Definition of Terms, and invite volunteers to read the definitions. Present background information about heresy from Leader Resource 1, Background — Heresy.

Invite participants to review the words they offered as responses to the word "heresy" earlier. Ask:

- Which ones align with the definitions and background we heard?
- What words do you want to modify or add?

ACTIVITY 2: ARIUS THE HERETIC (35 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- A copy of the story "[Arius the Heretic](#)" (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story. Decide how to convey the introductory information and how to tell the story.
- Optional: Plan how you will engage participants to reenact the Nicean Council debate about Arius's beliefs. You might choose to break the story where suggested to invite this role play, or invite the group to do the role play after you tell the story.

Description of Activity

Tell or read the story of Arius. You may choose to do this either as a narrative, or to invite participants to reenact the debate.

Emphasize that while contemporary Unitarian Universalists may not hold the same theological beliefs as Arius did, we do share a sympathy for his process of discerning a different teaching and willingness to hold on to his own, known truth. Point out that our sympathy is based on our theological principle that "revelation is not sealed."

Post two sheets of newsprint. Invite participants to list all the big ideas and values on which people in their congregation agree, and another list of the big ideas and values on which there is disagreement. Steer the group away from logistical conflicts such as, whether there should be one service or two. Guide the group, instead, to name theological concepts and values on which congregants agree and disagree.

When the lists seem complete, invite participants to examine the list. Ask:

- What are the basic agreements in our congregation?
- What are the concepts, values, and theologies about which congregants agree to disagree?

- Are there disagreements which might best be described as cultural? Are these matters of style, rather than belief?

ACTIVITY 3: HOW OPEN IS OPEN? (35 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 2, [Would You Harbor Me? Lyrics](#) (included in this document) for all participants
- Optional: Music player and recording of Sweet Honey and the Rock performing "Would You Harbor Me?" from the album *Sacred Ground* (Earthbeat, 1995)

Preparation for Activity

- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - Do you feel there are limits to the inclusion of people in your congregation?
 - On what basis or criteria would you exclude others? Is religious belief a criterion?
 - Are cultural differences criteria?
 - What does it mean to be open and welcoming in our congregation?
 - What does it mean to be safe? Do we believe everyone has the right to be safe in our congregation?
 - What should be the balance between freedom and responsibility, welcoming diversity and sharing an identity, and openness and accountability?
- Optional: Set up and test music player.

Description of Activity

If you have obtained an audio recording, play Sweet Honey and the Rock's, "Would You Harbor Me?" for the group.

Distribute the handout with song lyrics. Invite everyone to take their time reading the lyrics and marking lines that particularly touch, trouble, or motivate them.

Ask participants to form groups of three to discuss the questions you have posted on newsprint. Allow ten minutes for this part of the activity.

Re-gather the large group. Invite volunteers to share reflections, observations, and comments from their smaller groups.

CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Faith in Action from this workshop and/or Spiritual Preparation from Workshop 3

Preparation for Activity

- Download and customize Taking It Home as a handout. You may wish to add the Faith in Action activity suggestion from this workshop and/or the Spiritual Preparation questions for the next workshop.

Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Announce the date, time, and place of the next workshop and any other "housekeeping" information. Request or remind volunteers if you want participants to read material aloud or perform other roles at the next meeting.

Invite participants to gather around the chalice. Distribute copies of *Singing the Living Tradition* and lead the group to read in unison Reading 456, "We extinguish this flame," by Elizabeth Selle Jones. Extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: ORTHODOXIES AND HERESIES

Description of Activity

Unitarian Universalists share this with all faiths: We hold high ideals and principles, and yet struggle to match our actions with our vision. Even as we honor our birthright as a community of heretics and celebrate our spiritual ancestors who followed their hearts and consciences to new truths, we sometimes settle—if uneasily or unconsciously—into a position that might be taken as "orthodoxy" in its original meaning: right belief.

Between now and when the group next gathers, pay attention to the formal communications of your congregation, such as your newsletter, bulletin, or website, as well as informal communications such as coffee hour conversations, "parking lot" meetings, and social interactions. Are there "right beliefs" in your congregation? What "orthodoxies" can you discern? Who are your theological insiders and outsiders? Is there room in your Unitarian Universalist circle for all theologies? Discuss your findings with others.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

After the workshop, co-leaders should talk together to evaluate this workshop and plan future workshops. Use these questions to guide your shared reflection and planning:

- What parts of the workshop worked well and which did not? Why? How was the success, or lack of success, related to the topics? How was it related to the types of activities?
- How can we use this experience to make future workshops more effective? What would we change if we were to lead this workshop again?
- What was left unfinished in the workshop that should still be addressed? How and when will we address it?
- What strengths did we each bring to the workshop?
- As co-leaders, when did we work well together?
- What might help us be better leaders in future workshops?
- What do we need to prepare for the next workshop? Who will handle which tasks? Who will lead which activities?

TAKING IT HOME

He drew a circle that shut me out —
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in. — Edwin
Markham, American poet (1852-1940)

Reflect on these questions for your journal: Whom do I include or exclude from my community? Why? Could that exclusion be understood as holding some ideas or beliefs as "orthodox?"

Invite a congregational group of which you are a part to listen to Sweet Honey in the Rock's song "Would you Harbor Me?" and consider the ways in which you are willing to include others. What limits do you place on your willingness to harbor others? Are these limits based on fear of difference? Are there ways to be more inclusive?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: AN HERETICAL HISTORY (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newspaper, markers, and tape

- Leader Resource 2, [An Heretical History](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the transcript in Leader Resource 2.
- Write these questions on newsprint, and post:
 - What was at stake?
 - Why was the orthodoxy of belief so important to the early church?
 - What are our modern orthodoxies in contemporary society? In Unitarian Universalism?

Description of Activity

The video, "An Heretical History," traces some of the early streams of thought about the nature of God, Jesus, and salvation that continued through the history of the liberal church, eventually surfacing in Unitarianism and Universalism. Read the transcript from Leader Resource 2. Then, engage a discussion using the posted questions as a guide.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: WHO'S IN, AND WHO'S OUT (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint and markers

Preparation for Activity

- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - He drew a circle that shut me out — Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout. But love and I had the wit to win:-- We drew a circle that took him in. — Charles Edwin Anson Markham
- List the following questions on newsprint:
 - Are there limits to the inclusion of others for you? What sets those limits? Are some of them based on religious belief?
 - What does it mean to be open and welcoming in our congregation? What does it mean to be safe?
 - What is the balance between freedom and responsibility, welcome and receptivity, and openness and accountability?

Description of Activity

Share with participants:

Charles Edwin Anson Markham (April 23, 1852 - March 7, 1940) was an American poet and a

Universalist, known for his artful combination of justice themes with humor in traditional poem forms such as this epigram. "Outwitted" was published in 1915.

Read, in unison, Charles Edwin Markham's poem. Invite participants to share any personal experiences they have had with the poem (for example, some Unitarian Universalist youth groups have printed the text on T-shirts, or designed worship services around the poem's sentiments).

Invite participants to move into groups of three and to discuss the questions you have posted on newsprint. Allow ten minutes for this part of the activity.

Invite participants to rejoin the larger group and share reflections, observations, and comments from their smaller groups with the large group.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: WHAT MAKES A CREED? (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[What Makes a Creed](#) (included in this document) ?"
- Five to seven name tags on strings

Preparation for Activity

- Print out and read the story. Prepare to present the story's Introduction and Part I, then the role play activity described below, and finally present the story's Part II. Arrange in advance for a volunteer or your co-leader to be the first to "freeze" the action in the role play, to model.
- Create name tags for the role play:
 - James Luther Adams
 - Reverend Leslie Pennington
 - Oppositional Board Member
 - Board Member (2 to 4 name tags)

Description of Activity

Gather the group. Read or tell the story up to the point of the meeting of the Board. Stop, and ask for volunteers to take on the roles of James Luther Adams, Reverend Leslie Pennington, and several members of the Board including one "oppositional" member. If participants seem reluctant, quietly invite someone to step into a role. Arrange chairs in front of the group for the volunteers and give them the name tags you have prepared. Explain:

Once the role play begins, at any moment a participant not playing a role may say "Freeze!" and stop the conversation. The person who

called "Freeze!" may now point to anyone in the role play and take over their role by sitting in their chair and putting on their name tag. The conversation picks up right where it left off.

Begin the role play. Have the volunteer or co-leader model calling "freeze." Allow the role play to continue as long as it seems to create insights and energy, but be sure to save ten or fifteen minutes to process the role play and to share the conclusion of the story.

Process the role play with these questions:

- For those who chose to play roles: What was difficult? What was easy? Did you find your own personal views challenged by the role you were playing?
- For those who observed: Did you see expressions of orthodoxy or creedalism, in the discussion? How about heresy or heterodoxy?

Conclude the discussion. Read the story ending (Part II) aloud.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 4: THE RACOVIAN CATECHISM (45 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 3, [The Racovian Catechism](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 3, [The Racovian Catechism](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 3, The Racovian Catechism for all participants.
- Print out Leader Resource 3. Familiarize yourself with the Racovian Catechism so you can present the material.
- Prearrange for volunteers to read aloud from Handout 3, The Racovian Catechism. Assign the preface excerpt, the questions in the catechism, and the answers (perhaps one paragraph at a time). If possible, give volunteers the handout before this workshop.
- List these questions on newsprint, and set aside:
 - Does Christianity as described in the Catechism appear to be non-creedal to you?

- Do you find the certainty of a catechism to be mostly challenging or in some way also comforting?

Description of Activity

Invite participants to form pairs and each take three minutes to share with the other any previous experiences they have had with catechisms or other methods of teaching religious creeds.

Then, regather the group and invite general reflections.

Give the context of the Racovian Catechism by reading or summarizing Leader Resource 3, The Racovian Catechism. Then, distribute Handout 3, The Racovian Catechism and invite a volunteer to read aloud the excerpt from the preface.

Ask participants to compare their experiences with catechisms or creeds with the intentions of these authors. Are they the same? Different? How?

Continue reading from the catechism. You might have a volunteer pose all the questions, then have other volunteers take turns reading the responses.

Allow pauses for questions and conversation.

Finally, post the newsprint with questions you have prepared. Invite general conversation in response to these questions.

STORY: ARIUS THE HERETIC

By Gail Forsyth-Vail, in *Stories in Faith: Exploring Our Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources Through Wisdom Tales* (Boston: UUA, 2007).

Arius, a Libyan priest, lived in the 4th century, a time when the leaders of the Christian church, freed from persecution by the Edict of Milan in 312, were engaging in debates about the nature of humanity and the nature of Jesus. The Roman Empire was in crisis, pressured on many fronts by those who threatened to overrun it. There was a strong need to unify the Christian Church under the sovereignty of a protective savior. The Emperor Constantine viewed uniting the Christian Church as a way to strengthen and unify the Roman Empire and to bring order to the outlying areas. The endless religious debates, often leading to violence between partisans and riots in the street, were a source of significant annoyance to Constantine. In 325 he convened a council at his summer residence at Nicaea, in what is now Turkey, insisting that the bishops agree on a creed that would bring unity to the church. By the close of the Council of Nicaea, the Roman state and the Christian Church had reached a mutual understanding, with the emperor playing a significant role in the church and the church a significant role in the empire.

The priest Arius believed that Jesus was divine but somewhat less so than God. He believed that Jesus' wisdom and teachings were more important than his death and resurrection. Arius believed that human beings could draw closer to God by following those teachings. As the Christian Church solidified and unified in the fourth century and adopted a Trinitarian theology, Arianism became the archetypal heresy for the orthodox.

There came a time when the Emperor Constantine had had it with all the arguing. As head of the vast Roman Empire, he called a halt to the persecutions and killings of those people known as Christians. The Christians were followers of Jesus of Nazareth, a Jewish prophet who had been put to death almost three hundred years earlier. They were known for taking care of one another, and of the poor, the sick, widows, and children in need of help. Constantine was interested in these Christians and their new religion—if only they would stop arguing!

The real trouble was in a place called Alexandria, in Egypt. There was a priest named Arius who was in charge of part of the Christian Church in Alexandria. He was tremendously popular, in part because he was also a poet and a singer. He sometimes taught or preached by putting lessons into poems and songs, which was much more fun and interesting for the people than just plain words. He was a favorite of sailors, dockworkers,

and young people. Many flocked to hear him speak. They were convinced that following Jesus would help them to get closer to God. After all, Arius told them that Jesus had started out as a human being who was so holy that God had adopted him as a son.

Alexander, the main bishop of the city, was Arius's superior. He had a different idea about Jesus. He said that Jesus had been one with God since the very beginning, and that when he was on earth, he was God living as a human being. This bishop taught that people were basically sinful and that Jesus had come to earth and lived and died in order to save people from their wrongdoing. He also said that Arius was a heretic, which meant that Arius was preaching things that were different from what most bishops and church leaders believed to be true.

So arguments began and continued. Every day people debated at the market and in the public square. Sometimes there were even fistfights and riots about which view was the right one, Alexander's or Arius's. Word of all this reached the Emperor Constantine, and he wanted the fighting stopped. It wasn't good for the empire if people were rioting in the streets, so Constantine decided to settle it once and for all. He called a council and invited all of the bishops in the empire to spend some months at his summer residence in Nicea, right beside a beautiful lake in what is now the country of Turkey.

And so the bishops arrived in May at this wonderful summer residence. Many traveled for a long time to get there, coming by ship and then overland to Nicea. Everything was ready for their arrival. Servants made sure that the food and drink were perfect and that the guests were truly pampered. The emperor looked resplendent in purple robes with gold adornment. He told the bishops to make up their minds about this question of Jesus. After this council, there was to be no more arguing! He wanted a strong Roman empire with one religion. Constantine meant to enforce whatever the decision was with the power of this empire.

Alexander and his supporters spoke. They presented parts of the songs and poetry Arius had written, to prove he was a dangerous heretic, maybe even an agent of the devil. By the time they had finished, all but two of the hundred bishops were on Alexander's side, condemning Arius. Arius himself was not allowed to speak because he was only a priest, not a bishop. While they spent a few weeks enjoying the delights of the lakeside summer home, the bishops wrote a creed for the Christian Church, a set of beliefs that everyone needed to agree to in order to belong. All were required to sign it. Arius and the two bishops who supported him refused to sign it. They were declared heretics and sent into exile.

There were a few more councils and lots more violence over the next few years. Arius was in and out of trouble during that whole period of time, but he never gave up on what he thought was right and true. On the day he died, quite suddenly, he was with friends and foes, still holding fast to what he believed.

STORY: WHAT MAKES A CREED?

Adapted from the Tapestry of Faith story "James Luther Adams," by Jessica York.

Present the story Introduction and Part I, reading aloud up to the point marked "STOP." Then, lead a role play and discussion as instructed in Alternate Activity 3, Description of Activity. Following the discussion, read the conclusion of the story (Part II) aloud.

Introduction

Unitarian Universalism is a living faith. We think that people should be free to believe what they must believe—the truth of their life experiences—instead of professing belief in what they are told to believe. This is what we mean when we say ours is a "creedless" religion. Creeds are often associated with "orthodoxy," or "straight teaching." Those who do not agree with the beliefs stated in the creed are often labeled as "heterodoxical," or even "heretical."

Being a living faith means that any one of us can change what we believe, if we experience a deeper truth that contradicts our previous beliefs. But in order to change, we must be open to new thoughts, new ideas, and new experiences. We have to have our ears open to hear the experiences of the people with whom we share community. There is a saying that people were created with two ears and one mouth because we should listen twice as much as we speak. When we come together in community, we have the opportunity to listen to each other and gain a perspective greater than what we would have alone.

Sometimes we listen with our ears. When you are a part of a sacred, beloved community you listen not only with your ears, but also with your heart.

Part I

In 1948, most congregations and houses of worship in the United States were segregated by the color of their members' skin. Some were segregated by law; others by custom or by a lack of actively trying to welcome and include all people. The First Unitarian Society of Chicago was one of these congregations. Although their church was located in a neighborhood with many African Americans, only whites could join, according to the written bylaws of the church, and according to custom.

The day came that many members began to believe that if they really wanted to live their values and principles, they needed to take action against racism. The minister, the Reverend Leslie Pennington, was ready for this day and ready to take action. So was James Luther Adams,

a well-known and respected liberal theologian and social ethicist. Adams taught at the Meadville Lombard Theological School, right across the street from the First Unitarian Society of Chicago. And he was a member of the congregation's Board of Directors.

Reverend Pennington and James Luther Adams joined with others to propose a change in the church's bylaws to desegregate the church. They saw this as a way to put their love into action.

But in 1948, desegregation—in fact, anything about skin color and racism—was controversial. Some people, even some of those who supported African Americans in demanding their civil liberties, believed in a separate, but equal policy.

When the congregation's Board considered the desegregation proposal, most of them supported it. However, one member of the Board objected. "Your new program is making desegregation into a creed," he said. "You are asking everyone in our church to say they believe desegregating, or inviting, even recruiting people of color to attend church here, is a good way to tackle racism. What if some members don't believe this?"

Respectful debate ensued at the First Unitarian Society of Chicago. Both sides felt, in their hearts, that their belief was right. Perhaps they were so busy trying to be heard they forgot to listen. And so, they kept on talking.

(Facilitator: Stop here. If you choose to, stage a role play of the preceding part of the story, as described in Alternate Activity 3, What Makes a Creed?)

Part II

The debate went on in the Board of Directors' meeting until the early hours of the morning. Everyone was exhausted and frustrated. Finally, James Luther Adams remembered that we should be listening twice as much as talking. He asked the person who had voiced the strongest objection, "What do you say is the purpose of this church?"

Suddenly, everyone was listening. Everyone wanted to hear the answer to this crucial question. Probably, the person who objected was listening especially hard to his own heart, as well as to the words he had heard from other Board members through the long discussion.

The Board member who opposed opening the church to people of color finally replied. "Okay, Jim. The purpose of this church is to get hold of people like me and change them."

The First Unitarian Society of Chicago successfully desegregated.

HANDOUT 1: DEFINITION OF TERMS

Orthodoxy — from Greek, *orthodoxos*, from *orthos*, "right," and *doxa*, "belief"

Ideas held to be the standard of right belief. A standard of orthodoxy may be established by authority (the judgment of others), tradition (the test of time), testimony (written documentation), or reason (personal experience).

Heterodoxy — from Greek, *heteros*, "other," and *doxa*, "belief"

Those beliefs outside or counter to the accepted body of teaching.

Heresy — from Greek, *hairesis*, "choice"

A view chosen instead of the official teaching of a church, which is thus considered wrong or potentially dangerous.

HANDOUT 2: WOULD YOU HARBOR ME? LYRICS

Words and music by Ysaye M. Barnwell, (C) 1994 Barnwell's Notes Publishing, recorded by Sweet Honey in the Rock (R). Used with permission. Visit [Ysaye M. Barnwell's website](#) for more information.

Would you harbor me?

Would I harbor you?

Would you harbor me?

Would I harbor you?

Would you harbor a Christian, a Muslim, a Jew
a heretic, convict or spy?

Would you harbor a run away woman, or child,
a poet, a prophet, a king?

Would you harbor an exile, or a refugee,
a person living with AIDS?

Would you harbor a Tubman, a Garrett, a Truth
a fugitive or a slave?

Would you harbor a Haitian Korean or Czech,
a lesbian or a gay?

Would you harbor me?

Would I harbor you?

Would you harbor me?

Would I harbor you?

HANDOUT 3: THE RACOVIAN CATECHISM

Excerpts from an 1818 imprint which can be viewed in its entirety online:

Rees, Thomas, [The Racovian Catechism](#), with notes and illustrations; translated from the Latin. To which is prefixed a sketch of the history of Unitarianism in Poland and the adjacent countries (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1818).

From the Preface

To the Pious Reader, Health and favour from God, the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

We here publish a Catechism, or Institute of the Christian Religion, drawn from the Holy Scriptures, as it is professed by our Church. It must not be thought, because in many things it departs from the standard of all other Christians, that, in sending it forth to the public, differing in their perceptions upon all matters, we intend, as it were by a herald, to proclaim hostility, or sound the trumpet for combat...

It was not without reason that Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, heavily complained of old, that after the Council of Nice (Nicea) nothing was written but CREEDS, and these indeed annually and monthly; "by which," he observes, "one after another, we are bitten until we are almost devoured... "

It is not without just cause that many pious and learned men complain at present also, that the Confessions and Catechisms which are now put forth, and published by different Christian Churches, are hardly any thing else than apples of Eris, trumpets of discord, ensigns of immortal enmities and factions among men. The reason of this is, that those Confessions and Catechisms are proposed in such a manner that the conscience is bound by them, that a yoke is imposed upon Christians to swear to the words and opinions of men; and that they are established as a Rule of Faith, from which, every one who deviates in the least is immediately assailed by the thunderbolt of an anathema, is treated as a heretic, as a most vile and mischievous person, is excluded from heaven, consigned to hell, and doomed to be tormented with infernal fires.

Far be from us this disposition, or rather this madness. Whilst we compose a Catechism, we prescribe nothing to any man: whilst we declare our own opinions, we oppress no one. Let every person enjoy the freedom of his own judgment in religion; only let it be permitted to

us also to exhibit our view of divine things, without injuring and calumniating others...

Of the Authenticity of the Holy Scriptures...

But how do you prove that the Christian Religion is true?

First, from the divinity of its author, and secondly, from the nature and circumstances of the Religion itself; for these all demonstrate that it is divine, and consequently true.

Whence does it appear that Jesus Christ, the author of the Christian Religion, was divine?

From the truly divine miracles which he wrought and also from this circumstance, that after having submitted to the most cruel death, on account of the religion he had taught, God raised him again to life...

You have proved from its author that the Christian Religion is divine. I wish you now to do the same from the nature of the Religion itself.

This appears from its precepts and promises; which are of so sublime a kind, and so far surpass the inventive powers of the human mind, that they could have had no author but God himself. For its precepts inculcate a celestial holiness of life, and its promises comprehend the heavenly and everlasting happiness of man...

How do you prove from its rise that the Christian Religion is divine?

This you will readily perceive when you consider who the first founders of this Religion were; men of mean birth, held in universal contempt; aided by no power or wealth, by no worldly wisdom or authority, in converting others to their doctrine...

Of what use then is right reason, if it be of any, in those matters which relate to salvation?

It is, indeed, of great service, since without it we could neither perceive with certainty the authority of the sacred writings, understand their contents, discriminate one thing from another, nor apply them to any practical purpose. When therefore I stated that the Holy Scriptures were sufficient for our salvation, so far from excluding right reason, I certainly assumed its presence.

If then such be the state of the case, what need is there of Traditions, which, by the Church of Rome, are pronounced to be necessary to salvation, and which it denominates the unwritten word of God?

You rightly perceive, that they are not necessary to salvation.

What then is to be thought concerning them?

That some of them are not to be reckoned under the name of traditions, in the sense in which the Papists employ them, but that many of them were not only invented, without just reason, but are also productive of great injury to the Christian Faith...

Concerning those things which constitute the way of salvation.

What do you understand by the term GOD?

The supreme Lord of all things.

And whom do you denominate Supreme?

Him, who, in his own right, has dominion over all things, and is dependent upon no other being in the administration of his government.

What does this dominion comprise?

A right and supreme authority to determine whatever he may choose (and he cannot choose what is in its own nature evil and unjust) in respect to us and to

all other things, and also in respect to those matters which no other authority can reach ; such as are our thoughts, though concealed in the inmost recesses of

our hearts ; for which he can at pleasure ordain laws, and appoint rewards and punishments...

What are the things relating to the nature of God, the knowledge of which is necessary to salvation?

They are the following: first, That God is; secondly, That he is one only; thirdly. That he is eternal; and fourthly, That he is perfectly just, wise, and powerful.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: BACKGROUND — HERESY

Author Leonard Levy, in his book *Blasphemy*, notes that "heresy" is not a Hebrew term. In fact, there is no equivalent for it in the Pre-Christian era. Heresy, a view not consistent with the church, depends entirely on the existence of an orthodox religion.

Both orthodoxy and heresy were foreign ideas to the earliest Christians, who lived with a variety of interpretations of the Gospels and church practices depending on locale and local teaching. All that ended in the late 4th century C.E. Several factors contributed to the change. In 313 C.E., after Constantine united the empire, Christianity became the state religion.

Constantine saw a unified creed or dogma as essential to a unified empire, and, importantly, the lack of such a creed as a threat to power. This political and strategic goal dovetailed neatly with a growing crisis in Christian thought, which struggled with the need to define a new religion in such a way as to retain the unity of God without sacrificing the divinity of Christ. Early church theologians had to get the doctrine right, not only for the future of the church, but because the "right path" to salvation was at stake.

A series of ecumenical councils, starting in 325 at Nicea, set out to establish the consistent doctrine of the Church, a creed for all. As a result, for the first time, Christians began to persecute one another for differences of opinion and faith. If one were found to hold views inconsistent with the teaching of the church, or heresy, they could be charged with crimes against both the church and state. Levy writes:

Within 15 years of 380 (just prior to the Council of Constantinople), imperial edicts deprived all heretics and pagans of the right to worship, banned them from civil offices, exposed them to heavy fines, confiscation of property, banishment and in certain cases, death. By 435, there were sixty-six laws against Christian heretics plus many others against pagans. The purpose of persecution was to convert the heretics and heathen, thus establishing uniformity.

Note that this uniformity was not just a matter of church but also a matter of the state. A cohesive church served as the basis for a uniform, strong political state.

Writers on Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist history have long pointed to these early heretics as our "spiritual ancestors," meaning that though we hold little in common with them in terms of theological belief, we do share a sympathetic

understanding of the process of discerning a different teaching of the right to holding that different point of view as valid.

In considering "orthodoxy," "heterodoxy," and "heresy," it's important to reflect not only on the winners and losers of the arguments, but how posterity has recorded the discussions. For example, all of Arius' writings were destroyed. We know about his views only from those who condemned them.

LEADER RESOURCE 2: AN HERETICAL HISTORY

From the video *Unitarian Universalism: An Heretical History*, produced by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Rockford, IL, 1995. Used with permission.

Transcript:

The roots of Unitarian Universalism begin at the time of Jesus of Nazareth. We sometimes forget that the earliest followers of Jesus were Jews, not Christians. They were Jewish working people who saw their leader in the context of the tradition of the Jewish prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Jonah, and Micah. As the influence of Jesus spread, supernatural ideas, expectations and interpretations began to be attached to people's understanding of who he was. In the gospel of Mark, Jesus is recorded as having asked his followers who people said he was, and they had a variety of responses. The book of Acts clearly records the struggle between the Jewish and Greek Christians, who it reports had no small dissention and debate because of their conflicting expectations of what it meant to be followers of Jesus.

People in the early centuries of the Christian Church held diverse ideas of who Jesus had been. Some, like the teacher Arius and his followers, believed Jesus to have been separate from the father God, while others, under the leadership of Athanasius, insisted that Jesus was, and always had been, God. And there were other views also.

The conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine changed Christianity. Constantine who wanted to use the religion to bring unity to his empire, insisted that a council of the Christian bishops to be called to resolve for once and for all who Jesus was—God or man—and what Christians had to believe to be Christians. That Council was held in the city of Nicea in the year 325 under the protection and intimidation of Roman troops. Not surprisingly, the Council agreed with the position of the emperor's bishop and adopted what Christians know as the Nicene Creed, which affirms the teaching that God is three in one, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, belief in what is known as the Trinity. There were those who believed that God was only one and not three. They were known as unitarians because of their insistence on the unity of God, and they were declared by the Council to be heretics.

Actually, ten years later, a Council held at Tyre restored the unitarian view as church teaching and Athanasius was exiled. And then in 381 the Council of Constantinople decided for once and for all in favor of a

belief in the three-person God as central to Christianity. Throughout the years, there have, however, been Christian scholars who insisted they could find no scriptural basis for the teaching of the Trinity.

Another ancient Christian controversy was over the teaching of eternal punishment. Some Christians, like the teachers Origen and Clement of Alexandria, insisted that the loving god whom Jesus called Father would never condemn his children to an eternal hell. This teaching of universal salvation was declared a heresy in 544.

Because unitarianism and universalism were outside the mainstream and were not organized, when we trace our history we tend to include many who rebelled against the religious establishment as being spiritual ancestors, even if they weren't specifically unitarian or universalist in their beliefs, but because they were people who chose to follow their consciences.

LEADER RESOURCE 3: THE RACOVIAN CATECHISM

The Racovian Catechism was first published in 1605 in Rakow, Poland, the center of 16th-century Polish Unitarianism, the only town in the world where Unitarians were in the religious majority. From the mid-sixteenth century, inhabitants of this area had enjoyed nearly unprecedented freedom of belief. The Catechism, largely the work of Faustus Socinus, was written both to provide instruction to those who were Unitarians, and also information for those outside the tradition. It was translated into German in 1608, and Latin, with a "dedication" (actually, more of a challenge) to James I of England, in 1609. According to Mark Harris,

The Catechism reflected a strong emphasis on following the ethical teachings of Jesus and the Ten Commandments and also commented extensively on social relations within the state. Rather than a teaching tool for children, it was a summary of church beliefs in question-and-answer format.

Unfortunately, the flourishing Unitarian community, including its publishing arm, was nearly completely destroyed in 1638. Subsequently, Catholicism was reestablished as the dominant religion in Rakow, a part of the counterreformation efforts in Eastern Europe.

Even after the devastation of Poland's Unitarian community, the Catechism continued to be printed in new translations. In 1651, a new edition in Latin was published in London, only to be followed in 1652 by a resolution of the British Parliament that required the Sheriffs of London and Middlesex to seize and burn all known copies. Later that same year, the first English translation, likely the work of John Biddle, was published.

FIND OUT MORE

Two Unitarian Universalist Association Commission on Appraisal reports address issues raised in this workshop:

[Belonging: The Meaning of Membership](#) (Boston: UUA, 2001)

[Engaging Our Theological Diversity](http://www.uua.org/documents/coa/engagingourtheodiversity.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/coa/engagingourtheodiversity.pdf) (Boston, UUA, 2005)

Here are resources for exploring orthodoxy and heresy in Christian history:

Irvin, Dale T. and Scott W. Sunquist. *History of the World Christian Movement, Vol. I: Earliest Christianity to 1453* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001)

Levy, Leonard Williams, *Blasphemy* (University of North Carolina Press, 1995)

WORKSHOP 3: RISING TIDES – REASON AS A RELIGIOUS SOURCE

INTRODUCTION

Where our treasure is, there our heart be also. And where our heart is there will be our reason and our premises. — James Luther Adams

Throughout history, humans have proclaimed the sources of their religious knowledge as a means to establish a basis of authority for their religious beliefs. The Principles and Sources of the Unitarian Universalist Association include human reason as an important Source of our living tradition. This workshop recounts some historical events and philosophical ideas that shaped the use of reason as a source of religious authority and tracks how this Source became ingrained in Unitarian Universalism.

Before leading this workshop, review the Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters in the program Introduction. Make preparations to accommodate individuals who may be in the group.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Offer a historical perspective on reason as a source of religious knowledge
- Introduce several Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalists who upheld reason as a source of authority in religious thought
- Offer the opportunity to consider the place of reason in religion.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about the history of reason as a source of authority in Western religious thought
- Learn about religious forebearers who upheld reason as a source of religious knowledge
- Identify the basis(es) of authority for their own religious beliefs.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: For the Love of Stars	25
Activity 2: Time Line of Reason as a Source of Religious Belief	40
Activity 3: Sources of Religious Knowledge	15
Activity 4: The Premises of Reason	20
Faith in Action: Sources of Religious Authority in Our Congregation	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Cone vs. Abbott — Is Scientific Reason an Adequate Guide for Living?	30
Alternate Activity 2: Heritage of Heresy — Bisbee and Tuttle on the Universalist Frontier	30
Alternate Activity 3: Common Unitarian Beliefs — 1887 and 1936	30
Alternate Activity 4: The Clockwork Universe of Deism	30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Give some thought to these questions so you will arrive at the workshop centered and ready to engage with the material and the group:

- What level of importance do I place on reason in my own theology?
- How do reason and emotion interact in my faith? How do they support each other or conflict with one another? Are they separable?

You may wish to ask participants to engage in this same spiritual practice so that they, too, arrive at the workshop centered and ready to engage with the material and the group.

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Sign-in sheet and pen/pencil
- Name tags and markers
- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1, [Schedule Template](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Create and post a workshop agenda on newsprint. The Workshop-at-a-Glance section provides time estimates. Create a welcome table near the entrance. Set out name tags and markers, the sign-in sheet and pen/pencil, and copies of the schedule.
- Make copies of the Time Line of UU History handout (Workshop 1, Handout 2), if you need some. Place time line handouts on the welcome table.
- Optional: Post the Time Line of UU History display.

Description of Activity

Welcome everyone to the workshop as they enter. Ask them to sign in, make (or pick up) name tags, and pick up the schedule and time line handouts from the welcome table. Point out the posted agenda for this workshop.

Including All Participants

Write the agenda in large, clear lettering and post it where it will be easily visible to all participants. Provide name tags large enough and markers bold enough so names will be easily visible.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Optional: Decorative cloth

Preparation for Activity

- Set up a worship or centering table with the chalice and (optional) decorative cloth.
- Optional: Invite a participant in advance to act as chalice lighter or reader to make the workshop more participatory.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice with these words of Ken Wisner:

The strengths of Unitarian Universalism spring from traditions of acceptance and generosity. Our enthusiasm for the diverse in human nature may invite, from time to time, a measure of chaos. We are prepared to go with the flow, using tools of reason, courage and moral strength to accept outcomes that cannot be known in advance.

Including All Participants

Remind volunteer readers to speak slowly and clearly so all can hear.

ACTIVITY 1: FOR THE LOVE OF STARS (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[For the Love of Stars](#) (included in this document) "
- Leader Resource 1, [Cecelia Payne-Gaposchkin, Photograph](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Print out the story and prepare to present it to the group.
- Print out Leader Resource 1, Cecelia Payne-Gaposchkin, Photograph.
- Write on newsprint, and post, this quote from Rev. Dr. William Murry:
A viable religion of the 21st century must recognize the importance of both reason and reverence.
- On another sheet of newsprint, write these questions, and set the newsprint aside:
 - As your knowledge about the world grows, are you led to more or less awe?
 - Does observation enliven or dampen your spirit?
- Optional: Download Leader Resource 1 and prepare the photograph, the Murry quotation, and the questions as digital slides. Test the computer and projector.

Description of Activity

Read the story aloud while you circulate or project the photograph. Invite comments and responses.

Display the William Murry quote. Read the quote aloud and ask participants to think of a time when learning something new about the world had an impact on their religious thought. Allow a minute or two of silence for participants to find their story. Then invite them to move into groups of three or four and share their reflections.

Allow ten minutes for small group conversations. Then, re-gather the large group. Post the two questions you have written on newsprint and lead a discussion based on the questions and the Murry quote.

ACTIVITY 2: TIME LINE OF REASON AS A SOURCE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF (40 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [Time Line of Reason as a Source of Religious Belief](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 1, [Humanism and its Aspirations — Humanist Manifesto I](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1, Humanism and its Aspirations — Humanist Manifesto I.
- Print out and review Leader Resource 2, Time Line of Reason as a Source of Religious Belief. Prepare to present the material, either by reading aloud or paraphrasing.
- Post the Time Line of UU History from Workshop 1.
- Write on newsprint, and set aside:
 - What do you see as the major gains and losses of an increased importance of reason in religion?
- Optional: On the [American Humanist Association](#) (at www.americanhumanist.org/Who_We_Are/About_the_AHA) website, find [Humanist Manifesto II](#) (at www.americanhumanist.org/who_we_are/about_humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_II) (1973) and Humanism and Its Aspirations: [Humanist Manifesto III](#) (at www.americanhumanist.org/Who_We_Are/About_Humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_III) (2003). Copy these for all participants if you wish to

extend this activity into a longer conversation about humanism.

Description of Activity

Present Leader Resource 2, Time Line of Reason as a Source of Religious Belief. Engage the group to help you add significant information and events to the Time Line of UU History. Solicit additional events to include. Allow fifteen minutes for this portion of the activity.

Distribute Handout 1, Humanism and its Aspirations — Humanist Manifesto I. Tell participants this document was signed by a number of Unitarian ministers and one Universalist minister in 1933. Allow participants a few minutes to read the manifesto, then invite comments, observations, and questions. Allow ten minutes for this part of the activity.

Now post the sheet of newsprint you have prepared and ask participants to move into groups of three or four to reflect on the posted question. Allow ten minutes for sharing in groups.

Re-gather the large group and have volunteers share comments and observations about reason as a source of religious authority.

Variation

If you have chosen to have an extended discussion of the humanism in your large group, distribute Humanist Manifestos II and III. Offer participants a few minutes with these documents, then continue facilitating a conversation in the large group, rather than moving into smaller groups.

ACTIVITY 3: SOURCES OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 3, [Sources of Religious Knowledge](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 2, [Sources of the Living Tradition](#) (included in this document)
- Paper and pens, pencils, and markers

Preparation for Activity

- Print out and review Leader Resource 3, Sources of Religious Knowledge. Prepare to present the material by reading it aloud or paraphrasing.
- Copy of Handout 2, Sources of the Living Tradition.

Description of Activity

Present the contents of Leader Resource 3, Sources of Religious Knowledge.

Distribute Handout 2, Sources of the Living Tradition. Read the handout aloud, affirming that describes the development of Unitarian Universalism rather than state the beliefs of all Unitarian Universalists. Then, invite participants to sit in quiet reflection and consider which of the Sources listed on Handout 2 best represents their earliest experiences of spirituality or religion. Pause, and then ask which resonates most strongly with their beliefs now—at this time in their lives.

Offer a time for participants to sketch, diagram, or write about how their understanding of religious authority may have changed over time. After about five minutes, invite participants to share their reflections with a partner.

ACTIVITY 4: THE PREMISES OF REASON (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 3, [Scientific Salvation](#) (included in this document)
- Three small objects for a ritual, perhaps smooth stones, flowers, sea shells, small sculptures or craft pieces, or candles

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 3.
- In advance, invite up to nine participants to volunteer as readers (the selection calls for one Narrator and eight Readers; you may choose to read the Narrator part). Give the readers the handout before this workshop so they can prepare to read their parts aloud.

Description of Activity

Introduce the activity with this brief story about James Luther Adams, using these or similar words:

James Luther Adams (1901-1994) was the leading theologian and social ethicist of Unitarianism in the twentieth century. His wide-ranging studies in psychology, philosophy, and religion and his ministry of teaching and lecturing led him to his belief that "religious liberalism affirms the moral obligation to direct one's effort toward the establishment of a just and loving community." But he was not naive about how challenging this aim was. One of the most profound experiences of his long life came in the 1930s, when he made two trips to Nazi Germany and was detained for a short time by the Gestapo. That experience helped shape his

meditations on the use, and misuse, of reason as a source of ethics and knowledge. In his essay "The Changing Reputation of Human Nature," he wrote: "The world has many educated people who know how to reason, and they reason very well, but curiously enough, many of them fail to examine the pre-established premises from which they reason, premises that turn out on examination to be antisocial, protective camouflages of power."

Distribute Handout 3, Scientific Salvation. Offer this background:

The Reverend Mark Harris explored a little-known and deeply unsettling chapter of Unitarian Universalist history in his 2008 Minns Lecture, "The Science of Salvation." His lecture included consideration of the relationship between liberal religion and the eugenics movement.

Invite volunteers to read the handout aloud.

Following the reading, allow time for participants to express their questions, thoughts, and feelings about this difficult chapter of our history.

Invite participants into a short time of silence. After a few moments, place the three objects, one at a time, on the chalice stand, using these words as you place each object:

(First object) We offer this in remembrance of those who have done great good, yet following the dictates of conscience as best they knew them, also stumbled, bringing harm to a hurting world. May we have compassion for all who struggle in human imperfection; may we be ever mindful of the premises of power.

(Second object) We offer this in remembrance of those who suffer harm at the hands of others whether through intentional malice or through misguided altruism. May we have compassion for all who struggle in human imperfection; may we be ever mindful of the premises of power.

(Third object) We offer this reminder for ourselves, so that the lessons of history may guide our actions today and in the future. May we have compassion for all who struggle in human imperfection; may we be ever mindful of the premises of power.

Including All Participants

Be mindful of participants who have a disability or who are close to someone who has a disability. This conversation may raise difficult issues and emotions.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Faith in Action from this workshop and/or Spiritual Preparation from Workshop 4

Preparation for Activity

- Download and customize Taking It Home as a handout. You may wish to add the Faith in Action activity suggestion from this workshop and/or the Spiritual Preparation questions for the next workshop.

Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Announce the date, time, and place of the next workshop and any other "housekeeping" information. Request or remind volunteers if you want participants to read material aloud or perform other roles at the next meeting.

Invite participants to gather around the chalice. Read these words by the Rev. Dr. William Schulz, from a sermon preached at the 1986 General Assembly:
Reason is still a cherished standard in our religious repertoire, but reason is coming to be supplemented by our immediate apprehension of the Holy and by our conviction that the Holy is embodied in the abundance of a scarred Creation.

Extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: SOURCES OF RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY IN OUR CONGREGATION

Materials for Activity

- [Commission on Appraisal, *Engaging Our Theological Diversity*](http://www.uua.org/documents/coa/engagingourtheodiversity.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/coa/engagingourtheodiversity.pdf)

Description of Activity

The 2005 publication by the Commission on Appraisal (COA), *Engaging Our Theological Diversity*, includes a section entitled "2004 Statement of Agreement and Tensions." This is the result of a session held by the COA at the 2004 General Assembly, in which they asked, "What would such a statement look like if an earnest effort to state plainly the areas of Unitarian Universalist points of agreement and disagreement were undertaken today?" Their answers were collated into

several categories, including Human Nature, Knowledge and Revelation, Reason, Freedom of the Individual, Human Responsibility, Value of Community, Democratic Process, Nature of the Divine, Interdependent Web, Source of Evil, Spirituality, Worship, Institutions, and Sources of Authority. The COA's hope was that congregations might create their own lists of points of agreement and disagreement, and that such a document "could be of great benefit in visioning and goal-planning, acculturating new members, guiding publicity efforts, and inspiring adult religious education offerings."

In their summation, the COA offered these "agree and disagree" statements about Reason:

We agree that reason is a necessary part of religious inquiry and that the abilities of the human mind to think and choose must be brought to bear on religious questions in a disciplined and rigorous way.

We disagree as to whether reason is a sufficient route to understanding by itself or whether other processes that go beyond the boundaries of reason are necessary.

Research whether your congregation participated in the 2004 call to develop a statement of agreements and disagreements. If so, was reason discussed specifically? If no statement was drawn up in 2004, what would such a statement say about the use of reason in your congregation today?

Review existing congregational documents such as covenants, vision or mission statements, bylaws, and pamphlets for any statement your congregation makes about sources of religious knowledge, including reason. Invite a congregational discussion on the sources of religious authority in your community.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

After the workshop, co-leaders should talk together to evaluate this workshop and plan future workshops. Use these questions to guide your shared reflection and planning:

- What parts of the workshop worked well and which did not? Why? How was the success, or lack of success, related to the topics? How was it related to the types of activities?
- How can we use this experience to make future workshops more effective? What would we change if we were to lead this workshop again?
- What was left unfinished in the workshop that should still be addressed? How and when will we address it?

- What strengths did we each bring to the workshop?
- As co-leaders, when did we work well together?
- What might help us be better leaders in future workshops?
- What do we need to prepare for the next workshop? Who will handle which tasks? Who will lead which activities?

TAKING IT HOME

Where our treasure is, there our heart be also.
And where our heart is there will be our reason
and our premises. — James Luther Adams

Writing in their 2005 publication, *Engaging Our Theological Diversity*, the UUA's Commission on Appraisal reported on the response to a statement in their theology questionnaire, "We are committed to the use of reason to interpret our experience and to form and test our religious convictions." Ninety percent of those who responded considered reason "important." Combining this response with others about what is at the core of individuals' and congregations' faith led the Commission authors to conclude, "Discovering a 'reasonable' faith has been life-changing for some; for others (especially many who grew up UU), disciplined inquiry is taken for granted as a way of life."

What about you? What role does reason play in your faith life? Is it at the core? One among several important aspects? Have you ever negatively experienced reason in connection with your life as a Unitarian Universalist?

Reflect on these questions in your journal, or invite conversation with family members and friends.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: CONE VS. ABBOTT — IS SCIENTIFIC REASON AN ADEQUATE GUIDE FOR LIVING? (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 4, [Reason and Reverence Worship Resources](#) (included in this document)
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, for all participants
- Materials for creating worship, e.g., the chalice, table, and decorative cloth from the workshop
- Optional: Meditation manuals and other worship materials
- Optional: Keyboard or piano

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 4, Reason and Reverence Worship Resources, for all participants.
- Optional: Arrange for an accompanist to help lead the music participants choose for the worship service.

Description of Activity

Participants plan and then lead a ten-minute worship service.

Introduce the activity using these or similar words:

When Charles Darwin published his *Origin of the Species* in 1859, it set off a firestorm in religious circles as the idea of direct, Divine creation was challenged by theories of evolution by natural selection. The initial response from both Universalists and Unitarians was negative, but by the turn of the twentieth century sympathy was growing for the idea—as historian Ernest Cassara writes, even a "joyful acceptance."

Two Universalist leaders who spoke on opposing sides of the issue were Orello Cone (1835-1905) and Alexander Abbott (1812-1869). Cone found no conflict between science and religion. He felt that the knowledge gained from scientific investigation created only a stronger basis for religious belief and hoped that the scientific method would help unravel faith's mysteries. He believed the Bible must be approached, as other areas of study are best approached, with reason and rational scientific inquiry. Abbott, while he respected science and its accomplishments, held that the mysteries of faith were not only necessary to the fullness of human existence, but also an area which science could never penetrate.

Ministers on both sides of the argument, and in both Unitarian and Universalist churches, weighed in with articles, essays, books, and addresses to their congregations. While views of religion, science, and their intersection may have shifted over the years, this topic is still a matter of lively engagement in our congregations.

Invite participants to create a ten-minute worship service on the theme of reason and reverence. Distribute Handout 4, Reason and Reverence Worship Resources and copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*. Then invite participants to self-select into three groups:

- Creating sacred space
- Music, opening words, closing words

- Dialogue between Abbott and Cone.

Explain that the worship service will include a dialogue between Cone and Abbott, as well as music and opening and closing words. Tell them they will have fifteen minutes to plan their component and coordinate with the other groups.

In addition to Handout 4 and hymnbooks, offer any mediation manuals and other worship materials you have provided. Explain that they may use these materials in their plan if they wish to.

Tell the groups when ten minutes have elapsed. At the end of fifteen minutes, re-gather the group and invite them to present the worship service they created.

Including All Participants

Some people may wish to read aloud as part of the worship service or to dramatize the dialogue, others to share music, others to handle logistical details, and some to simply participate. Invite participants to be involved in the worship service in ways that feel comfortable and authentic for them.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: HERITAGE OF HERESY — BISBEE AND TUTTLE ON THE UNIVERSALIST FRONTIER (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- *Heritage of Heresy: Bisbee and Tuttle on the Universalist Frontier* video
- Computer with Internet access, projector, and speakers

Preparation for Activity

- Queue the four-part video *Heritage of Heresy*.
- Test computer equipment, projector, and speakers..

Description of Activity

Give this background information, by reading it aloud or paraphrasing:

When Charles Darwin published his *Origin of the Species* in 1859, it set off a firestorm in religious circles as the idea of direct, Divine creation was challenged by theories of evolution by natural selection. The initial response from both Universalists and Unitarians was negative, but by the turn of the twentieth century sympathy was growing for the idea—as historian Ernest Cassara writes, even a "joyful acceptance."

Watch the videos about the debate between Herman Bisbee and James Tuttle concerning the validity of Darwin's theory and of the Bible as sources of religious truth. After watching, invite questions and comment.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: COMMON UNITARIAN BELIEFS — 1887 AND 1936 (40 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 5, [Things Most Commonly Believed Today Among Us \(1887\) and Unitarians Face a New Age \(1936\)](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 5, Things Most Commonly Believed Today Among Us (1887) and Unitarians Face a New Age (1936).
- Pre-arrange with two volunteers to alternate reading the lists in Handout 5. If possible, provide the handout in advance.
- Write these questions on newsprint, and post:
 - What does the form of the 1887 statement of faith say about the theological conflicts and tensions of its time?
 - What does the form of the 1936 summary of agreements and disagreements say about the theological conflicts and tensions of its time?
 - What differences and similarities are there between the two statements?
 - What tensions or inconsistencies are there in each statement? Do any of the same theological tensions exist in contemporary Unitarian Universalism?
 - With which of the points in either statement do you agree? With which do disagree?
- Optional: Download the questions and prepare them as one or more digital slides. Test the computer and projector.

Description of Activity

Distribute Handout 5, Things Most Commonly Believed Today Among Us (1887) and Unitarians Face a New

Age (1936). Offer this background to the 1887 statement from Mark Harris' *The A to Z of Unitarian Universalism*:

Things Most Commonly Believed Today Among Us was written in response to a raging controversy over the theological basis for Unitarian churches. The controversy came to a head the previous year... the debate raged over the question of whether or not Western Unitarianism was to be grounded in Christian theism or a broader-based freedom advocated by Jenkin Lloyd Jones and Gannett... In its final form the statement tried to articulate simple truths that a majority could agree upon.

Offer this background to the 1936 statement, also from Harris' work:

Unitarians Face a New Age was the published report of the American Unitarian Association's Commission of Appraisal (COA) the proved pivotal in changing the direction of the denomination toward renewal in the 1930s. The COA, which came into being as a result of an AUA Annual Meeting resolution in 1934, ... (published) a 342-page report... which consisted of seven major areas of recommendations for the denomination... Under a section on "Doctrine," the commission considered those religious values upon which Unitarians agreed, ... and those areas of disagreement. The commission suggested that there should be some attempt to formulate these theological views in written statements.

Invite volunteers to read Handout 5, in turns. Invite participants into conversation about the statement, using the posted questions as a guide.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 4: THE CLOCKWORK UNIVERSE OF DEISM (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Paper and markers
- Drawing and collage supplies including fancy papers, and old magazines and catalogs
- Scissors, glue, and tape
- [Images of orreries](http://www.adlerplanetarium.org/research/collections/instruments/orreries.shtml) (at www.adlerplanetarium.org/research/collections/instruments/orreries.shtml) from the website of the Adler Planetarium, Chicago
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Prepare a newsprint with these quotes, and post:
 - Deism — A view contrasting atheism and polytheism. It emerged in 17th- and 18th-century England. It holds that knowledge of God comes through reason rather than revelation, and that after God created the world, God had no further involvement in it. — Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms
- Arrange for adequate workspace for participants to engage in drawing and collage-making.
- Optional: Access the [images of orreries](http://www.adlerplanetarium.org/research/collections/instruments/orreries.shtml) (at www.adlerplanetarium.org/research/collections/instruments/orreries.shtml). Print them out to show the group or download them and prepare them as digital slides, and test the computer and projector.
- Optional: Download the quotations. Prepare them as one or two digital slides. Test the computer and projector.

Description of Activity

Read the quotations aloud and solicit responses. You might ask:

- How is Deism reflected in contemporary Unitarian Universalism?
- Is it a theological point of view that resonates for you? For other Unitarian Universalists you know?

Read aloud the following quote, explaining that it represents the understanding of 17th- and 18th-century Deists, some of whom we claim as our Unitarian forebears:

To the Deists, God was a kind of cosmic clockmaker who created a mechanical universe, wound it up for all eternity, and let it go. The experimental method of science became the liturgy of this pseudo religion, the encyclopedia its bible, nature its church, and all men of reason the congregation. — William Fleming, Arts and Ideas

Display or pass around images of orreries ("clockwork universes"). Invite responses to the idea of a "clockwork universe;" ask participants to imagine the universe using their own terms and metaphors.

Distribute drawing and collage supplies and ask people to create their own view of the universe and the place of

humans in it. Is God/the transcendent/the Divine present in their concept of the universe?

Save ten minutes for participants to re-gather and share, display, or explain their images if they wish to do so.

STORY: FOR THE LOVE OF STARS

By Gail Forsyth-Vail, in *Stories in Faith: Exploring Our Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources Through Wisdom Tales, a Tapestry of Faith Toolkit Book* (Boston: Skinner House, 2007).

Once there was a little girl named Cecilia who fell in love with the universe. She felt her heart leap with joy every time she learned something new about the world around her. She would grow up to become a scientist, an astronomer who studied the stars. Throughout her whole life, she studied and observed the stars, working with other scientists and on her own. What are stars made of? How are they born? Do they die? And how do we know? Throughout her whole life, her heart sang with each discovery, each bit of new understanding about the wonders of the far-off sky.

When Cecilia was a small child in England, still being pushed in a pram, which is an old-fashioned stroller, she saw a meteorite blaze across the sky. Her mother taught her a small rhyme so she could remember what it was:

"As we were walking home that night

We saw a shining meteorite."

She later told a friend that from that moment, she knew she would grow up to be an astronomer. She learned the names of all the constellations in the sky, picking out the Big Dipper, Orion's Belt, and others. She was naturally very observant and precise, able to pick out and remember small details. By age twelve, she had learned to measure things and to do math problems very precisely. At her school, they had an interesting way of increasing the students' powers of observation. Once a week, students were required to find with their eyes (not touching) three little brass tacks scattered somewhere in the school garden. For Cecilia, always an observer, this education just strengthened her resolve to be a scientist.

In 1912, when Cecilia was a teenager, there was very little help available for a young woman who wanted to be a scientist. Filled with joy and wonder, she studied the chemical elements that made up the world and learned to classify and identify plants of all kinds. She spent hours in a laboratory, which she called her chapel, where she conducted "a little worship service of her own," in awe before the magnificence of the natural world. Persistent, she found people who would teach her science at school, and she pored over her family's home library until she found two lonely science books to study: one about plants and the other containing Sir Isaac Newton's observations about planets and his law of gravity.

In 1919 Cecilia entered college to study botany, because the study of plants was an acceptable scientific study for a woman in those days. She went through her courses in botany, but also attended lectures in physics, where she found "pure delight." She was transformed by each new bit of knowledge about physics and astronomy. When she realized at one lecture that all motion is relative, she did not sleep for three nights. Leaving botany behind, she persuaded the college to allow her to take a degree in physics, because the astronomy was considered part of physics.

After finishing her degree, Cecilia Payne left for the United States, where she would study as an astronomer at Harvard University. She spent her first two years there figuring out what stars are made of, and concluded in 1925 that most stars are primarily hydrogen. In today's world of satellites and computers, we know this to be true, but it was an extraordinary statement at that time. No one believed her. Nonetheless, when she presented those conclusions, she was the first person ever, male or female, to be granted a Ph.D. in astronomy.

Cecilia had no small number of struggles as an astronomer because she was a woman. It took until 1956—after twenty-three years of working—for her to be named a professor. Even so, she was the first woman ever to be named a full professor at Harvard. When she was thirty-four, she arranged for the rescue of Russian astronomer Sergei Gaposchkin, who had been exiled from his own country. She later married him and they did research together. They raised three children, who all went to the Sunday School at First Parish Unitarian Universalist in Lexington, Massachusetts. Through it all, she held on to her love for the scientific quest—and for the stars.

Near the end of her life, Cecilia wrote that where other women were not allowed to be in "direct touch with the fountain-head, whether you call it God or the Universe," she had been—always. Her love for the universe and for the wonder of it all lasted her entire life.

HANDOUT 1: HUMANISM AND ITS ASPIRATIONS — HUMANIST MANIFESTO I

Copyright 1933 by *The New Humanist* and 1973 by the American Humanist Association. Used with permission. Please note that this is no longer a current statement of humanist convictions; it has been replaced by [Humanism and Its Aspirations: Humanist Manifesto IIII](#).

Humanist Manifesto I

The Manifesto is a product of many minds. It was designed to represent a developing point of view, not a new creed. The individuals whose signatures appear would, had they been writing individual statements, have stated the propositions in differing terms. The importance of the document is that more than thirty men have come to general agreement on matters of final concern and that these men are undoubtedly representative of a large number who are forging a new philosophy out of the materials of the modern world. — Raymond B. Bragg (1933)

The time has come for widespread recognition of the radical changes in religious beliefs throughout the modern world. The time is past for mere revision of traditional attitudes. Science and economic change have disrupted the old beliefs. Religions the world over are under the necessity of coming to terms with new conditions created by a vastly increased knowledge and experience. In every field of human activity, the vital movement is now in the direction of a candid and explicit humanism. In order that religious humanism may be better understood we, the undersigned, desire to make certain affirmations which we believe the facts of our contemporary life demonstrate.

There is great danger of a final, and we believe fatal, identification of the word religion with doctrines and methods which have lost their significance and which are powerless to solve the problem of human living in the Twentieth Century. Religions have always been means for realizing the highest values of life. Their end has been accomplished through the interpretation of the total environing situation (theology or world view), the sense of values resulting therefrom (goal or ideal), and the technique (cult), established for realizing the satisfactory life. A change in any of these factors results in alteration of the outward forms of religion. This fact explains the changefulness of religions through the centuries. But through all changes religion itself remains constant in its quest for abiding values, an inseparable feature of human life.

Today man's larger understanding of the universe, his scientific achievements, and deeper appreciation of brotherhood, have created a situation which requires a new statement of the means and purposes of religion. Such a vital, fearless, and frank religion capable of furnishing adequate social goals and personal satisfactions may appear to many people as a complete break with the past. While this age does owe a vast debt to the traditional religions, it is none the less obvious that any religion that can hope to be a synthesizing and dynamic force for today must be shaped for the needs of this age. To establish such a religion is a major necessity of the present. It is a responsibility which rests upon this generation. We therefore affirm the following:

FIRST: Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

SECOND: Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as a result of a continuous process.

THIRD: Holding an organic view of life, humanists find that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected.

FOURTH: Humanism recognizes that man's religious culture and civilization, as clearly depicted by anthropology and history, are the product of a gradual development due to his interaction with his natural environment and with his social heritage. The individual born into a particular culture is largely molded by that culture.

FIFTH: Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values. Obviously humanism does not deny the possibility of realities as yet undiscovered, but it does insist that the way to determine the existence and value of any and all realities is by means of intelligent inquiry and by the assessment of their relations to human needs. Religion must formulate its hopes and plans in the light of the scientific spirit and method.

SIXTH: We are convinced that the time has passed for theism, deism, modernism, and the several varieties of "new thought".

SEVENTH: Religion consists of those actions, purposes, and experiences which are humanly significant. Nothing human is alien to the religious. It includes labor, art, science, philosophy, love, friendship, recreation--all that is in its degree expressive of intelligently satisfying human living. The distinction between the sacred and the secular can no longer be maintained.

EIGHTH: Religious Humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man's

life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now. This is the explanation of the humanist's social passion.

NINTH: In the place of the old attitudes involved in worship and prayer the humanist finds his religious emotions expressed in a heightened sense of personal life and in a cooperative effort to promote social well-being.

TENTH: It follows that there will be no uniquely religious emotions and attitudes of the kind hitherto associated with belief in the supernatural.

ELEVENTH: Man will learn to face the crises of life in terms of his knowledge of their naturalness and probability. Reasonable and manly attitudes will be fostered by education and supported by custom. We assume that humanism will take the path of social and mental hygiene and discourage sentimental and unreal hopes and wishful thinking.

TWELFTH: Believing that religion must work increasingly for joy in living, religious humanists aim to foster the creative in man and to encourage achievements that add to the satisfactions of life.

THIRTEENTH: Religious humanism maintains that all associations and institutions exist for the fulfillment of human life. The intelligent evaluation, transformation, control, and direction of such associations and institutions with a view to the enhancement of human life is the purpose and program of humanism. Certainly religious institutions, their ritualistic forms, ecclesiastical methods, and communal activities must be reconstituted as rapidly as experience allows, in order to function effectively in the modern world.

FOURTEENTH: The humanists are firmly convinced that existing acquisitive and profit-motivated society has shown itself to be inadequate and that a radical change in methods, controls, and motives must be instituted. A socialized and cooperative economic order must be established to the end that the equitable distribution of the means of life be possible. The goal of humanism is a free and universal society in which people voluntarily and intelligently cooperate for the common good. Humanists demand a shared life in a shared world.

FIFTEENTH AND LAST: We assert that humanism will: (a) affirm life rather than deny it; (b) seek to elicit the possibilities of life, not flee from them; and (c) endeavor to establish the conditions of a satisfactory life for all, not merely for the few. By this positive morale and intention humanism will be guided, and from this perspective and alignment the techniques and efforts of humanism will flow.

So stand the theses of religious humanism. Though we consider the religious forms and ideas of our fathers no longer adequate, the quest for the good life is still the central task for mankind. Man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power for its achievement. He must set intelligence and will to the task.

(Signed)

J.A.C. Fagginger Auer—Parkman Professor of Church History and Theology, Harvard University; Professor of Church History, Tufts College.

E. Burdette Backus—Unitarian Minister.

Harry Elmer Barnes—General Editorial Department, ScrippsHoward Newspapers.

L.M. Birkhead—The Liberal Center, Kansas City, Missouri.

Raymond B. Bragg—Secretary, Western Unitarian Conference.

Edwin Arthur Burt—Professor of Philosophy, Sage School of Philosophy, Cornell University.

Ernest Caldecott—Minister, First Unitarian Church, Los Angeles, California.

A.J. Carlson—Professor of Physiology, University of Chicago.

John Dewey—Columbia University.

Albert C. Dieffenbach—Formerly Editor of *The Christian Register*.

John H. Dietrich—Minister, First Unitarian Society, Minneapolis.

Bernard Fantus—Professor of Therapeutics, College of Medicine, University of Illinois.

William Floyd—Editor of *The Arbitrator*, New York City.

F.H. Hankins—Professor of Economics and Sociology, Smith College.

A. Eustace Haydon—Professor of History of Religions, University of Chicago.

Llewellyn Jones—Literary critic and author.

Robert Morss Lovett—Editor, *The New Republic*; Professor of English, University of Chicago.

Harold P. Marley—Minister, The Fellowship of Liberal Religion, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

R. Lester Mondale—Minister, Unitarian Church, Evanston, Illinois.

Charles Francis Potter—Leader and Founder, the First Humanist Society of New York, Inc.

John Herman Randall, Jr.—Department of Philosophy, Columbia University.

Curtis W. Reese—Dean, Abraham Lincoln Center, Chicago.

Oliver L. Reiser—Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh.

Roy Wood Sellars—Professor of Philosophy, University of Michigan.

Clinton Lee Scott—Minister, Universalist Church, Peoria, Illinois.

Maynard Shipley—President, The Science League of America.

W. Frank Swift—Director, Boston Ethical Society.

V.T. Thayer—Educational Director, Ethical Culture Schools.

Eldred C. Vanderlaan—Leader of the Free Fellowship, Berkeley, California.

Joseph Walker—Attorney, Boston, Massachusetts.

Jacob J. Weinstein—Rabbi; Advisor to Jewish Students, Columbia University.

Frank S.C. Wicks—All Souls Unitarian Church, Indianapolis.

David Rhys Williams—Minister, Unitarian Church, Rochester, New York.

Edwin H. Wilson—Managing Editor, *The New Humanist*, Chicago, Illinois; Minister, Third Unitarian Church, Chicago, Illinois.

HANDOUT 2: SOURCES OF THE LIVING TRADITION

From Article II, Section C 2.1. Bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

- Section C-2.1. Principles.

The living tradition which we share draws from many sources:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;
- Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As free congregations we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust and support.

HANDOUT 3: SCIENTIFIC SALVATION

Excerpted and adapted from *Elite: Uncovering Classism in Unitarian Universalist History* by Mark W. Harris (Boston, Skinner House, 2011). Used with permission.

This reading is for multiple voices, a narrator, and several individuals who represent early 20th-century Unitarians and Universalists.

Narrator

From the earliest days of Unitarianism and Universalism, these traditions have advocated for the compatibility of science and religion. Both traditions encourage the use of reason, the search for truth, and the improvement of human nature and society through learning and the discoveries of science. Some, especially those called humanists, eschew Biblical revelation and supernaturalism and believe that science and technology will eventually solve all the major problems facing humankind.

At the end of the nineteenth century, many liberals saw hope in the new science of eugenics as it embodied a kind of evolutionary optimism. Many believed that the births of stronger, smarter, and even more attractive babies would signal the coming salvation of the world. In the ensuing decades prominent religious liberals

... became enthusiasts for eugenics. Their stories reflect our faith in science and how our hopes for a better world can engender gross violations of human freedoms and rights.

Reader 1

Unitarian Universalists today—who uphold the inherent worth and dignity of every person as their first Principle—would be shocked to read the title of a book published in 1902 by the American Unitarian Association: *The Blood of the Nation: A Study of the Decay of Races Through the Survival of the Unfit*. The author was David Starr Jordan, president of Stanford and the most renowned ichthyologists (a zoologist who studies fish) in America.

During the early twentieth century, Jordan became the most sought-after speaker at Unitarian events. Between 1902 and 1916, he published nineteen books with the denominational imprint, Beacon Press. He was its most prolific author with most of his titles remaining on the Beacon backlist until the eve of World

War II...

Jordan was a pacifist, raised in a Universalist household, but Jordan's pacifism was based on a belief

that war is a biological evil: It kills off the physically and mentally fit and leaves behind the less fit. He declared that poverty, dirt, and crime produced poor human material. "It is not the strength of the strong but the weakness of the weak which engenders exploitation and tyranny," he wrote in *The Heredity of Richard Roe*. Weak people bring failure upon themselves and ultimately will bring failure on the nations they live in, if they are the ones who survive and reproduce. War, Jordan believed, robs the race of its most vital blood.

Reader 2

In 1924, a Virginia law aimed at the sterilization of "the unfit" to prevent the passing on of their genetic heritage was tested with the case of Carrie Buck. Carrie Buck was scheduled to be sterilized under the new law. She had been raised in foster care, been raped, become pregnant, and given birth all before the age of seventeen. She was considered part of a "shiftless, ignorant and worthless class." The judge ruled the operation should be done. Appeals eventually took it to the Supreme Court... Unitarians Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. and William Howard Taft voted with the majority, upholding the ruling, with Holmes writing the decision.

Reader 3

Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote:

We have seen more than once that the public welfare may call upon the best citizens for their lives. It would be strange if it could not call upon those who already sap the strength of the state for these lesser sacrifices... It is better for all the world if, instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind... Three generations of imbeciles are enough.

Reader 4

In the early twentieth century, progressives, including a number of Unitarians, were very enthusiastic about eugenics. ...Clergy inspected prospective couples for marriage to make sure they were normal physically and mentally. The great Unitarian activist John Haynes Holmes... encouraged his fellow ministers in the Liberal Ministers Association of New York to perform nothing but healthy marriages, for the conservation of the "normal" family, so that, in the interest of improving society, "defectives" did not propagate.

Reader 5

John Haynes Holmes wrote:

Nothing is more important, to my mind, in our modern treatment of the question of marriage,

than to use our powers of social control to prevent many people from marrying—those, namely, whose marriage, for one reason or another, can be nothing but a tragedy.

Reader 6

When the Universalists passed their Declaration of Social Principles in 1917, its working program included the following: "We want to safeguard marriage so that every child shall be born with a sound physical, mental, and moral heritage."

Reader 7

Birth control or even sterilization were ways to control indiscriminate breeding. When Clarence Russell Skinner, the great Universalist social activist, published *The Social Implication of Universalism*, he declared:

The new enthusiasm for humanity readily pictures a time when through eugenics, education, friendship, play, worship, and work, the criminal will be no more, because the misdirection or the undevelopment of human nature will cease.

Reader 8

Throughout the United States, sermon contests were held on the subject of better breeding. Sponsored by the American Eugenics Society, the contests had a central theme, "Religion and Eugenics: Does the Church Have Any Responsibility for Improving the Human Stock?" One participant in 1928 was Homer Gleason of the First Universalist Church in Rochester, Minnesota. He wrote to the society:

Please allow me to add that I have greatly enjoyed my preparation for this work. I have thought for years that I was somewhat of a eugenicist, but five months of intensive study have thoroughly convinced me. . . . Surely, this is a great cause.

These contests flourished between 1923 and 1930 when the society increased the popularity of eugenics with contests and competitions among "fitter families" at state fairs. To go along with the largest pigs or cows, the fairs had the most racially perfect families on display.

Reader 9

Many progressives were also organizing to restrict immigration of what they perceived as inferior peoples. They declared a need to preserve the white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant heritage in the face of new lower classes of immigrants, especially those who were not Protestants.

Reader 10

Today it probably surprises us that some Unitarians and Universalists supported eugenics. We generally think our faith empowers us to speak for those who otherwise have no voice and to advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves. Yet the eugenics movement had about it, as Richard Hofstadter noted, the air of "reform."

Reader 11

Some Unitarians and Universalists later changed their positions on the practice of eugenics. In the wake of World War II, Clarence Russell Skinner gave voice to the realization that science had served "the ends of destruction." He said, "Our culture . . . has let science go where it will, serving heathen gods." In *A Religion for Greatness*, Skinner concluded that "we must come to grips with one of the great problems of our time: Will science freely lend itself to any form of evil which demands its service and pays its price?"

HANDOUT 4: REASON AND REVERENCE WORSHIP RESOURCES

Hymns

In *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook:

Hymn 26, "Holy, Holy, Holy"

Hymn 30, "Over My Head"

Hymn 145, "As Tranquil Streams that Meet and Merge"

Hymn 174, "O Earth, You Are Surpassing Fair"

Hymn 287, "Faith of the Larger Liberty"

Hymn 288, "All are Architects of Fate"

Hymn 304, "A Fierce Unrest"

Hymn 331, "Life Is the Greatest Gift of All"

Hymn 343, "A Firemist and a Planet"

Opening/Closing Words

See selection of Readings in *Singing the Living Tradition*.

Also:

There are two ways to live: you can live as if nothing is a miracle; you can live as if everything is a miracle. — Albert Einstein

In these days there is much talk of science and religion, and many souls are unbalanced. Some are inflated till they shine with rainbow splendors, presently to collapse; and some quake with fear lest the foundations of the righteous be removed. In such a case it behooves any who can to lend a hand. — J. Smith Dodge, Jr., Universalist minister (1889)

The most significant word in the vocabulary of the present generation—the word of farthest reaching and most varied import—is undoubtedly Evolution. — Charles Fluhrer, Universalist minister (1889)

Words of Orello Cone

Written in support of the use of reason and the scientific method in the search for religious truth (use excerpts to create a dialogue with Abbott):

Science, remaining as it does, in its own field of physical phenomena and facts infringes neither upon the domain of religion, nor that of a theistic philosophy.

...

The religious teacher should remember that there is much truth in the realm of science which no one is so well qualified to elucidate as he

who gives all his thought to the study of physical phenomena, and that all truth should be welcomed by every lover of his kind. And the student of science should not forget that there is a realm of the spirit, the facts and phenomena of which are as real and as much entitled to recognition as those with which he deals.

...

If Science is the truth as to the facts and phenomena of the physical world, and Religion, the truth as to the facts and relations of the spiritual life, then "the conflict of science and religion" is a misnomer... a truth in one realm of knowledge or one domain of nature cannot be in conflict with a truth in another realm or domain.

...

In the presence of the problem of the origin of things science is dumb. Out of the voiceless mystery of being it has won no revelation. Hence, far from coming into conflict with religion, far from drawing any conclusions hostile to it, science has only prepared the problem for the consideration of a religious philosophy, has even contributed as much as lies in its power to the establishment of the postulates of religion.

...

According to the historico-critical method of examining them (the Gospels), they are studied not simply as literature, but as products of the time in which they were written, that is, as works which in no small degree reflect the ideas and discussions, the hopes and fears, which prevailed in Christian circles toward the end of the first century and the beginning of the second.

...

Christianity... was not already complete in Jesus, but its principle has also unfolded itself only in long series of forms of development, and we have every reason for assuming that it will still further develop and adapt itself to still new conditions of life.

Words of Alexander R. Abbott

Written in support of reverence as the source of religious truth (use excerpts to create a dialogue with Cone):

Religion and philosophy are both necessary to us, both aid in the harmonious development of our being, and, they seem to be the constant attendants of the trusting spirit and the inquiring mind. But they are not interchangeable. Science seeks to penetrate all the secrets and evolve all the laws of nature. She seeks facts, knowledge, law, order, arrangements, relations. The whole

architecture of the glittering dome of heaven she finds in laws.

...

But is religion satisfied with this? Are the deepest, most permanent and imperative wants of the human soul satisfied with these husks of philosophy and physical science? Is she content to be guided through all the vicissitudes of this mental journey and meet the overshadowing mystery that awaits her at the close, guided by this cold, dry light of the intellect, however clear and strong it may be? Rationalism is no new thing to the world, but as old, at least, as the religious history of the race. The constant effort of those faculties to bring the whole realm of knowledge and faith, thought and emotion, under their dominion have kept alive the old battle between religion and reason, belief and skepticism from the earliest ages to the present, and for aught we can see, it is destined to continue to the end of time. It is the legitimate result of an age profoundly absorbed in material pursuits.

...

All your powers, faculties, methods and instruments; your scale, dividers, calipers, crucibles, telescope, microscope, and eye, eye, are adapted only to things seen and temporal, not to things unseen and eternal. For the solution of problems that are daily recurring, we need the ultimate results of the purest scientific processes; but for the peace and trust of the spirit, as we walk under the clouds and shadows of life, bearing its burdens, enduring its trials, and encountering its temptations, weeping over its bereavements, how impotent are all human philosophy and science! We walk by faith, not by sight.

HANDOUT 5: THINGS MOST COMMONLY BELIEVED TODAY AMONG US (1887) AND UNITARIANS FACE A NEW AGE (1936)

Things Most Commonly Believed Today Among Us

A Statement of Faith written by William Channing Gannett for the 1887 meeting of the Western Unitarian Conference in Chicago, adopted by a vote of 59 to 13.

- We believe that to love the Good and to live the Good is the supreme thing in religion;
- We hold reason and conscience to be final authorities in matters of religious belief;
- We honor the Bible and all inspiring scripture, old and new;
- We revere Jesus, and all holy souls that have taught men truth and righteousness and love, as prophets of religion;
- We believe in the growing nobility of Man; We trust the unfolding Universe as beautiful, beneficent, unchanging Order; to know this order is truth; to obey it is right and liberty and stronger life;
- We believe that good and evil invariably carry their own recompense, no good thing being failure and no evil thing success; that heaven and hell are states of being; that no evil can befall the good man in either life or death; that all things work together for the victory of the Good;
- We believe that we ought to join hands and work to make the good things better and the worst good, counting nothing good for self that is not good for all;
- We believe that this self-forgetting, loyal life awakes in man the sense of union here and now with things eternal—the sense of deathlessness; and this sense is to us an earnest of the life to come;
- We worship One-in-All — that life whence suns and stars derive their orbits and the soul of man its Ought, — that Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, giving us power to become the sons of God, — that Love with which our souls commune.

Unitarians Face a New Age Statement of Doctrinal Agreements and Tensions

A summary of the conclusions drawn from the Study of Values by the 1936 Unitarian Commission of Appraisal. Published in *Unitarians Face a New Age*, the commission's report.

Unitarians Agree

- In affirming the primacy of the free exercise of intelligence in religion, believing that in the long run the safest guide to truth is human intelligence.
- In affirming the paramount importance for the individual of his own moral convictions and purpose.
- In affirming that the social implications of religion are indispensable to its vitality and validity, as expressed in terms of concern for social conditions and the struggle to create a just social order.
- In affirming the importance of the church as the organized expression of religion.
- In affirming the necessity for worship as a deliberate effort to strengthen the individual's grasp of the highest spiritual values of which he is aware.
- In affirming the rational nature of the universe.

Unitarians Disagree

- As to the expediency of using the traditional vocabulary of religion, within a fellowship which includes many who have rejected the ideas commonly associated with such words as "God", "prayer", "communion", "salvation", "immortality".
- As to the wisdom of maintaining the definitely Christian tradition, and the traditional forms of Christian worship.
- As to the religious values of a purely naturalistic philosophy.
- As to the adequacy and competency of man to solve his own problems, both individual and social.
- As to the advisability of direct action by churches in the field of social and political problems.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: CECELIA PAYNE-GAPOSCHKIN, PHOTOGRAPH

Used by permission of the Smithsonian Institution Archives. Image SIA2009-1325.



LEADER RESOURCE 2: TIME LINE OF REASON AS A SOURCE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF

Reason can be described as "the mental capacity or power to use the human mind in reaching and establishing truth." Reason has played an important role in religion since the **Greek philosophers** pronounced it a masterful principle of Creation, and human knowledge to be a result of the free exercise of reason. The Greek philosophers also contrasted reason with emotion, setting up a dichotomy that survives to this day.

The Greek word *logos* (logic) would eventually become associated with the Latin *ratio*, the root of the word "rationality." The **Roman philosophers** applied reason to ascertain morals in harmony with nature. **Cicero** wrote, "True law is right reason in agreement with nature."

Reason became a central theme during the **Renaissance** (the late 1500s to the late 1600s) and in the work of scientists and philosophers of the **Enlightenment** era which followed. Scientific-empirical methods of investigating questions about how the world worked valued evidence over dogmatic ideas. **Galileo** wrote, "I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with senses, reason, and intellect has intended us to forego their use and by some other means given us knowledge which we can attain by them."

Occurring on the heels of the Renaissance, the **Protestant Reformation** emphasized the "priesthood of all believers." Custom and tradition were challenged by new discoveries, and freedom of the mind and freedom of conscience became hallmarks of a widespread revolt against authoritarianism. This raised another dichotomy that survives today in religion: reason vs. revelation. Some thinkers suggested that if central truths were derived from reason alone, then basic rational inquiry should lead to conclusions that are universal. Others went further, suggesting there really was no basis for Divine revelation at all.

Philosopher John Locke (1632-1704) accepted Divine revelation as a source of religious truth, but understood reason to be an important and necessary source of determining truth. Truth took priority over revelation; that is, reason should be applied to revelation.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) wrestled with the problems of deriving morality and religious principles from reason in two books, *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788). Kant concluded that due to the limits of human reason, rational or scientific

thought alone was insufficient to completely understand the great problems of metaphysics—freedom, immortality, the existence of God. To Kant, the empirical or experiential is as important as the rational or scientific. When we reach the limits of human reason or scientific data, we must choose the beliefs that best facilitate our ability to be moral persons.

Through the 17th and 18th centuries, there was also a growing embrace of humanism, a viewpoint found in both philosophy and religion that emphasizes human values, worth and achievement, and which is sometimes contrasted with a theological viewpoint that gives God the place of supreme value. Early strains of humanistic thought can be found in **Deism**, perhaps most famously articulated in **Thomas Paine's** *The Age of Reason* (1794, 1795, and 1807). Classical Deism holds that knowledge of God comes through reason rather than revelation, and that God had no further involvement in the world after Creation. Humans, therefore, have a special responsibility and role in the course of historical events and personal salvation.

In the 18th century, American revivals (the two **Great Awakenings**) emphasized emotionalism in religion. In response to the revivals, those who valued reason in religion as a way of understanding God and discerning right from wrong began to clearly argue for reason rather than emotion as the basis of religious understanding. In the same period, **John Wesley** (1703-1791) articulated four different sources that led to theological conclusions: scripture, tradition, experience, and reason. In this view, *scripture* includes the word of God, the Bible; *traditions* of the church are based upon this; *reason* is granted to humans from God; and with all these things in place, humans then *experience* God's love. Religious experience, then, was a product of the revealed word of God, the historical church, and human reason.

The Foundational Role of Reason in the Development of Unitarian Universalism

In 1819, **William Ellery Channing** called for the use of reason in interpreting the scriptures.

In 1866, the **Free Religious Association** (FRA) was established by several disenchanting Unitarians and others, to, according to their constitution, "promote the interests of pure religion, to encourage the scientific study of theology, and to increase fellowship in the spirit." Surviving into the 20th century, members of the FRA were amongst the earliest humanists in the Unitarian tradition.

In 1887, the **Unitarian Western Conference** adopted a statement of faith, *Things Most Commonly Believed Today Among Us*, by **William Channing Gannett**. The

statement was meant to soothe a growing divide between Unitarians who saw their religion based in Christian theism, and those who sought a broader understanding and definition of Unitarianism. The statement includes the assertion, "We hold reason and conscience to be final authorities in matters of religious belief."

In raising these human attributes—reason and conscience—to the level of "final authority," the groundwork was laid for humanism to be a major force within Unitarianism, Universalism, and ultimately Unitarian Universalism, in the 20th century. Early proponents included **John Dietrich** (1878-1957) and **Curtis Reese** (1887-1961). Religious humanism, as understood in 20th-century Unitarian circles, valued the insights of science, sought the reformation of traditional religious beliefs and practices, and rejected any supernatural God. While humanism maintained these values, its development was not static, and can be followed in such statements as **Humanist Manifesto I** (1933), **Humanist Manifesto II** (1973), and **Humanist Manifesto III** (2003). Find links to each of these statements in Find Out More.

In 1936, the **Unitarian Commission of Appraisal** summarized areas of theological agreement among Unitarians, affirming that the "safest guide to truth is human intelligence." In 1937, **Sophia Lyon Fahs** became Children's Editor for "The New Beacon Series". The series, published by Beacon Press but used for several decades by both Unitarians and Universalists, brought a natural humanist philosophy to children's religious education, emphasizing children's first-hand experiences with the universe and engaging them in asking and answering their own religious questions.

Reason and humanism continue to be key elements of Unitarian Universalist faith.

LEADER RESOURCE 3: SOURCES OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE

Throughout the course of human history, many have attempted to create meaning and search for truths. With this came the need to establish the sources of religious knowledge and authority. The earliest religions were based on oral traditions as history, culture, and worldview was passed from generation to generation. In these stories lay the source and authority for the peoples' understanding.

Of course, people had their own experiences of the transcendent, and in every culture some were blessed with special insight. Known by many names and described in many ways, these were the ones said to communicate directly with the Divine mystery, through whom revelation came. This revelation, along with the traditions of the ancestors, shaped a particular understanding of the world.

In time some oral traditions were collected in written scriptures. The earliest known, the Vedas of Hinduism, have been dated to between 1700 and 1100 BCE. As written texts took their place alongside the traditions of stories and practices and the revelations of seers and prophets, they, too, became authoritative.

By the Middle Ages, the Christian Church had laid a foundation for infallible theological authority consisting of scripture, sacred church tradition, and the authority of bishops as succeeding in direct line from the Twelve Apostles of Jesus. The Protestant Reformation, calling for the reform of what it saw as the Church's digression from true Christianity, raised the call of *sola scriptura*. *Sola Scriptura* (by scripture alone) placed the Bible above all other forms of Christian religious authority. This doctrine did not remove all other sources of religious knowledge; rather it held that the Bible was the only infallible source, and that all else must be subordinate to, and tested against, the Bible.

Many who lived and worked in the church, as well as some who were persecuted as heretics, held that other forms of religious knowledge were possible and necessary. Michael Servetus, Faustus Socinus, and Francis David were just a few from our tradition who held that reason and personal experience of transcendent mystery must be a part of shaping any theological position.

In the 18th century, John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement, organized a view of religious authority which has become known as the Wesleyan Quadrilateral. The Quadrilateral contains scripture, tradition, reason, and experience, but not all four carry equal weight. For Wesley, scripture was always the

primary source of authority, and the others were secondary means of knowledge that one used to interpret and embody the truth of scripture.

As Unitarians and Universalists moved toward a wider religious understanding they expressed those understandings in different ways. In the mid-19th century the Transcendentalists of New England placed supreme importance on the individual's personal transcendent experience of God, unmediated by church or priesthood. For many Transcendentalists this direct experience was evident in the glories of nature. Perhaps the supreme example is Henry David Thoreau who wrote:

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.

One of the Transcendentalists, Theodore Parker, in his 1841 address *Discourse on the Transient and Permanent in Christianity* went so far as to challenge the authority of the Bible and the words of Jesus, avowing that their authority lay not in the fact that they were scripture but rather in that they reflected eternal religious truths.

In an 1885 sermon, Unitarian minister James Freeman Clarke captured the feeling of the time with his "Five Points of the New Theology." Modeled on the five points of Calvinism, Clarke laid the basis of the Unitarian covenant in:

- The Fatherhood of God
- The Brotherhood of Man
- The Leadership of Jesus
- Salvation by Character
- The Progress of Mankind, Onward and Upward Forever.

William Channing Gannett's Statement of Faith, "Things Most Commonly Believed Today Among Us," written in 1887 with the aim of quelling a raging theological dispute in the Western Unitarian Conference, unequivocally stated that "We hold reason and conscience to be final authorities in matters of religious belief."

After the 1961 consolidation of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America, member congregations of the new Unitarian Universalist Association as well as individual Unitarian Universalists debated the source of religious authority, resulting in the source statement found in *The Principles and Sources*

section of the Unitarian Universalist Association bylaws.
The statement, passed in 1961 and amended in 1985,
set forth the sources in which our living tradition finds
meaning and truth.

FIND OUT MORE

[Commission on Appraisal, *Engaging Our Theological Diversity*](#) (at www.uua.org/documents/coa/engagingourtheodiversity.pdf)

[Unitarians Face A New Age: The Report of the Commission of Appraisal to the American Unitarian Association](#) (at www.uua.org/documents/coa/36_unitariansfaceanewage.pdf) (Boston: The Commission of Appraisal 1936)

Read *Applied Evolution* by Marion D. Shutter. (Boston: Eugene F. Endicott, Universalist Publishing House, 1900)

Humanism

On the [American Humanist Association](#) (at www.americanhumanist.org/Who_We_Are/About_the_AHA) website, find [Humanist Manifesto II](#) (at www.americanhumanist.org/who_we_are/about_humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_II) (1973) and Humanism and Its Aspirations: [Humanist Manifesto III](#) (at www.americanhumanist.org/Who_We_Are/About_Humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_III) (2003)

Read [Reason and Reverence: Religious Humanism for the 21st Century](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=654) by Rev. Dr. William R. Murry (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2007)

Read [Today's Children and Yesterday's Heritage: A Philosophy of Creative Religious Development](#) by Sophia Lyon Fahs (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952)

WORKSHOP 4: THE VERDANT SPRINGS – REFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

Religious reform can never be all at once, but gradually, step by step. If they offer something better, I will gladly learn. — Francis David

This workshop considers religious reform movements, as expressed in the interplay of theology and institutions. It considers how these movements fed into Unitarian Universalism and examines the role of reform in our own movement's history. Participants explore how our religious forebears have approached the sometimes conflicting goals of remaining true to their historical and theological bases and remaining relevant and vital for their members.

Before leading this workshop, review the Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters in the program Introduction. Make preparations to accommodate individuals who may be in the group.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Present an overview of the history of reformation in Western Christianity and demonstrate how church reform shaped Unitarian Universalism
- Share some stories of individuals, groups, and events that helped form the character of Unitarian Universalism
- Highlight the interplay of theology and institution when religious movements change.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn how some external and internal church reform movements have shaped Unitarian Universalism
- Explore the interplay of theology and institution when religious movements change
- Consider some vehicles which have been, and could be, used to bring change within our denomination
- Consider how reform movements can create both intentional and unintentional change.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Francis David	20
Activity 2: Time Line of Reformation	20
Activity 3: Interplay of Theology and Institution	20
Activity 4: Transcendentalism	25
Activity 5: Reform in Our Own Time	15
Faith in Action: Involvement in the Wider Movement	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Ralph Waldo Emerson — The Divinity School Address	30
Alternate Activity 2: Theodore Parker — The Transient and Permanent in Christianity	30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Reflect on a time of theological or institutional change in your congregation, perhaps when a new governance model was put in place, or a change in ministry brought a new theological direction. Did your congregation make a change from being Unitarian or Universalist to Unitarian Universalist? Did an organized initiative such as Jubilee World or Welcoming Congregation bring change to your congregation?

How did you feel about the change? Did you see the need for it? Did you feel as strongly as some other people? Does hindsight alter any of the perceptions or feelings you had at that time?

You may wish to ask participants to engage in this same spiritual practice so that they, too, arrive at the workshop centered and ready to engage with the material and the group.

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Sign-in sheet and pen/pencil
- Name tags and markers
- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1, [Schedule Template](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Create and post a workshop agenda on newsprint. The Workshop-at-a-Glance section provides time estimates. Create a welcome table near the entrance. Set out name tags and markers, the sign-in sheet and pen/pencil, and copies of the schedule.
- Make copies of the Time Line of UU History handout (Workshop 1, Handout 2), if you need some. Place time line handouts on the welcome table.
- Optional: Post the Time Line of UU History display.

Description of Activity

Welcome everyone to the workshop as they enter. Ask them to sign in, make (or pick up) name tags, and pick up the schedule and time line handouts from the welcome table. Point out the posted agenda for this workshop.

Including All Participants

Write the agenda in large, clear lettering and post it where it will be easily visible to all participants. Provide name tags large enough and markers bold enough so names will be easily visible.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Optional: Decorative cloth

Preparation for Activity

- Set up a worship or centering table with the chalice and (optional) decorative cloth.
- Optional: Invite a participant in advance to act as chalice lighter or reader to make the workshop more participatory.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice with these words adapted from the Reverend Emmy Lou Belcher:

We light this chalice in memory of those who have been persistent seekers, those whose desire to search together gave us this religious home, whose search for truth shaped this questing religion, whose perspective on freedom created more justice among peoples. Our presence here today is lit by their dreams and deeds.

Including All Participants

Remind volunteer readers to speak slowly and clearly so all can hear.

ACTIVITY 1: FRANCIS DAVID (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- A copy of the story "[Francis David — Guilty of Innovation](#)" (included in this document)"
- Leader Resource 1, [Francis David, Portrait](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Print out the story and prepare to read or tell it.
- Print out Leader Resource 1, Francis David, Portrait.
- Write on newsprint, and post: Francis David's trial for "innovation" shows how historians often draw different conclusions about the same historical events by highlighting different aspects of the story and particular characteristics of those involved.
- On another sheet of newsprint, write these questions, and set the newsprint aside:
 - What factors might contribute to differing views or conclusions?
 - What might be the impact of differing historical views?
 - Can you think of other instances where historical accounts have differed in motive, impact or meaning?
- Optional: Download the portrait of Francis David (Leader Resource 1) and prepare the portrait, and the statement and questions above as digital slides. Test the computer and projector.

Description of Activity

Present the story "Francis David — Guilty of Innovation."

Share:

As our story indicates, what was once a close partnership between Francis David and Giorgio Biandrata, dedicated to the advancement of Unitarianism became an adversarial relationship that destroyed one man and lessened the other. While Biandrata lived another nine years following David's death, his influence in the church waned. He died largely unmourned by a movement he helped to found.

The history of the Unitarian movement in Transylvania and the relationship between these two men of ecclesiastical power played out amid many currents and countercurrents of political, national, and religious life. Historians have proposed several reasons for the break between Biandrata and David.

David Bumbaugh writes in *Unitarian Universalism: a Narrative History*:

"The great tragedy of David and Biandrata lies in the fact that each of them was committed to the salvation of the Unitarian cause. Biandarata acted to save the church from political peril. In a letter to Jacobus Palaeologus written in 1580, Biandrata suggested that he was less disturbed by David's ideas than by their possible consequences for the future of the church. David wanted to advance needed reform, even at the expense of constant and recurring conflict. This, he seemed to believe, was the mission of the church, and he was prepared to risk everything, his own well-being and the well-being of the church, in the pursuit of greater truth and purity of doctrine."

Thomas Rees, in his historical introduction to the *Rakovian Catechism* written in 1818, drew a very different picture, one of a malevolent and "Judas-like" Biandrata locked in a struggle of personal enmity with a man of superior talents and integrity. Rees described an unspecified falling out between the erstwhile friends in 1574 over an unspecified "gross offence" of Biandrata's. While Bumbaugh and other historians understand Biandrata's repeated attempts to get David to temper his outspoken nature in the best interest of the church, Rees saw it as Biandrata's plot to bring about David's ruin.

David Parke, in *The Epic of Unitarianism*, indicates that the persecution of David came wholly from outside the Unitarian fold. He is

silent about any discord between Biandrata and David.

This one incident shows how historians often draw different conclusions about the same events by focusing on different aspects of a story or highlighting different traits of the people involved.

Post the prepared quote and questions where all participants can see them. Invite participants to reflect on the quote. Then, lead a large group discussion of the questions.

ACTIVITY 2: TIME LINE OF REFORMATION (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 2, [Reformation](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 2, *Reformation* and become familiar with its contents.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - How is contemporary Unitarian Universalism true to its origins and history, as it emerges from various reform movements?
 - Is reform the norm for Unitarian Universalism?
 - When is reform accomplished with a minor shift in focus and direction, and when does it add a whole new dimension to the faith?
 - What is the difference between renewal and reform?
 - Is Unitarian Universalism in a period of reform or renewal now? If so, how so?
- Post the Time Line of UU History from Workshop 1.

Description of Activity

Share the information in Leader Resource 2, *Reformation*. Invite comments and observations. Engage the group to help you add significant information and events to the Time Line of UU History. Then, lead a large group conversation using the questions you have posted.

ACTIVITY 3: INTERPLAY OF THEOLOGY AND INSTITUTION (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 3, [Theology and Institution](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 3, Theology and Institution and become familiar with its contents.
- Write the word "THEOLOGY" on one sheet of newsprint and "INSTITUTION" on another. Post the two sheets on opposite sides of the room.
- Prepare a sheet of newsprint with these questions:
 - Did the group described intend to reform theology or reform an institution?
 - Which, if any, did they actually change?

Description of Activity

Post the newsprint with the two questions. Read or present in your own words the contents of Leader Resource 3, Theology and Institution, stopping at the first marked point.

Invite participants to consider the first posted question. Then, lead them to answer the second.

After the second question, invite participants to move to one side or the other to indicate whether they believe the primary change effected was in the institution or in theology. Invite a few people to share why they think the *actual* change was more in the institution or in the theology.

Allow four minutes of conversation. Then, move on to the second section of Leader Resource 3, Theology and Institution, again asking participants to move to one side or the other depending on whether they believe the primary change effected was in the institution or in theology. Allow another four minutes for responses and conversation.

Move on to the third section in Leader Resource 3, Theology and Institution and repeat the process.

Including All Participants

If any participants may be unable to move easily from one end of the room to the other, do not post "THEOLOGY" and "INSTITUTION" signs; instead, invite participants to choose one answer or the other by a show of hands.

ACTIVITY 4: THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 4, [The Transcendentalists](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 4, The Transcendentalists and become familiar with its contents.
- Arrange for two volunteer participants to read aloud the Emerson and Thoreau quotes in Leader Resource 4, The Transcendentalists. If possible, provide their assignments in advance.
- If feasible, plan to go outdoors for this activity. Arrange for seating (chairs, blankets on the ground, etc.) to suit the needs of the group.

Description of Activity

Gather the group, outdoors if possible. Present the information contained in Leader Resource 4, The Transcendentalists. Then have the volunteers read the passages from Emerson and Thoreau.

Now explain that the group consider the first Source named in the Unitarian Universalist Association Principles and Sources—direct experience of transcending mystery and wonder—and how that Source relates to their personal beliefs. Ask everyone to find a comfortable position, ground themselves firmly on the earth (or the floor, if you are indoors), and enter a time of quiet meditation.

As the group settles, invite participants to become aware of the things they can sense around them. Ask them to silently identify four things that they can see at this time. Allow a few moments of silence.

Then, ask participants to be aware of their sense of sound and to identify four sounds they can hear around them. Allow a brief silence so participants have a chance to identify sounds. Reassure them that they might not identify four distinct things or they may not recognize them quickly.

Next, invite participants to silently identify four things they can feel against their skin, allowing time for them to recognize the different sensations.

Next, invite them to identify four things they can smell. Reassure them that it may be more difficult to distinguish distinct odors and aromas, but invite them to stick with it and see how it goes.

Now invite participants to identify four things they can taste. Again, reassure them that it is fine if they think they cannot taste four flavors.

Finally, invite participants to consider how present they feel to the place and to the moment, how present they feel in their bodies. Does this feeling have any spiritual meaning for them? How might this feeling connect to the first named Source of our Unitarian Universalist tradition, "direct experience of transcending mystery and wonder?"

After about fifteen minutes of this guided meditation, invite participants to gently return to the group.

Invite volunteers to share about their experiences, reminding the group that everyone has the right to pass.

ACTIVITY 5: REFORM IN OUR OWN TIME (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 2, [Reformation](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- From Leader Resource 2, Reformation, choose the quote from Rev. Peter Morales or the quote from Rev. Dr. William Sinkford as the focus of this activity. Write the quote you choose on newsprint, and post.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - What kind of reform is the author advocating? Institutional? Theological? Both?
 - Do you agree with the impulse for the kind of change the author is advocating?

Description of Activity

Invite participants to reflect on a contemporary call for change in Unitarian Universalism. Read aloud the quote you have posted. Then ask participants to move into groups of three to consider the questions you have posted.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Taking It Home

- Optional: Faith in Action from this workshop and/or Spiritual Preparation section from Workshop 5

Preparation for Activity

- Download and customize Taking It Home as a handout. You may wish to add the Faith in Action activity suggestion from this workshop and/or the Spiritual Preparation questions for the next workshop.

Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Announce the date, time, and place of the next workshop and any other "housekeeping" information. Request or remind volunteers if you want participants to read material aloud or perform other roles at the next meeting.

Invite participants to gather around the chalice. Read these words of Dillman Baker Sorrells:

May we go forth remembering those who shaped our lives and hoping that we may honor them well. May our coming together enrich our lives.

Extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: INVOLVEMENT IN THE WIDER MOVEMENT

Materials for Activity

- Information on your UUA District or region and the UUA headquarters
- Computer with Internet access

Preparation for Activity

- Explore the [website of the Unitarian Universalist Association](#) (at www.uua.org/) and the website of your UUA District (find listings on the [UUA district page](#)).
- Identify someone in your congregation who currently serves on a Board, committee, task force, panel, or other volunteer position with your district region or the UUA. Your minister will likely know who else in your congregation is involved with association or district service.

Description of Activity

One of the ways reform comes to an institution is through individual involvement and commitment to a process of change. Research how one becomes involved in the work of your district region or wider Association. Interview someone in your congregation who currently serves at a level beyond the congregation. Ask:

- How and why did you choose to become involved?
- What do you do?
- What effect do you feel you have had on the district or the Association?
- What thoughts do you have for others who may wish to extend their involvement beyond the walls of the congregation?

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

After the workshop, co-leaders should talk together to evaluate this workshop and plan future workshops. Use these questions to guide your shared reflection and planning:

- What parts of the workshop worked well and which did not? Why? How was the success, or lack of success, related to the topics? How was it related to the types of activities?
- How can we use this experience to make future workshops more effective? What would we change if we were to lead this workshop again?
- What was left unfinished in the workshop that should still be addressed? How and when will we address it?
- What strengths did we each bring to the workshop?
- As co-leaders, when did we work well together?
- What might help us be better leaders in future workshops?
- What do we need to prepare for the next workshop? Who will handle which tasks? Who will lead which activities?

TAKING IT HOME

Religious reform can never be all at once, but gradually, step by step. If they offer something better, I will gladly learn. — Francis David

Consider the types of reform you have discussed in this workshop—the reformation of ideas, the reformation of ways of doing things, the reformation of organizations. Does it seem that a wide, systemic change follows individual change—that one person or a small group changes, and then encourages others toward the same change? Consider one change you might like to make in your own life. Is it a change of belief or behavior? Values or action? What causes you to want to make this change? Do you think that if you accomplished this

change it would ripple out beyond you to influence your friends, family, or associates? How could a change you make in yourself affect the beliefs, the methods, or the infrastructure of a group to which you belong?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: RALPH WALDO EMERSON — THE DIVINITY SCHOOL ADDRESS (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Divinity School Address](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 5, [Ralph Waldo Emerson, Portrait](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1, Divinity School Address for all participants.
- Print out Leader Resource 5 to show the group.
- Read the Description of Activity and reflect on the questions you will pose for the group, so you will be ready to help participants understand the passages.
- Arrange for volunteers to read parts of the Divinity School Address aloud. If possible, give them the handout in advance.
- Optional: Download the portrait of Emerson (Leader Resource 5). Prepare the portrait as a digital slide. Test the computer and projector.
- Optional: Read the full text of the Divinity School Address [online](http://www.emersoncentral.com/divaddr.htm) (at www.emersoncentral.com/divaddr.htm).

Description of Activity

Project or pass around the portrait of Emerson. Introduce Emerson's sermon using these or similar words:

The Transcendentalist era is well represented by two of the most important Unitarian sermons ever preached: "The Divinity School Address," delivered by Ralph Waldo Emerson to the senior class at the Harvard Divinity School in July, 1838, and "The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity," preached by Theodore Parker at the ordination of the Rev. Charles C. Shackford at the Howes Place Church in Boston in May, 1841.

These two sermons, separated by a slim three years, succinctly state the case for a new way of thinking about theology, church, religious life,

and Unitarianism. The sermons were to have a direct and lasting effect on the Unitarian faith, far beyond the immediate circumstances, and perhaps exceeding the imaginations of their writers.

Emerson's Address was given to a graduating class of Harvard Divinity School. Approximately 100 people gathered to hear Emerson, who had recently resigned his own ministry, and was known to be bullish on reform. In the words of Conrad Wright, "the burden of the address ... was simple. It was a reminder that the life of religion must be recreated anew in the souls of each successive generation, and a declaration that it is the responsibility of the minister to 'acquaint men at first hand with the Deity.'" Emerson's Address raised both passionate acclaim from fellow Transcendentalists, and harsh criticism from friends and peers alike. For those who agreed with Emerson, nothing could have been finer than to hear his words delivered from the very heart of the Unitarian world—Harvard's Divinity Hall. But the choice of location drew the ire of many, who felt Emerson had used the invitation to challenge ministers, the church, and the accepted Unitarian theology. The controversy rippled out in a continuing series of sermons and publications, and would ultimately affect Unitarianism both doctrinally and institutionally.

Distribute Handout 1, Divinity School Address. Invite volunteers to read the text, pausing after each section, and allowing for discussion and clarification. If the discussion seems to stall, pose open-ended questions such as "What is Emerson saying here? What thoughts arise for you? What questions?"

Notes on Using Primary Source Documents

For modern readers, the radical content of Emerson's writing may not be obvious. The Unitarianism against which Emerson was reacting with such vehemence is unlikely to resemble our own, so we may not understand the depth of his critique. And, in the times in which we live, there is a much broader acceptance of a wide range of thought and belief. In these post-modern times, it is hard to label what is normative and what is radical. Further, the language of the 19th century is not our own, and can present hard going for those unaccustomed to its vocabulary and style. To assist participants, read the original text slowly and pause often to unpack its meaning.

When using primary source material, call participants' attention to a document's original context. Use questions such as:

- What kind of a document is this taken from? (in this case, a sermon)
- For whom is it intended? (again, in this case, a mixed audience, but primarily new graduates of Harvard Divinity School)
- What arguments or points does the author try to make in this particular excerpt?
- What is the underlying issue, or issues, that motivated the author?
- What's at stake?
- What can we tell about the writer from the document?
- What is the author's source of authority?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: THEODORE PARKER — THE TRANSIENT AND PERMANENT IN CHRISTIANITY (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 2, [The Transient and Permanent in Christianity](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 6, [Theodore Parker, Portrait](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 2 for all participants.
- Print out Leader Resource 6 to show the group.
- Read the Description of Activity and reflect on the questions you will pose for the group, so you will be ready to help participants understand the passages.
- Arrange for volunteers to read parts of the sermon aloud. If possible, give them the handout in advance.
- Optional: Download the portrait of Parker (Leader Resource 6). Prepare the portrait as a digital slide. Test the computer and projector.
- Optional: Read the full text of the sermon [online](https://books.google.com/books?id=OnwXAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Parker+%22+Transient+and+Permanent+in+Christianity%22&source=bl&ots=hfcZ-ley-o&sig=3LoHd_BTza52gBOY7iXFSy2UK-k&hl=en&ei=RgV1TabOF4TAgQeL6d07&sa=X&) (at books.google.com/books?id=OnwXAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Parker+%22+Transient+and+Permanent+in+Christianity%22&source=bl&ots=hfcZ-ley-o&sig=3LoHd_BTza52gBOY7iXFSy2UK-k&hl=en&ei=RgV1TabOF4TAgQeL6d07&sa=X&)

Description of Activity

Project or pass around the portrait of Parker found in Leader Resource 6. Introduce the activity using these or similar words:

The Transcendentalist era is well represented by two of the most important Unitarian sermons ever preached: "The Divinity School Address," delivered by Ralph Waldo Emerson to the Senior Class at the Harvard Divinity School in July, 1838, and "The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity," preached by Theodore Parker at the ordination of the Rev. Charles C. Shackford at the Howes Place Church in Boston, May, 1841.

These two sermons, separated by a slim three years, succinctly state the case for a new way of thinking about theology, church, religious life, and Unitarianism. The sermons were to have a direct and lasting effect on the Unitarian faith, far beyond the immediate circumstances, and perhaps exceeding the imaginations of their writers.

Theodore Parker heard Emerson's Divinity School Address in 1838, and afterward wrote, "I shall give no abstract so beautiful, so just, so true, and terribly sublime, was his picture of the faults of the Church in its present position." Parker's sympathies ran with those of the Transcendentalists. For him, humans were made to be religious, and had an instinctive intuition of the divine. Preaching at the ordination of Rev. Charles C. Shackford in the Hawes Place Church, Boston on May 19, 1841, Parker clearly identified himself as more Christian than Emerson, and indicated that the Christian church held more meaning for him as well. Parker's key points were that there were in religion "forms permanent"—religion as taught by Jesus—and "forms transient"—specific historical manifestations and doctrines. What aroused the interest of his critics, initially constituted of a small group of orthodox ministers, was his declaration that, among the transient aspects of Christianity were ever-changing views of the authority of the Bible, and of Christ as well. Eventually these criticisms would spill over into the still-young-and-in-formation Unitarian world, and affect deeply Parker's relationships with his colleagues, who, while ultimately holding to their belief in free speech and expression, nonetheless shunned

Parker from their pulpits and other ministerial involvements.

Distribute Handout 2, The Transient and Permanent in Christianity. Have the volunteers read the text. Have readers pause after each section, and lead discussion and clarification. If the discussion seems to stall, pose open-ended questions:

- What is Parker saying here?
- What thoughts arise for you? What questions?

Notes on Using Primary Source Documents

For modern readers, the radical content of Parker's writing may not be obvious. The Unitarianism against which Parker reacted with such vehemence is unlikely to resemble our own, so we may not understand the depth of his critique. And, in the times in which we live, there is such broader acceptance of a wide range of thought and belief that it can be hard to label what is normative and what is radical. Further, the language of the nineteenth century is not our own, and can present hard going for those unaccustomed to its vocabulary and style. To assist participants, read the text slowly and pause often to unpack its meaning.

When using primary source material, call participants' attention to the document's original context. Here, you might use questions such as:

- What kind of document is this taken from? (in this case, a sermon)
- For whom is it intended? (the audience at a minister's ordination; Parker may not have known exactly who would be in attendance)
- What arguments or points does the author try to make in this particular excerpt?
- What underlying issue, or issues, motivated the author?
- What's at stake?
- What can we tell about the writer from the document?
- What is the author's source of authority?

STORY: FRANCIS DAVID — GUILTY OF INNOVATION

Originally published in [Harvest the Power: Developing Lay Leadership](#), a Tapestry of Faith program by Matt Tittle, Gail Tittle, and Gail Forsyth-Vail (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2008).

For a short time, religious toleration was the rule of the land in sixteenth century Transylvania. When his mother died, the newly crowned King John Sigismund found himself ruling a country divided religiously among Roman Catholics, Calvinists, and Lutherans. Among the king's advisors were George Biandrata, a Polish physician and skilled politician, and court preacher David Ferencz, known in the west as Francis David.

In the heady times of the sixteenth century, Christian doctrine was the subject of great debate. King John Sigismund, realizing that there was no possibility of compromise among the various interpretations of proper doctrine, had issued an edict that each person was free to support their chosen understanding of Christian doctrine. The edict allowed advisor Biandrata, and court preacher David, both members of the Reformed (Calvinist) tradition, to begin to explore questions concerning the doctrine of the Trinity and the deity of Jesus. Their exploration and unorthodox interpretations of Christian doctrine caused considerable concern among other members of the Reformed clergy.

In those days, doctrinal matters in Transylvania were fully aired by convening a formal debate. King John Sigismund scheduled such an event for March 3, 1568, and invited those representing the "Unity of God" position to debate the Trinitarians. The debate lasted ten days, beginning at 5 a.m. each day. Francis David represented the Unitarian position and relied on scripture to buttress his arguments. At the conclusion of the debate, David's arguments were seen as stronger, and many in Transylvania embraced Unitarianism. A second debate the following year led the King to declare that he himself was Unitarian, and that there should be religious toleration in the land. By 1571, Unitarianism was given legal recognition in what would turn out to be King John Sigismund's last public act. He died two months later as a result of an accident, and left no heir to the throne.

John Sigismund was succeeded by a Catholic named Stephen Bathori, who dismissed most of the Unitarians at court, while retaining Biandrata as one of his advisors. While reaffirming a policy of toleration for those Christian religions named in the 1571 decree, he declared that he would not allow any further religious innovation.

Unitarianism gained more converts in Transylvania during that period, despite the prohibition against doctrinal changes, and an ecclesiastical organization was developed. By 1577, restrictions were placed on Unitarians, but the organization continued to thrive. Francis David, by now the Unitarian Bishop, was still driven toward reform of doctrine rather than development of church organization. He explored questions having to do with the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, infant baptism, predestination, and the worship of Jesus, questioning doctrine in all four areas. Biandrata, more concerned with the health of the church than with matters of doctrine, urged David to keep silent. But this was not Francis David's way.

Francis David began to preach his heretical ideas from the pulpit. Biandrata, concerned for the survival of the Unitarian Church, reported David's activities to the ruler. David continued to preach after the Prince ordered him to stop, and Francis David was arrested and tried for the crime of "innovation," questioning and challenging religious doctrine. The prosecutor at trial was Giorgio Biandrata, who dissembled when asked about his own earlier involvement in questioning religious doctrine. Francis David was found guilty of innovation and condemned to prison for the remainder of his life. He died in the royal dungeon in the castle at Deva on November 15, 1579. Biandrata went on to push the Unitarian church toward more conservative theological positions. By the time he died in 1588, very little remained of his former influence in the Transylvanian Unitarian movement. The Unitarian Church in Transylvania was forced into a position of doctrinal stagnation that lasted for more than two hundred years.

HANDOUT 1: DIVINITY SCHOOL ADDRESS

Excerpts from a Divinity School Address given by Ralph Waldo Emerson to the Senior Class in Divinity College, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Sunday evening, July 15, 1838.

On human agency...

... The intuition of the moral sentiment is an insight of the perfection of the laws of the soul. These laws execute themselves. They are out of time, out of space, and not subject to circumstance. Thus; in the soul of man there is a justice whose retributions are instant and entire. He who does a good deed, is instantly ennobled. He who does a mean deed, is by the action itself contracted. He who puts off impurity, thereby puts on purity. If a man is at heart just, then in so far is he God; the safety of God, the immortality of God, the majesty of God do enter into that man with justice.

(Pause.)

On the nature of God...

These facts have always suggested to man the sublime creed, that the world is not the product of manifold power, but of one will, of one mind; and that one mind is everywhere active, in each ray of the star, in each wavelet of the pool; and whatever opposes that will, is everywhere balked and baffled, because things are made so, and not otherwise.

(Pause.)

On the intuitive, religious sentiment...

Wonderful is its power (of religious sentiment) to charm and to command. It is a mountain air. It is the embalmer of the world. It is myrrh and storax, and chlorine and rosemary. It makes the sky and the hills sublime, and the silent song of the stars is it. By it, is the universe made safe and habitable, not by science or power. Thought may work cold and intransitive in things, and find no end or unity; but the dawn of the sentiment of virtue on the heart, gives and is the assurance that Law is sovereign over all natures; and the worlds, time, space, eternity, do seem to break out into joy.

This sentiment is divine and deifying. It is the beatitude of man. It makes him illimitable. Through it, the soul first knows itself. It corrects the capital mistake of the infant man, who seeks to be great by following the great, and hopes to derive advantages from another, — by showing the fountain of all good to be in himself, and that he, equally with every man, is an inlet into the deeps of Reason... This sentiment lies at the foundation of society, and successively creates all forms of worship...

(Pause.)

On Universal Truths...

This thought dwelled always deepest in the minds of men in the devout and contemplative East; not alone in Palestine, where it reached its purest expression, but in Egypt, in Persia, in India, in China...

(Pause.)

On direct experience of the Divine...

Meantime, whilst the doors of the temple stand open, night and day, before every man, and the oracles of this truth cease never, it is guarded by one stern condition; this, namely; it is an intuition. It cannot be received at second hand. Truly speaking, it is not instruction, but provocation, that I can receive from another soul.

(Pause.)

On the nature of Jesus...

Jesus Christ belonged to the true race of prophets. He saw with open eye the mystery of the soul. Drawn by its severe harmony, ravished with its beauty, he lived in it, and had his being there. Alone in all history, he estimated the greatness of man. One man was true to what is in you and me. He saw that God incarnates himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of his world. He said, in this jubilee of sublime emotion, 'I am divine. Through me, God acts; through me, speaks. Would you see God, see me; or, see thee, when thou also thinkest as I now think.' But what a distortion did his doctrine and memory suffer in the same, in the next, and the following ages! There is no doctrine of the Reason which will bear to be taught by the Understanding. The understanding caught this high chant from the poet's lips, and said, in the next age, 'This was Jehovah come down out of heaven. I will kill you, if you say he was a man.' The idioms of his language, and the figures of his rhetoric, have usurped the place of his truth; and churches are not built on his principles, but on his tropes. Christianity became a Mythos, as the poetic teaching of Greece and of Egypt, before. He spoke of miracles; for he felt that man's life was a miracle, and all that man doth, and he knew that this daily miracle shines, as the character ascends. But the word Miracle, as pronounced by Christian churches, gives a false impression; it is Monster. It is not one with the blowing clover and the falling rain.

(Pause.)

On the nature of the Church...

Historical Christianity has fallen into the error that corrupts all attempts to communicate religion. As it appears to us, and as it has appeared for ages, it is not

the doctrine of the soul, but an exaggeration of the personal, the positive, the ritual. It has dwelt, it dwells, with noxious exaggeration about the person of Jesus. The soul knows no persons. It invites every man to expand to the full circle of the universe, and will have no preferences but those of spontaneous love...

The second defect of the traditionary and limited way of using the mind of Christ is a consequence of the first; this, namely; that the Moral Nature, that Law of laws, whose revelations introduce greatness, — yea, God himself, into the open soul, is not explored as the fountain of the established teaching in society. Men have come to speak of the revelation as somewhat long ago given and done, as if God were dead. The injury to faith throttles the preacher; and the goodliest of institutions becomes an uncertain and inarticulate voice...

The true preacher can be known by this, that he deals out to the people his life, — life passed through the fire of thought... (H)istorical Christianity destroys the power of preaching, by withdrawing it from the exploration of the moral nature of man, where the sublime is, where are the resources of astonishment and power...

My friends, in these two errors, I think, I find the causes of a decaying church and a wasting unbelief. And what greater calamity can fall upon a nation, than the loss of worship? Then all things go to decay. Genius leaves the temple, to haunt the senate, or the market. Literature becomes frivolous. Science is cold...

(Pause.)

Charge to the Church...

Let me admonish you, first of all, to go alone; to refuse the good models, even those which are sacred in the imagination of men, and dare to love God without mediator or veil... let the breath of new life be breathed by you through the forms already existing.

HANDOUT 2: THE TRANSIENT AND PERMANENT IN CHRISTIANITY

Excerpts from Theodore Parker's sermon, "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity," delivered at the Ordination of Rev. Charles C. Shackford in the Hawes Place Church, Boston on May 19, 1841.

... Looking at the Word of Jesus, at real Christianity, the pure religion he taught, nothing appears more fixed and certain. Its influence widens as light extends; it deepens as the nations grow more wise. But, looking at the history of what men call Christianity, nothing seems more uncertain and perishable. While true religion is always the same thing, in each century and every land, in each man that feels it, the Christianity of the Pulpit, which is the religion taught; the Christianity of the People, which is the religion that is accepted and lived out; has never been the same thing in any two centuries or lands, except only in name...

(Pause.)

Let us look at this matter a little more closely. In actual Christianity -- that is, in that portion of Christianity which is preached and believed -- there seem to have been, ever since the time of its earthly founder, two elements, the one transient, the other permanent. The one is the thought, the folly, the uncertain wisdom, the theological notions, the impiety of man; the other, the eternal truth of God. These two bear perhaps the same relation to each other that the phenomena of outward nature, such as sunshine and cloud, growth, decay, and reproduction, bear to the great law of nature, which underlies and supports them all...

(Pause.)

An undue place has often been assigned to forms and doctrines, while too little stress has been laid on the divine life of the soul, love to God, and love to man...

Now there can be but one Religion which is absolutely true, existing in the facts of human nature, and the ideas of Infinite God. That, whether acknowledged or not, is always the same thing and never changes. So far as a man has any real religion -- either the principle or the sentiment thereof -- so far he has that, by whatever name he may call it. For, strictly speaking, there is but one kind of religion, as there is but one kind of love, though the manifestations of this religion, in forms, doctrine, and life, be never so diverse. It is through these, men approximate to the true expression of this religion. Now while this religion is one and always the same thing, there may be numerous systems of theology or philosophies of religion...

(Pause.)

Any one, who traces the history of what is called Christianity, will see that nothing changes more from age to age than the doctrines taught as Christian, and insisted on as essential to Christianity and personal salvation. What is falsehood in one province passes for truth in another. The heresy of one age is the orthodox belief and "only infallible rule" of the next...

(If we are faithful, the great truths of morality and religion, the deep sentiment of love to man and love to God, are perceived intuitively, and by instinct, as it were, though our theology be imperfect and miserable...

(Pause.)

Almost every sect, that has ever been, makes Christianity rest on the personal authority of Jesus, and not the immutable truth of the doctrines themselves, or the authority of God, who sent him into the world. Yet it seems difficult to conceive any reason, why moral and religious truths should rest for their support on the personal authority of their revealer, any more than the truths of science on that of him who makes them known first or most clearly. It is hard to see why the great truths of Christianity rest on the personal authority of Jesus, more than the axioms of geometry rest on the personal authority of Euclid, or Archimedes. The authority of Jesus, as of all teachers, one would naturally think, must rest on the truth of his words, and not their truth on his authority...

Now it seems clear, that the notion men form about the origin and nature of the scriptures; respecting the nature and authority of Christ, have nothing to do with Christianity except as its aids or its adversaries; they are not the foundation of its truths ...

(Pause.)

(Jesus) was the organ through which the Infinite spoke. It is God that was manifested in the flesh by him, on whom rests the truth which Jesus brought to light and made clear and beautiful in his life; and if Christianity be true, it seems useless to look for any other authority to uphold it, as for some one to support Almighty God. So if it could be proved, -- as it cannot, -- in opposition to the greatest amount of historical evidence ever collected on any similar point, that the gospels were the fabrication of designing and artful men, that Jesus of Nazareth had never lived, still Christianity would stand firm, and fear no evil. None of the doctrines of that religion would fall to the ground; for if true, they stand by themselves. But we should lose, -- oh, irreparable loss! -- the example of that character, so beautiful, so divine, that no human genius could have conceived it, as none, after all the progress and refinement of eighteen centuries, seems fully to have comprehended its lustrous life...

(Pause.)

In (Jesus) the Godlike and the Human met and embraced, and a divine Life was born. Measure him by the world's greatest sons; -- how poor they are. Try him by the best of men, -- how little and low they appear. Exalt him as much as we may, we shall yet, perhaps, come short of the mark. But still was he not our brother; the son of man, as we are; the Son of God, like ourselves? His excellence, was it not human excellence? His wisdom, love, piety, -- sweet and celestial as they were, -- are they not what we also may attain? In him, as in a mirror, we may see the image of God, and go on from glory to glory, till we are changed into the same image, led by the spirit which enlightens the humble. Viewed in this way, how beautiful is the life of Jesus. Heaven has come down to earth, or rather, earth has become heaven. The Son of God, come of age, has taken possession of his birthright...

(Pause.)

Christianity itself, that pure Religion, which exists eternal in the constitution of the soul and the mind of God, is always the same. The Word that was before Abraham, in the very beginning, will not change, for that word is Truth. From this Jesus subtracted nothing; to this he added nothing. But he came to reveal it as the secret of God, that cunning men could not understand, but which filled the souls of men meek and lowly of heart...

(Pause.)

To turn away from the disputes of the Catholics and the Protestants, of the Unitarian and the Trinitarian, of Old School and New School, and come to the plain words of Jesus of Nazareth, Christianity is a simple thing; very simple. It is absolute, pure Morality; absolute, pure Religion; the love of man; the love of God acting without let or hindrance. The only creed it lays down is the great truth which springs up spontaneous in the holy heart -- there is a God. Its watchword is, be perfect as your Father in Heaven. The only form it demands is a divine life; doing the best thing, in the best way, from the highest motives; perfect obedience to the great law of

God. Its sanction is the voice of God in your heart; the perpetual presence of Him, who made us and the stars over our head; Christ and the Father abiding within us. All this is very simple; a little child can understand it; very beautiful, the loftiest mind can find nothing so lovely. Try it by Reason, Conscience, and Faith -- things highest in man's nature -- we see no redundancy, we feel no deficiency. Examine the particular duties it enjoins; humility, reverence, sobriety, gentleness, charity, forgiveness, fortitude, resignation, faith, and active love; try the whole extent of Christianity so well summed up in the command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind -- thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" and is there anything therein that can perish?...

Were all men Quakers or Catholics, Unitarians or Baptists, there would be much less diversity of thought, character, and life; less of truth active in the world than now. But Christianity gives us the largest liberty of the sons of God, and were all men Christians after the fashion of Jesus, this variety would be a thousand times greater than now; for Christianity is not a system of doctrines, but rather a method of attaining oneness with God...

(Pause.)

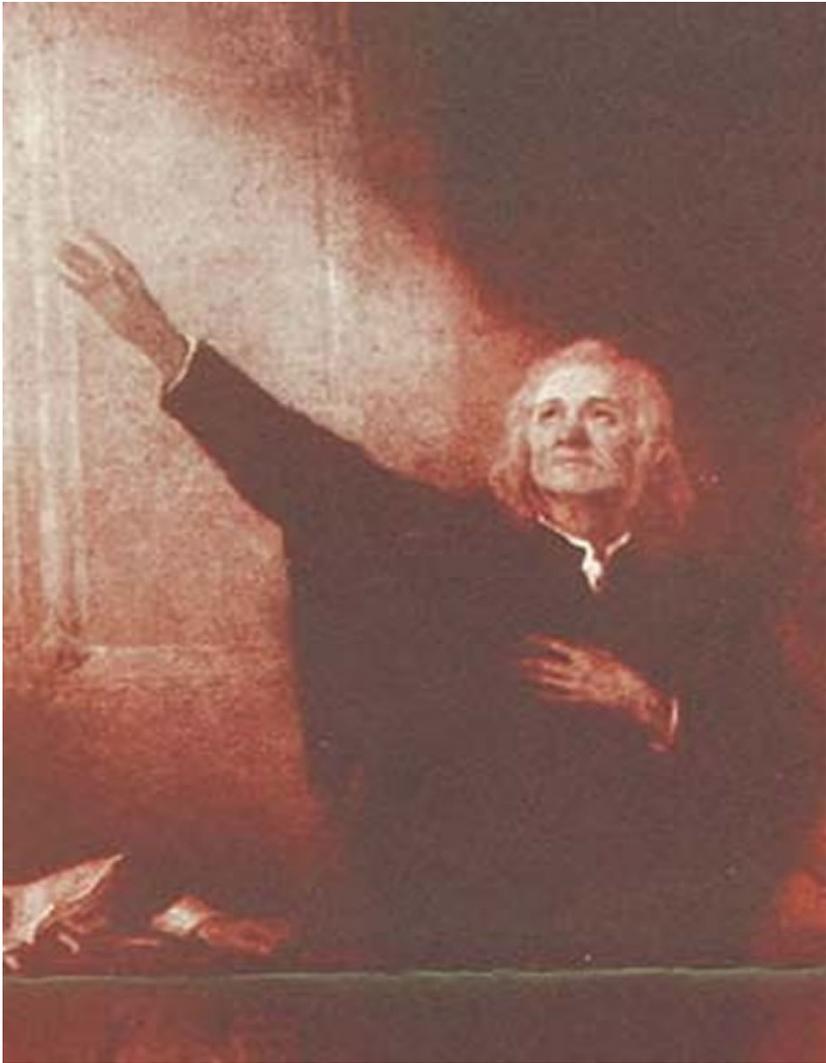
The truths he taught; his doctrines respecting man and God; the relation between man and man, and man and God, with the duties that grow out of that relation, are always the same, and can never change till man ceases to be man, and creation vanishes into nothing...

For it is not so much by the Christ who lived so blameless and beautiful eighteen centuries ago, that we are saved directly, but by the Christ we form in our hearts and live out in our daily life, that we save ourselves, God working with us, both to will and to do...

God send us a real religious life, which shall pluck blindness out of the heart, and make us better fathers, mothers, and children; a religious life, that shall go with us where we go, and make every home the house of God, every act acceptable as a prayer...

LEADER RESOURCE 1: FRANCIS DAVID, PORTRAIT

From the Unitarian Universalist Association archives.



LEADER RESOURCE 2: REFORMATION

Ever since there have been faith communities, there have also been reform movements, efforts focused on the spiritual renewal of the members of the community, and on the mission of the institutions themselves. In the first century, The Apostle Paul wrote of spiritual renewal and reform in his epistles to members of the early Christian "house churches." When we read these letters, which are now part of the Christian canon, we perceive the constant interplay between two competing impulses—the clarification and renewal of theological ideas competed with the establishment of rules and boundaries to shape and define the faith community. There is much these early documented religious institutions have in common with faith communities throughout history. In order to remain viable and effective, each in their own particular time and circumstances, faith communities must address and resolve ongoing questions of leadership, beliefs, acceptable behavior, who's in and who's not, and how the group will embrace a common vision and mission and move forward into the future.

While the 16th century Reformation is the most significant reform movement in the history of Western religion, there had been precursors to this singular and earth-shaking event. In the 14th century, Englishman John Wyclif had championed the cause of the people against the abuses of the church and was condemned as a heretic, but not before he had produced the first English translation of the Bible. John Huss, or Jan Hus, a Czech who lived near the end of the fourteenth century, had advocated for the authority of scripture over that of the church. He denied the infallibility of the pope, whose behavior he believed to be immoral, and held that communion should be available to the laity. Because of those ideas, he was burned at the stake in 1415. The work of these individuals foreshadowed some of the major themes that would emerge in the Reformation.

Although there were many factors leading to the Protestant Reformation, the movement was, in part, an outgrowth of the Renaissance. During that period, the culture exhibited increased emphasis on the individual, as well as new scholarship and ways of interpreting ancient texts. There were during that time key developments in technology, such as the invention of the printing press, which allowed the widespread distribution of Bibles and other religious texts. The rise of the power of the middle class, and a storm of political conflicts, helped to create an environment conducive to reform.

Though the conditions include a multitude of factors, the single act of a single individual, Martin Luther (1483-1546) is credited with initiating the Reformation. Intending to initiate a reform movement within the Roman Catholic Church, Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg, Germany on October 31, 1517. The Theses decried practices of simony (including the buying and selling of indulgences), clerical corruption and spiritual apathy. What happened, however, is that Luther's movement, which began as a reform movement within the Roman Catholic tradition led to a new acceptance of freedom of dissent in religious matters. The Reformation quickly morphed into a multi-faceted movement and counter-movement (i.e. the Catholic Reformation or Counter-Reformation), and embraced a broad range of theological and institutional reforms, including doctrinal disputes over the Lord's Supper, rejection of papal control, the belief in the efficacy of personal communication with God, justification by faith or works, and personal responsibility and freedom. The "fruit" of Luther's actions was the Protestant movement, which spread quickly among those seeking greater religious freedom. Both the Unitarian and Universalist faiths, in their institutional forms, emerged from this "protest" against the Roman Catholic Church.

While most Unitarian Universalists today would not recognize the theology of the Reformation period as their own, some ideas very important to us were developed in these turbulent and heady times. Antitrinitarians, forerunners to Unitarians, grew in strength and numbers as more people began reading the Bible for themselves (and in their own languages) and applied reason to theological arguments. As the Roman Catholic Church lost its singular position as "the Church," the idea of voluntary membership—faith as choice—began to take root. Ultimately, many of the doctrines developed by Protestant theologian John Calvin would provide rich material for Unitarians and Universalists to react against in our own efforts to reform Christianity.

Equal in importance to the actual reforms was the notion, met with varying degrees of acceptance, that ongoing reform is a part of the development of religion. Examination of our own Unitarian, Universalist and Unitarian Universalist history reveals a number of times in when we have been confronted with the same key questions confronting any religious reform movement, whether well in the past or more contemporary. How is a religion "true" to its origins and history? When is reform accomplished with a minor shift in focus and direction, and when does it add a whole new dimension to the

faith? What are the similarities and differences between the reformation of a faith, and the renewal of a faith? How much reform can a tradition or institution withstand before a separate or breakaway sect emerges? Learning to engage questions such as these while "walking together" as a covenanted community is a part of our liberal religious history, and part of being a Unitarian Universalist today.

We are the inheritors of a continuous stream of religious reforms. Even so, there have been a few noteworthy times when the "stream" became a wild river, and the waters of reform raged. A particularly turbulent time came during the period between the 1830s and the 1880s, when the Transcendentalists rebelled against liberal Christian Unitarians. The key thinkers and writers of this time, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Theodore Parker, George Ripley and others, agreed in many ways with William Ellery Channing's understanding of Unitarian Christianity. They embraced a progressive self-culture, and held that the idea of God comes from and is present in our own souls. Where they differed was in their understanding of the place of rationalism in religion. While not denying the place of reason in religion, the Transcendentalists longed for and advocated a more spiritual approach to life, an approach that relied on intuition. It was their firm belief that every person could experience the divine, personally and immediately. Transcendentalist thought created waves in the newly organized American Unitarian Association, as the nascent movement sought to balance a unified and reason-based religion with one that allowed for freedom of thought, growth, and movement.

Another tidal wave of controversy was launched by those who, in the early twentieth century, preached and wrote from the emergent perspective of religious humanism. These ministers, including John Dietrich and Curtis Reese, proposed that a supernatural deity was unnecessary to modern religion, and that a life both moral and ethical could be lived without a personal God. In this view, humans were moved to the center of the religious circle, emphasizing human responsibility for actions, without control from, or appeal to, a God.

Mark Harris characterizes the humanist movement as one of reform: "Religious humanism claimed that orthodox religious belief and practice must be reformed in light of modern knowledge." Modern knowledge, to the humanists, included the discoveries of science and the social sciences, including psychology and sociology, as well as the nihilism found in modern philosophy.

The influence of humanism on Unitarianism, and subsequently Unitarian Universalism, has been enormous. It became the dominant theological position in our movement by the mid-20th century; though not

without controversy as some Unitarian Universalists sought to maintain an understanding of God as part of their faith. There have been times when theists and humanists have held each other with mutual respect, such as when the two sides worked together to produce the hymnbook *Hymns of the Spirit*, and other times when adherents to the two positions have been at odds, exhibiting mutual intolerance that seems incongruous with a free faith. What is clear is that the reforming actions of the twentieth-century humanists challenged Unitarian Universalism and made it far more theologically diverse than it had been.

Reform in religion is an ongoing enterprise, though not one without controversy or debate. During his tenure as President of the UUA in the opening years of the 21st century, the Reverend William Sinkford drew both appreciation and fire for these thoughts about the future direction of Unitarian Universalism:

I would like to see us become better acquainted with the depths, both so that we are more grounded in our personal faith, and so that we can effectively communicate that faith—and what we believe it demands of us—to others. For this, I think we need to cultivate what UU minister David Bumbaugh calls a "vocabulary of reverence." ... we need some language that would allow us to capture the possibility of reverence. To name the holy, to talk about human agency in theological terms—the ability of humans to shape and frame our world guided by what we find to be of ultimate importance. — in *A Language of Reverence*, Dean Grodzins, ed. (Meadville Lombard Press, 2004)

Most recently, the Reverend Peter Morales, elected President of the UUA in 2009, offered his own charge for Unitarian Universalism, which, not surprisingly, involves change:

We can be the religion of our time... We cannot seize the opportunity before us unless we are willing to make significant changes. We are not talking about minor adjustments. We need to change our religious culture. We need to become more welcoming, more relevant in the lives of our people, more involved in the great moral issues of our time.

LEADER RESOURCE 3: THEOLOGY AND INSTITUTION

Reform comes in many ways, both inadvertent and intentional, and affects many areas of congregational life. Most often, reform efforts are directed toward either theology or institutional structures. Here are a few stories of reform efforts and their outcomes, both intended and unintended.

The Universalist Society of Gloucester, Massachusetts

Although many believe that the United States was founded on the principle of separation of church and state, in reality, at the time of the founding of the United States, the New England established (Standing Order) churches were supported by the tax dollars of everyone living within the parish.

In 1774, when John Murray first preached in Gloucester, Massachusetts, he brought a message of God's unending love and universal salvation. His Universalist message was well received by some in Gloucester and five years later a number of them founded the Independent Church of Christ and called Murray as their preacher. Members of the Independent Christian Church, many of whom left the town's established church in order to join the new one, felt it was unfair that they had to pay taxes in support of the established church when they had their own religious society to support. They took their case to the courts.

In 1783, members of the Universalist congregation brought suit against the First Parish church for return of property confiscated to cover the taxes the Universalists had refused to pay. Though the case dragged on for three years, eventually John Murray was declared a legitimate preacher of the Gospel, and tax relief was granted to the new church. Murray's wife, Judith Sargent Murray, wrote about the case "the Gloucesterians humbly conceived that religion was a matter between an individual and his God; that no man had the right to dictate a mode of worship to another; that in that respect every man stood upon a perfect equality."

This 1786 victory became an important test case in the move toward separation of church and state in the United States. However, never content to stand still, the Universalists continued to champion a larger religious freedom, and led the fight for final disestablishment in Massachusetts. When this goal was accomplished in 1833, Massachusetts became the last of the New England states to discontinue public support for Standing Order churches.

(Pause.)

Commission on Appraisal (COA)

In 1935, at the urging of ministers and laypersons interested in the renewal of the denomination, the Unitarian Commission of Appraisal was founded. Chaired by Frederick May Eliot, the Commission's first report was the 1936 *Unitarians Face a New Age*, which is often seen as a pivotal in a "Unitarian renaissance." The report covered a number of areas from worship to governance, calling for stronger, though more decentralized organization, and less emphasis on individualism. Among its recommendations was the creation of a new Moderator position, and closer cooperation with other religious denominations, particularly the Universalists.

When the Unitarians and Universalists merged in 1961, the Commission "of" Appraisal became the Commission "on" Appraisal as part of the new bylaws, and was established as a permanent body of the General Assembly.

According to the Bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Commission on Appraisal is charged to "review any function or activity of the Association which, in its judgment, will benefit from an independent review and report its conclusions to a regular General Assembly." Note that the Commission's role is not to *enact* reform, but to *report* its findings on the progress and health of the denomination to the body *empowered* to enact reform.

Over the years the Commission has reported on issues of governance, ministry, membership, theology, race relations, fundraising, lay leadership, religious life and many other topics.

(Pause.)

The Humiliati

In the spring of 1945, a group of five divinity students and young ministers met informally for study at the Universalist Tufts School of Religion. The gathering was such a success that the group formally organized, calling itself the Humiliati, "the humble ones." The Humiliati held annual convocations "for communal study and worship" until 1954. Never larger than ten members, the group included over time Gordon McKeeman, Albert Ziegler, Earle McKinney, Raymond Hopkins, David Cole, Frederick Harrison, Charles Vickery, Keith Munson, Albert Harkins (the only member who was never a student at Tufts), and Leon Fay (the only Unitarian member).

With study and fellowship as their stated intentions, the Humiliati delved into issues of worship, free will, ministry, creeds, and the philosophical bases of liberal religion. The Humiliati wanted to revitalize the

Universalist church, which they believed was waning in relevance and theological distinctiveness. They developed a unique theology they termed "emergent Universalism." Emergent Universalism owed much to the theological education the group received at Tufts. It combined the "impulse theology" of Professor Bruce Brotherston, which imbued all creatures with an impulse toward spiritual wholeness and the social conscience of Professor Clarence Skinner's Social Gospel. It held that spiritual growth and renewal were primary in strengthening the innate pull toward the good, toward personal fulfillment and wholeness. This, they proposed, would form a basis for social action.

In their proposals to reform worship, the Humiliati wished to move away from an intellectually-based service toward a more heart-centered, participatory worship. They believed that creeds, more elaborate liturgy and clerical vestments as well as new symbols were essential to move in that direction. Their symbol, still found in many churches rooted in the Universalist tradition, was a circle with an off-center cross, symbolizing Universalism's foundations in Christianity along with an open space to welcome the influence of other religions—thus a new understanding of "Universalism."

Imbedded in all these proposed changes were distinct moves away from Universalism's traditions—away from Christianity as central and unique, and toward creedalism and a high ecclesiasticism. The Humiliati met much resistance and criticism, but they did have an impact on the denomination's theology, symbols, and forms of worship. With their strong involvement in denominational governance they also had an influence far beyond what their numbers would suggest on institutional structures, including merger with the Unitarians.

(Pause.)

Women and Religion Resolution

In an era when the women's movement was raising questions about the role of women in society, Unitarian Universalists took up the cause not only in the wider world but also within the Association. Many were growing increasingly attentive to and uncomfortable with the sexism of traditional religion. The wording of hymns and readings referred to God in exclusively male terms and to humanity as "mankind." The Bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Association referred to all officers and ministers as "he." Even the Principles the Association adopted at consolidation used male-centered language. But language was not the only issue. Entrenched sexism in the UUA was also reflected

in the fact that there were very few women in positions of lay leadership or ordained ministry.

In 1977 the Thomas Jefferson District and a group of women from First Parish in Lexington, Massachusetts, proposed the Women and Religion Resolution, which was adopted unanimously by the General Assembly. The resolution called for leaders at all levels to "make every effort to a) put traditional assumptions and language in perspective and b) avoid sexist assumptions and language in the future."

One outcome of the resolution was a rapid increase in the number of women in the ministry and in leadership. By the turn of the twenty-first century the majority of Unitarian Universalist ministers were women, and every Moderator of the Association since 1985 has been a woman.

Another outcome was the publication of worship materials which use more inclusive language, for example, *Readings for Common Worship* in 1981, *Hymns in New Form for Common Worship* in 1982, and the current hymnbooks *Singing the Living Tradition* in 1993 and *Singing the Journey*, 2005.

Perhaps the most far-reaching change was a restatement of the UUA Principles. Two years after the Women and Religion Resolution was adopted, a Continental Conference on Women and Religion was held in Loveland, Ohio. That conference generated a proposal to revisit the Principles. A draft revision was submitted to the 1981 General Assembly with language inclusive of gender and theology. After some rewriting and congregational study, the current Principles were adopted by the General Assembly in 1985 (amended, 1995).

Although we rarely refer to the Resolution itself, its philosophy and contributions have become part of our denominational ethic. By engaging with the realities of historic discrimination based in religion our ideas about inclusion in worship, leadership, language, and theology have been transformed.

LEADER RESOURCE 4: THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS

Our age is retrospective. It builds the sepulchres of the fathers. It writes biographies, histories, and criticism. The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs? Embosomed for a season in nature, whose floods of life stream around and through us, and invite us by the powers they supply, to action proportioned to nature, why should we grope among the dry bones of the past, or put the living generation into masquerade out of its faded wardrobe? The sun shines to-day also.

These are the opening words of *Nature* written by Ralph Waldo Emerson in 1836, words that encapsulated and defined the American Transcendental movement. Transcendentalism was born of many influences. It was born in an age of Romanticism in the arts and philosophy, in reaction against a dry and rational Age of Reason. It was born of new methods of biblical criticism that called into question earlier assumptions about the literal truth of Christian scripture. It was born of a Kantian philosophy that said that human knowledge derived from more than purely sense-based data. It was born of a social idealism that gave rise to utopian communities and "the progress of Man onward and upward forever."

Because the Transcendentalists were highly individualistic, it can be hard to pin down exactly what Transcendental thought was. It was not a codified set of beliefs so much as a spiritual approach to life. Transcendentalism called for personal, direct experience of the divine, unmediated by church or priest. Its proponents believed that the soul is directed toward personal growth (or self-culture), freedom, and truth.

Although it had its roots in Europe, Transcendentalism was largely an American phenomenon, centered in New England, and, even more specifically, in Concord, Massachusetts. Due to the anti-institutional nature of the philosophy, Transcendentalists never formed a church, though a number of its adherents served as Unitarian ministers. The Transcendental Club (1836-1840), also known as Hedge's Club, was a group that met to engage in philosophical conversation. The Club was the idea of Frederic Henry Hedge, who served the Unitarian church of Bangor, Maine. Members included Ralph Waldo Emerson, Theodore Parker, Orestes Brownson,

and George Ripley and the group remarkably admitted women to the circle, including Margaret Fuller, Sarah Ripley, and Elizabeth Peabody (although Fuller and Peabody also convened conversation circles for women). Among the best known publications of the group were *The Dial* and *The Western Messenger*.

While much of the movement's thought has lived on in the works of writers such as Melville, Dickenson, Longfellow, and Hawthorne as well as in the social philosophies of Bronson Alcott, Thoreau, and Emerson, the group's impact on the social issues of their own day should not be forgotten. Individually, members of the circle were involved in working for abolition, suffrage, temperance, economic justice, education, and peace.

In the body of work they left behind, it is easy for us to look back and see the accomplishments of this relatively small group (the Transcendental Club never numbered above 30 members), but harder to feel the impact they had on society. Their ideas, though often based in the thought of those who came before them, were seen as entirely radical. Emerson and Parker, both initially ministers in the Unitarian church, created an uproar almost impossible to imagine. Emerson left the church by his own choice, reportedly because he was unable in good conscience to serve the Lord's Supper, which he found meaningless. Parker, however, was all but thrown out.

A charismatic leader, Theodore Parker led the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society, which, with over 7,000 members, was the largest church in Boston. Parker's colleagues, on the other hand, found his theology, his criticism of Unitarian leadership and his social policies to be reprehensible. Almost all ministers refused to exchange pulpits with him, a common practice of the time. When James Freeman Clarke did exchange pulpits with Parker, sixteen families broke off from his church to start a rival congregation. The Thursday Lecture, which had been a feature of the Boston Ministers Association for over two centuries, was discontinued lest Parker get a chance to speak. Finally, Parker was asked to resign from the Association, but declined, citing the foundational values of Unitarianism as the right of conscience and freedom of belief. This move led 20th century historian Conrad Wright to call Parker a "persistent irritant within the Unitarian community."

Today, the theology and philosophy of the Transcendentalists seems quite tame, although in its own era it was highly radical. Transcendental thought has over time had an extraordinary impact on Unitarianism and on society. It gave rise to a uniquely American body of literature and to a reverence for

nature as divine creation. It also challenged the very foundations of nineteenth century Unitarianism.

The following two quotes, one from Emerson and one from Thoreau, evoke what we call in contemporary Unitarian Universalism " direct experience of transcending mystery and wonder." Listen for the ways in which each experiences the Divine.

From the Divinity School Address, Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1838:

I once heard a preacher who sorely tempted me to say, I would go to church no more. Men go, thought I, where they are wont to go, else had no soul entered the temple in the afternoon. A snow storm was falling around us. The snow storm was real; the preacher merely spectral; and the eye felt the sad contrast in looking at him, and then out of the window behind him, into the beautiful meteor of the snow. He had lived in vain. He had not one word intimating that he had laughed or wept, was married or in love, had been commended, or cheated, or chagrined. If he had ever lived and acted, we were none the wiser for it. The capital secret of his profession, namely, to convert life into truth, he had not

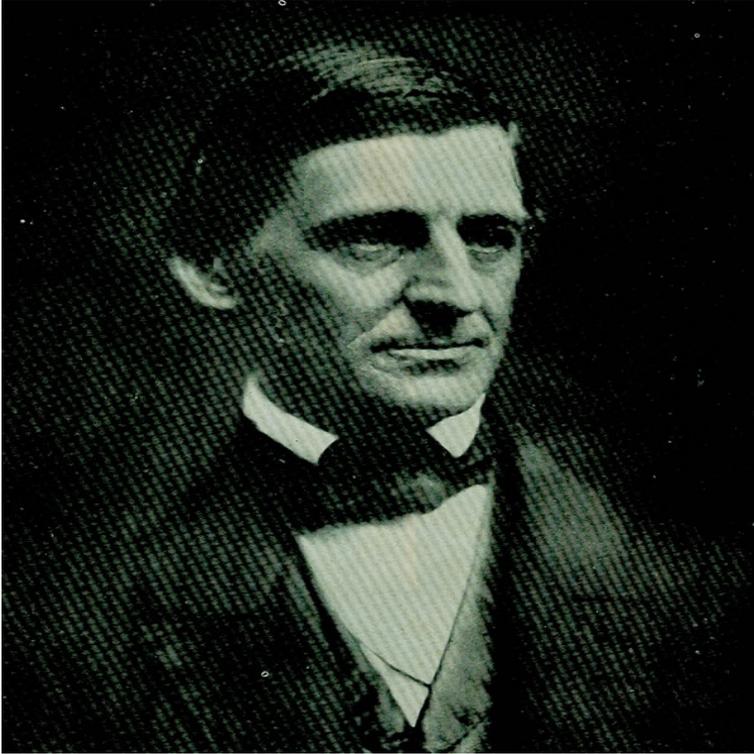
learned. Not one fact in all his experience, had he yet imported into his doctrine.

From "Walking" by Henry David Thoreau, 1862:

We had a remarkable sunset one day last November. I was walking in a meadow the source of a small brook, when the sun at last, just before setting, after a cold grey day, reached a clear stratum in the horizon, and the softest brightest morning sun-light fell on the dry grass and on the stems of the trees in the opposite horizon, and on the leaves of the shrub-oaks on the hill-side, while our shadows stretched long over the meadow eastward, as if we were the only motes in its beams. It was such a light as we could not have imagined a moment before, and the air also was so warm and serene that nothing was wanting to make a paradise of that meadow. When we reflected that this was not a solitary phenomenon, never to happen again, but that it would happen forever and ever an infinite number of evenings, and cheer and reassure the latest child that walked there, it was more glorious still.

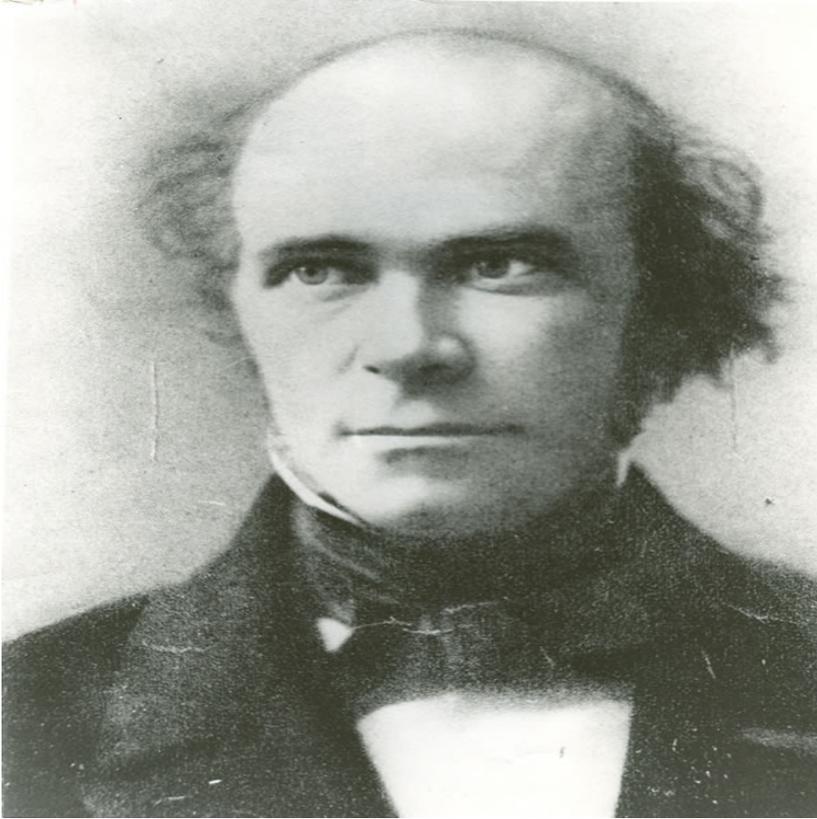
LEADER RESOURCE 5: RALPH WALDO EMERSON, PORTRAIT

From the Unitarian Universalist Association archives.



LEADER RESOURCE 6: THEODORE PARKER, PORTRAIT

From the Unitarian Universalist Association archives.



FIND OUT MORE

Wright, Conrad. [*Three Prophets of Religious Liberalism: Channing, Emerson, Parker*](#) (Boston: Skinner House Books, 1994)

Howe, Charles A., "[The Humiliati](#)," in the Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography

Murray, John and Judith Sargent Murray, *The Life of Rev. John Murray: Preacher of Universal Salvation* (Boston: Universalist Publishing House, 1869)

Andrews, Barry M. [*Emerson as Spiritual Guide: A Companion to Emerson's Essays for Personal Reflection and Group Discussion*](#) (Boston: Skinner House, 2003), [*Thoreau as Spiritual Guide: A Companion to Walden for Personal Reflection and Group Discussion*](#) (Boston: Skinner House, 2000), and [*The Spirit Leads: Margaret Fuller in Her Own Words*](#) (Boston: Skinner House, 2010).

WORKSHOP 5: GOD'S GONNA TROUBLE THE WATER – MARTYRS AND SACRIFICE

INTRODUCTION

Let all who live in freedom, won by the sacrifice of others, be untiring in the task begun, till everyone on earth is free. — James Reeb, Unitarian Universalist minister, who was killed in Alabama, March 11, 1965

This workshop examines the commitment and contributions of some martyrs in our Unitarian Universalist history who paid the ultimate price upholding their religious principles. Participants explore the strength of their own beliefs, values and attitudes regarding taking a stand when the cost may be high.

Before leading this workshop, review the Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters in the program Introduction. Prepare to accommodate individuals who may be in the group.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Describe religious, political, and cultural conditions that gave rise to the persecution of Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalists at certain points in history
- Introduce some Unitarians and Unitarian Universalists who stood against the prevailing ideas and institutions of their times—Michael Servetus, Norbert Capek, Violet Liuzzo, and James Reeb
- Invite participants to explore their own understandings of religious "martyrdom" and their feelings and beliefs about risking personal safety to take a stand in service to their values.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand how the intersection of religious, cultural, and political power create conditions for religious martyrdom, through the examples of Michael Servetus, Norbert Capek, Violet Liuzzo, and James Reeb
- Learn the stories of several Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist martyrs

- Explore ways taking a stand in service to religious values can involve personal risk and sacrifice
- Consider their inheritance from Unitarian, Universalist and Unitarian Universalist martyrs.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	10
Activity 1: Introduction	15
Activity 2: Michael Servetus	20
Activity 3: To Live until We Die — Norbert Capek	20
Activity 4: Call to Selma	40
Faith in Action: Stories of Perseverance	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Roll Call of British Martyrs	30
Alternate Activity 2: Memorial for Unitarian Universalist Martyrs	30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Consider these questions:

- Why was your given name chosen? Who chose it for you? (Or have you chosen it for yourself?)
- Were you given a saint's name at birth, or at the time of confirmation?
- If you were given a Hebrew name, how was it chosen?
- Were you named for someone in your family's history, a loved or "sainted" one or someone your family admired?
- What gifts have you received from the person whose name you bear?
- Are any family members or religious or historical figures in some sense your spiritual or religious ancestors? What gifts of wisdom have you

received from these ancestors? What sacrifices did they make in their time?

You may wish to ask participants to engage in this same spiritual practice so that they, too, arrive at the workshop centered and ready to engage with the material and the group.

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Sign-in sheet and pen/pencil
- Name tags and markers
- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1, [Schedule Template](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Create and post a workshop agenda on newsprint. The Workshop-at-a-Glance section provides time estimates. Create a welcome table near the entrance. Set out name tags and markers, the sign-in sheet and pen/pencil, and copies of the schedule.
- Make copies of the Time Line of UU History handout (Workshop 1, Handout 2), if you need some. Place time line handouts on the welcome table.
- Optional: Post the Time Line of UU History display.

Description of Activity

Welcome everyone to the workshop as they enter. Ask them to sign in, make (or pick up) name tags, and pick up the schedule and time line handouts from the welcome table. Point out the posted agenda for this workshop.

Including All Participants

Write the agenda in large, clear lettering and post it where it will be easily visible to all participants. Provide name tags large enough and markers bold enough so names will be easily visible.

OPENING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook
- A copy of the Spiritual Preparation section from this workshop's Introduction
- Optional: Decorative cloth
- Optional: Keyboard or piano

Preparation for Activity

- Set up a worship or centering table with the chalice and (optional) decorative cloth.
- Print out the Spiritual Preparation reflection questions.
- Optional: Invite an accompanist or singer to lead "For All the Saints," Hymn 103 in *Singing the Living Tradition*.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice and share these words:

We light our chalice this day in remembrance of all who have given their lives for freedom, for larger life, for justice. In memory of them we sing their songs, gather their dreams to carry in our bones. Their songs lead us on, their dreams shape us, and their light will guide us home.

If you invited participants to do the Spiritual Preparation activity before the workshop, offer an opportunity for brief comments and sharing from participants' "namesake" meditations. If you did not provide the spiritual preparation questions in advance, invite participants now to briefly share a spiritual legacy or name they have received from those who have gone before. Use the Spiritual Preparation questions as a guide.

Invite participants to sing together the first verse of Hymn 103, "For All the Saints," or read the lyrics together.

ACTIVITY 1: INTRODUCTION (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Background — Saints and Martyrs](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 1, Background — Saints and Martyrs and familiarize yourself with its contents.

Description of Activity

Share these words of Unitarian Universalist minister Victoria Safford:

Many Unitarian Universalists are accustomed to self-identify as exiles, or at least emigrants either from some other religious tradition or from an utterly un-churched secular life. For most of us, our emigration has been voluntary. We were not excommunicated or banished from the

churches and the temples of our childhood; we walked, and nothing forced us to come here. Technically, we are more willful expatriates than persecuted exiles.

But within our collective memory, the shared history of our tradition, is carried the imprint of true exile: early Universalists banished from the countries of their birth, chased as far as the New World (and even here the going was not exactly easy); early Unitarians martyred by Calvin or the Inquisition, their books forbidden, their churches destroyed, their communities demolished, in Poland, Spain, Italy, Romania. Read one way, our history is the story of gadflies and rabble-rousers, perpetual malcontents and incurable heretics always inconveniently pushing the boundaries of convention. Read another way, and perhaps more honestly, Unitarian Universalist history is the story of those who could not with integrity abide imposed belief or imposed religious practice. It was there they faced the most awful kind of exile—separation from their own hearts, their own consciences, their God.

Introduce the workshop theme with these words, or your own:

While Unitarian Universalists often invoke the names of our most famous martyrs—Michael Servetus, Frances David, Norbert Capek, James Reeb, Viola Liuzzo—and the ways in which they died, we rarely take the time to contemplate their "stories of exile." Let us not forget that these women and men lived lives filled with quandaries and choices that are not unlike our own, and that their deaths do not constitute the full story of the lives they lived.

Use Leader Resource 1, Background — Saints and Martyrs to explain the terms "believer," "saint," "martyr," "witness," and "sacrifice." Invite comment and reflection.

ACTIVITY 2: MICHAEL SERVETUS (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Tumultuous Times in 16th Century Europe](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 2, [Michael Servetus](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 3, [Michael Servetus, Portrait](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)

- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1, Tumultuous Times in 16th Century Europe.
- Print out Leader Resource 2, Michael Servetus and familiarize yourself with the material.
- Print out Leader Resource 3, Michael Servetus, Portrait.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - Do you see Servetus as one of our ancestral "gadflies and rabble-rousers, perpetual malcontents and incurable heretics always inconveniently pushing the boundaries of convention," or as one "who could not with integrity abide imposed belief or imposed religious practice?" (Victoria Safford)
 - What, in the life of Servetus, speaks to your own understanding of Unitarian Universalism?
- Post the Time Line of UU History from Workshop 1.
- Optional: Access [Raphael's "School of Athens"](http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/r/raphael/4stanze/1segnatu/1/athens.html) (at www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/r/raphael/4stanze/1segnatu/1/athens.html) online. Prepare to project it using the computer or print out the image to pass around.
- Optional: Download the portrait of Michael Servetus (Leader Resource 3). Prepare the portrait as a digital slide. Copy the questions above into a digital slide. Test the computer and projector.

Description of Activity

Explain that understanding the political, cultural, and religious context of a martyr's death helps us better understand the person's life and the meaning of their actions. If possible, pass around or project the image of Raphael's painting, "School of Athens."

Distribute Handout 1, Tumultuous Times in 16th Century Europe. Add key events to the Time Line of UU History. Invite participants to note themes they observe in the events on the handout. Ask:

- What are the major conflicts in this time period?
- Who are the actors in the conflicts?
- How are the conflicts expressed?

If you are using the Raphael painting, ask:

- What feeling does the painting engender?
- How does it speak to any the cultural, political, and intellectual trends of the period?

Ask if participants are familiar with the Unitarian martyr, Michael Servetus and invite them to share their knowledge. Pass around or project the portrait of Servetus (Leader Resource 3). Use Leader Resource 2, Michael Servetus to provide an outline of Servetus' life. Then, read aloud the sentence of Servetus as pronounced by the Syndics in Geneva. Invite participants to listen closely for evidence of Servetus' crimes of heresy that were woven into the sentence. Once the reading is complete, pause for a moment of silence.

Invite participants to turn to a partner and respond to the questions you have posted on newsprint. After five minutes, invite participants to focus their attention on the large group. Invite comments, observations, and responses to the questions.

ACTIVITY 3: TO LIVE UNTIL WE DIE — NORBERT CAPEK (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 4, [Norbert Capek](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 5: [Norbert Capek, Photograph](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 2, [Capek Prayer](#) (included in this document)
- Plain paper and markers, pens, color pencils, and crayons
- Timepiece (minutes)
- Bell or chime
- Optional: Computer with Internet access and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 4, Norbert Capek and familiarize yourself with the material.
- Print out Leader Resource 5, Norbert Capek, Photograph.
- Copy Handout 2, Capek Prayer for all participants.
- Optional: If you will not have Internet access, download the photograph of Norbert Capek (Leader Resource 5) and prepare it as a digital slide. Test the computer and projector.

Description of Activity

Pass around the photograph of Capek or project the image. Read aloud the first paragraph of the Leader Resource 4, Norbert Capek. Invite participants to contribute anything they know about Capek. Use the notes in Leader Resource 4, Norbert Capek to provide more information.

Distribute Handout 2, Capek's Prayer. Lead participants to read the prayer slowly, in unison. Then, explain that Capek wrote it shortly before his death in a concentration camp. Invite reactions; ask "What can you understand about Capek's faith from this single prayer?"

Suggest participants respond to the prayer by imagining themselves to be a companion to Capek at that moment in his life. Invite them to use the materials you have provided to fill the white space on their handouts with words, images, or symbols of response.

Allow the group to work for about ten minutes in silence. Then ring a chime, and ask them to finish what they are writing or drawing.

ACTIVITY 4: CALL TO SELMA (40 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 3, [The Year 1965](#) (included in this document)
- Story, "[James Reeb and the Call to Selma](#)" (included in this document)
- Story, "[Viola Liuzzo and the Call to Selma](#)" (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer with Internet access, and projector

Preparation for Activity

- Read online biographies of [Viola Liuzzo](#) and [James Reeb](#) using the Unitarian Universalist Historical Society's [Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography](#).
- Prearrange with a few volunteers to read aloud the events named in Handout 3, The Year 1965. If possible, provide the handout in advance.
- Copy the stories "James Reeb and the Call to Selma" and "Viola Liuzzo and the Call to Selma" for all participants.
- Post the Time Line of UU History from Workshop 1.

- Optional: Access Jacob Lawrence painting, "[Confrontation at the Bridge](http://www.artnet.com/artwork/425682198/982/jacob-lawrence-confrontation-at-the-bridge.html)" (at www.artnet.com/artwork/425682198/982/jacob-lawrence-confrontation-at-the-bridge.html or <http://www.jacobandgwenlawrence.org/artandlife04.html>) on the Artnet website. Prepare to show it to the group or print out the image to pass around.

Description of Activity

Distribute Handout 3, The Year 1965 and invite volunteers to read aloud the events of the year, month by month. Add key events to the Time Line of UU History. Ask participants if they wish to add any personal events or memories to the time line.

If you have chosen to project or pass around the image of the Jacob Lawrence painting, invite participants to respond to the image. What feelings and ideas does it bring to mind?

Read aloud the text of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s telegram to clergy on March 8, 1965:

In the vicious maltreatment of defenseless citizens of Selma, where old women and young children were gassed and clubbed at random, we have witnessed an eruption of the disease of racism which seeks to destroy all America. No American is without responsibility. The people of Selma will struggle on for the soul of the nation but it is fitting that all Americans help to bear the burden. I call therefore on clergy of all faiths to join me in Selma.

Invite participants to spend two minutes in silence, meditating on the events of 1965, the Lawrence image, and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s call. Then ask participants to share with a partner what they would have done had they received the telegram. Allow five minutes for paired conversation; then, ask people to return their attention to the larger group.

Introduce the information that two Unitarian Universalists died in the protests that took place in Alabama in 1965. Invite participants to share what they know about the lives of James Reeb and Viola Liuzzo. Allow a few responses, then distribute copies of "James Reeb and the Call to Selma" and "Viola Liuzzo and the Call to Selma." Read (or have volunteers help you read) one or both stories aloud. If you only have time to read one aloud, invite participants to then read the other to themselves.

Engage the group to consider the lives of James Reeb and Viola Liuzzo, using these questions:

- In which ways were Liuzzo and Reeb ordinary people? To what extent were they extraordinary?
- Is a martyr one who dies for their beliefs? Or one who dies with their beliefs intact, with ideals uncompromised?
- Do Liuzzo and/or Reeb fit your definition of a martyr? Of a saint? Is there a difference?
- Do we all have a shot at sainthood?

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Faith in Action from this workshop and/or Spiritual Preparation from Workshop 6

Preparation for Activity

- Download and customize Taking It Home as a handout. You may wish to add the Faith in Action activity suggestion from this workshop and/or the Spiritual Preparation questions for the next workshop.

Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Announce the date, time, and place of the next workshop and any other "housekeeping" information. Request or remind volunteers if you want participants to read material aloud or perform other roles at the next meeting.

Invite participants to gather around the chalice. Share these words, adapted from Christine Robinson:

What a debt we owe!

To the elders of the human race—its inventors, its wise, its lovers, thinkers, creators. In the course of their lives, they left gifts for us, gifts beyond measure.

Some are anonymous, some names we know. How great a cloud of witnesses dwell in the history of our world.

This is the challenge of our remembering:

To be reminded of the dependence on others which brings meaning to our lives.

To resolve to live our lives to the best that we know—to contribute to our world and to love in our turn. That our witness, too, will be added to theirs, and our gifts, too, will be given to a world which has given us so much.

Extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: STORIES OF PERSEVERANCE

Description of Activity

When we know martyrs only by their final moments, the way in which they died, we are likely to say to ourselves "I could never do that." But when we look more deeply at the lives they lived, we are more likely to find qualities we have in common with them.

Of martyrs, Susan Bergman has written:

... if we are not all called to this extremity of submission, we can at least recognize—in our own choices to persevere despite personal cost, to honor our beliefs in the contest with doubt—the significance of the daily, incremental decisions that influence who we become, and how we behave. — in "Twentieth Century Martyrs: A Meditation," in Susan Bergman, ed. *Martyrs: Contemporary Writers on Modern Lives of Faith* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1996)

Can you name a time when your beliefs forced you to choose to "persevere despite personal cost?" What gave you the strength to do so?

Offer to share your story in a column for your congregational newsletter or as a short homily in a worship service, and encourage others to do the same. Talk with the religious educator or religious education committee about ways in which stories of honoring belief despite personal cost might be shared with a Coming of Age group, a youth group, or children in your congregation.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

After the workshop, co-leaders should talk together to evaluate this workshop and plan future workshops. Use these questions to guide your shared reflection and planning:

- What parts of the workshop worked well and which did not? Why? How was the success, or lack of success, related to the topics? How was it related to the types of activities?
- How can we use this experience to make future workshops more effective? What would we change if we were to lead this workshop again?
- What was left unfinished in the workshop that should still be addressed? How and when will we address it?
- What strengths did we each bring to the workshop?

- As co-leaders, when did we work well together?
- What might help us be better leaders in future workshops?
- What do we need to prepare for the next workshop? Who will handle which tasks? Who will lead which activities?

TAKING IT HOME

Let all who live in freedom, won by the sacrifice of others, be untiring in the task begun, till everyone on earth is free. — James Reeb, Unitarian Universalist minister, who was killed in Alabama, March 11, 1965

Of martyrs, Susan Bergman has written:

... if we are not all called to this extremity of submission, we can at least recognize—in our own choices to persevere despite personal cost, to honor our beliefs in the contest with doubt—the significance of the daily, incremental decisions that influence who we become, and how we behave. — in "Twentieth Century Martyrs: A Meditation," in Susan Bergman, ed. *Martyrs: Contemporary Writers on Modern Lives of Faith* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1996)

Reflect on the "daily, incremental decisions that influence who we become, and how we behave." What decisions of yours reflect choices to "persevere despite personal cost?" Consider what it means to witness to your faith. Journal your reflections.

Consider the actions of some who were present in the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church on Sunday, July 28, 2008, when a gunman entered the sanctuary of the congregation and opened fire, fatally wounding Linda Kraeger of the Westside UU Church and inflicting injury on several others. Greg McKendry, a member of the congregation, died while trying to shield others. Several others charged the gunman, sustaining critical injuries, while still other adults worked quickly and bravely to clear the sanctuary.

Is there a difference between being put to death for what one professes, as were the 16th- to 18th-century martyrs, and, being inspired by one's faith, standing against prevailing powers by offering moral resistance—that is, refusing to allow evil into one's life, or into the life of the oppressed with whom one stands, in the manner of our 20th-century martyrs?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ROLL CALL OF BRITISH MARTYRS (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [This Day in Unitarian Universalist History](#) by Frank Schulman (Boston, Skinner House, 2004)
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook

Preparation for Activity

- Use the index of *This Day in Unitarian Universalist History* to bookmark pages that mention British martyrs of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries: Bartholomew Legate, Edward Wightman, Matthew Hamont, George Van Parris, Paul Best, John Lewes, John Fry, Thomas Aikenhead, John Biddle, and Thomas Emlyn.
- Prearrange with volunteers to read the ten short pieces. If possible, provide their assignments and the text in advance.

Description of Activity

Invite volunteer participants to take turns reading the descriptions of British martyrs. Following the last reading, ask for two minutes of silence.

Then, distribute copies of *Singing the Living Tradition* and lead the group to read responsively Reading 721, "They Are with Us Still." At the end of the reading, invite volunteer readers to repeat the names of the British martyrs.

Guide reflection and discussion with these questions:

- In the nearly 200 years of trials and hostility, what strikes you most in the descriptions of these martyrs?
- For many of these martyrs, the description of their deaths provides almost all the information we have about their lives. How does that shape our understanding of their martyrdom?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: MEMORIAL FOR UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST MARTYRS (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Pictures of Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalists who died for their beliefs, including Leader Resource 3, [Michael Servetus, Portrait](#) (included in this document) and Leader

Resource 5, [Norbert Capek, Photograph](#) (included in this document)

- Leader Resources 2 ([Servetus](#)) (included in this document) and 4 ([Capek](#)) (included in this document) and Handouts 1 ([Tumultuous Times...](#)) (included in this document) , 2 ([Capek Prayer](#)) (included in this document) , and 3 ([The Year 1965](#)) (included in this document)
- A copy of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook
- Craft materials such as cardboard boxes, tin foil, construction paper, colored tissue paper, ribbons, fabric, and natural objects such as tree branches, flowers, and colored stones, along with scissors, craft glue, pencils and color markers
- Optional: Handout Votive candles and holders, or LED battery-operated candles

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a place in your congregation's space where the group can set up a memorial for a time.
- Prepare a work table that will be accessible to all participants.
- Gather images of Servetus, Capek, Liuzzo, and Reeb. Print out Leader Resources 3 (Servetus) and 5 (Capek). Search online for images of Viola Liuzzo and James Reeb you can print out. Set images on work table.
- Print out a few copies of Leader Resource 2 (Servetus) and 4 (Capek) and the three handouts from this workshop. Set these materials on a work table.
- Bookmark Reading 721, "They Are with Us Still" in *Singing the Living Tradition*, and set the hymnbook on the work table.
- Optional: Talk with your minister and/or worship committee about incorporating this activity into a worship service focusing on Unitarian Universalist history. An appropriate time might be late October, near All Saints Day, All Souls Day, and Dia de los Muertes (Day of the Dead).

Description of Activity

Tell the group this activity is an opportunity to remember and memorialize women and men of our faith heritage who died for their beliefs and values. Invite participants to use their imaginations as well as resources from other activities in this workshop to create an altar that honors the martyrs in our history. Indicate the images and craft

materials you have provided. Suggest they may wish to use a few words from the sentence given to Michael Servetus (Leader Resource 2) or from the reading you have bookmarked in *Singing the Living Tradition*. Some may wish to contribute the copies of Handout 2, Capek Prayer on which they wrote or drew in Activity 3. Encourage participants to creatively fill in what history has not given us of martyrs' lives.

Tell the group any plans you have made for displaying the altar, for related worship, or other activities. Ask the group to determine which aspects of this project will be done individually or collectively as they create a memorial altar to share with the congregation.

Including All Participants

Have plenty of "ready made" materials, such as pictures, available for those who are less confident of their artistic skills.

STORY: JAMES REEB AND THE CALL TO SELMA

James Reeb's calling emerged slowly, but steadily. He had grown up in Casper, Wyoming, where he met and married his wife Marie. A devout and conservative Christian, after college James began preparation for the Presbyterian ministry. While in seminary, he began to question his faith. In 1957, a few months after reading a book by Unitarian religious educator Sophia Lyon Fahs, he converted to Unitarianism. He became a Unitarian minister and was called to serve the All Souls Congregation in a racially mixed neighborhood in Washington, DC. There, Rev. Reeb organized programs and projects to help the poor.

In July, 1964, he left All Souls to accept a position with the American Friends Service Committee. He and his family, which now included four children, moved to Dorchester, Massachusetts and began working to better living conditions in largely black, economically depressed neighborhoods of Boston. He came to understand that the suffering he witnessed resulted from fundamental inequalities in society and government's treatment of people according to the color of their skin—systemic racism.

Reeb was a member of the Unitarian Arlington Street Church in Boston, but he frequently preached as a guest minister in nearby suburban congregations. He used these opportunities to urge people in largely white congregations and communities to pay attention to and work to change racial injustice. He spoke against the racial disparities enforced by laws in the South and by economic and social segregation in the North.

In 1965, while Rev. James Reeb worked in Boston, events were moving in the civil rights movement in the state of Alabama.

Alabama's Jim Crow laws, like these enacted throughout the South, codified a "separate but equal" system that was anything but equal. The right to vote, a fundamental right of citizenship in a democratic society, was routinely denied African Americans. The system of discrimination and oppression ruled nearly every aspect of life, reinforced by violence not only by lawless citizens, but also by elected officials, police, and others charged with enforcing the law. Beatings, destructive vandalism, and even murder awaited anyone who did anything to challenge the system. On February 26, an Alabama state trooper killed Jimmie Lee Jackson, a 26-year-old black Civil Rights worker, setting off the chain of events that would bring James Reeb to Selma, Alabama. In response to Jimmie Lee Jackson's murder, the Rev. Dr.

Martin Luther King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference called for a march, from Selma to Montgomery, to demand voting rights for all citizens.

Six hundred Civil Rights activists gathered in Selma to join a planned march to Montgomery, the State capital. The march began on March 7, 1965, a day now known as Bloody Sunday. On the outskirts of Selma, on the Edmund Pettis Bridge, marchers encountered a line of police, three deep, carrying billy clubs, guns, and gas masks. Police charged into the marchers, clubs swinging, and followed up the clubbing with tear gas. National television carried it all—to Dorchester, Massachusetts, where James and Marie Reeb watched.

And then came the Call to Selma. Now Dr. King called on people of faith—people of all faiths, ministers and others—from across the country to come to Selma and march with him to Montgomery. All over the United States, Unitarian Universalist ministers and lay leaders alike wrestled with the call to come to Selma. Should they march, putting themselves in the midst of the violence they had all seen on television? Should they urge others in their faith communities to do the same? James Reeb thought hard about whether to leave his wife and four young children. He decided he had to help; it was crucial for people of faith to bear witness to what was happening in Alabama. He bade his family good-bye and boarded a plane, joining about 100 ministers from the Boston area.

James Reeb was with thousands who gathered on Tuesday to march but were, again, turned back at the Edmund Pettis Bridge. Reeb and others decided to stay in Selma and try again on Thursday. That night, a group of ministers went out to dinner at a place called Walker's, one of the few racially integrated restaurants in the area. While others departed by car after dinner, Reeb and two other Unitarian Universalist ministers, Orloff Miller and Clark Olsen, left on foot.

The three headed, side by side, to the chapel where Dr. King was to speak. James Reeb walked on the outside, nearest the street. They had not gone far when four or five white men came at them from across the street. Frightened, the three walked faster. They realized one of the men had a stick. When the attackers reached the three ministers, one swung his heavy stick and smashed the side of James Reeb's head. Miller and Olsen were beaten and kicked on the sidewalk. When the attack was over, it was clear that Reeb was seriously hurt.

After some desperate searching for help in a city that was hostile to "outside agitators," the three ministers found a phone at the Boynton's Insurance office and obtained an ambulance from a Negro funeral home next door. Badly hurt, Reeb needed to get to the hospital in

Birmingham, where there was a neurosurgeon. Miller and Olsen accompanied James Reeb in the ambulance, which was driven by an African American. A police car escorted them through Selma, but dropped away and refused to accompany them once the ambulance reached the city limits. Just outside the city, the ambulance got a flat tire. The vehicle was surrounded by a threatening crowd, so no one dared get out to change the tire. The ambulance drove back to Selma on the rim with the flat tire flopping. Finding a place to make a phone call and find another ambulance was difficult; few black people in the city had phones. They finally found a phone at a radio station where the driver had once worked and called for another ambulance. They transferred the very ill James Reeb and set out again for Birmingham, this time reaching the hospital where Reeb immediately began surgery.

News traveled quickly that James Reeb had been beaten and was in critical condition. In sharp contrast to the media silence which had greeted Jimmie Lee Jackson's death two weeks earlier, the evening news all over the country carried the story of the white Unitarian Universalist minister who had been attacked in Selma. President Lyndon Johnson had been notified in the White House, and he sent a government airplane to take Marie Reeb to her husband's side.

In James Reeb's hospital room, there was a bouquet of yellow roses from the President.

On March 11, two days after his arrival in Selma, James Reeb died. His death so shocked the country and the U.S. Congress that President Johnson sent the Voting Rights Act to Congress within days. Dr. King, invited to Washington to support the Voting Rights Act, declined. Instead, he delivered the eulogy at Reeb's funeral, saying:

So in his death, James Reeb says something to each of us, black and white alike—says that we must substitute courage for caution, says to us that we must be concerned not merely about who murdered him, but about the system, the way of life, the philosophy that produced the murder. His death says to us that we must work passionately, unrelentingly, to make the American dream a reality, so he did not die in vain.

STORY: VIOLA LIUZZO AND THE CALL TO SELMA

Ain't gonna let nobody
Turn me 'round
Turn me 'round
Turn me round
Ain't gonna let nobody
Turn me 'round
Gonna keep on a-walkin'
Keep on a-talkin'
Walking up to freedom land.
— African American spiritual

The protesters sang and chanted on the 50-mile march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. The black people of Selma had tried to march earlier in the month to demonstrate for African American voting rights and in remembrance of a young black man—Jimmie Lee Jackson—who had been killed a few weeks before during another peaceful protest. However, the earlier protest had been called off when the marchers were met by police officers who beat them and imprisoned many. Now the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was leading a new march to the State capital to protest, and marchers planned to let nothing stop them.

Their numbers had grown past 20,000. Many people had seen the televised footage of Bloody Sunday, when the first march was brutally attacked. Many had heard the call from Rev. King for lovers of justice to come to Selma and join the march.

One who saw and heard was a white woman from Detroit, Michigan: Viola Liuzzo. Now she was in Selma to support the cause of civil rights. Her car was in Selma, too, being used to pick up the old and weak who had started the march, but could not finish. After the march, Viola helped drive supporters to the airport and bus and train stations for their journey home. But Viola herself did not go home.

Home for Viola was Detroit, but it had once been Pennsylvania, where she was born. Then Tennessee, and then Georgia. Her family had moved to where her father and mother could find work, which wasn't always easy. Viola's family had struggled. Yet as hard a time as her family had had, wherever they went, Viola could see that black people had a much harder time. Viola asked herself why some people had so much wealth and others so little. She wondered what the color of a person's skin had to do with whether they would be a hard worker or a good student. When her family moved to Michigan, she thought things would be better. After all, segregation by skin color happened in the Southern states, and Michigan was in the North.

However, in Michigan, Viola encountered segregation in a different form than she had seen before. She saw that, even when segregation was not enforced by law, white people and black people lived in two different worlds. She wondered why some people thought it impossible that white people and black people could be friends.

All that thinking helped Viola form firm opinions about what is right, wrong, and fair. Once she made her mind up, nobody was going to turn her around! So she worked for economic justice and to better the educational system in Detroit. She worked for civil rights with the NAACP (National Association of Colored People) alongside her black friends. When she did not see her beliefs and values reflected in the Catholic Church she attended, she left and joined First Unitarian Universalist Church of Detroit.

When Viola heard Rev. King's Call to Selma to bear witness to injustice and march on behalf of voting rights for all, she let nothing stop her from doing what she believed she had to do—go to Selma and support the march. Viola, who had five children, had many responsibilities at home. Even so, once she made up her mind to go, she called her husband and told him her plans. He was worried.

"Viola, it might be dangerous."

"I know," she replied.

"Viola, you might get killed," he said.

"I know," she answered.

Before anyone else could try to talk her out of it, Viola was in her station wagon and heading to Alabama.

She held hands with her brothers and sisters, crossed the bridge, and marched. She offered her car to be used as needed.

Late one night, Viola and a young African American man drove some marchers home in Viola's car. Another car, filled with men from the Klu Klux Klan, pulled up along Viola's car on a lonely stretch of road. The men shot Viola and killed her because she was a white woman trying to help black people claim their civil rights.

Viola's murder outraged many people. It followed the murder of the Rev. James Reeb and the murder of Jimmie Lee Jackson and added to the public pressure on legislators in Washington, DC. Congress responded to the pressure and passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Viola's dedication to her values, and her sacrifice, brought all of us a little bit closer to freedom. Further, the American Civil Rights movement has inspired oppressed people all over the world. Viola Liuzzo is the only white

woman honored on the Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Alabama. A memorial plaque honoring Viola Liuzzo, Jimmie Lee Jackson, and James Reeb hangs at the national offices of the Unitarian Universalist Association in Boston, Massachusetts.

HANDOUT 1: TUMULTUOUS TIMES IN 16TH CENTURY EUROPE

1509-11

Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio) completed "School for Athens" fresco in the Apostolic Palace of the Vatican. Set in classical times, the masterwork emphasizes reason, dialogue, and the liberal arts—a marked departure from Michelangelo's nearby Sistine Chapel, painted around the same time (1508-12)

1517

Martin Luther (1483-1546), an ordained priest of the Roman Catholic Church, posted his 95 Theses on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg, Germany. Luther first opposed the dispensation of indulgences by the church, and eventually expanded his thinking to include broad reforms of the church. He was excommunicated in 1521.

1527

Under Charles V (1500-1558; Holy Roman Emperor 1519-1558), Rome was sacked by rebellious troops and Pope Clement VII was imprisoned.

1535

John Calvin (1509-1564) began his reformation work in Geneva, and in 1536 published *Institutes of Christian Religion*, a systematic description of Protestant thought.

1543

Nicholas Copernicus (1473-1543) published *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*, his theory of planetary motion.

1545

Council of Trent opened by Pope Paul III for church reform in light of the Protestant Reformation.

HANDOUT 2: CAPEK PRAYER

It is worthwhile to live and fight courageously for sacred ideals.

Oh blow ye evil winds into my body's fire; my soul you'll never unravel.

Even though disappointed a thousand times or fallen in the fight and everything worthless seem,

I have lived amidst eternity.

Be grateful, my soul,

My life was worth living.

He who was pressed from all sides but remained victorious in spirit is welcomed into the choir of heroes.

He who overcame the fetters giving wing to the mind is entering into the golden age of the victorious.

HANDOUT 3: THE YEAR 1965

By any account, the year 1965 in the United States was one of upheaval and transformation.

February

Malcolm X was assassinated in New York City. Jazz pianist Nat King Cole died in Santa Monica, CA. His last album L-O-V-E rose to number 4 in the Billboard chart later that Spring.

March

The U.S. Justice Department ordered all schools to desegregate, threatening to withhold funds from those that refused to complete integration by fall of 1967. A Civil Rights march in Selma, Alabama provoked state troopers to violence ("Bloody Sunday"), which fueled additional marches to Montgomery, Alabama. Also that month, U.S. Catholic churches began changing their worship services in response to Vatican II.

April

An estimated 51 tornados killed almost 300, and injured 1,500, in six Midwestern states.

May

Head Start welcomed its first class of children. In the same month, the first "teach in" took place on college campuses, opposing military action in Vietnam, and the first draft card burnings happened at the University of California in Berkeley.

June

Poet Robert Lowell refused an invitation to the White House because of his "dismay and distrust" of U.S. foreign policy. The United States Supreme Court struck down a Connecticut law that had been used to close and fine a Planned Parenthood birth control clinic.

July

The bill establishing Medicare and Medicaid was signed into law. President Johnson called the U.S. Army Reserves into service for the escalating conflict in Vietnam. Bob Dylan "plugged in," performing with an electric guitar for the first time at the Newport Folk Festival.

August

President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act. The Watts Riot erupted in Los Angeles. The Beatles played the first stadium rock concert at Shea Stadium, New York City.

September

Bill Cosby, starring in *I Spy*, became the first African American to star in a television show.

Hurricane Betsy hits near New Orleans, Louisiana, causing more than one billion dollars in damages.

October

Ten thousand people marched in New York City in opposition to the Vietnam War.

November

Twenty-five thousand attended the March on Washington for Peace in Vietnam. A blackout cut power to nine Northeastern states, stranding 800,000 people in subways.

Also in 1965

The National Endowment of the Arts and the National Endowment of the Humanities were created.

The Sound of Music with Julie Andrews and Roman Polanski's *Repulsion* opened in movie theaters.

For the first time since the birth of the United States, mainline Protestant churches stopped growing or began to lose members.

By the end of the year, more than 200,000 American troops were fighting in Vietnam.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: BACKGROUND — SAINTS AND MARTYRS

In Christianity, the term "saints" originally referred to "all believers"—as in the hymn, *For All the Saints*. But the meaning of saint changed during the Roman Empire's persecution of Christians, and "martyr" became the prototype of saint. Even this word, martyr, needs some unpacking, for the root meaning of martyr is "witness." As martyrs and saints became increasingly important to the Christian faith, so, too, did their "sacrifice," a word which means "to make sacred." Today, the Catholic Church canonizes individuals as saints who were not martyred. So, in thinking about our religious ancestors who died because of their beliefs, we will wrestle with a range of words including "believer," "saint," "martyr," "sacrifice," and "witness."

In considering our martyrs, remember:

1. It is impossible to completely untangle the cultural, political, and religious motives of a martyr or of a persecutor. Virtually all martyrdoms have a political element, especially in any historical time when civic and religious authorities overlap.
2. Not all, nor even most, martyrs seem to have voluntarily sought death. Rather, it seems most martyrs faced their deaths heroically when they were unable to turn from their conscience, or truth, or belief—that is, when they were witnessing to their faith.

LEADER RESOURCE 2: MICHAEL SERVETUS

Michael Servetus (pronounced Sir-VEE-tus) (c. 1511-1553) was the most celebrated martyr of the 16th century. His writings include the first systematic description of antitrinitarian thought. He challenged both the Catholic and Protestant churches to return to a pre-Nicene purity; "restoration," not "reformation." As with many martyrs, he is remembered more for his death than for his accomplishments.

Servetus was tried before the Calvinist Council of Judges (Syndics) in Geneva. He was found guilty of heresy on October 26, 1553, and was burned at the stake the following day at noon. Here is an excerpt from the sentence as pronounced:

Wherefore we Syndics, judges of criminal cases in this city, having witnessed the trial conducted before us at the instance of our Lieutenant against you "Michel Servet de Villeneuve" of the Kingdom of Aragon in Spain, and having seen your voluntary and repeated confessions and your books, judge that you, Servetus, have for a long time promulgated false and thoroughly heretical doctrine, despising all remonstrances and corrections and that you have with malicious and perverse obstinacy sown and divulged even in printed books opinions against God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, in a word against the fundamentals of the Christian religion, and that you have tried to make a schism and trouble the Church of God by which many souls may have been ruined and lost, a thing horrible, shocking, scandalous and infectious. And you have had neither shame nor horror of setting yourself against the divine Majesty and the Holy Trinity, and so you have obstinately tried to infect the world with your stinking heretical poison... For these and other reasons, desiring to purge the Church of God of such infection and cut off the rotten member, having taken counsel with our citizens and having invoked the name of God to give just judgment ... having God and the Holy Scriptures before our eyes speaking in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we now in writing give final sentence and condemn you, Michael Servetus, to be bound and taken to Champel and there attached to a stake and burned with your book to ashes. And you shall finish your days and give an example to others who would commit the like.

Highlights of Michael Servetus' life:

- Born in Spain, c. 1509-1511
- While studying law in France, read the Bible, found no reference to the Trinity
- In 1529, in service to a Franciscan monk, saw first-hand the riches of the Church, the exaltation of the Pope; turned to the Protestants in Basel
- In 1531, at about age 20, published *De Trinitatis Erroribus* (*On the Errors of the Trinity*)
- In 1532, published *Dialogorum de Trinitate* (*Dialogues on the Trinity*) without much success; books were confiscated; Servetus was run out of Protestant towns; the Supreme Council of the Inquisition in Spain took interest in him
- Studied mathematics and medicine in Paris while that city was going through turmoil of Protestant/Catholic upheaval
- Lived for many years under alias Michel de Villeneuve, Doctor of Medicine; described pulmonary respiration for the first time
- In 1546, began a secret correspondence with John Calvin
- In 1553, published *Christianism Restitutio* (*The Restoration of Christianity*) including letters written to Calvin; arrested, escaped, and arrested again by Protestant authorities in Geneva
- Convicted Servetus of antitrinitarianism and opposition to child baptism by the Council of Geneva; burned at the stake October 27, 1553
- Servetus' death unleashed a heated debate within Protestantism about what should be done with heretics; while Calvin defended the Council's decision because "to spare Servetus would have been to endanger the souls of many," Sebastian Castellio argued "to kill a man is not to protect a doctrine; it is but to kill a man ... when Servetus fought with reasons and writings, he should have been repulsed by reasons and writings."

Summary of Servetus' beliefs:

- No original sin
- Jesus had one nature: fully human and fully divine, God came to earth
- All people, regardless of religion, are able to improve; grace is available to all
- All things are a part of God.

LEADER RESOURCE 3: MICHAEL SERVETUS, PORTRAIT

From the Unitarian Universalist Association archives.



LEADER RESOURCE 4: NORBERT CAPEK

Norbert Capek (1870-1942) (pronounced CHAH-pek) was a Unitarian minister who, with extraordinary energy, talent, and commitment, brought the Unitarian faith from the United States to thousands in Czechoslovakia. Capek believed that a truly religious person should have "the ability to have faith and confidence, the ability to hope, the feeling of worship, charity or selfless love, and conscientiousness." In 1941 he was arrested by the Gestapo for listening to foreign broadcasts and for high treason. He was put to death in a Nazi prison camp the following year.

Highlights of Norbert Capek's life:

- Born in South Bohemia in 1870
- Raised in the Catholic Church, he became disillusioned at a young age; resigned at age 18 and was baptized a Baptist
- As a Baptist evangelist, founded churches from Ukraine to Budapest
- "Rediscovered" the free faith of sixteenth century central Europe, which led him to a more liberal understanding of faith
- From 1914 to 1919, served Baptist churches in New York and New Jersey
- In 1919, left the ministry and the Baptist church. In 1921, joined, with his wife and children, the Unitarian Church in Orange, New Jersey
- In 1921, returned to newly independent Czechoslovakia and founded the Unitarian Church in Prague; by 1941, the church had 3,200 members
- Arrested by the Gestapo in March 1941 and accused of listening to foreign broadcasts and "high treason"
- Put to death at Hartheim Castle, Austria in October 1942.

LEADER RESOURCE 5: NORBERT CAPEK, PHOTOGRAPH

From the Unitarian Universalist Association archives.



FIND OUT MORE

See Victoria Safford's complete essay, "[Living in Exile](#)," (at www.uuworld.org/2004/02/interpretation.html) in the online archives of *UU World* (March/April 2004).

Servetus and Capek Biographies

Read biographies of [Michael Servetus](#) and [Norbert Capek](#) online in the Unitarian Universalist Historical Society's [Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography](#). See the articles "Michael Servetus" and "Norbert Capek" in Mark Harris, *Historical Dictionary of Unitarian Universalism* (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2004).

More about Viola Liuzzo and the Rev. James Reeb

"[Home of the Brave](#) (at www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/hob.html)" a documentary film about Liuzzo

Howlett, Duncan. *No Greater Love: The James Reeb Story* (Boston: Skinner House, 1993)

Leonard, Richard D. [Call to Selma: Eighteen Days of Witness](#) (Skinner House Books, 2002)

Mendelsohn, Jack. *The Martyrs: 16 Who Gave Their Lives for Racial Justice* (Harper and Row, 1966)

Stanton, Mary. *From Selma to Sorrow: The Life and Death of Viola Liuzzo* (University of Georgia Press, 1998)

Servetus and the British Martyrs

Levy, Leonard Williams. *Blasphemy: Verbal Offense Against the Sacred, from Moses to Salman Rushdie* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995)

Reynolds, Matthew. *Godly Reformers and Their Opponents in Early Modern England: Religion in Norwich c. 1560-1643* (Boydell Press, 2005)

Schulman, Frank, [This Day in Unitarian Universalist History](#) (Skinner House Books, 2004)

WORKSHOP 6: SHALL WE GATHER AT THE RIVER? – RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

INTRODUCTION

We need not think alike to love alike. — Francis David

Religious tolerance is one of the greatest values of our movement. Perhaps our faith embraces it passionately because our religious forebears were so often subjected to intolerance. Throughout Western history, religious tolerance has been a question both in the civic realm, as societies have worked out whether to allow diversity of religious belief and practice, and within faith traditions themselves, as religions have had to work out just how much diversity of belief would be tolerated within their particular tradition. This workshop explores tolerance of diverse beliefs, both in the civic realms that held our faith forebears and within our faith tradition itself. Participants examine moments in history when governments or rulers, wrestling with questions of religious freedom, created an environment where Unitarianism and Universalism could take root. The workshop also studies the history of religious diversity within the Unitarian tradition.

Before leading this workshop, review the Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters in the program Introduction. Prepare to accommodate individuals who may be in the group.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Present touchpoints in Western history where struggles related to religious tolerance have shaped Unitarian Universalism
- Illuminate several events in our faith history which challenged Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalists to engage the idea of religious tolerance
- Consider tolerance as a religious value.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about religious tolerance in Western history and consider how government and civic society's struggles related to religious tolerance have affected Unitarian Universalism

- Learn about people and events that shape Unitarian Universalist values of tolerance and inclusivity
- Consider the differences between tolerance, acceptance, and embracing the other
- Consider their personal boundaries of tolerance and acceptance.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Queen Isabella	25
Activity 2: What Is Tolerance?	25
Activity 3: How Broad the Umbrella?	25
Activity 4: Embracing the Religions of the World	25
Faith in Action: Reckless Borrowing or Appropriate Cultural Sharing?	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Toribio S. Quimada	25

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Consider these words from adult participants in a focus group conducted by the Commission on Appraisal, as reported in *Engaging Our Theological Diversity* (2005): (UU Christians) understand exactly what (the humanists) feel, because their sense that "I am in the process of being thrown out of the house that I built," that's where we were—we understand that completely ... The question is to somehow change the system so that ... it doesn't hold that possibility anymore ... We tell the story of the increasing tolerance always, but we don't say, "And people lost their church."

Can you recall or imagine being pushed out of a religious home because of your theological beliefs? What thoughts or feelings arise for you as you remember or imagine such a scenario? What action did you, or might you, take in response to the feeling of being "pushed out?" What are you doing (or would you consider doing) to help ensure that people will not feel pushed out of their faith community because of their beliefs?

You may wish to ask participants to engage in this same spiritual practice so that they, too, arrive at the workshop centered and ready to engage with the material and the group.

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Sign-in sheet and pen/pencil
- Name tags and markers
- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1, [Schedule Template](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Create and post a workshop agenda on newsprint. The Workshop-at-a-Glance section provides time estimates. Create a welcome table near the entrance. Set out name tags and markers, the sign-in sheet and pen/pencil, and copies of the schedule.
- Make copies of the Time Line of UU History handout (Workshop 1, Handout 2), if you need some. Place time line handouts on the welcome table.
- Optional: Post the Time Line of UU History display.

Description of Activity

Welcome everyone to the workshop as they enter. Ask them to sign in, make (or pick up) name tags, and pick up the schedule and time line handouts from the welcome table. Point out the posted agenda for this workshop.

Including All Participants

Write the agenda in large, clear lettering and post it where it will be easily visible to all participants. Provide name tags large enough and markers bold enough so names will be easily visible.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Optional: Decorative cloth

Preparation for Activity

- Set up a worship or centering table with the chalice and (optional) decorative cloth.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice and share these words of the Reverend Barbara Pescan:

today we light this flame

in memory
and in appreciation
for all who have gone before
lighting with the passion of their lives
the way to freedom.
for all who have lighted fires at hearths
for those who have kept the flames alive
in cold and dangerous times
for those whom the fires consumed
because they would not betray their souls
nor their covenants with their gods
for those who knew their small light
would not put us one spark closer to truth
but who would not yield to dire predictions.
nor to cynicism
nor to common sense
their uncommon sense that it was their light
that was called for
that it was they
who were called
by name.
we light this flame in memory
and in appreciation
for all those who have gone before.
Let us do something worthy
of its light.

ACTIVITY 1: QUEEN ISABELLA (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Their Souls Would Not Be Satisfied](#)" (included in this document)
- A crown or tiara

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story.
- Engage two participants (or members or friends of your congregation) to perform the story, and provide each volunteer with a copy of the story well in advance.
 - Invite one person to portray Queen Isabella, the central figure of the story. Consider asking someone skilled in theater performance to play this role.
 - Invite another person to serve as the Narrator who introduces Queen Isabella.
- Obtain a crown or tiara to use as a prop; or, make a crown from heavy paper and decorate as desired.

Description of Activity

Volunteers present the story, "Their Souls Would Not Be Satisfied."

After the presentation, ask participants whether they had ever before heard the story of the only Unitarian king. Did that story differ from the version they just heard? How? If no participants have heard this story before, tell them this story is often told as the story of King John Sigismund and Francis David, with Isabella presented as a minor character, if at all.

Share this quote from Warren Ross:

History has been defined as a dialogue between an author and his or her sources.

Lead the group to explore these questions:

- How does the perspective from which we tell our faith stories reveal our unstated assumptions?
- How can we shift perspective on our faith stories in order to bring us closer to our ideal of tolerance for beliefs and ways of thinking different from our own?

ACTIVITY 2: WHAT IS TOLERANCE? (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 1, [Religious Tolerance](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 1, Religious Tolerance and familiarize yourself with the material.
- Write these quotations on sheets of newsprint, and post:
 - "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof... " — U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights
 - "Tolerance comes most easily when nothing really matters, when a person has no vital and compelling beliefs about anything. Where there are strong and definite beliefs, it becomes notoriously more difficult to tolerate opposing beliefs, particularly in religion." — Phillip Hewett, "Why Unitarian?" in

Unitarians in Canada (1978, 2nd edition, 1995)

- "Although tolerance is no doubt a step forward from intolerance, it does not require new neighbors to know anything about one another. Tolerance can create a climate of restraint, but not one of understanding. Tolerance alone does little to bridge the chasm of stereotype and fear that may, in fact, dominate the mutual image of the other ... William Penn and, later, the framers of the Constitution wanted to move beyond the tolerance of religious difference to the free exercise of religion." — Diana Eck, *A New Religious America* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001).
- Optional: Download the quotations and prepare them as three digital slides. Test the computer and projector.

Description of Activity

Read aloud or paraphrase the contents of Leader Resource 1, Religious Tolerance. Invite reflections on the progress of religious tolerance through history. Invite them to focus for the time being on civic religious tolerance, a necessary condition for liberal theological ideas to thrive.

Post (or display, one at a time) the quotations you have prepared. Allow time for people to read each and think about their meaning.

Read aloud these two statements:

1. The principle of religious tolerance, as stated in the U.S. Constitution, is sufficient to support and protect the religious pluralism of our country at this time.
2. While the principle of religious tolerance, as stated in the U.S. Constitution, was sufficient for less pluralistic times in our history, our contemporary culture calls for legal amplification to the basic Bill of Rights protection.

Invite participants to self-select into two groups for a 10-minute discussion about one of the statements. Explain that participants may join a group because they agree or disagree with the statement, or because they are simply curious about it.

Bring the two groups back together to share insights and opinions.

ACTIVITY 3: HOW BROAD THE UMBRELLA? (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 2, [Freedom of Belief](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 2, Freedom of Belief and familiarize yourself with its contents.
- Write on newsprint Henry Whitney Bellows' 1865 descriptions of diverse 19th century Unitarian factions:
 - Evangelical Christian Unitarians — firmly rooted in Christianity, held to the miraculous nature of Jesus as savior of humankind
 - Conservative Unitarians — older traditionalists who put great store in rationalism, holding theologically traditional and institutionally conservative Unitarian Christian views
 - Radical Unitarians — resisted a strong church structure, were strongly anti-creedal, and wanted to include world religions other than Christianity in Unitarianism
 - Broad Church Men — (including Henry Whitney Bellows) Unitarians who saw truth in all these positions and wanted Unitarianism to be as open and broad as possible; sought to unify all the factions
- Optional: Download the descriptions and prepare them as a single digital slide. Test the computer and projector.

Description of Activity

Tell the group they will now focus on the history of religious tolerance *within* our faith tradition.

Summarize Leader Resource 2, Freedom of Belief, then read aloud the descriptions of the four factions. Ask participants to consider with which group they might have stood if they had lived in the nineteenth century. Allow a few moments, then designate five parts of the room for the four different groups and "none of the above." Invite participants to move to the part of the room that will reflect their choices, grouping all the

"radicals" together and all the "traditionalists" and so on. Once everyone has chosen a position, invite those who wish to say a few words about why they chose to stand where they did. Ask, what might we learn about Unitarian Universalism today from this history? Are there religious "factions" in your congregations? What are they, and what are the positive or negative implications?

Including All Participants

If moving about the room or standing presents a challenge for anyone in the group, allow everyone to remain seated. Call out the names of the groups one by one, and then call out "none of the above." Ask participants to raise their hands or otherwise signify when they identify with the group named.

ACTIVITY 4: EMBRACING THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 3, [Embracing the Religions of the World](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 4, [Photo of Beltane at Charles Street Meeting House](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 1, [A Universal Religion](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: The UUA Leader's Library resource "[Reckless Borrowing or Appropriate Cultural Sharing?](#)"
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 3, Embracing the Religions of the World and familiarize yourself with its contents.
- Copy Handout 1, A Universal Religion for all participants.
- In advance, invite three participants to read aloud the three quotations on Handout 1. Give the readers their assignments and the handout before this workshop so they can prepare to read their parts aloud.
- On the UUA website, read the article "[Reckless Borrowing or Appropriate Cultural Sharing?](#)" by Jacqui James, which offers background to help you facilitate the discussion.

- Print out to pass around (or, download for projection) the photograph of Beltane at Charles Street Meetinghouse (Leader Resource 4).

Description of Activity

Read aloud or paraphrase Leader Resource 3, Embracing the Religions of the World. Show Leader Resource 4, the image of the Charles Street Meetinghouse. Invite participants to share reflections about Patton's experiment; position it as one in a long line of Unitarian and Universalist efforts to establish a church that is open and welcome to those of all faiths. Ask:

- Does the adaptation of an early nineteenth century church for the mid-twentieth century appear to bring together old and new ideas of religion? Or, do these styles seem to clash?
- Is it possible for a religion to embrace the whole of humanity with all of our history and cultural differences?
- Does Unitarian Universalism hold the potential to be that religion?

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Handout 2, [Who Is Welcome in Our Congregations?](#) (included in this document)
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Faith in Action from this workshop and/or Spiritual Preparation from Workshop 7

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 2, Who Is Welcome in Our Congregations?
- Download and customize Taking It Home as a handout. You may wish to add the Faith in Action activity suggestion from this workshop and/or the Spiritual Preparation questions for the next workshop.

Description of Activity

Distribute Handout 2, Who Is Welcome in Our Congregations? and Taking It Home. Announce the date, time, and place of the next workshop and any other "housekeeping" information. Request or remind volunteers if you want participants to read material aloud or perform other roles at the next meeting.

Invite participants to gather around the chalice.

Share these words from Rev. Peter Morales:

The hunger for true religious community, for connection and commitment, is pervasive in our time. Our future depends on whether we can connect with people at the level of their deepest longings and highest aspirations. We are called to feed the spiritually hungry and to offer a home to the religiously homeless. And in the process, we are enriched in spirit.

Extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: RECKLESS BORROWING OR APPROPRIATE CULTURAL SHARING?

Materials for Activity

- Optional: The UUA's Social Justice section on Multiculturalism to view the resource "[Reckless Borrowing or Appropriate Cultural Sharing?](#)" (at www.uua.org/multiculturalism/introduction/misappropriation/20451.shtml)

Preparation for Activity

- Optional: Download and read the suggested resource. You may wish to provide copies for a discussion.

Description of Activity

Survey your congregation's environs for displayed religious symbols. Begin in the obvious places—the sanctuary, fellowship hall, children's chapel—then search the less-obvious, for example literature racks, outdoor signage, table coverings or altar decorations, and newsletter masthead. Interview staff or committee members to discover who made the decision to display a symbol, and when the decision was made. Write an article for the congregational website or newsletter describing the meaning and history of the symbols and the processes that led to their display.

For a more in-depth exploration of issues related to appropriate cultural appreciation of other religions' or peoples' symbols and rituals, gather a group including the minister(s), worship committee or associates, members of the religious education staff and volunteers. Share the essay "Reckless Borrowing or Appropriate Cultural Sharing?" and discuss and how it relates to your congregational practices.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

After the workshop, co-leaders should talk together to evaluate this workshop and plan future workshops. Use

these questions to guide your shared reflection and planning:

- What parts of the workshop worked well and which did not? Why? How was the success, or lack of success, related to the topics? How was it related to the types of activities?
- How can we use this experience to make future workshops more effective? What would we change if we were to lead this workshop again?
- What was left unfinished in the workshop that should still be addressed? How and when will we address it?
- What strengths did we each bring to the workshop?
- As co-leaders, when did we work well together?
- What might help us be better leaders in future workshops?
- What do we need to prepare for the next workshop? Who will handle which tasks? Who will lead which activities?

TAKING IT HOME

We need not think alike to love alike. — Francis David

The Unitarian Universalist faith is sometimes captured in three words: freedom, reason, and tolerance--that is, freedom to search for truth and meaning; use of reason in all matters, including religion; and tolerance of the inevitable differences that we embody as human beings. But some have suggested that "tolerance" is too low a standard for this day and age. In Diana Eck's words,

Tolerance alone does little to bridge the chasms of stereotype and fear that may, in fact, dominate the mutual image of the other ... it is far too fragile a foundation for a society that is becoming as religiously complex as ours.

In your journal, reflect: When is tolerance a goal for you, and when is it one step in the direction of something larger?

You may also choose to fill out the survey in Handout 2, *Who Is Welcome in Our Congregations?* as a take-home activity.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: TORIBIO S. QUIMADA (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Toribio S. Quimada](#)" (included in this document)

- Leader Resource 5, [Maglipay Universalist](#) (included in this document)
- An object for meditation focus such as the chalice, a small piece of sculpture, or an object from nature
- Optional: *Universalist: A History of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines* by Frederic John Muir

Preparation for Activity

- Print out the story "Toribio S. Quimada" and prepare to present it to the group.
- Copy Leader Resource 5, *Maglipay Universalist*. If you prefer to sing this hymn rather than read the words, the tune can be found in the book *Universalist: A History of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines* by Frederic John Muir. You can see a [video of a congregation singing this hymn](#). (at vimeo.com/15852011)
- Arrange the chairs in a circle and set the focus object where all participants will be able to see it.

Description of Activity

Gather the group in the seating you have arranged and share the story, "Toribio S. Quimada." Then invite participants into a time of meditation, prayer, or contemplation. Ask them to settle comfortably into their seats, direct their focus to the object you have provided, and take a few deep, centering breaths.

Read aloud, from Leader Resource 5, the words of *Maglipay Universalist* written by the Reverend Toribio Quimada. After a minute of silence, ask participants to share a thought, a prayer, a hope or words of healing for the family and friends of Rev. Toribio Quimada. Allow a brief space for silence after the last words are offered, and then ask participants to broaden the spiritual circle of care and offer words for all the members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines, and for all the people they have helped. Following another brief silence, ask participants to again widen the spiritual circle to encompass all our brothers and sisters in faith. Finally ask the group to encompass the whole world, and especially to offer compassion and healing to those who are threatened by a message of love, those whose fear is so great that they would destroy people like Toribio Quimada. Allow a few moments of silence and close with the first two lines of *Maglipay Universalist*:

To teach the hope that is for all,
Proclaim the Universal call.

STORY: THEIR SOULS WOULD NOT BE SATISFIED

By the Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons; used with permission.

Narrator: We have a very important guest with us today. She has come all the way from Transylvania of the mid-sixteenth century to tell us of a new innovation in her day known as Unitarianism. Please make her welcome, Princess Isabella of Poland.

(As the narrator speaks, Queen Isabella places a crown on her head.)

Queen Isabella: *(Place the crown on your head. Present this part with an imposing, regal bearing.)*

You are surprised to see me assume this crown, are you not? "Princess," they call me still; "Princess Isabella of Poland," as if I had never left the court of my father, as if I had never gone to Transylvania, as if I had never been a queen. But a queen I was; the queen of a dream, the queen of an idea of the heart and soul that has transformed the world, and might transform it still.

How often do they come together, the dream and the crown? How often is the vision of a new way of being human together in the world granted unto those with the power to make it, even briefly, the foundation of law and custom? This crown was the power to make the dream real; a dream that could perhaps only have been born in that land in that time, but a dream that in four hundred years and more, has never died. You are its heirs and its carriers today; you are the people we dreamed of, my son and I.

The other story you know, for the bards and minstrels have told and retold it, and its pictures have been graven in your hearts, while ours was forgotten, and I think I know why. It is because Arthur was a man. It is because the vision of Camelot, with its democracy and chivalry and deeply held honor and peace, was a man's vision. That we can tolerate and remember. When the crown and the dream are a woman's crown, and a woman's dream, that is more difficult. To the extent that it has been remembered at all, it is remembered as my son's dream. King John Sigismund, you say, promulgated the first edict of religious toleration in the modern western world. King John Sigismund of Transylvania, they write, the only Unitarian King in history.

You must understand the world in which we lived, my son John and I. The Protestant reformations that had swept over Europe during our lives, and the counter-surges of Catholic orthodoxy, were powerful tides of religious, political and even military struggle. It was an assumption beyond question that a nation's ruler had

the right, and indeed the obligation, to impose upon the people his or her own understanding of correct religious doctrine. Any who disagreed, and dared to say so, were killed —burned at the stake, or thrown into prison to die of neglect — or banished to another country. Years after my own death, in the late part of my son John Sigismund's reign, when he issued his last and most inclusive charter, guaranteeing full religious liberty, Protestant theologians were still praising Calvin for having burned Servetus alive, and more than forty years were still to pass before persons ceased to be burned at the stake in England for holding wrong religious opinions.

And in this world of tides and struggle my infant son, John Sigismund, and I were betrayed by one of the very men my husband and king, John Zapolya, had chosen on his deathbed to safeguard our throne. George Martinuzzi, Bishop of Nagyvarad, connived to send us into exile and return Transylvania to Catholic control.

For myself alone, I could have wept and raged and cursed God. But always there was John Sigismund to think of. It was then that we began the Game. To keep from going mad, to keep from poisoning ourselves with bitterness of revenge rehearsed over and over, we sent our fantasies in the other direction. When we return, when the crown is restored to us, when the land is ours again, what kind of rulers shall we be? What would be the best way, the very best possible way, to rule a kingdom such as ours? We could play this for hours, arguing out the fine points of statecraft, of jurisprudence, of military and political strategy, but always with two questions, equally to be lifted up. Will it work? and Is it good? It was a game that we would play for five long years of exile, while John grew from a slender lad of eleven to the passionate convictions of sixteen. And it was in the context of this game that the Dream itself was born. For one of the questions that the ruler must face, of course, is what to do about religion.

We talked for hours about the possibilities available. I had been raised in the traditional Catholic faith of the Polish court, and that was the belief of John Zapolya. Yet in the years of war and confusion, the Reformation had swept the country. Few of the great families or prominent nobles now remained Catholic, and to restore Catholicism would have entailed a bitter, costly and painful struggle. And besides, after the way in which Martinuzzi, a man of the Church, had behaved toward us, and the way in which the Church had rewarded him for his perfidy, John Sigismund and I had little love for the Roman church. We were also much influenced by my mother's doctor, always my good friend and supporter, Giorgio Biandrata, with his ideas that the reformers had not gone far enough, that the whole

doctrine of the Trinity was an error invented by the Church. They called him then what they call you today: Unitarian. And there was the reality than most of the powerful nobles of the land we would be seeking to rule were either Lutherans, or else the new form of Protestant, followers of John Calvin. Add to all this the knowledge that it was the infidel Mohammedan Suleiman, our staunchest protector and friend, who forced Ferdinand to give us back our country and crown as part of a comprehensive peace treaty in 1555.

It came slowly, a dream born of a game born of desperation. Why should we have to choose for everyone? What did we know about God more than all those other believers? Suppose a nation had many churches, different from one another, and the people could choose freely among them such worship as would satisfy their souls? Suppose there were books to read, freely and openly; public debates, even, where the ablest of each tradition could argue their true convictions as forcefully as possible, and convince whomever they might? It was so daring, so different from anything we knew, that we laughed at first. But gradually the dream took hold of us, as dreams do, and we understood that this would be a part of our plan, whenever we should return to power.

It took us months to plan, but our return to our people was a triumph of joy. And at the first parliament I issued the decree that "every one might hold the faith of his choice... without offence to any..." It was the first time since the political hegemony of Christendom had spread across the western world centuries before, that a national leader gave back to ordinary people the authority of their own consciences in matters of God and the soul. Two and half years later, shortly after John had turned nineteen, I died; and the fate of our dream was left in his hands. And in his hands the dream grew, and he nourished it, and expanded it, and proved that it could work. But it was I who taught him to dream, I who nurtured him in wisdom and the courage that goes beyond the field of battle to make the mind itself daring; it was I who first gave form to the dream we shared; a woman's dream.

I tell you, lay aside the legends of Camelot! Wake to the light of this dream, the light of which you are the keepers and the nearest heirs. Be not complacent. But see how the seed we planted has taken root in the heart of the human spirit, and everywhere that it is crushed, it springs up anew, flowering ever more boldly. Your nation was founded in it! I cannot pass you my crown; its time is gone. But the dream lives on. May you prove to be its worthy stewards!

STORY: TORIBIO S. QUIMADA

Toribio S. Quimada was a man who knew the meaning and effects of intolerance. Born in 1917 on the island of Cebu in the Philippines, Toribio was one of thirteen children. As a child, Toribio often heard his parents discuss religion and criticize the lax principles of the Protestant church. As strict Roman Catholics in the Philippines, they were forbidden to read the Bible because they were told it was created by Martin Luther. However, Toribio found it hard to believe the teachings of the church, particularly around matters of salvation and damnation. He could not believe that a just, loving God, the God in whom he believed, would leave some people to suffer in hell for an eternity. He wanted very much to read the Bible to see for himself what it said, but because it was forbidden, no Bible was available.

In 1936, the economic effects of the Great Depression forced the Quimada family to move to the island of Negros where Toribio's uncle Fernando Quimada was a Protestant minister. Despite the hard feelings caused by their religious differences, Fernando helped the family settle into their new home. Toribio's uncle gave him his first Bible, and he was at last able to read its words for himself.

Under his uncle's influence Toribio converted to Protestantism. The Protestants were extremely suspicious of his conversion and questioned him closely, seeing him as a critic rather than as a sincere convert. But Toribio Quimada persevered in his attendance, eventually becoming a teacher in the Sunday School, though his own formal education had ended in the seventh grade. Eventually, Toribio's family came to accept his Protestant faith as their own. In 1943, about twenty members of the Quimada family were baptized into the church Toribio attended, the Iglesia Universal de Kristo.

Following the Second World War, the pastor of the Iglesia Universal fell ill and the people asked Quimada to step in. He was ordained as a minister of the church in 1948 and given responsibility for seven congregations. When he discovered that the Iglesia Universal could not provide sufficient hymnbooks, Bibles or Sunday School materials for the congregations' needs, he reached out to other Christian churches in the Philippines and abroad. In 1951, Quimada came across a listing of churches in America. He looked under "U" hoping to find the Iglesia Universal but instead found the Universalist Church of Wisconsin. Unfortunately, his letter requesting help was returned. Persevering, he wrote to the Universalist church in Gloucester, Massachusetts, which not only answered him but also forwarded his letter to the Universalist Service

Committee. They, in turn, provided the materials Quimada needed. For this contact, and for failing to pay 30 percent of his income to the Iglesia Universal headquarters, Quimada was excommunicated from the Iglesia Universal in 1954.

But Quimada was not one to stand still. With recommendations from city officials and the support of members of his former churches, the newly formed Universalist Church of the Philippines (UCP) was recognized by the Universalist Church of America in December, 1954. Nine congregations followed Rev. Quimada to Universalism.

After he completed his college degree in 1965, Quimada's ministry took a turn toward social activism. The poor farmers in the area around the UCP headquarters worked their family's lands for generations, but held no formal or legal deeds. This made it easy for corporations or wealthy farmers to take over the land. Angered when local officials took no action, Quimada helped the farmers obtain deeds to their properties. He also ran for local office, but lost due to a campaign of smears and vote buying. The opposition's slogan "If you vote for Quimada you will become a Universalist" caused great terror in an area dominated by corrupt government and the authoritarianism of the Catholic Church. Losing election to public office, however, did not dissuade Quimada from continuing to work for justice.

In 1972, the Universalist Church of the Philippines became a member of the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF). Twelve years later, in recognition of his outstanding service to liberal religion and the people of the Philippines, the IARF presented Quimada with the Albert Schweitzer Award for Distinguished Service.

In 1985, UCP became the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines and was accepted into membership of the UUA three years later. The delay in membership was due to a clause in the UUA bylaws that limited membership to North America. To admit UUCP to membership required nothing less than a change to the Association's bylaws.

While preparing to travel to General Assembly to receive recognition of the church's new status, Toribio Quimada was murdered by a group of assassins. In the early hours of the morning, his home was set ablaze. His wife and children escaped, but Rev. Quimada did not. His home and all church property were burned. No one has ever been charged with the murder of Rev. Toribio Quimada, founder of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines, but little doubt remains that he paid a

heavy price for a ministry of activism on behalf of the poor.

HANDOUT 1: A UNIVERSAL RELIGION

The Community Church is an institution of religion dedicated to the service of humanity... It substitutes for a private group of persons held together by common theological beliefs or viewpoints, the public group of citizens held together by common social interests... It substitutes for restrictions of creed, ritual, or ecclesiastical organization, the free spirit. It relegates all matters of theology and worship where they belong — to the unfettered thought and conviction of the individual... It substitutes for Christianity as a religion of special revelation, the idea of universal religion. It regards the religious instinct as inherent in human nature, and all religions as contributions to the fulfillment of man's higher life... — John Haynes Holmes, *I Speak for Myself*, 1958

The experiments at the Charles Street Meeting House, Unitarian Universalist, in Boston, Massachusetts, attempt to combine the art, literature, idealism, philosophies, music, and symbolism of all the world's religions into a religion for one world. Although we are ill educated and naive, our intentions are creative and honest... Relatedness of ideas and convictions can flourish between people of widely separated traditions. The earth has

become one neighborhood, and we have brothers in thought and attitude everywhere. We hope to bring this potential fellowship into communication and cooperation, whereby a universal religion, with organization in all countries, on all continents, will one day come into being. — Kenneth L. Patton, *A Religion for One World*, 1964

Our Principles and Purposes affirm that "the tradition we share draws from many sources," including "wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life." And it certainly is true that almost all religions have borrowed heavily from others blending and combining religions or aspects of religions. Over time and with exposure to various religious peoples and ideas our original Unitarian Universalist traditions adopted their present pluralistic theological positions... As our worship increasingly incorporates ritual and spirituality from other cultures, concerns are raised about whether it is possible for Unitarian Universalists to authentically incorporate rituals, symbols, and artifacts from many of the world's cultures and traditions. And we hear concerns about the implications of racism inherent in cross-cultural 'borrowing' of various spiritual rituals and traditions. — Jacqui James, "Reckless Borrowing or Appropriate Cultural Sharing", 2001

HANDOUT 2: WHO IS WELCOME IN OUR CONGREGATIONS?

From *Weaving the Fabric of Diversity*, by Jacqui James and Judith A. Frediani (Boston: UUA, 1996).

Complete this survey twice—once for the "Me" column and once for the "My Congregation" column. You will not be asked to share your responses.

1. Starting with the "Me" column, write the letter (T, M, or B from the key below) that best describes your reaction to each person listed.

T (top) = people you would really like to have in your congregation; people you would sit and talk with

M (middle) = people you might like to see, but you're not sure

B (bottom) = people you would not like to have join your congregation; people you would not sit and talk with

2. Using the "My Congregation" column, write the letter (T, M, or B) that best describes how your congregation would respond to each of the people listed.

Me My congregation

Elderly single male

Elderly single female

Interracial couple

Ex-convict

Extremely overweight person

Person with noticeable hygiene problem

Person who sings in a loud monotone

Articulate, well educated Caucasian male

Articulate, well educated Caucasian female

Heterosexual with children

Caucasian blue-collar male

Caucasian blue-collar female

Unemployed person

Person on public assistance

Single person under 30

Person with a European accent

Person with non-European accent

Person who wears fur coats

Native American

African American

Latino/a

Asian American

Arab American

Person who uses a wheelchair

Gay male

Lesbian

Person who is bisexual

Transgender person

Gay couple

Lesbian couple

Person with severe physical deformity

Person with alcohol on their breath

Emotionally disturbed person with unpredictable behavior

Person with a neuromuscular disorder (Cerebral Palsy, Tourette Syndrome, etc)

Smoker

Political/social liberal

Political/social conservative

Homeless person

Person testing HIV positive

Recovering sex addict

Vegetarian

Atheist

LEADER RESOURCE 1: RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

This workshop explores different faces of religious tolerance. Religious tolerance includes the notion that the practice of different religions should be permitted and that different religious beliefs should be accepted and understood to be valid. Throughout Western history, religious tolerance has been a question both in the civic realm as societies have worked out whether to allow diversity of belief and practice, and within faith traditions themselves, as religions have had to work out just how much diversity of belief would be tolerated within their tradition. This handout primarily addresses the civic realm, examining moments in history when governments and rulers wrestled with the questions of religious tolerance or liberty, at times creating an environment where Unitarianism and Universalism were able to take root.

The earliest recorded edicts of tolerance in Western history are those by Galerius (311 CE) and the Edict of Milan (313 CE) by Constantine Augustus and Licinius Augustus. Created during a time of fast-changing religious allegiances and alliances, these statements were intended to grant certain rights of assembly and practice to Christians and non-Christians alike. However, the motivation behind the statements was perhaps less a generous offer for all humans to enjoy religious liberty than an attempt to curry favor with all possible gods, as seen in this, from the Edict of Milan:

... so that we might grant to the Christian and others full authority to observe that religion which each preferred; whence any Divinity whatsoever in the seat of the heavens may be propitious and kindly disposed to us and all who are placed under our rule ...

In fact, these edicts did little to encourage an environment open to the varieties of Christian theology that were emerging at the time. They offered no real protection to the earliest of our Unitarian and Universalist spiritual ancestors, including Origen and Arius during whose lifetimes religious persecution and intolerance thrived.

In Europe, the notion of religious toleration as a policy of the government would not even begin to develop until many hundreds of years later, with the opening salvos of the Reformation and the subsequent blossoming of a variety of Christian beliefs. For hundreds of years, religious beliefs were established for the people by the state, generally by a monarch. At best, declarations of tolerance permitted religious practices of Christian sects

other than the state religion, and protected believers of other faiths from persecution. But these acts could be—and were—easily reversed and undone by the decrees of successors, as we have seen in the story of Queen Isabella and King John.

The execution of Michael Servetus in 1553 (see Workshop 5, God's Gonna Trouble the Water — Martyrs and Sacrifice) in Geneva on the charges of blasphemy and heresy raised deep questions about tolerance. John Calvin had ordered the execution, and theologian Philip Melancthon, a key figure in Luther's Reformation, supported the action. He wrote to Calvin:

To you also the Church owes gratitude in the present moment, and will owe it to the latest posterity ... I affirm also that your magistrates did right in punishing, after a regular trial, this blasphemous man.

But Sebastian Castellio, one of the first Reformed Christian proponents of freedom of conscience and freedom of thought, joined Laelius Socinus and Celio Secondo Curione in writing words of protest:

It is unchristian to use arms against those who have been expelled from the Church, and to deny them rights common to all mankind... When Servetus fought with reasons and writings, he should have been repulsed by reasons and writings.

For the rest of the sixteenth century, and throughout the seventeenth century, the commitment to religious tolerance waxed and waned in both mainland Europe and the British Isles, depending on the rulers in power, as well as internal conflicts or revolutions, in each country. Two significant moments for our spiritual ancestors were:

- the establishment of the Warsaw Confederation (1573) which granted religious toleration in the lands of modern Poland and Lithuania, at the time a religiously and ethnically diverse society which included Socinians, our religious forebears
- the 1689 English Act of Toleration, which granted toleration to Protestant dissenters in Britain (although Unitarians were not given full freedom under even this law until 1813).

The first European immigrants to the North American continent brought mixed religious experiences and motivations. Yes, they wanted to be free to practice their own faith, yet not all planned to extend religious freedom to others whose beliefs differed from their own. In the

words of Diana Eck, professor of comparative religion at Harvard:

As the decades brought more and more settlers to these shores, our Christian ancestors did not create widely tolerant communities. The Puritans of Boston envisioned a society, a biblical commonwealth, decisively shaped by their own form of Christianity. They were concerned primarily with religious freedom for themselves and did not regard it as a foundation for common life with people who differed from them.

This was particularly true in Massachusetts. In the seventeenth century, before Unitarianism and Universalism had emerged in the colonies as theological movements, Massachusetts' leaders banished Roger Williams, Anne Hutchinson, and many others for their dissenting beliefs. Later, the effects of intolerance were felt by our progenitors, with the persecution of Universalists beginning in the late eighteenth century. In the early nineteenth century, the Unitarian controversy pitted theological liberals against those with more orthodox views within the Standing Order churches themselves.

Religious tolerance and liberty showed themselves in the American colonies sporadically and provincially. Roger Williams and William Penn, who respectively founded Rhode Island and Pennsylvania, were notable for their early embrace of freedom of conscience and worship for all. On Long Island, the Flushing Remonstrance overrode a ruling by Governor Peter Stuyvesant banning Quakers. Maryland's Toleration Act of 1649 extended rights to both Catholics and Protestants. However, it was during the effort to disestablish the Church of England in Virginia that leaders formulated the approach to religion which found its way into the United States Constitution as articulated in the Bill of Rights. The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom was passed in 1786, and became a model for the First Amendment, passed in 1791, which simply states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof... "

Even the explicit declaration of tolerance found in the Bill of Rights had a loophole: Until the Fourteenth Amendment was passed in 1868, individual states could have an official state religion. Massachusetts was the last to completely disestablish church-state commitments, in 1833. The Dedham Controversy (see Workshop 9) and the Independent Church of Christ, Gloucester (see Workshop 4), both from within our own religious history, were notable steps on the road to disestablishment.

Not surprisingly, the First Amendment is viewed by some contemporary thinkers as a groundbreaking and revolutionary act, while others see in it pure pragmatism. Diana Eck writes:

... the sturdy principles of free exercise of religion and the nonestablishment of religion have stood the test of time. America's rich religious pluralism today is a direct result of our commitment to religious freedom. Our secular humanist traditions also are a product of the freedom of conscience built into the Constitution. Freedom of religion is also freedom from religion of any sort.

But Ronald L. Johnstone, an historian who specializes in early American religion, sees a slightly different picture:

In significant part, this change from state churches to religious toleration and pluralism occurred because no single religious group could claim anything near the majority of supporters throughout the thirteen states necessary to establish it as the officially sanctioned religion of the new nation... every religious group, whether dissenting or firmly established, now found itself occupying a minority status in the context of all thirteen states, and so each was quite naturally concerned with keeping government from interfering with what it wanted to do and teach religiously.

Regardless of the motivation of the creators of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, it is incontrovertible that without the basic principle of civic religious tolerance, neither Unitarianism nor Universalism would have taken root in this new country's soil.

LEADER RESOURCE 2: FREEDOM OF BELIEF

Full religious tolerance requires acceptance of faiths different from yours as well as acceptance of diverse beliefs among people in your own faith community. The mid-19th century was a time when Unitarianism was called to evaluate the strength of its own notion of tolerance, and to question the breadth of the umbrella under which Unitarians were to take shelter.

Across the United States, Unitarians were challenging religious beliefs of all kinds—from the truth of biblical miracles to the divinity of Jesus, to the existence of God. Even the denomination's Christian nature and identity were called into question. In 1865, Henry Whitney Bellows saw the need to unify Unitarians across different theological views. He named four factions within Unitarianism: evangelical Christians who held to the miraculous nature of Jesus' life and works; older rationalists who represented a theologically traditional and institutionally conservative Unitarianism; radicals who were challenged by ecclesiastical structure, were strongly anti-creedal, and who wanted to include world religions other than Christianity in Unitarianism; and, finally, the group to which Bellows himself belonged, the Broad Church Men. The Broad Church Men strove to unite all factions by making Unitarianism as theologically open and broad as possible. To this end, Bellows and others, including James Freeman Clarke, Frederic Henry Hedge and Edward Everett Hale, proposed a national convention of congregations wherein each church would have a vote in the affairs of the denomination. Thus, the National Conference was born—the first representative body of Unitarian churches; the American Unitarian Association was at that time an association of individuals.

In 1866, the National Conference of Unitarian Churches in Syracuse, New York, reaffirmed an allegiance to the religion of Jesus Christ over the dissenting voices of more radical members. As a result, the following year, dissenters created the Free Religious Association (FRA), dedicated to a religion wholly free from creeds and doctrine. Although the FRA group never exceeded 500 members, it had capable leadership in William J. Potter, Francis Ellingwood Abbot, Octavius Brooks Frothingham, and Felix Adler. The FRA was dedicated to forming an absolute, universal, nonsectarian religion that honored the religious impulse of all world religions, yet was constrained by none of their doctrines. It was to be a faith for a rational age, with room for both the spiritual and the scientific.

Although the FRA had a written constitution, its ideas were perhaps most clearly articulated in *Fifty*

Affirmations written by Francis Ellingwood Abbot. *Fifty Affirmations* averred,

Free Religion is the natural outcome of every historical religion, —the final unity, therefore, towards which all historical religions slowly tend.

Perhaps betraying a quest for ultimate inclusion, the final affirmation declared,

...Christianity is the faith of the soul's childhood;
Free Religion is the faith of the soul's manhood.

In *The Epic of Unitarianism*, David Parke writes of the FRA:

...its adherents were sure of what they did not want in religion, but found it almost impossible to agree on what they did want. The Free Religious Association declined from inaction, and finally disintegrated from the centrifugal forces of radical individualism.

The organization lasted into the 20th century, but its impact was greatly reduced following the 1893 World Parliament of Religions.

During the period that the FRA sought and promoted religious tolerance from its largely Eastern base in New York and Massachusetts, the same issues of theological inclusion were being debated in the Western Unitarian Conference. In 1875 the "Issue in the West" reached a crisis point. Alienated from Boston Unitarianism's more conservative bent, the Western Conference withdrew its support from the American Unitarian Association's (AUA) missionary program, and hired its own Missionary Secretary, Jenkin Lloyd Jones. The liberal-leaning Jones founded new congregations from the Appalachians to the Rockies under the Conference's motto, "Freedom, Fellowship and Character in Religion," which was highly reminiscent of the FRA's own motto, "Freedom and Fellowship."

In response to Jones' activities, the AUA declared, "(We) would regard it as a subversion of the purpose for which funds had been contributed... to give assistance to any church or organization which does not rest emphatically on the Christian basis.

Led by Jones, the "Unity men" (so called because Jones edited a newsletter with that name) squared off against the conservatives, who were led by Jabez T. Sunderland of Ann Arbor, Michigan and Jasper Douthit of Shelbyville, Illinois. Sunderland and Douthit in turn withdrew, and formed a rival organization, the Western Unitarian Association, for the promulgation of pure Christianity. This organization, too, was refused sanction by the AUA, leaving Western Unitarianism in something of a state of disarray.

At the 1887 meeting of the Western Unitarian Conference, William Channing Gannett presented his slate of "Things Most Commonly Believed Today Among Us" as a first step in reconciliation. It was adopted by the Conference delegates, 59 to 13, but it would be a further seven years before the rift was healed.

The Broad Church movement, the Free Religious Association, and the Issue in the West emerged in a time of tension between free thinking and orthodoxy, a time of growing interest in scientific thought and reason, and an age of idealism and individualism. Though they lasted but a short time, these movements had enormous impact on the inclusive character of Unitarianism as an open and free religion.

LEADER RESOURCE 3: EMBRACING THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

In the Unitarian and Universalist traditions, there have always been individuals who express not only tolerance toward other's religions, but also acceptance of, curiosity about, and even embrace of faiths other than their own. First among these was Hannah Adams (1755-1831), a scholar, writer, and distant cousin of John Adams. Hannah Adams lived in Boston and was welcomed into the Unitarian circles of James Freeman, minister of King's Chapel, Joseph Buckminster, and Harvard College. In her study of religion, Adams became fascinated with the variety of sects and denominations. She embarked on a project to honestly describe various religions, their evolution and beliefs. In her memoir, she wrote that she undertook this project because

I soon became disgusted with the want of candor in the authors I consulted, in giving the most unfavorable descriptions of the denominations they disliked and applying to them the names of heretics, fanatics, enthusiasts, c.

Adams published two major volumes. The first described the variety of religious sects since the beginning of the Christian era. Then, in 1814, she published the ambitious *A Dictionary of All Religions and Religious Denominations, Jewish, Heathen, Mahometan, Christian, Ancient and Modern*. Her books were revolutionary for their time, and proved influential among theology students at Harvard. Ironically, in the words of one author, "her Compendia laid a foundation for the very theologians whose work then eclipsed her own."

While Adams' work was primarily informational, an attempt to objectively describe the religions of the world, the next generation of Unitarian theologians, the Transcendentalists, engaged with the world's religions and began to integrate the wisdom they gathered into their own thinking. The Transcendentalists, including Ralph Waldo Emerson and Margaret Fuller, were among the first Westerners to read scriptures from religions that were non-Christian, including the Bhagavad-Gita, the Upanishads, the Qur'an, Buddhist writings, and the teachings of Confucius. Their study of these scriptures offered new insights into both the commonalities and particularities of religious traditions and found their way into writings such as Emerson's "The Oversoul."

In 1841, James Freeman Clarke took a bold step, founding the Church of the Disciples in Boston, a free church dedicated to "common practical goals rather than common theological opinions." Clarke believed much good could be accomplished if the church existed to organize ethical activity but allowed individuals to differ

on theological matters. Clarke's two-volume work, *Ten Great Religions* (1871-73), furthered both scholarship and interest in the world's religions.

Unitarians and Universalists took leading roles in planning the first World Parliament of Religions, held during the World Columbian Exposition (Chicago World's Fair) in 1893. It was the first international gathering of representatives of faiths from all over the world. Both Unitarians and Universalists saw the Parliament as a unique opportunity to showcase the unity and fellowship of all world religions. (For more information on the Parliament, see Workshop 14, Globalization)

By the twentieth century, more Unitarians and Universalists considered the idea of a basically non-sectarian congregation, welcoming to people of all faiths and bound by ethics or social action rather than a denominational identity. John Haynes Holmes, minister of the Church of the Messiah in New York City, embarked with his congregation on a bold experiment, becoming the Community Church in 1919. Holmes' aim, in his words, was to "take the situation as I found it in the city, and make my church an inclusive institution for all sorts and conditions of men." Holmes believed that to be truly welcoming to all required a "community church, dedicated to the services of those social and ethical ideals which must make humanity one in prosperity and peace." In worship, Holmes honored all religious traditions. He also assisted Clarence Skinner in founding the Community Church of Boston in 1920.

Perhaps the most forthright embrace of world religions from within our tradition came in the form of an experimental Universalist congregation at the Charles Street Meetinghouse in Boston. In 1949, the Massachusetts Universalist Convention invited Kenneth Patton to transform an early nineteenth century Federal style church into a home "for a universal religion." Patton combined his love and knowledge of the arts and religion to transform the space into a setting for a truly universal religion, one which would combine "the art, literature, idealism, philosophies, music and symbolism of all the world's religions into a religion for one world." Patton rearranged the traditional New England pews into circular seating, and added interior details of art and symbolism from the world's religions and from science—including a bookcase of world scriptures, a mural of the Great Nebula in Andromeda, and a sculpture of the atom.

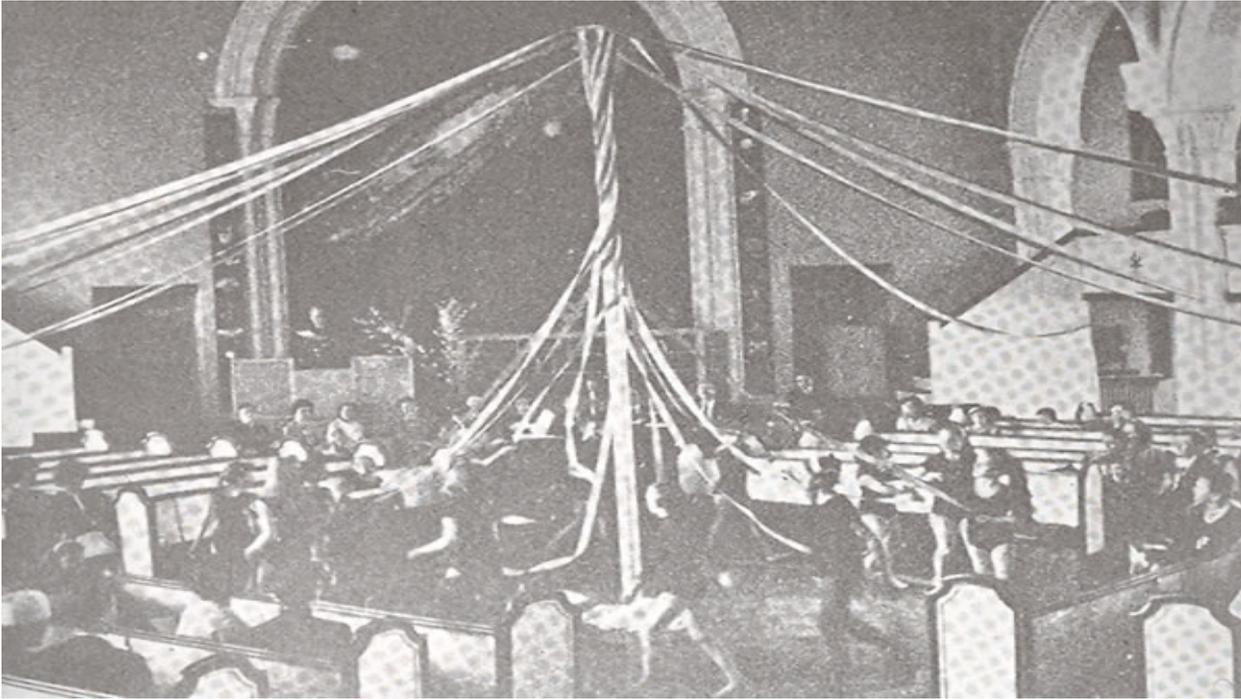
Even as the Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist faiths have respected, studied, and welcomed the influence of the world's religions, there have recently been cautionary chords struck from both within and outside our tradition. Critics of Unitarian

Universalism have sometimes mocked it as "the salad bar" religion, taking a bit of this and some of that, resulting in a faith that is "a mile wide and an inch deep." From within our own faith, it has been suggested that what is needed is an "increasing awareness... of cultural appropriation especially as it relates to spiritual rituals,

symbols, and artifacts." These critiques and concerns indicate a deepening understanding that, while religions share much, they have as many differences as similarities, and we overlook those differences at our own peril.

LEADER RESOURCE 4: PHOTO OF BELTANE AT CHARLES STREET MEETING HOUSE

From the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations archives.



LEADER RESOURCE 5: MAGLIPAY UNIVERSALIST

Words by Toribio S. Quimada. Lyricized by Richard Boeke, 1989.

The title means "be joyful, Universalist." You can see a [video of a congregation singing this hymn](https://vimeo.com/15852011). (at vimeo.com/15852011)

Be joyful, Universalist, come celebrate our convention.

Officials, members, all unite, rejoicing in debate that's free,

To teach the Universal Light.

To strengthen church democracy

(Chorus)

To teach the hope that is for all, proclaim the universal call.

To teach the hope that is for all, proclaim the universal call.

So many rigid Biblicists restrict our God to ancient days.

Often both priest and Calvinists are preaching narrow only ways.

Remember Universalist,

the sun of God has many rays.

(Chorus)

Heaven is Universalist, including middle, rich and poor.

It is not being on a list, that opens up the divine door.

Lift up your hearts to God's great grace,

that reaches out to every race.

(Chorus).

FIND OUT MORE

Eck, Diana L. *A New Religious America* (NY: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001)

Muir, Frederic John. *Maglipay Universalist: A History of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines*. (2001)

WORKSHOP 7: WE'RE ALL SWIMMING IN THE STREAM TOGETHER – COVENANT

INTRODUCTION

For I say—whether you ever heard, directly, of this little event in Dedham or not—to understand in any depth our liberal free church tradition, or to make much sense of deeply rooted everyday realities of Unitarian Universalist churches now, today, you must understand in your bones the historical importance of the spirit of love manifest in the doctrine of covenantal organization, as this little group of people in Dedham understood it in New England in 1637.
— Alice Blair Wesley

This workshop considers the history and meaning of covenant in our religious tradition. It explores the difference between a covenant and a statement of belief and examines the importance of covenant in the free church tradition as it pertains to both freedom of thought and freedom of governance.

Before leading this workshop, review the Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters in the program Introduction. Prepare to accommodate individuals who may be in the group.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Trace the history of covenant through the Unitarian Universalist tradition
- Consider the importance of covenant to Unitarian Universalist identity.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand the meaning of a covenant
- Understand the centrality of covenant to Unitarian Universalist congregations
- Delve into the connection between covenant and congregational polity
- Become familiar with the evolution of the language and concept of covenant in our tradition

- Be able to differentiate between a covenant and a statement of belief
- Make links between the use of covenant in Unitarian Universalism and its use in other religious traditions.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: What Is Covenant?	35
Activity 2: A History of Statements of Belief	30
Activity 3: Building a House of Covenant	35
Faith in Action: Our Covenant	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: A History of Covenant	25
Alternate Activity 2: The Unitarian Universalist Principles	30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Read your congregation's covenant and the ones commonly used by contemporary Unitarian Universalist congregations found in Handout 1, Congregational Covenants. Take time to consider the meaning of these covenants in the congregation and in your life. You may wish to light a candle or in some way create a sacred space and moment to deeply connect with the meaning, the joys and the responsibilities of being together in religious community.

You may wish to ask participants to engage in this same spiritual practice so that they, too, arrive at the workshop centered and ready to engage with the material and the group.

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Sign-in sheet and pen/pencil
- Name tags and markers
- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1, [Schedule Template](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Create and post a workshop agenda on newsprint. The Workshop-at-a-Glance section provides time estimates. Create a welcome table near the entrance. Set out name tags and markers, the sign-in sheet and pen/pencil, and copies of the schedule.
- Make copies of the Time Line of UU History handout (Workshop 1, Handout 2), if you need some. Place time line handouts on the welcome table.
- Optional: Post the Time Line of UU History display.

Description of Activity

Welcome everyone to the workshop as they enter. Ask them to sign in, make (or pick up) name tags, and pick up the schedule and time line handouts from the welcome table. Point out the posted agenda for this workshop.

Including All Participants

Write the agenda in large, clear lettering and post it where it will be easily visible to all participants. Provide name tags large enough and markers bold enough so names will be easily visible.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Optional: Decorative cloth

Preparation for Activity

- Set up a worship or centering table with the chalice and (optional) decorative cloth.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice and share these words:

We light this chalice as a beacon of the free church tradition,

a tradition that lives on in us,
a tradition that calls us together by covenant,
by mutual promise to walk together in the ways
of faith.

May ours be a community of love that calls us
ever to peace, hope, justice.

ACTIVITY 1: WHAT IS COVENANT? (35 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- A copy of the story "[The Agreement](#)" (included in this document)
- Group covenant from Workshop 1, Activity 4
- Handout 1, [Congregational Covenants](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story "The Agreement" and prepare to read or tell it with feeling, bringing the drama and characters to life with your voice and expressions.
- Obtain a copy of your congregation's covenant and add the text to Handout 1, Congregational Covenants. Then, print out and copy the handout. (Note: Participants will use Handout 1 again in Activity 5.)
- Post the covenant the group generated in Workshop 1, Activity 4.
- Write on newsprint, and post: *Covenant is a way of articulating shared values that*
 - *speak about what the congregation values most highly*
 - *define the promises they make together*
 - *define how members will act with one another*

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story "The Agreement."

Then, call participants' attention to the covenant they made with one another in Workshop 1. Ask:

- How is this covenant an expression of our intention to engage in this program, not just as individuals, but as a group responsible to and supported by one another?

Distribute Handout 1, Congregational Covenants. Invite participants to read aloud together either the congregation's covenant or one of the two commonly

used covenants on the handout. Invite participants to choose a conversation partner to consider:

- What are the ways members of the congregation have obligations to each other?
- What are the ways each person names what they need from the community and what they are willing to contribute to its well being?

Allow 10 minutes for this conversation.

Then, indicate the definition of covenant that you have written on newsprint. Engage discussion, using these questions:

- How does our congregation's covenant meet the criteria in the definition?
- How does our program covenant meet those criteria? Is there anything we should add to our program covenant?
- Was the agreement among the river, the salmon, and the bears in the Lopez story a covenant? How so?
- Is everyone included in your congregation's covenant? Is there a "river" that is taken for granted?
- What does your congregation's covenant mean to you?

ACTIVITY 2: A HISTORY OF STATEMENTS OF BELIEF (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Leader Resource 2, [A History of Statements of Belief](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 2, [A Collection of Covenants and Statements of Belief](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 2, A History of Statements of Belief and Handout 2, A Collection of Covenants and Statements of Belief and familiarize yourself with their contents.
- Copy Leader Resource 2, A History of Statements of Belief.

- Arrange for volunteers to read aloud the six statements of belief quoted on Handout 2. Give readers the handout and their assignments ahead of time.
- On the Time Line of UU History, locate the dates of all six statements of belief quoted on Handout 2.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - What were the concerns of the people who wrote this statement of belief?
 - What hopes, dreams, and understanding of human and divine natures does the statement reflect?
 - How does this relate to contemporary Unitarian Universalism?

Description of Activity

Explain that the tradition of covenantal organization comes from our Unitarian roots and stretches back to the New England Puritans. Our Universalist forebears (and, at various times, our Unitarian forebears as well) sought to name what held them together, choosing to articulate a set of shared theological understandings about the nature and responsibilities of humanity and the nature of God.

Distribute Handout 2, A Collection of Covenants and Statements of Belief. Then, present the information from Leader Resource 2, A History of Statements of Belief. As you go along, pause where indicated on Leader Resource 2 to read (or have a volunteer read) the text of a statement of belief from Handout 2. Point out the date of each statement of belief on the Time Line of UU History. After each text reading, ask the group to consider and respond to the two questions you have posted.

Invite participants to consider two documents from the two different strands of our tradition: the Universalist Winchester Profession of 1803 and Unitarian minister William Channing Gannett's "Things Commonly Believed Today Among Us" from 1887.

Lead the group to compare the documents:

- What are points of similarity?
- What are points of difference?

What seeds of theological agreement do you observe that foreshadow the eventual merger of the Unitarians and the Universalists?

Conclude by asking for general comments about the evolution of beliefs in both the Unitarian and Universalist traditions, and about the ongoing efforts to include,

rather than exclude, those whose conscience compelled them to believe something outside the denominational mainstream.

ACTIVITY 3: BUILDING A HOUSE OF COVENANT (35 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Congregational Covenants](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 3, [Building a House of Covenant](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 4, [House of Covenant Template](#) (included in this document)
- Light-color card stock, one 8x11-inch sheet for each participant
- Scissors, tape and glue sticks, stickers, and fine point markers to share
- Optional: Magazines to cut up for collage, and copies of a printed covenant that can be cut up
- Optional: [UU clip art](#) to use for crafts

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1, Congregational Covenants (if you did not already do so for Activity 1).
- Copy Handout 3, Building a House of Covenant.
- Copy Handout 4, House of Covenant Template on card stock. Optional: To save time during the workshop, precut the house template for each participant.
- Gather magazines to cut up for a collage. You may also wish to copy your congregational covenant or workshop handouts with covenant text for participants to cut up.
- Prepare a craft area where participants will have room to work on individual projects.
- Optional: Print out UU clip art from the UUA website.
- Optional: Identify a place in your congregational building where you can display the finished "Houses of Covenant."

Description of Activity

Participants each construct a "House of Covenant," based either on your congregation's covenant or a sample covenant.

Distribute Handout 3, Building a House of Covenant and Handout 4, House of Covenant Template. Make sure

each participant has Handout 1, Congregational Covenants.

Explain the project in these or similar words:

First, cut out the house template (if this has not already been done).

Then, follow the suggestions on Handout 3, Building a House of Covenant for each part of the house—the foundation, roof, walls, and doors and windows.

Decorate your house with the appropriate elements of your covenant. You might use words, pictures, or colors to represent each element. There is no one way to construct a house—or a covenant!

When you are done decorating, assemble the house using tape or glue. As you work, you are invited to share with each other your own interpretations of the covenant.

When creations are complete, consider displaying them for the rest of the congregation to admire.

Including All Participants

Not all participants will consider themselves artistic, so, provide supplies that invite expression without requiring drawing ability. Printed copies of a covenant that can be cut up, printed clip art, and old magazines can provide a source of inspiration and artwork.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Faith in Action from this workshop and/or Spiritual Preparation from Workshop 8

Preparation for Activity

- Download and customize Taking It Home as a handout. You may wish to add the Faith in Action activity suggestion from this workshop and/or the Spiritual Preparation questions for the next workshop.

Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Announce the date, time, and place of the next workshop and any other "housekeeping" information. Request or remind volunteers if you want participants to read material aloud or perform other roles at the next meeting.

Invite participants to gather around the chalice. Share these words of Martin Buber:

The real essence of community is to be found in the fact—manifest or otherwise—that it has a center. The real beginning of a community is when its members have a common relation to the center overriding all other relations; the circle is described by its radii, not by the points along its circumference.

Extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: OUR COVENANT

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Congregational Covenants](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Obtain a copy of your congregation's covenant and add the text to Handout 1, if you have not done so already. Print out and copy the handout.
- Invite a minister, historian, or other appropriate person in your congregation to tell how the congregation came to create or adopt its covenant.

Description of Activity

Learn the history of how your congregation came to adopt its covenant or came to use a common Unitarian Universalist covenant.

Name the ways in which you see the idea of covenant embodied in your congregation, whether that covenant is specifically written out or not. What are the ways your community builds mutually beneficial relationships? What milestones along the way led your congregation to work together and create or adopt a covenant?

Covenants rarely define the remedies or courses of action to take if the covenant is broken. Consider ways in which congregations might bring people back into right relationship when the covenant has been broken or a relationship has been damaged. Does your congregation have such remedies? Are they inherent in a covenant or must the remedies be specifically spelled out?

Identify strategies your congregation currently uses. Explore how you might broaden the list of actions currently used to establish or re-establish right relationship.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

After the workshop, co-leaders should talk together to evaluate this workshop and plan future workshops. Use

these questions to guide your shared reflection and planning:

- What parts of the workshop worked well and which did not? Why? How was the success, or lack of success, related to the topics? How was it related to the types of activities?
- How can we use this experience to make future workshops more effective? What would we change if we were to lead this workshop again?
- What was left unfinished in the workshop that should still be addressed? How and when will we address it?
- What strengths did we each bring to the workshop?
- As co-leaders, when did we work well together?
- What might help us be better leaders in future workshops?
- What do we need to prepare for the next workshop? Who will handle which tasks? Who will lead which activities?

TAKING IT HOME

For I say—whether you ever heard, directly, of this little event in Dedham or not—to understand in any depth our liberal free church tradition, or to make much sense of deeply rooted everyday realities of Unitarian Universalist churches now, today, you must understand in your bones the historical importance of the spirit of love manifest in the doctrine of covenantal organization, as this little group of people in Dedham understood it in New England in 1637.
— Alice Blair Wesley

Covenants have a historical role at the core of our Unitarian Universalist tradition, but agreements of relationship and behavior, based on shared values, are used in many aspects of life. Besides your faith community, where else in your life do covenants exist? Are the covenants implicit or explicit? Are there areas of your life where no covenant exists now, but where you might adopt one?

Consider your family life. What shared values do you celebrate? What are the shared expectations of behavior and relationship? How do you come back into right relationship when there is a misunderstanding or breach? Consider writing a family covenant. What would it include?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: A HISTORY OF COVENANT (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Plain paper and pens/pencils
- Leader Resource 1, [A History of Covenant](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 1, A History of Covenant and prepare to present its contents.
- On the Time Line of UU History, locate the Cambridge Platform (1648).
- On a sheet of newsprint, list these concepts:
 - God/Ultimate
 - Persons
 - Beliefs/Creed

Description of Activity

Take about ten minutes to present the contents of Leader Resource 1, A History of Covenant. Indicate key events on the time line as you present the material.

Tell participants you will ask them to form small groups to consider the way in which a covenantal organizing structure differs from one where a congregation is organized around a set of beliefs. Invite participants to move into groups of three while you post the list you prepared on newsprint. Provide each triad with markers and two sheets of plain paper, and invite them to draw a diagram showing a congregation organization along creedal or belief lines and one organized along covenantal lines. Ask them to include the three concepts you have listed on newsprint however they wish to in the diagrams.

Allow triads ten minutes to work. Then invite each group to present their diagrams.

Invite responses to these questions:

- Does a covenantal organizing structure preclude unity of belief?
- Does it necessarily include unity of values?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST PRINCIPLES (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 5, [The Unitarian Universalist Principles](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 5.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - Do these statements of Unitarian Universalist Principles constitute a covenant? Why or why not?
 - Are they statements of belief, or do they in any way fulfill the role of such a statement? Why or why not?

Description of Activity

Distribute Handout 5, The Unitarian Universalist Principles. Explain that the handout shows two versions of the Unitarian Universalist Principles. The first version was adopted at the consolidation of the two denominations in 1961 and the second was adopted by the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association in 1985 and amended in 1995.

Invite participants to read the handout. When everyone has done so, take ten minutes to lead a discussion of the questions you have posted on newsprint.

Next, read this excerpt from the Commission on Appraisal's 2005 report *Engaging Our Theological Diversity*:

The exceptional popularity of the Principles as a guiding statement of common commitment among individual Unitarian Universalists has been surprising. The committee that steered the process leading to the near-unanimous adoption of the Principles and Purposes never anticipated the various uses to which their work would be put. Their charge was simply to propose an amended statement of purpose for the Bylaws, replacing the statement adopted at the time of consolidation in 1961—a document that many denominational activists had come to view as dated in terms of language and political fashion. However, as Warren Ross comments in *The Premise and the Promise*, "To an astonishing extent today's Principles and Purposes... have won a lasting place in Unitarian Universalist

hearts and have been woven intimately into the fabric of our denominational life."

Invite participants to move into groups of four and discuss how they feel about the Principles and Sources, as a covenant, as a statement of belief, and as a religious document. Allow ten minutes for group conversations. Then re-gather the large group and invite small groups to share briefly.

Explain that although the Principles are an important guiding document, they were never meant to be carved in stone for all time, and, in fact, a review of the Principles began in 2008. Ask participants to consider the thoughts expressed in their small group discussions and reflect on what changes they would wish to see in a revision of the Principles.

STORY: THE AGREEMENT

By Barry Lopez.

One time...before there were any people walking around this valley there were bear people. They had an agreement with the salmon....The salmon would come upriver every fall and the bears would acknowledge this and take what they needed. This is the way it was with everything. Everyone lived by certain agreements and courtesies. But the salmon people and the bear people had made no agreement with the river. It had been overlooked. No one thought it was even necessary. Well, it was. One fall the river pulled itself back into the shore trees and wouldn't let the salmon enter from the ocean. Whenever they would try, the river would pull back and leave the salmon stranded on the beach. There was a long argument, a lot of talk. Finally the river let the salmon enter. But when the salmon got up into this country where the bears lived the river began to run in two directions at once, north on one side, south on the other, roaring, heaving, white water, and rolling big boulders up on the banks. Then the river was suddenly still. The salmon were afraid to move. The bears were

standing behind the trees, looking out. The river said in the middle of all this silence that there had to be an agreement. No one could just do something, whatever they wanted. You couldn't just take someone for granted.

So for several days they spoke about it. The salmon said who they were and where they came from, and the bears spoke about what they did, what powers they had been given, and the river spoke about its agreement with the rain and the wind and the crayfish and so on. Everybody said what they needed and what they would give away. Then a very odd thing happened—the river said it loved the salmon. No one had ever said anything like this before. No one had taken this chance. It was an honesty that pleased everyone. It made for a very deep agreement among them.

Well they were able to reach an understanding about their obligations to each other and everyone went (their) way. This remains unchanged. Time has nothing to do with this. This is not a story. When you feel the river shuddering against your legs, you are feeling the presence of all these agreements.

HANDOUT 1: CONGREGATIONAL COVENANTS

OUR CONGREGATION'S COVENANT

(Leader: Add the text of your congregation's covenant to this handout before copying for the group.)

COVENANTS COMMONLY USED IN UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATIONS

Love is the doctrine of this church,
The quest of truth is its sacrament,
And service is its prayer.
To dwell together in peace,
To seek knowledge in freedom,
To serve human need,
To the end that all souls shall grow into harmony with the Divine-
Thus do we covenant with each other and with God.

— Arranged by L. Griswold Williams

Love is the spirit of this church,
and service is its law.

This is our great covenant:
To dwell together in peace,
To seek the truth in love,
And to help one another.

— James Vila Blake

In the freedom of truth,
And the spirit of Jesus,
We unite for the worship of God
And the service of all.

— Charles Gordon Ames

HANDOUT 2: A COLLECTION OF COVENANTS AND STATEMENTS OF BELIEF

Rule of Faith, Philadelphia Convention of Universalists (1790)

Section 1. OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. We believe the scriptures of the old and new Testament to contain a revelation of the perfections and will of God, and the rule of faith and practice.

Section 2. OF THE SUPREME BEING. We believe in one God, infinite in all his perfections; and that these perfections are all modifications of infinite, adorable, incomprehensible and unchangeable love.

Section 3. OF THE MEDIATOR. We believe that there is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; who by giving himself a ransom for all, hath redeemed them to God by his blood; and who, by the merit of his death and the efficacy of his spirit, will finally restore the whole human race to happiness.

Section 4. OF THE HOLY GHOST. We believe in the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to make known to sinners the truth of this salvation, through the medium of the holy scriptures, and to reconcile the hearts of the children of men to God, and thereby dispose them to genuine holiness.

Section 5. OF GOOD WORKS. We believe in the obligation of the moral law as to the rule of life; and we hold that the love of God manifested to man in a redeemer, is the best means of producing obedience to that law, and promoting a holy, active and useful life.

Winchester Profession, New England Convention of Universalists (1803)

Article I. We believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain a revelation of the character of God, and of the duty, interest and final destination of mankind.

Article II. We believe that there is one God, whose nature is Love, revealed in one Lord Jesus Christ, by one Holy Spirit of Grace, who will finally restore the whole family of mankind to holiness and happiness.

Article III. We believe that holiness and true happiness are inseparably connected, and that believers ought to be careful to maintain order and practise good works; for these things are good and profitable unto men.

As we believe these to be truths which deeply concern the honor of the Divine character and the interests of man, we do hereby declare that we continue to consider ourselves, and our societies in fellowship, a Denomination of Christians, distinct and separate from those who do not approve the whole of this Profession of Belief, as expressed in the three above Articles.

...Yet while we, as an Association, adopt a general Profession of Belief and Plan of Church Government, we leave it to the several Churches and Societies, or to smaller associations of churches, if such should be formed, within the limits of our General Association, to continue or adopt within themselves, such more particular articles of faith, or modes of discipline, as may appear to them best under their particular circumstances, provided they do not disagree with our general Profession and Plan.

And while we consider that every Church possesses within itself all the powers of self-government, we earnestly and affectionately recommend to every Church, Society, or particular Association, to exercise the spirit of Christian meekness and charity towards those who have different modes of faith or practice, that where the brethren cannot see alike, they may agree to differ; and let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

Boston Declaration, Universalist General Convention (1899)

The conditions of fellowship in this Convention shall be as follows: The acceptance of the essential principles of the Universalist faith, to wit: The Universal Fatherhood of God; The Spiritual authority and leadership of His Son, Jesus Christ; The trustworthiness of the Bible as containing a revelation from God; The certainty of just retribution for sin; The final harmony of all souls with God.

The Winchester Profession is commended as containing these principles, but neither this nor any other precise form of words is required as a condition of fellowship, provided always that the principles above stated be professed.

Universalist Bond of Fellowship (1935)

The bond of fellowship in this Convention shall be a common purpose to do the will of God as Jesus revealed it and to co-operate in establishing the Kingdom for which he lived and died.

To that end, we avow our faith in God as Eternal and All-Conquering Love, in the spiritual leadership in Jesus, in

the supreme worth of every human personality, in the authority of truth known or to be known, and in the power of men of goodwill and sacrificial spirit to overcome evil and progressively establish the Kingdom of God.

National Conference of Unitarian Churches Statement of Purpose (1865)

Whereas, the great opportunities and demands for Christian labor and consecration at this time increase our sense of the obligations of all disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ to prove their faith by self-denial and by the devotion of their lives and possessions to the service of God and the building up of the Kingdom of his Son, therefore, the Christian churches of the Unitarian faith here assembled unite themselves in a common body to the end of reorganizing and stimulating the denomination with which they are connected to the largest exertions in the cause of Christian faith and work.

Things Common Believed Today Among Us, William Channing Gannett, Western Unitarian Conference, 1887

The Western Conference has neither the wish nor the right to bind a single member by declarations concerning fellowship or doctrine. Yet it thinks some practical good may be done by setting forth in simple words the things most commonly believed among us—the Statement being always open to re-statement and to be regarded only as the thought of the majority.

All names that divide "religion" are to us of little consequence compared with religion itself. Whoever loves Truth and lives the Good is, in a broad sense, of our religious fellowship; whoever loves the one or lives the other better than ourselves is our teacher, whatever church or age he may belong to.

The general faith is hinted well in words which several of our churches have adopted for their covenant: "In the freedom of the Truth and in the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man." It is hinted in such words as these: "Unitarianism is a religion of love to God and love to man." Because we have no "creed" which we impose as a condition of fellowship, specific statements of belief abound among us, always somewhat differing, always largely agreeing. One such we offer here:

- We believe that to love the Good and to live the Good is the supreme thing in religion;
- We hold reason and conscience to be final authorities in matters of religious belief;

- We honor the Bible and all inspiring scripture, old and new;
- We revere Jesus, and all holy souls that have taught men truth and righteousness and love, as prophets of religion.
- We believe in the growing nobility of Man;
- We trust the unfolding Universe as beautiful, beneficent, unchanging Order; to know this order is truth; to obey it is right and liberty and stronger life;
- We believe that good and evil invariably carry their own recompense, no good thing being failure and no evil thing success; that heaven and hell are states of being; that no evil can befall the good man in either life or death; that all things work together for the victory of Good.
- We believe that we ought to join hands and work to make the good things better and the worst good, counting nothing good for self that is not good for all;
- We believe that this self-forgetting, loyal life awakes in man the sense of union here and now with things eternal—the sense of deathlessness; and this sense is to us an earnest of the life to come.
- We worship One-in-All—that life whence suns and stars derive their orbits and the soul of man its Ought—that Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, giving us power to become the sons of God,—that Love with which our souls commune.

HANDOUT 3: BUILDING A HOUSE OF COVENANT

Parts of a covenant include:

The Foundation

Alice Blair Wesley in her 2000-01 Minns Lecture series "Our Covenant" paraphrased James Luther Adams, saying,

Strong effective, lively liberal churches, sometimes capable of altering positively the direction of their whole society, will be those liberal churches whose lay members can say clearly, individually and collectively, what are their own most important loyalties, as church members.

The foundation of a house is the most solid element upon which the rest is built. Which element of your covenant is the most fundamental for you? What is your most important loyalty? What words in your covenant express this? Express this near the base of your house model.

The Walls

A covenant provides us with a definition of boundaries. It lays out the behaviors, actions, and responsibilities that define our communities. Like the walls of a house, our covenant provides the defining shape of our community.

What parts of your covenant define the shape of your life together? Express this on the walls of your house.

The Roof

A covenant provides a safe space for spiritual exploration, just as a roof provides us safety from storms and sun. Which parts of your covenant provide you shelter? Express this on the roof of your house.

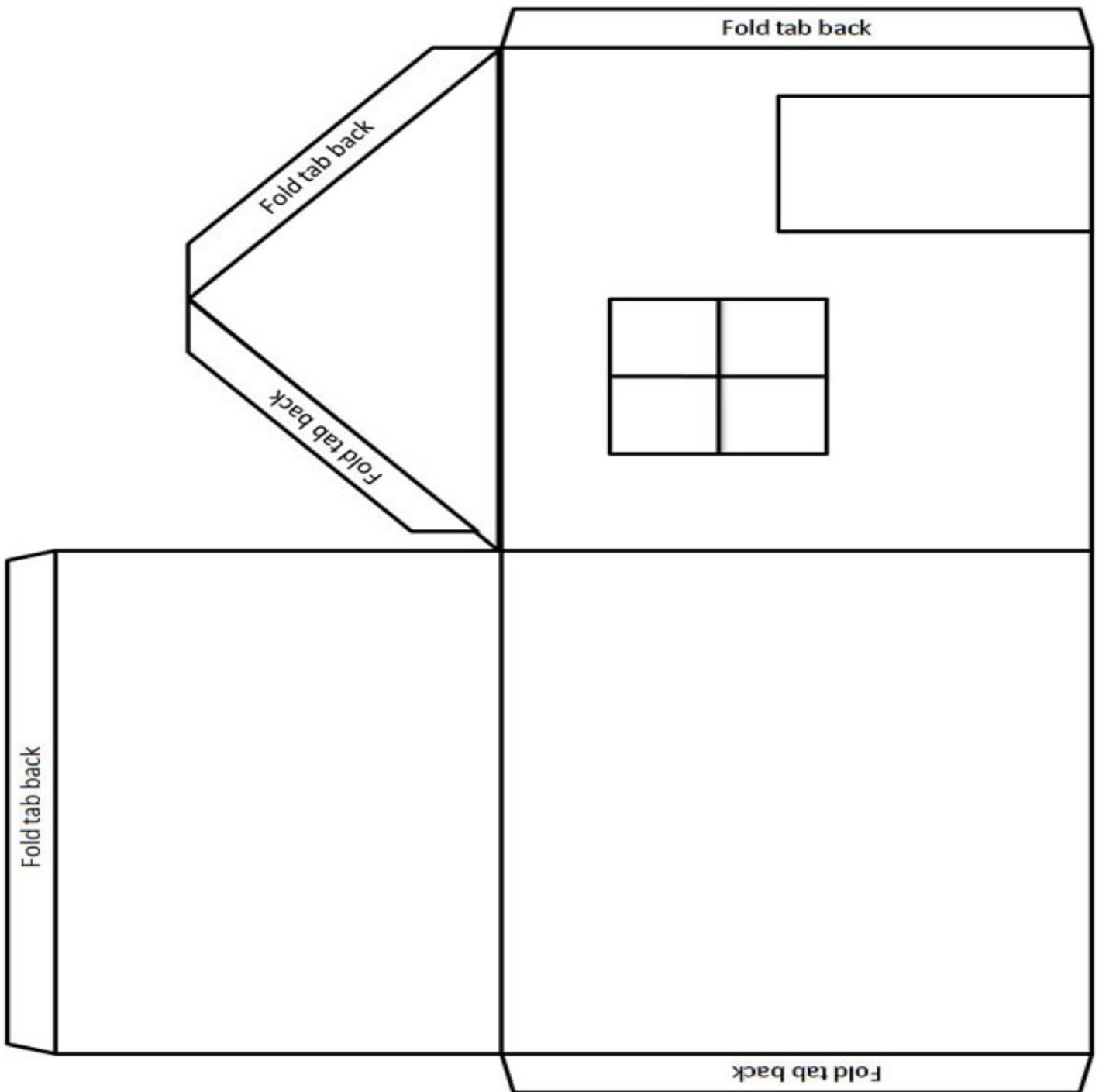
Doors and Windows

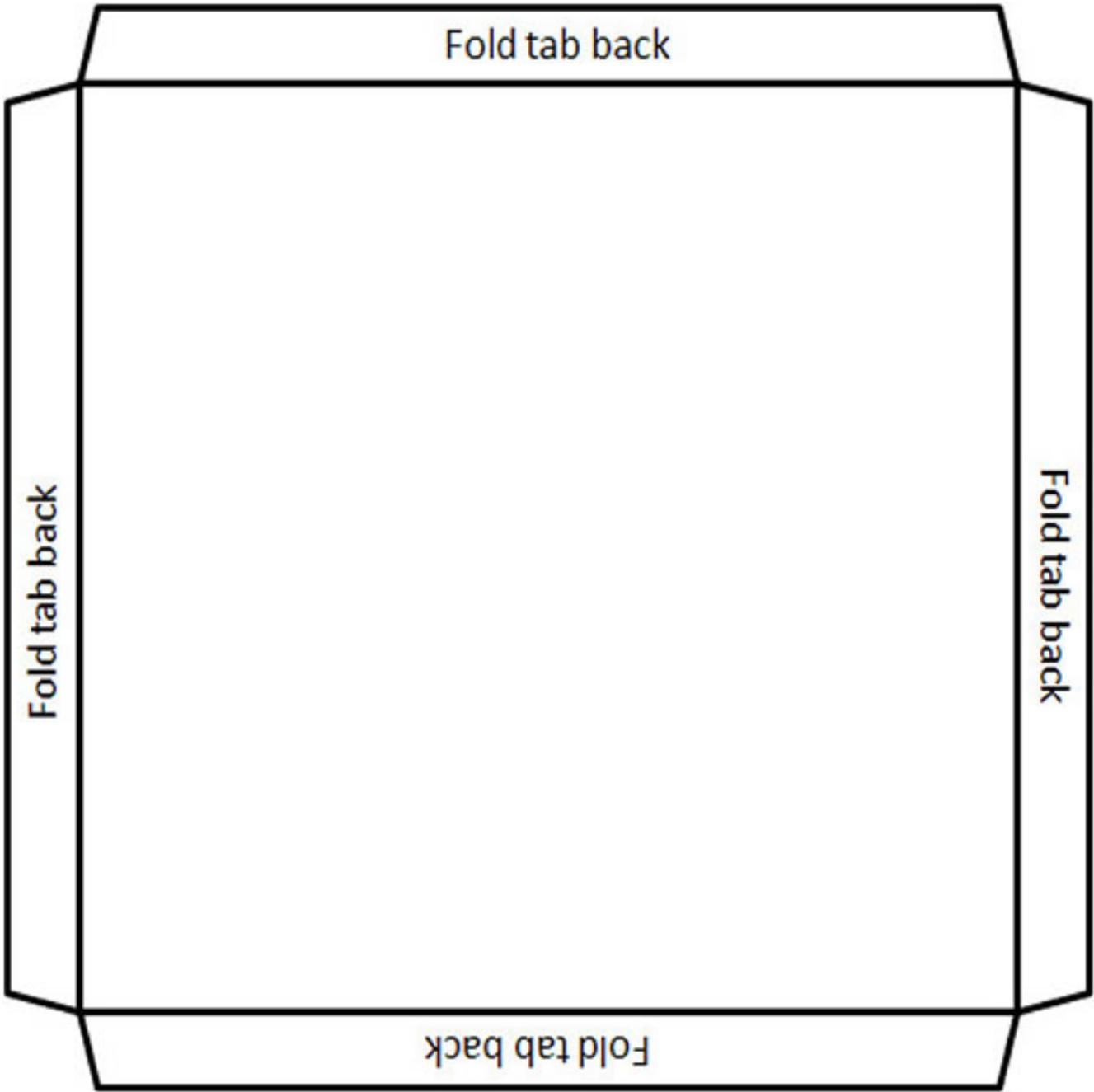
Although our covenants define the shape of our communities and define their boundaries of belonging, they were never designed to be exclusive, to wall us off from others or to wall us in. Like the doors of a house, our covenants must allow us the freedom to enter and depart. They must provide a welcome for others. Like the windows of a house, they should also help us to see beyond our own walls. In what ways does your covenant welcome others into your house? In what ways does it provide you insight into the faith of others? In what ways does it provide you freedom? Express this on the doors and windows of your house.

To assemble your house after you have cut it out and decorated it:

- Fold back all tabs. Fold at corner and roof lines.
- Attach tabs using glue or tape to build house. You may find it easiest to assemble each side/roof section separately before attaching the side/roof sections to each other and the floor.

**FAITH LIKE A RIVER: WORKSHOP 7:
HANDOUT 4: HOUSE OF COVENANT TEMPLATE**





HANDOUT 5: THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST PRINCIPLES

Unitarian Universalist Principles (1961)

The Association, dedicated to the principles of a free faith, shall:

- (a) Support the free and disciplined search for truth as the foundation of religious fellowship;
- (b) Cherish and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition, immemorially summarized in the Judeo-Christian heritage as love to God and love to humankind;
- (c) Affirm, defend, and promote the supreme worth and dignity of every human personality, and the use of the democratic method in human relationships;
- (d) Implement the vision of one world by striving for a world community founded on ideals of brotherhood, justice, and peace;
- (e) Serve the needs of member societies;
- (f) Organize new churches and fellowships and otherwise extend and strengthen liberal religion;
- (g) Encourage cooperation among people of good will in every land.

Unitarian Universalist Principles (1985)

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

The living tradition which we share draws from many sources:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;
- *(Added in 1995)* Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As free congregations we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust and support.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: A HISTORY OF COVENANT

The free church tradition of which we are a part does not offer up a creed, a certain set of beliefs, that everyone must accept in order to belong to the community. Instead, the boundaries of our community are determined by commitment and participation. Our central question is not "What do we believe?" but rather "What values will we uphold and how will we do this together?" Our covenant, the promises we make to each other in regarding how to we will be a community of faith, is at the heart of what it means to be Unitarian Universalist.

The notion of covenant is an ancient one. It is a central theme of both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. When the early Puritans came to America looking to form a new type of church, they chose to gather their churches using the ancient form of covenant. These first churches in America were created by mutual consent for mutual benefit in a time and place where survival depended on mutual cooperation, but they were not formed solely from need. They were also a reaction to a form of church organization that not only required everyone to subscribe to a certain set of beliefs and also put all power and control into the hands of a church hierarchy. It is important to remember that our freedom of belief is closely tied to our freedom of self-governance, or congregational polity (See Workshop 8, *Gently Down the Stream — Polity*).

By today's definitions, neither the Pilgrims of the Plymouth Colony nor the Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony would be understood as either democratically governed or theologically diverse by today's definitions. They did, however, lay the basis for the values of congregational polity and theological diversity which ground our contemporary faith communities. The Cambridge Platform of Church Discipline written by the New England Puritans in 1648 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, describes the form this new church governance was to take. In *The American Creed*, Forrest Church paraphrases the Puritans' essential covenant as this:

We pledge to walk together
In the ways of truth and affection,
As best we know them now
Or may learn them in the days to come,
That we and our children may be fulfilled
And that we may speak to the world
In words and actions
Of peace and goodwill.

The Cambridge Platform goes on to define, in some detail, just what constitutes a church. Yet, this, a simple

promise to walk together in the ways of truth and affection, remains the basis of the document.

The Puritans held a Calvinist theology; they believed that some people were elected for salvation by God. For the Puritans, a church was to be a voluntary gathering of select individuals who, by their "personall and publick confession" of a faith conversion and "blamless obedience to the word," were presumed to be among those chosen for salvation, the "Saints by calling."

While all who lived in the parish were expected at church services and gatherings, only those who were true members of the church, the Saints by calling, were admitted to communion, had a say in the affairs of the church, or had their children baptized. This led to problems, however, by the third generation, public professions of religious conversion decreased. In 1662, a synod of churches adopted the Half-Way Covenant in order to deal with the problem of falling membership. The Half-Way Covenant permitted not only the baptism of the children of Saints, as the Cambridge Platform had, but also baptism of the children of the children of the Saints. This was designed to keep the children within the community of the church with the hope that they would, one day, receive personal conversion. The Half-Way Covenant was controversial, but and ultimately did not solve the problems of dwindling conversion experiences and falling membership. The distinctions of election and sainthood fell away over the years, but the essential core of the Cambridge Platform remained. Churches still gathered by covenant, a voluntary and mutual promise to walk in the ways of truth and affection as best they were known. Over time, congregations adopted new wording to reflect their own covenants.

Around 1880, the Rev. Charles Gordon Ames, minister of the Spring Garden Unitarian Society in Philadelphia, wrote a covenant for his congregation. An adaptation can be found as Reading 472 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. In 1894 the Unitarian church of Evanston, Illinois, adopted the covenant written by its minister, Rev. James Vila Blake. This covenant, too, can be found in the current hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition* as Reading 473.

A survey taken of 459 Unitarian churches at the turn of the twentieth century showed that 90 churches used some variation of Ames' wording while 111 others used locally devised wording. In the book, *Congregational Polity*, Conrad Wright reports of these covenants that "some were highly theological, others purely business in character having no spiritual purpose, and still others 'evidently resurrected from the tomb of oblivion, for the benefit of the (survey).'"

A more recent survey, conducted by the UUA's Commission on Appraisal for their 2005 report *Engaging Our Theological Diversity*, asked congregations if they regularly used words of covenant in worship. Responses from 370 congregations showed that 42 used the words of covenant as penned by L. Griswold Williams or an adaptation of them. Forty-one congregations reported using the covenant written by Blake, or an adaptation. Nine congregations said they used a covenant that combines the words of both Williams and Blake and four congregations reported using an adaptation of the Ames covenant.

LEADER RESOURCE 2: A HISTORY OF STATEMENTS OF BELIEF

The concepts of voluntary association and freedom of belief were important in the developing Universalist faith, as they were in Unitarianism. Just as the Cambridge Platform of the Puritans was to set the stage for Unitarian societies in North America, so the early history of Universalism in America has its defining documents.

As Universalism was gaining adherents in the late 18th century there was a call for organization and a national meeting of Universalist societies. The first wider meeting was held at Oxford, Massachusetts in 1785. However, many use the founding of the Philadelphia Convention of Universalists in 1790 to mark the organization of Universalism as a denomination. The 1790 meeting in Philadelphia adopted two documents—the Rule of Faith and the Plan of Church Government which set parameters for the new denomination. The Plan of Church Government called for the autonomy of congregations on matters of faith and practice. The Rule of Faith called for a common theological understanding based in Christian scripture and dedicated to a life of good works through belief in the Holy Trinity and universal salvation.

(Leader: Pause and invite participants to read, "Rule of Faith, Philadelphia Convention of Universalists" from Handout 2. Lead a discussion using the questions you have posted on newsprint.)

Two years later, the Universalist churches of New England petitioned the Philadelphia Convention for permission to meet separately based on the hardship of travel for meetings, and the New England Convention was born. At their 1803 meeting in Winchester, New Hampshire, the New England Convention adopted what came to be a long-standing statement of faith known as the Winchester Profession. The Winchester Profession provided somewhat less theological definition while maintaining its belief in Christian scripture, the Holy Trinity, a life of good works, and universal salvation.

The adoption of the Winchester Profession did not come easily. The disagreement turned not on a point of theology, but on whether requiring any statement of belief at all was acceptable. Some felt that a statement of belief was necessary to clearly distinguish Universalism from among the various Christian beliefs being preached. Others felt that any statement, however broad, was limiting to personal conscience. Ultimately, the New England Convention adopted the Winchester Profession, with a Liberty Clause which allowed individual societies or groups of societies to adopt

additional articles of belief provided these did not conflict with the beliefs laid out in the Profession.

(Leader: Pause and invite participants to read "Winchester Profession" from Handout 2. Lead a discussion using the questions you have posted on newsprint.)

In 1899, a further statement of faith was adopted by the Universalist General Convention in Chicago. What came to be known as the Boston Declaration reaffirmed a strong foundation in Christianity while maintaining room for individual conscience.

(Leader: Pause to read aloud, or have a volunteer read, "Boston Declaration" from Handout 2. Lead a discussion using the questions you have posted on newsprint.)

The importance of a life of good works was prominent in the Bond of Fellowship drawn up in 1935. Here, theological belief is broadened, and the social basis of Universalism is emphasized. This seems a clear reflection of influence of the Social Gospel movement of that the early 20th century, which called for a socially conscious form of religion that would apply the teachings of Jesus to the problems of the day: such as poverty, injustice, war, and poor education.

(Leader: Pause to read aloud, or have a volunteer read, "Universalist Bond of Fellowship" from Handout 2. Lead a discussion using the questions you have posted on newsprint.)

While the Unitarian side of our history has fewer examples of affirmations of belief, it is not wholly without them. In their annual report of 1853 the officers of the American Unitarian Association (AUA) set forth a statement of their beliefs. According to Earl Morse Wilbur in *Our Unitarian Heritage*, this statement aimed to defend Unitarianism against orthodox Christians' criticisms of rationalism and radicalism. Since the AUA was, at that time, an association of individuals rather than an association of congregations, and the statement of beliefs came from the officers rather than the entirety of its membership, this statement did not necessarily voice a widely-accepted creed.

Twelve years later, in 1865, the National Conference of Unitarian Churches was founded. Its Statement of Purpose sets out an unmistakably Christian vision.

(Leader: Pause to read aloud, or have a volunteer read, "National Conference of Unitarian Churches Statement of Purpose" from Handout 2. Lead a discussion using the questions you have posted on newsprint.)

William Channing Gannett, Unitarian minister and a leader in the Western Unitarian Conference in the late 19th century, is remembered as both an outspoken

opponent of creedalism and author of the statement "Things Most Commonly Believed Today Among Us." While Gannett in no way meant his statement as a creed, it was an attempt to articulate the Unitarian beliefs of the day, and thereby answer challenges regarding over the theological basis of Unitarianism. The statement won wide support at an 1887 meeting of the Western Unitarian Conference.

(Leader: Pause to read aloud, or have a volunteer read the first two paragraphs of, "Things Most Commonly

Believed Today Among Us" from Handout 2. Invite participants to silently read the bullet points. Lead a discussion using the questions you have posted on newsprint.)

Today, still, no creed stands as a basis of membership in our societies. Freedom of belief and conscience, as along with freedom of association, is an active legacy of both our Universalist and Unitarian forebears.

FIND OUT MORE

[Engaging Our Theological Diversity](http://www.uua.org/documents/coa/engagingourtheodiversity.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/coa/engagingourtheodiversity.pdf), the 2005 Unitarian Universalist Association Commission on Appraisal Report

Hughes, Peter, ed. [The Cambridge Platform](#) (Boston: Skinner House, 2008)

Wesley, Alice Blair. *Our Covenant: The 2000-01 Minns Lectures*. (Meadville Lombard Theological School Press, 2002)

There is considerable information about the [history and legacy of the Cambridge Platform](#) on the website of the United Church of Christ, with whom Unitarian Universalists share a polity that is rooted in the Cambridge Platform.

WORKSHOP 8: GENTLY DOWN THE STREAM – POLITY

INTRODUCTION

As connected as we are—to friends, to family, to each other—we often feel ultimately on our own as we make our way through life, and that can be a frightening prospect. We can overcome this fear only by reaching out to one another, and in our shared courage, we will learn. — Phoebe Eng, Asian American author

This workshop explores the history of how Unitarians and Universalists have gathered and organized into religious communities. It examines differences between the Unitarian and Universalist polity traditions and identifies sources that have influenced our current governance practices. Participants view our polity—the organization, association, membership, and leadership of our congregations, individually and as an association—as an important part of our liberal religious heritage. In what ways has this heritage served us well? How has it proved challenging or limiting? Participants identify aspects of our heritage of congregational polity that can help us meet the demands of our own time.

Before leading this workshop, review the Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters in the program Introduction. Make preparations so you can accommodate any individual who may be in the group.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Offer a definition of congregational polity and track its development in our Unitarian and the Universalist faith traditions
- Explore the meaning and expression of congregational polity in contemporary Unitarian Universalist congregations
- Invite participants to consider the wisdom and strengths our heritage of congregational polity offers to contemporary Unitarian Universalists and the congregations to which we belong.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn the meaning of "polity" and understand congregational polity in a Unitarian Universalist context
- Explore the historical roots of our polity and compare contemporary practices with practices of our religious forebears
- Examine topics related to polity, including membership, association of independent congregations, and professional and lay leadership
- Explore their congregation's connections with other entities in Unitarian Universalism, including the UUA, their District staff and network of congregations, and other Unitarian Universalist organizations, affinity groups, and partner relationships
- Consider their individual role in the governance of their religious community.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: What Is Polity?	25
Activity 2: Cambridge Platform	20
Activity 3: The Historical Parade of Membership	35
Activity 4: Community of Congregations	20
Faith in Action: Lifting Up Covenantal Relationships	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Evolutions of Ordained Ministry	25
Alternate Activity 2: Debating Membership	30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Consider what being part of a Unitarian Universalist congregation means to you. If your congregation has a covenant, you may want to read it and consider its words.

Reflect on these questions:

- How does being a part of this community call to you?
- What gifts do you bring to your congregation?
- What opportunities does your congregation offer you to volunteer, to "grow" your gifts, or to acquire new gifts?

You may wish to ask participants to engage in this same spiritual practice so that they, too, arrive at the workshop centered and ready to engage with the material and the group.

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Sign-in sheet and pen/pencil
- Name tags and markers
- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1, [Schedule Template](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Create and post a workshop agenda on newsprint. The Workshop-at-a-Glance section provides time estimates. Create a welcome table near the entrance. Set out name tags and markers, the sign-in sheet and pen/pencil, and copies of the schedule.
- Make copies of the Time Line of UU History handout (Workshop 1, Handout 2), if you need some. Place time line handouts on the welcome table.
- Optional: Post the Time Line of UU History display.

Description of Activity

Welcome everyone to the workshop as they enter. Ask them to sign in, make (or pick up) name tags, and pick up the schedule and time line handouts from the welcome table. Point out the posted agenda for this workshop.

Including All Participants

Write the agenda in large, clear lettering and post it where it will be easily visible to all participants. Provide name tags large enough and markers bold enough so names will be easily visible.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Optional: Decorative cloth

Preparation for Activity

- Set up a worship or centering table with the chalice and (optional) decorative cloth.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice with these words from the Reverend Libbie Stoddard, minister emerita of the First Universalist Society of Central Square, NY:

Journeys begin in many ways:
... .. a step,
... .. an idea,
... .. a goal,
... .. a dream,
... .. a longing.

How we travel may matter more
than how far we travel;

The struggle may matter more
than what we win.

This room, this building, this fellowship,
is both a starting place for our journeys,
and a stopping place along the way.

Draw nourishment from the presence of each one
another;

share your many and varied maps;
journey on, sustained and enriched by the spirit
and wisdom and love to be found here.

ACTIVITY 1: WHAT IS POLITY? (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 1, [What is Polity?](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 1, What is Polity? and familiarize yourself with its contents.
- Write the title "Polity" on a sheet of newsprint and post it.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to free associate with the word "polity." The point is not so much to define polity, as to evoke associations with the term. You may need to prompt with terms such as "governance," "leadership," "association," and "authority." Record contributions on newsprint.

Allow four minutes for brainstorming. Then, see if the collection of words offered by participants suggest any tensions that are inherent in Unitarian Universalist congregational polity. For example, were both freedom and structure named? Rights and responsibilities? Draw double-pointed arrows to mark any tensions, or other connections, you find among the words on the newsprint.

Using Leader Resource 1, share the definitions of terms and present background information about congregational polity.

Then direct the group's attention to the words they brainstormed about "polity." Ask:

- Which are in alignment with the definitions and background offered?
- What might be modified, expanded, or added?

ACTIVITY 2: CAMBRIDGE PLATFORM (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Cambridge Platform](#)" (included in this document)
- Handout 1, [Summary of Agreements from the Cambridge Platform, 1648](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print out the story and read it several times so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Copy Handout 1, Summary of Agreements from the Cambridge Platform, 1648.
- Optional: Arrange for volunteers to read some of the excerpts aloud. Give them their assignments and a copy of Handout 1 in advance.

Description of Activity

Read aloud or present the story "The Cambridge Platform."

Distribute the handout. Mention that the preamble you offered in the story was the original 1648 wording, but for clarity and ease of reading the excerpts on the handout are provided from an 1850 "translation."

Consider each excerpt in turn, dividing the time to allow consideration of all sections. Invite participants to discuss how the agreements defined in 1648 compare to your congregation's contemporary practices.

ACTIVITY 3: THE HISTORICAL PARADE OF MEMBERSHIP (35 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [The Historical Parade of Membership](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Your congregation's bylaws that apply to membership
- Materials describing membership at your congregation
- Words your congregation uses to welcome new members

- Timepiece (minutes)
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 2, The Historical Parade of Membership and familiarize yourself with its contents.
- Obtain a copy of your congregation's bylaws concerning membership. Make copies for a small group.
- Contact the chair of the committee in your congregation that deals with membership and request any materials that describe the process, requirements, benefits, and/or responsibilities of becoming a member of your congregation. Make copies for a small group.
- Ask your minister for a copy of the words used to welcome new members to your congregation. Make copies for a small group.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
In joining a liberal church or religious society one joins both an organization and a tradition. The organization depends on the loyalty and participation of its members. The tradition includes faiths, guidelines, and customs answering to basic human needs—a consensus expressed in words from time to time but not imposed on anyone as a test for membership. — from Vincent Silliman, Arthur Foote, and Christopher Gist Raible, "A Selection of Services for Special Occasions," Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, 1981
- Optional: Download the quotation and prepare it as a digital slide. Test the computer and projector.

Description of Activity

Share the contents of Leader Resource 2, The Historical Parade of Membership.

Invite participants to form three groups. Give one group copies of your congregation's bylaws concerning membership, another group copies of materials from your membership committee, and the third group words used to welcome new members to your congregation. Note: If you do not have materials from the membership committee or the minister, have all the groups focus on the bylaws.

Give groups five minutes to review the distributed materials.

Now call everyone's attention to the quotation you have posted. Invite each group to use the congregational

materials they have been reviewing and the information you shared from Leader Resource 2, The Historical Parade of Membership, to identify ways people joining your congregation might sense they are joining "an organization" and ways might they understand that they are joining "a tradition." Allow groups to work together for ten minutes.

Invite small groups to report their findings to the larger group.

Ask, "What is missing from your congregation's membership requirements and protocols?"

ACTIVITY 4: COMMUNITY OF CONGREGATIONS (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 3, [A Community of Congregations](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 3 and prepare to present its contents.
- Visit the [UUA website](http://www.uua.org/) (at www.uua.org/). Become familiar with the list of [related and affiliated organizations](#). Look for organizations with which your congregation has had connection or which participants may know due to their individual interests or affiliations.

Description of Activity

Present the information from Leader Resource 3, A Community of Congregations by reading it aloud or paraphrasing. Invite participants to brainstorm on newsprint the ways your congregation and its members are connected to other Unitarian Universalists. Include both formal and informal relationships. Mention, if participants do not, relationships with:

Denominational organizations such as the UUA; your District; your region; UU congregations in your local area; another UU or Unitarian congregation, such as through the [Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council](#) (at www.uupcc.org/); other Unitarian Universalists groups that are not congregations; and informal connections your congregation may have with other societies.

If participants have trouble thinking of groups, mention a few you have culled from the UUA website.

When brainstorming is complete, draw a representation of your congregation on a new piece of newsprint. Invite participants to come forward one at a time and add a representation of one of your congregation's

connections or relationships to the drawing. To help the activity get started, prompt with questions such as:

- How is this congregation connected to the one in the next town/the next county/the next state?
- How is this congregation connected to the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations?
- How is this congregation connected to other Unitarian Universalist groups and organizations, such as the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee or UU camps and conference centers?

Discuss the benefits of these relationships for your congregation.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook
- Taking It Home
- Handout 2, [Signs of Membership — A Self-Reflective Exercise](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Faith in Action from this workshop and/or Spiritual Preparation section from Workshop 9

Preparation for Activity

- Download and customize Taking It Home as a handout. You may wish to add the Faith in Action activity suggestion from this workshop and/or the Spiritual Preparation questions for the next workshop. Copy Handout 2, Signs of Membership — A Self-Reflective Exercise. Participants will need this handout to do the Taking It Home exercise.
- Place a hymnbook on each participant's chair.

Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Announce the date, time, and place of the next workshop and any other "housekeeping" information. Request or remind volunteers if you want participants to read material aloud or perform other roles at the next meeting.

Invite participants to gather around the chalice. Sing together Hymn 113, "Where Is Our Holy Church." Extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: LIFTING UP COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIPS

Materials for Activity

- [Covenant is Foundational to Congregational Polity](#) on UUA.org
- Computer, projector, and speakers
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Test equipment; queue “What do we promise one another?” video (3:02)
- Create a slide and project or write on newsprint and post:
 - What do we promise one another?
 - What promises do we make to our faith?
 - What sacrifices are we willing to make to create and sustain communities of welcome, hope, and service?
 - What promises do we make to the world?
 - How do we become the people that others can count on to Stand on the Side of Love?

Description of Activity

Share this text from UUA.org. You may choose to project it as you read:

Covenant is the silk that joins Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregations, communities, and individuals together in a web of interconnection. The practice of promising to walk together is the precious core of our creedless faith.

“Covenant” is both a noun and a verb. It can be a written agreement among individual community members promising to behave in certain ways, and it can mean to engage in mutual promises with Spirit, with other people and communities.

Every congregation has covenanted to “affirm and promote” our “Principles and Practices” and to promise “one another our mutual trust and support.” Beyond these mutual commitments, which each congregation makes when it formally joins the Association, it can be hard to know exactly how congregations and communities are called to steward their associational covenant.

Here are examples of how some congregations honor this larger covenant:

- engage in [Standing on the Side of Love](#) justice efforts

- participate in pulpit or choir swaps with neighboring congregations
- learn and worship alongside other congregations by participating in [district or regional](#) programs (see your district/regional website for more information)
- provide direct services to other congregations by paying Fair Share dues to our [Association](#) and to districts/regions
- ask leaders from other congregations for advice and support
- send delegates to our Unitarian Universalist Association’s [General Assembly](#)
- attend installations and ordinations at area congregations

Ask participants to consider how your congregation or community upholds the promise to offer one another our mutual trust and support. What relationships do you have with other Unitarian Universalist congregations and groups? Make a list on newsprint. As a group, decide how to share with others the idea that these relationships between and among UU congregations and groups are an important part of our polity and of our covenant as Unitarian Universalists.

Explain that at General Assembly in 2013, participants were invited to consider the commitments and promises they and their congregations or groups make as Unitarian Universalists. Share the video, which introduced a reflection process at that General Assembly. Organize a similar reflection process in your congregation or group, inviting people to meet in small groups to consider the questions posed in the video and posted on newsprint or the slide you have prepared.

Variation

Work with your minister and governing body to design an annual renewal of covenant for the leadership and the congregation, or lift up the idea of covenant at an annual recognition of volunteers.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

After the workshop, co-leaders should talk together to evaluate this workshop and plan future workshops. Use these questions to guide your shared reflection and planning:

- What parts of the workshop worked well and which did not? Why? How was the success, or lack of success, related to the topics? How was it related to the types of activities?

- How can we use this experience to make future workshops more effective? What would we change if we were to lead this workshop again?
- What was left unfinished in the workshop that should still be addressed? How and when will we address it?
- What strengths did we each bring to the workshop?
- As co-leaders, when did we work well together?
- What might help us be better leaders in future workshops?
- What do we need to prepare for the next workshop? Who will handle which tasks? Who will lead which activities?

- Congregational bylaws, ministerial covenant, words of installation, or, with the permission of your minister, the ministerial contract

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 4, Evolutions of Ordained Ministry and prepare to present it to the group.
- Make copies of the congregational document(s) you have gathered concerning ministry.

Description of Activity

Present the contents of the Leader Resource 4, Evolutions of Ordained Ministry in your own words or by reading it aloud. Distribute copies of your congregation's bylaws, ministerial contract or ministerial covenant. Invite participants to discuss what that document tells you about the relationship of minister and congregation, and any procedures related to professional ministry such as search, settlement or installation.

TAKING IT HOME

As connected as we are—to friends, to family, to each other—we often feel ultimately on our own as we make our way through life, and that can be a frightening prospect. We can overcome this fear only by reaching out to one another, and in our shared courage, we will learn. — Phoebe Eng, Asian American author

Conrad Wright writes, in *Congregational Polity: A Historical Survey of Unitarian and Universalist Practice*, that within the Unitarian Universalist tradition of congregational polity, "it is left to the individual to decide whether he or she belongs within the covenant of a particular local religious community, and power is not assigned to ecclesiastical authority to decide whether the applicant is to be allowed in."

If you are already a member of the congregation, use Handout 2, Signs of Membership — A Self-Reflective Exercise to reflect on your decision to become a member. How would you have answered these questions when you first decided to become a member? Do any of the questions offer a continuing challenge for you?

If you are not a member of the congregation, use Handout 2, Signs of Membership — A Self-Reflective Exercise as an opportunity for discernment if and when you do consider becoming a member.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: EVOLUTIONS OF ORDAINED MINISTRY (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 4, [Evolutions of Ordained Ministry](#) (included in this document)

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: DEBATING MEMBERSHIP (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [The Historical Parade of Membership](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 5, [Membership Debate Scenarios](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 2 and familiarize yourself with its contents.
- Print and prepare Leader Resource 5 for all participants.

Description of Activity

Read aloud or present the contents of Leader Resource 2, The Historical Parade of Membership. If you paraphrase, read aloud the section about the 1963 General Assembly.

Invite the participants to form two groups. To one group, assign the designation "pro," and to the other, "con." Print out and prepare Leader Resource 5, Membership Debate Scenarios, and give the "pro" group the first half labeled PRO and the "con" group the other half labeled CON.

Invite each group to spend the next 15 minutes preparing their side of the debate. After 15 minutes, invite a representative from each group to present their case. Once each side has been heard, open the conversation to the whole group for discussion and debate.

STORY: THE CAMBRIDGE PLATFORM

In 1637, the settlers in what was to become the town of Dedham, Massachusetts, wanted to start a church. The problem was, the roughly 30 families didn't know each other, and, therefore, didn't know what sort of church to begin. As newcomers to the American wilderness, they had had time only to set up enough government to apportion land, build and equip homes, and begin the work of farming. Religiously, they were strangers. However, the exigencies of survival and the religious call of their hearts imposed the need for them to come together.

To that end, they began a yearlong series of cottage meetings, each organized around discussion of a particular question. We might think that in order to know each other's religious views and needs these New England ancestors might choose topics like salvation, damnation, predestination or morality. But they did not. What they mostly discussed were matters of civil organization, for in their understanding, the church would reflect the ethic of the larger society, and what they longed for was sincere religious association based in love and founded in freedom.

In the England they had left behind, these meetings would have been illegal. The bishops of the English churches had begun to crack down on the ministers, scholars, and lay people who looked at the lessons of the Bible stories in a political and social light. Discontent grew, not with church theology so much as with the ecclesiastical structure that dictated every facet of local church affairs. The idea of a free church took shape among the people—a church whose individual congregations were controlled by no outside authority.

This was the sort of church the small group in Dedham, Massachusetts, decided to build. It was a church much like its neighbors, and much like the other churches that would be built in New England in the coming decades, a radically lay-led church gathered by mutual consent rather than by mutual belief, founded in covenant rather than creed, and governed by the congregation itself.

Make no mistake, this group did not hold widely varying theological beliefs that would have made it unable to exist as a creedal church, but their belief that churches should be self-governing organizations gathered in the spirit of mutual love was paramount. This basis for gathering and governing a church by congregational determination was described ten years after the founding of the Dedham church in a document known commonly as the Cambridge Platform (or, more formally, as A Platform of Church Discipline Gathered

Out of the Word of God and Agreed Upon by the Elders and Messengers of the Churches Assembled in the Synod at Cambridge in New England).

The Cambridge Platform defined congregational polity. Based in the Calvinist theology of the Puritans, it set out a structure for churches founded on New Testament descriptions of early churches. It defined matters of church officers, ministry, membership, and cooperation between churches. Although changes in practice were being made as early as the second generation, the Cambridge Platform remains a defining document for the denominations, including Unitarian Universalism, that continue to practice congregational polity. Of the 65 congregations that voted to ratify the Platform in 1648, 21 are members of the Unitarian Universalist Association today.

HANDOUT 1: SUMMARY OF AGREEMENTS FROM THE CAMBRIDGE PLATFORM, 1648

Here are some of the agreements made by the signers of the Cambridge Platform (or, more formally, as *A Platform of Church Discipline Gathered Out of the Word of God and Agreed Upon by the Elders and Messengers of the Churches Assembled in the Synod at Cambridge in New England*):

- Differences with the Anglican and Presbyterian churches were ecclesiastical rather than theological (i.e. pertaining to church structure and governance rather than to belief).
- "Saints by calling" (i.e. those who have professed their faith and live pious lives) become a church only by covenant.
- The covenant is not only between members but also with God and is lived in community according to Christian principles. True covenant must be lived out, not simply professed.
- There are two types of Elders. The first type includes Pastors and Teachers, who are ministers of the Gospel. The second type is the Ruling Elders, who are concerned with the administration of the church.
- Pastors are concerned with communicating Biblical wisdom and calling people to lives of Christian principle. Teachers are concerned with doctrine, running the schools and communicating knowledge and correct belief. Both are responsible for the health of the church covenant as it was lived out among the people.
- Churches are free to choose their own ministers and officers, as well as to ordain them.
- Not just anyone can be a member of a church. There should be tests for membership. Qualifications for membership should be repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ.
- Membership is not to be taken lightly. Since members are not admitted without due consideration they should not leave without due consideration so that their leaving does not harm the full community.
- Although churches are autonomous, they should cooperate with each other and see to each other's welfare.
- Church government and civil government were meant to be separate and not in opposition to

each other, but to aid each other. Civil authorities cannot force people to be members of churches or to take communion.

HANDOUT 2: SIGNS OF MEMBERSHIP — A SELF-REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

Conrad Wright writes, in *Congregational Polity: A Historical Survey of Unitarian and Universalist Practice*, that in the Unitarian Universalist tradition of congregational polity, "it is left to the individual to decide whether he or she belongs within the covenant of a particular local religious community, and power is not assigned to ecclesiastical authority to decide whether the applicant is to be allowed in." (p. 206).

What questions might one use for discerning whether or not one is prepared to join a Unitarian Universalist congregation? Here are some suggestions:

- Am I prepared to identify myself as a Unitarian Universalist to my family and friends? Do I both know enough about this faith tradition, and feel secure in my identification with it, to "go public?"
- Am I committed to developing my understanding of my own personal beliefs? Do I understand that the Principles and Purposes are not a creed, and that my formation as a Unitarian Universalist does not begin and end with these broad statements?
- Am I a Unitarian Universalist locally and globally? Do I recognize that the congregation that I am joining is (most likely) a member of an Association of congregations, and that our collective participation in that Association strengthens our influence in the world?
- Am I prepared to participate in the lay leadership of this congregation? Do I accept that the essence of congregationalism is willing participation in the determination of how we will "walk together," and that my supportive voice and loving action are necessary to this congregation's health?
- Am I prepared to share the financial responsibilities of this congregation? Do I understand that Unitarian Universalist congregations are self-supporting, and that I have an obligation as a member to assist the congregation in meeting its commitments?

LEADER RESOURCE 1: WHAT IS POLITY?

Definitions from Donald K. McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996).

DEFINITIONS

Polity (from Greek, *politeia*, and Latin, *politia*, "administration of a commonwealth), a form of church government adopted by an ecclesiastical body.

Congregational a form of church government in which governing authority is with the local congregation, which is autonomous and independent.

Ecclesiastical (from Greek, *ekklesia* "assembly called out," "church"), relating to the clergy, church organizations, administration, or governance. Contrasted with "secular."

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY POLITY?

Ask a group of Unitarian Universalists what "polity" is and you are likely to get a wide range of responses. Perhaps someone may offer a definition, such as "a form of church governance." There might also be quizzical looks, or even a diatribe about bureaucracies. Those who know little about what polity *is* may understand more about how polity is *expressed* in our congregational and denominational life. Perhaps the more salient questions about polity are "When do we use it?" (answer: constantly) and "What does it do?" (answer: define who we are). In the words of the Commission on Appraisal, "... every time we call a new minister, or vote on a resolution of ethical witness, or give money to denominational bodies, or receive financial or expert assistance from a denominational body, or deliberate our ministry to the larger community, or question standards and practices that are commonly honored, we touch on issues of congregational polity."

"Polity" is a general term for the form of church organization adopted by a religious tradition. Unitarian Universalists operate under a particular form of polity called "congregational polity," defined as "the rights and responsibilities of each properly organized congregation to make its own decisions about its own affairs without recourse to any higher human authority."

Congregational polity is encoded in the bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, Section 3-1.2:

Nothing in these Bylaws shall be construed as infringing upon the congregational polity or internal self-government of member societies, including the exclusive right to each society to

call and ordain its own minister or ministers, and to control its own property and funds...

Put more simply, polity can be understood as the way we are, as Unitarian Universalists, and why we are that way. Or, in the words of Paul Harrison, "polity is faith put into practice."

Our current framework of polity is a descendent of a rich and robust heritage, starting with the Cambridge Platform of 1648, and evolving through the lived experiences of all who, in covenantal gathering and association, have called themselves Unitarian, Universalist, or Unitarian Universalist. The origins of congregational polity lie in the Reformation, with the first intimations that the power for creating ordered communities of faith lay with the people, not with a hierarchy of clerics. These first stirrings are reflected in the earliest gathered communities of Massachusetts, such as the Dedham church (see Activity 2) and the First Universalist Church of Gloucester (see Activity 4). So foundational is congregational polity to our faith tradition that the Commission on Appraisal has called it "our unwritten constitution."

Soon after the merger of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America in 1961, the new Unitarian Universalist Association published a Commission report, "The Free Church in a Changing World." The authors articulated the key principles of our distinctively democratic form of church government which are foundational for congregational polity:

- The right of the church to admit members in accordance with its own definition of qualifications;
- The right of the church to select its own leadership;
- The right of the church to control its own property; and
- The right of the church to enter freely and voluntarily into association with other churches.

From the beginning, and throughout our denominations' histories, our commitment to congregational polity has brought with it inherent tensions. We come by this naturally from what Earl Holt refers to as a polity that values "reason and persuasion over authoritarianism and legalism." How much freedom, and how much discipline? What about rights versus rules? When does the democratic process serve, and when does it hinder? Who has authority? What about power? Autonomous congregations, or a community of congregations?

Peter Raible wrote these words in his introduction to a course of study of Unitarian Universalist polity:

Polity is not theology, but belief issues affect church organization. Polity is not history, but how we govern our churches grows out of an historical context. Polity is not "how to do ministry," but clerics cannot work effectively without understanding the strictures of governance under which they labor.

Polity—it's everywhere.

LEADER RESOURCE 2: THE HISTORICAL PARADE OF MEMBERSHIP

The notion that it is the right of every congregation to determine its own qualifications for membership is basic to congregational polity. Hand-in-hand with this notion is the understanding of our faith communities captured by the phrase "we unite" rather than "we believe." Our gathered communities are defined by a visible covenant, not by allegiance to a creed. From the beginning, our spiritual and historical ancestors have wrestled with this question: "without without creeds or confessions, what are the standards of acceptance to membership?" Though this question is settled ultimately by each individual congregation, our tradition's no congregations in our tradition do not stand in isolation. They are associated both formally and informally with one another, and so questions of membership — who constitutes the congregation — are a shared concern.

The Cambridge Platform of 1648 (see Activity 2) clearly articulated that gathered churches were to be constituted of "Saints by Calling." For the Puritans, this term meant those who were predestined, or elected, for salvation. Though it was impossible to be sure exactly who those would be, the criteria, or "marks," that the community sought in individuals were:

1. knowledge of the principles of the Gospel;
2. repentance from sin, and an attempt to lead a blameless life; and
3. experience of having been visited by the Holy Spirit.

In 1662, a synod of churches responded to a dwindling number of people who testified to a conversion experience, adopted a "Half-Way Covenant" permitting the baptism of the children of the children of the Saints, with the hope that they would, one day, receive personal conversion. Later in the 17th century, individual churches began to change their practices, opening up baptism and communion to all.

In the mid-18th century, former notions of membership were challenged by the waves of the Great Awakening that swept across the northeastern Northeastern states. On the one hand, the heightened emotionalism of the religious revival led to conversions, and thus growth in numbers for congregations eager for new, enthusiastic members. On the other hand, many clergy and lay leaders alike distrusted highly emotional conversion experiences, and argued for additional criteria for membership beyond a conversion experience.

The late 18th century brought more sectarianism to the young Republic. People began to affiliate with a faith community based on theological outlook or other personal factors. The legal structure which ended governmental support for certain established churches also changed the nature of membership. When the churches were no longer supported by publicly collected taxes, congregational operations had to be funded from the voluntary contributions of their members. By the mid-nineteenth century, the answer to the question "Who constitutes the church?" was at least partly answered by the method by which the church would be supported— voluntary subscription, or pews that would be rented, sold, or taxed. James Freeman Clarke of Boston's Church of the Disciples (gathered in 1841), disagreed with defining membership in part by financial support of the institution. He believed that the church was made up of "all who expressed a desire to unite for religious purposes," regardless of ability to help finance the church's operation.

As the 19th century brought more associational activity to both Unitarians and Universalists, there was a clear concern as to how larger organizational efforts would affect local churches and their members. Both Unitarians and Universalists denominational bodies debated what beliefs they held in common and whether congregations ought to be held to particular broad statements of faith. The Universalists adopted the 1803 Winchester profession, which had a "liberty clause" so that churches could develop their own statements of faith.

In 1900, the newly elected president of the American Unitarian Association (AUA), Samuel Eliot, established a committee to collect information on church practices regarding criteria for membership. Many churches reported they had adopted a formal covenant, but none had included in their covenant a creedal restriction on membership. Soon afterward, the AUA published its *Handbook for Unitarian Congregational Churches*. The Handbook reaffirmed that there must be no theological test or confession of faith required for membership, yet continued, "it may wisely be provided that a proper committee first assure itself of the moral probity and serious intention of all persons applying for membership before they are received into full enrollment." The Handbook did not articulate, however, what exactly what would constitute "moral probity and serious intention," nor how or by whom exactly it was to be detected.

Before the consolidation of the AUA and the Universalist Church of America (UCA) as the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), several committees researched and published recommendations for the anticipated association. A commission on The Church and Its

Leadership articulated the rights to be reserved for the local church ; the first of which these was the right of the each church to admit members in accordance with its own definition of qualifications. When the new UUA came to adopt a Constitution constitution and bylaws, this understanding of congregational polity was affirmed in Article II, Section 3, as "the independence and autonomy of local churches, fellowships and associate members;" and further assured "nothing in this Constitution or Bylaws of the Association shall be deemed to infringe upon the congregational polity of churches and fellowships."

Though the new bylaws were a clear statement of the UUA's intentions, and were deeply rooted in historical congregational polity, an event early in the Association's young life presented a challenge to the notion that each congregation defines its own criteria for membership. At the 1963 General Assembly in Chicago, a constitutional amendment was debated that would require congregations to demonstrate that they had a policy of "open membership" in order to qualify for voting rights in the UUA General Assembly. Historian Conrad Wright describes what happened:

The proposal was introduced in 1962 by a number of ministers from churches in the South, who felt that an explicit avowal of nondiscrimination inserted in the Constitution of the continental association would support them in their efforts to eliminate (racial) segregation locally. It provided that a church would be entitled to be represented by delegates only if in the preceding fiscal year it had "maintained a policy of admitting persons to membership without discrimination on account of race, color, or national origin."

The proposal came up for decision in 1963 at the meeting in Chicago. Meanwhile, a considerable number of ministers and laypersons, who were wholly in sympathy with the intent of the amendment, questioned whether this particular proposal was the best way to achieve the intended goal. The Association had never been given the right to set doctrinal standards for member churches, and neither the Board of Trustees nor the General Assembly had been given the power to discipline or expel churches for doctrinal irregularity, or to intrude on the internal self-government of autonomous churches. The question was central to an understanding of the congregational way of the churches.

Although the proposal won the majority of votes, it did not receive the necessary two-thirds of delegates to become a Constitutional constitutional amendment. In

1967, another amendment was proposed and passed. The successful amendment declared the responsibility of both Association and churches "to promote the full participation of persons, without regard to race, color, sex, or national origin," but did not attach this responsibility to an individual congregation's right to vote at General Assembly.

In congregational polity, the right to establish criteria for membership rests firmly with the local congregation. Yet our history raises two intriguing questions to consider: What is — or should be — the criteria for membership in a Unitarian Universalist congregation? And, should the UUA consider legislative proposals that would require congregations to demonstrate certain commitments?

LEADER RESOURCE 3: A COMMUNITY OF CONGREGATIONS

While freedom and independence were among the first concerns of those who founded the first Universalist churches and the precursors to the Unitarian churches, so, too, was association. The ideas of freedom and order have been held in tension throughout our history, often reflecting the push-pull to centralize and then again decentralize denominational authority.

Over the centuries, there have been a number of ways Unitarian and Universalist churches have joined together in association. Some ways have been formal, such as national conventions, and some have been informal, such as local ministers' gatherings. Some ways have been ecclesiastical, such as to settle church disputes or to fellowship ministers. Other ways have been administrative, such as to print religious tracts or to raise funds for missionary work.

The Cambridge Platform, the foundational document of the New England Standing Order Churches that would later form the core of Unitarianism in the nineteenth century, called for congregations to cooperate and support one another. No structure was defined for this cooperation, but, early on, ministers' councils gathered to discuss the issues of the day. Over time these ecclesiastical councils took on the work of settling local disputes and assuring fit candidates for the ministry.

In the mid-eighteenth century, the itinerant preachers of the Great Awakening presented a new kind of challenge to the established churches. When ministers not associated with a single, fixed church came to town and preached their version of religion to all who came to hear, local societies could no longer count on orthodoxy of belief among the townspeople or impose discipline. Improved travel presented a challenge to the authority of locally based ecclesiastical councils, as it became possible in times of dispute for a minister or church to gather a council from the societies most likely to support their position. By early in the nineteenth century tensions were rising between liberal and conservative factions in the Standing Order churches. Between 1825 and 1835, some established churches split along Unitarian and Trinitarian lines. The newly emerging Unitarian churches were autonomous. The American Unitarian Association (AUA), headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, was founded in 1825 as a voluntary association of individuals, not congregations. Its goal was simply to provide printed tracts and missionary support to advance the young Unitarian movement. In 1865, at the urging of Henry Whitney Bellows, the National Conference was started as the first Unitarian ecclesiastical body on a national level. The following

year, the National Conference organized fourteen districts (known as local conferences), though each local group had its own focus, ranging from discussion to mission. In 1911, the National Conference was renamed the General Conference, and in 1925 was rolled into the AUA, bringing administrative and ecclesiastical functions together in one body.

Like the Unitarians, the Universalists followed a system of congregational polity from the very beginning. The first Universalist church, in Gloucester, Massachusetts, was gathered by covenant. One of their number, John Murray, called to be the minister.

Although the Universalist churches had no founding document like the Cambridge Platform calling them into association with each other, they met on ecclesiastical matters from the earliest days. In 1785, just six years after the Gloucester church was founded, the Universalist churches met at a convention in Oxford, Massachusetts. In 1790, seventeen Universalists representing eight societies met as the Philadelphia Convention and drew up articles of faith and an organizational plan. Similar conventions would be held in the following decades.

The New England Convention of Universalists was the strongest of the several geographically-defined associations, and in 1803 Convention delegates from 35 societies assumed the right to define a statement of belief for all Universalists in the Winchester Profession. The Convention also formalized the plan of church government created at the Philadelphia Convention into a Plan of General Association that called for annual meetings, regular representation by local churches, and the credentialing and discipline of ministers.

Beginning in 1825, state conventions were organized and delegates were chosen from informal local associations. The states in turn sent delegates to the larger area conventions. In 1833, the New England Convention became the General Convention of Universalists in the United States, the single national organization. However, the General Convention suffered from unequal representation and low attendance, and there were calls for increased centralization. In 1865, the Convention instituted its first professional administrative positions to bring stronger leadership to the national level, though in reality the state conventions retained a good deal of power.

The nineteenth century was a time ripe for cooperation not only among congregations, but also in affinity groups that shared common interests or goals. Missionary societies, associations of women, religious educators, young people, and publishing houses arose to unite

Unitarians and Universalists alike (for more information see Workshops 11 and 16).

Early in the twentieth century, Universalists began to build a central organization for bureaucratic functions. In 1919 the Universalist General Convention opened its first national headquarters in Boston, Massachusetts, and ecclesiastical and administrative functions were combined in the General Convention. In 1938 the Convention became the Universalist Church of America (UCA).

The consolidation of the AUA and UCA in 1961 retained many of the associational aspects of both denominations. Like both denominations, the new structure had three tiers: autonomous congregations, geographically- based districts, and the national organization providing administrative and ecclesiastical functions. The General Assembly, which transacts the business of the association, continues to be made up of delegates from local congregations. While structure and procedure differ in many ways from what came before, the essential points of congregational polity remain as a heritage from both Universalist and Unitarian denominations.

Unitarian Universalists, thus, continue to live with the natural tension between independence and association, freedom and order. We continue to embody the words of the Cambridge Platform of 1648 that "although churches be distinct, and therefore may not be confounded one with another, and equal, and therefore have not dominion one over another; yet all the churches ought to preserve church communion one with another."

LEADER RESOURCE 4: EVOLUTIONS OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

Unitarian

In the list of men who subscribed to the 1637 covenant of community of Dedham, Massachusetts appear the names John Allin and John Hunting. In 1639, the people of Dedham followed the convention of congregation polity that would later be recorded in the Cambridge Platform to elect from their number a minister and a ruling elder. John Allin was chosen to the minister; John Hunting to be the ruling elder.

On April 24, 1639, a simple ceremony formalized the appointments. Allin and two lay members of the congregation ordained John Hunting as elder by a laying on of hands, and Hunting and two members ordained Allin as minister by the same method. Allin's sermon was based on I Corinthians 3:9, "For we are laborers together with God." Although we do not have the text of that sermon, we can surmise from this founding text that its tone was about the work that the congregation would do together. Allin and Hunting were elected by the people, but not separate from the people. While ministers and members from neighboring churches were invited to the ceremony, their only role was to express their "love and approbation of the proceedings of the church by giving to the officers chosen the right hand of fellowship." The Dedham church was welcomed into community of churches; the focus was on the work of the congregation.

This egalitarian view of ministry was to change as, by the end of the century, ministry became a profession. A look at the ordination of Ebenezer Parkman in Westborough, Massachusetts on October 28, 1724 highlights some of the changes. At Parkman's ordination service, the prayers, sermon and right hand of fellowship were all offered by local ministers who welcomed Parkman into a professional group rather than welcoming Westborough into a community of churches. Parkman described the occasion as his "Solemn Separation to the Work of the Gospel Ministry." The focus became the relationship of minister to vocation, not the relationship of minister to congregation.

Where once the lay members of a congregation recognized their choice of religious leader with ordination, ordination now involved other members of the clergy, and emphasized a "Solemn Separation of (a) person to the Work of the Sacred Ministry." Where once a church might operate for many months until a minister was found, now churches locked their doors when they lacked a minister to fill the pulpit. No longer did ministers

serve the congregation that ordained them until retirement. Instead, a minister might serve several parishes throughout a career.

In the early seventeenth century, as the Standing Order churches took root, it was the province of societies to select and ordain their own ministers. By the dawn of the eighteenth century, it was the province of local ecclesiastical councils to recommend candidates for the ministry and to become involved in matters of discipline. By the turn of the next century things would shift yet again. As the Unitarian Controversy broke down networks of cooperation, especially among ministers, the ecclesiastical councils waned in their authority. It was not until the founding of the National Conference in 1865 that the Unitarians would have a national ecclesiastical body. Fellowshiping of ministers remained a rather haphazard affair until a Committee on Fellowship was established in 1878.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the definition of ordained ministry gradually widened beyond parish boundaries to include those categories of ministry that we would today call community ministry. Professors in theological schools and ministers working in social services came to be known as Reverend just as their parish counterparts were.

Universalist

Like the first Puritan churches, early Universalist congregations, being accustomed to Baptist farmer/preachers, made little distinction between minister and laity. But unlike the Puritans, the Universalists had ecclesiastical organizations almost from the beginning. State and General Conventions ordained ministers, and were involved in matters of discipline. As early as 1800 the New England Convention had a formal Committee on Ordination. Even after the formation of the General Convention in 1833, the state conventions continued to hold so much power that congregations could call only those ministers in fellowship with the state convention. Churches that defied this rule could lose membership in the Convention. This remained one of the largest differences between the Universalists and the Unitarians, as the Unitarians continued to recommend, but not insist, that churches call ministers who were in fellowship with the denomination. Additionally, Universalist polity did not allow its ministers to hold dual fellowship with another denomination until 1917.

Merger

Approaching the denominational consolidation in 1961, fellowship in the Universalist ministry was conferred by the Universalist Church of America (UCA) (formerly the General Convention) or the state conventions.

Fellowshipping of Unitarian ministers came under the purview of the Committee on Fellowship of American Unitarian Association (AUA) beginning in 1925 when the AUA and its ecclesiastical counterpart, the General Conference, merged. Upon consolidation of the UCA

and AUA, a single Fellowship Committee was formed to see to credentialing and discipline of ministers. The Unitarian Universalist Association Department of Ministry was created to oversee matters of ministry, from education to settlement.

LEADER RESOURCE 5: MEMBERSHIP DEBATE SCENARIOS

Make a copy of this resource and cut it in half, the PRO section on one half and the CON section on the other half.

PRO:

It is 1963, in Chicago, and you are delegates to the UUA's General Assembly. You support an amendment to the UUA's Constitution and Bylaws that would require congregations to maintain an open, nondiscriminatory membership policy in order to qualify for voting at General Assembly. You feel this is the best way to achieve the racial inclusion in our congregations. You believe it is appropriate that congregations "step up to the plate" in this way, even if the amendment strikes some as a violation of congregational polity. You think that, despite the logistics of the UUA's Board of Trustees trying to adequately certify the compliance of over 1,000 congregations each year, the benefits far outweigh any efforts.

CON:

It is 1963, in Chicago, and you are delegates to the UUA's General Assembly. You do not support an amendment to the UUA's Constitution and Bylaws that would require congregations to maintain an open, nondiscriminatory membership policy in order to qualify for voting at General Assembly. You are in total sympathy with the intentions expressed in the amendment, but you are opposed to the method being used to accomplish the goal of racial desegregation. You believe this proposal would inappropriately allow the Association to set conditions on membership and voting. While you see the legitimate concerns behind this move, you believe the proposed method for achieving it is unworkable and represents an infringement on congregational polity.

FIND OUT MORE

Commission on Appraisal, [*Interdependence: Renewing Congregational Polity*](#) (Boston: UUA, 1997)

Hughes, Peter, ed. *The Cambridge Platform: Contemporary Reader's Edition* (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2008)

Wesley, Alice Blair. *Our Covenant: The 2000-01 Minns Lectures* (Chicago: Meadville Lombard Press, 2002)

Wright, Conrad. *Congregational Polity: A Historical Survey of Unitarian and Universalist Practice* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1997)

Wright, Conrad. *Walking Together: Polity and Participation in Unitarian Universalist Churches* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1989)

[*The Cambridge Platform of Church Discipline*](#) (at

books.google.com/books?id=aSkPAAAAIAAJ&dq=cambridge+platform&printsec=frontcover&source=bl&ots=rOJCRuErSX&sig=fdFZ_IGMsFG9j0r0RJPV5g_cXr0&hl=en&ei=kg2MSv-

[_FliYMb3OyZMO&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=6#v=onepage&q=&f=false](#)) (Boston: Perkins and Whipple, 1850)

WORKSHOP 9: RISE IN THE SEA — UNITARIANISM

INTRODUCTION

Mindful of truth ever exceeding our knowledge and community ever exceeding our practice, reverently we covenant together, beginning with ourselves as we are... — Walter Royal Jones, Jr., chair of the commission that drafted the 1985 revision of the Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes

This workshop examines the character and contributions of the Unitarian thread of our tradition. It considers the history of Unitarianism as a theology, a movement, and an institution, and highlights important people and events before the consolidation with the Universalists.

Before you lead this workshop, review the Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters in the program Introduction and prepare to accommodate anyone who may be in the group.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Explore the unique identity of Unitarianism through key people and events from its history
- Trace the history of theological and institutional Unitarianism, highlighting important turning points.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Become familiar with key events that defined Unitarianism as a theology and an institution
- Learn about the lives and contributions of some important Unitarians of the past.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: The Baltimore Sermon	30

Activity 2: The Almighty Love	15
Activity 3: From Antitrinitarian to Unitarian	25
Activity 4: Remembering The Iowa Sisterhood	30
Faith in Action: Exploring Your Congregation's History — Long-term Project	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Unitarian Summer — The Isles of Shoals	30
Alternate Activity 2: The Dedham Case	25

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Set aside time to consider:

- What does the word "God" mean to you? Is it a sustaining spiritual concept, a useful way to communicate concepts of the sacred to other people, an irrelevant concept, or something else all together?
- Like early Unitarians, do you understand the Divine as a single entity, or a concept which might have multiple expressions or forms, each Divine?

You may wish to ask participants to engage in this same spiritual practice so that they, too, arrive at the workshop centered and ready to engage with the material and the group.

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Sign-in sheet and pen/pencil
- Name tags and markers
- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1, [Schedule Template](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Create and post a workshop agenda on newsprint. The Workshop-at-a-Glance section provides time estimates. Create a welcome table near the entrance. Set out name tags and markers, the sign-in sheet and pen/pencil, and copies of the schedule.
- Make copies of the Time Line of UU History handout (Workshop 1, Handout 2), if you need some. Place time line handouts on the welcome table.
- Optional: Post the Time Line of UU History display.

Description of Activity

Welcome everyone to the workshop as they enter. Ask them to sign in, make (or pick up) name tags, and pick up the schedule and time line handouts from the welcome table. Point out the posted agenda for this workshop.

Including All Participants

Write the agenda in large, clear lettering and post it where it will be easily visible to all participants. Provide name tags large enough and markers bold enough so names will be easily visible.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Optional: Decorative cloth

Preparation for Activity

- Set up a worship or centering table with the chalice and (optional) decorative cloth.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice and share these words of Rabindrinath Tagore, a Bengali (Indian) poet who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913:

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls
Where words come out from the depth of truth
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit
Where the mind is led forward by thee
Into ever-widening thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

Tell participants that Rabindrinath Tagore was a member of India's Brahma Samaj religious movement, which was influenced by Unitarianism in the 19th century and retains connections to the Unitarian Universalist Association today.

ACTIVITY 1: THE BALTIMORE SERMON (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Baltimore Sermon](#) (included in this document) "
- Leader Resource 1, [William Ellery Channing, Portrait](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Print out the story and prepare to present it. Make copies for participants to take home at the close of the workshop.
- Write on a sheet of newsprint:
 - God: Unity or Trinity?
 - Christ: Fully human or two natures, human and divine?
 - Nature of God: Loving or condemning?
- On another sheet, write:
 - I used to think ...
 - Now I think ...
 - As a Unitarian Universalist, I wonder ...
- Print out Leader Resource 1, William Ellery Channing, Portrait to pass around.

- Optional: Download Leader Resource 1 and prepare the portrait as a digital slide. Prepare a digital slide with the three topics and the three sentence prompts. Test the computer and projector.
- Optional: Make copies of the story for participants to take home.

Description of Activity

Pass around or display the portrait of William Ellery Channing (Leader Resource 1).

Present the story "The Baltimore Sermon."

Invite brief comment and questions about the material. Explain that Channing's Baltimore Sermon is an "evolutionary document," that is, one which describes his theological journey away from some of his previous beliefs and assertions to new religious understandings. Say that Unitarianism, and Unitarian Universalism, have always encouraged personal exploration of this kind.

Invite participants to move into discussion groups of three. Post the three topics and three sentence prompts. Invite participants to select one or two of the topics, drawn from the major points of Channing's sermon, as a beginning point for conversation. Suggest they use the sentence prompts to help them reflect

Allow triads 15 minutes for sharing. Then invite participants to share comments with the large group.

ACTIVITY 2: THE ALMIGHTY LOVE (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [The Almighty Love](#) (included in this document)
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook
- Optional: Piano or keyboard

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1, The Almighty Love.
- Become comfortable singing Theodore Parker's lyrics (Handout 1) to one of the tunes provided for Hymns 322 or 370 in *Singing the Living Tradition*.
- Optional: Arrange for an accompanist to play the hymn.

Description of Activity

Introduce the activity in these words or your own:
Both the Unitarian and Universalist traditions have a rich history of hymnody, the art of writing

music for the church. Many Unitarian Universalists enjoy singing hymns, despite the old joke, "Why are UUs so bad at singing hymns? Because they're always reading ahead to see if they agree with the lyrics!" Historically, hymns have been signposts that show the evolution of our theology and our social justice concerns.

Distribute Handout 1 and lead participants to sing the hymn together or read the lyrics aloud together.

After singing, ask:

- According to Parker's lyrics, what is the nature of God?
- Is Parker's naturalism an attractive concept for you?

ACTIVITY 3: FROM ANTITRINITARIAN TO UNITARIAN (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [From Antitrinitarian to Unitarian](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 2, [Defining Moments](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 2, From Antitrinitarian to Unitarian and prepare to read or present it.
- Copy Handout 2, Defining Moments.
- Invite five volunteers to read the quotes in Handout 2, Defining Moments. Give them the handouts and their assignments in advance.

Description of Activity

Explain that although Channing's and Parker's sermons were defining moments in American Unitarianism, Unitarian ideas date back nearly two thousand years. Distribute the handouts and tell participants they provide some milestones in Unitarian theological history. Present or read the leader resource, pausing where indicated for the volunteers to read the quotations.

Invite participant comments and questions.

Ask:

- What relevance does the Unitarian/Trinitarian debate have for Unitarian Universalists today?
- Have you ever had occasion to explain the word "Unitarian" to someone? How might knowing the history of the term be helpful?

ACTIVITY 4: REMEMBERING THE IOWA SISTERHOOD (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Iowa Sisterhood](#) (included in this document) "
- Handout 3, [Remembering the Iowa Sisterhood](#) (included in this document)
- One large candle or chalice, and lighter
- 21 tea light candles, or 21 LED battery-operated tea lights
- Centering table and decorative cloth
- Optional: A copy of *Singing the Living Tradition* and a piano or keyboard

Preparation for Activity

- Print out the story "The Iowa Sisterhood" and prepare to read or tell it.
- Copy Handout 3, Remembering the Iowa Sisterhood, for all participants.
- Prepare a centering table by covering a table with a cloth and arranging a central candle (or chalice) and twenty-one tea lights.
- Decide on roles for the remembrance activity and how you will assign them. You might invite three or four volunteers to alternate reading names from the list on Handout 3 while other participants take turns lighting a candle. Or, you might invite each participant in turn to light a candle and say a name. Provide the handout in advance to participants who may read aloud from it, and make sure everyone knows it is okay to "pass."
- Optional: Arrange for a musician to accompany the hymn.

Description of Activity

Share the story of the Iowa Sisterhood. Ask if participants have heard of the Sisterhood before and invite them to offer any additional information. Distribute Handout 3, Remembering the Iowa Sisterhood.

Light the central candle. Implement the plan you devised for participants to say the names of the 21 women who were members of the Iowa Sisterhood and light a candle for each woman.

Close the remembrance ceremony by leading the group to say in unison the words of Mary Safford provided on Handout 3 or to sing the hymn "Great Over-Soul and Inter-Heart" together.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- A copy of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook
- Copies of the story "[The Baltimore Sermon](#) (included in this document) "
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Faith in Action from this workshop and/or Spiritual Preparation from Workshop 10

Preparation for Activity

- Download and customize Taking It Home as a handout. You may wish to add the Faith in Action activity suggestion from this workshop and/or the Spiritual Preparation questions for the next workshop.

Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home and "The Baltimore Sermon." Announce the date, time, and place of the next workshop and any other "housekeeping" information. Request or remind volunteers if you want participants to read material aloud or perform other roles at the next meeting.

Invite participants to gather around the chalice.

Share Reading 687, by John W. Brigham, in *Singing the Living Tradition*. Extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: EXPLORING YOUR CONGREGATION'S HISTORY — LONG-TERM PROJECT

Preparation for Activity

- Seek help to identify sources of historical information about your congregation.
- Plan how you will engage participants to gather, analyze, and present historical information about your congregation across several group meetings. This Faith in Action activity is designed to continue through Workshops 10 and 11.

Description of Activity

Search for the Unitarian, Universalist, or Unitarian Universalist origins of your congregation. All Unitarian Universalist congregations, regardless of their age, have a history. One aspect of that history is the original theological and institutional identity of the faith

community—Unitarian, Universalist, or Unitarian Universalist. This initial identity may be well known and celebrated, or it may be obscured by many layers of changes, or lost in the fogs of time. Even if the founding religion appears to be well established, there is likely some story about the congregation's affiliation that is less well known.

Here are some places to seek clues to your congregation's history:

- Archives. Look for published and unpublished congregational histories, biographies of your congregation's ministers and lay leaders, sermons, newsletters, and pamphlets.
- Historic photographs of present and past meeting places. Examine signs, symbols, and decorations.
- Oral histories. Find, or create them; you may want to interview a long-time member for their recollections.
- Published histories of Unitarianism, Universalism, and the Fellowship Movement, and works about the history of religion in America or the history of your community or geographical region.

Divide tasks so all can take part in the reconnaissance. Then, come together to share your findings and discuss:

- What of your origins can you still discern in your congregation's culture, surroundings, and identity?
- How have your congregation's roots formed your contemporary congregational culture?

Offer your discoveries to the congregation through a newsletter column, a page on the website, a homily, or a dramatic skit at a special event.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

After the workshop, co-leaders should talk together to evaluate this workshop and plan future workshops. Use these questions to guide your shared reflection and planning:

- What parts of the workshop worked well and which did not? Why? How was the success, or lack of success, related to the topics? How was it related to the types of activities?
- How can we use this experience to make future workshops more effective? What would we change if we were to lead this workshop again?

- What was left unfinished in the workshop that should still be addressed? How and when will we address it?
- What strengths did we each bring to the workshop?
- As co-leaders, when did we work well together?
- What might help us be better leaders in future workshops?
- What do we need to prepare for the next workshop? Who will handle which tasks? Who will lead which activities?

TAKING IT HOME

Mindful of truth ever exceeding our knowledge and community ever exceeding our practice, reverently we covenant together, beginning with ourselves as we are... — Walter Royal Jones, Jr., chair of the commission that drafted the 1985 revision of the Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes

Our early American Unitarian ancestors—and their detractors—wrestled mightily with labels. In the 17th and early 18th centuries, the epithet "Unitarian" labeled those who thought differently from mainstream Protestants. In 1819, Channing took the bold step to define and to claim "Unitarian" as a description of his own emerging theological understanding. In one stroke, Channing turned the tables on those who would use the term to deride others.

As individuals and as groups, we are labeled, and we apply labels to others. Often labels are thrust on us in ways that are deeply hurtful. But there are other moments, such as Channing's delivery of the Baltimore Sermon, which can inspire us to claim as a proud descriptor a term intended as an insult. Think, for example, of "queer," and its evolution from a negative label used by a homophobic culture, to the positive identity term claimed by many gays, lesbians, questioning youth, and allies.

In what ways have you been labeled by others? Have those labels been agreeable to you, or upsetting? Have you ever taken a negative label and turned it around for yourself?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: UNITARIAN SUMMER — THE ISLES OF SHOALS (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Unitarian Summer — The Isles of Shoals](#) (included in this document) "
- Paper and markers, pens, and pencils
- Optional: Child Hassam's painting, [Poppies, Isles of Shoals](#) (at www.nga.gov/exhibitions/horo_025.shtm) and (optional) a computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Print out the story and prepare to present it.
- Invite two volunteers to read the parts of Mr. Elliott and Mr. Marvin. Provide them with the story in advance.
- Optional: Download *Poppies, Isles of Shoals* and print out the image to pass around or prepare it as a digital slide.

Description of Activity

If you have the image, project or pass around Child Hassam's *Poppies, Isles of Shoals*, to set the scene. Introduce the story with these words, or words of your own:

Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist camps and conferences have been offering experiences to campers and conferees for well over a century. These settings and programs offer recreation and renewal, education and camaraderie. For many Unitarian Universalists, camps and conferences offer the only opportunity each year to live immersed in the values and principles of Unitarian Universalism surrounded by those of like mind and intention.

Each Unitarian Universalist camp, conference, and institute has its own illustrious and important history. In this activity, we'll consider the founding moment of one site that has hosted Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalists for more than a century.

Read or tell the story, "Unitarian Summer — The Isles of Shoals." If you have volunteers to read the parts of Mr. Elliott and Mr. Marvin, take the narrator's role and read all the text that is not dialogue.

Invite participants to share experiences they have had at a Unitarian Universalist camp or conference center. In

the words of Thomas Elliot, "given (so many people) of one mind and one purpose," did something "happen?"

Distribute paper and writing/drawing implements. Invite participants to let their imaginations create the perfect Unitarian Universalist camp or conference experience. Where would it be located? What would the site be like? What programs and activities would be offered? Who would attend? How long would a program run? What would be unique about the experience? Would it draw from or connect with other Unitarian Universalist experiences you have had?

Allow participants 15 minutes to write, draw, diagram, or otherwise put their dream on paper. Then, invite volunteers to share.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: THE DEDHAM CASE (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Dedham Case](#) (included in this document) "
- A copy of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook
- Optional: Bell or chime
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Print out the story and prepare to present it.
- Write on newsprint:
Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. — Margaret Mead.
- Optional: Prepare the Margaret Mead quotation as a digital slide.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story "The Dedham Case." Invite comment and questions. Ask participants to name what the Dedham case changed—ecclesiastically, politically, and legally.

Post or project the quote from Margaret Mead, and lead the group to read it in unison. Suggest that although the members of the parish in Dedham may not have set out to "change the world," in fact, their actions had an impact far beyond their own time and place in history.

Invite participants into a time of meditation and reflection. Suggest that they find a comfortable position, and, if they wish, to close their eyes. You might use a chime to begin and end this quiet time.

Once everyone is settled, read aloud Reading 567 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, by Marge Piercy. Then invite participants to imagine a time when they felt joined together with others to make some small difference in the human or the natural world. Ask them to return to that time and place, to picture themselves there and recall the sights, sounds, and feelings of the moment. Slowly, pausing between each question to allow time for contemplation, ask:

- What united you? A task, an ideal, or both?
- How did it feel to be of use?
- Did you feel you had done all you could?
- Do you feel your action might have had an effect beyond the immediate moment?

Slowly and gently return the group to the present, allowing a minute or two. Invite reflections on ways the actions of a small group can have a wider effect.

STORY: THE BALTIMORE SERMON

William Ellery Channing was weary of having the epithet "Unitarian" flung at him in disdain. Ever since Henry Ware had been elected to the Hollis Professorship of Divinity at Harvard College, the temperature of public debate between orthodox and liberal factions of New England's Standing Order Churches had risen.

Many theological points were at issue. The turn to liberalism in New England churches had begun with the unitarian notion of the singular, or unitary, nature of God, antithetical to the trinitarian understanding of God as three: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But soon the debate widened. Was God a benevolent and loving presence that wanted the best for all humanity, or, as in Calvinist orthodoxy, a wrathful and exacting God? *That* debate called into question the orthodox idea of the elect, the notion that some are saved and others damned. Soon the orthodox/liberal controversy encompassed not only the nature of God, but also the nature of Jesus; was Jesus fully divine, or fully human, or partly each? Religious people debated the question of human nature—were humans good, and capable of distinguishing right and wrong, as the liberals believed; or, as in the orthodox view, were humans depraved, and captive to sin? And reason—where did that fit in? The orthodox insisted that the Bible alone was the valid basis for religious knowledge, while liberals maintained that the use of God-given reason and conscience was needed along with revelation. With Ware's election in 1805 to head Harvard College, the liberals had taken control of the seminary which was the primary training ground of New England's ministers. This caused great dismay among those of more orthodox beliefs.

By 1812, the young William Ellery Channing became the *de facto* leader of the Boston liberals following the untimely death of leading liberal Joseph Buckminster. Channing preached about a benevolent, loving God who had endowed humanity with innate goodness, rationality, and the wisdom to discern between good and evil. In a sermon delivered at the ordination of Jared Sparks in 1819 at the new liberal church in Baltimore, Maryland, Channing decided to snatch the label of Unitarian from those who would degrade it and to claim it proudly as his own. His address, "Unitarian Christianity," stands as a hallmark of Unitarian history. As David Parke writes:

The "Baltimore sermon" gave the Unitarians a platform and a spokesman. It placed them for the first time on the offensive in relation to the orthodox. It was very probably the most important Unitarian sermon ever preached anywhere.

In the hour-and-a-half-long address, Channing took on two tasks. First, he established reason as valid and necessary for the interpretation of scripture—not as the only basis for religious belief, but as an aid to revelation, for reading and understanding the meaning of the Bible.

Our leading principle in interpreting Scripture is this, that the Bible is a book written for men, in the language of men, and that its meaning is to be sought in the same manner as that of other books... With these views of the Bible, we feel it our bounden duty to exercise our reason upon it perpetually; to compare, to infer, to look beyond the letter to the spirit...

Having set the stage for biblical interpretation, Channing's second task was to lay out four reason-based conclusions of Unitarian Christians. He began with the unity of God, as opposed to the doctrine of the Trinity. Next, he postulated Christ as fully human, as opposed to having two natures, human and divine. Then he spoke of the moral perfection of God, which negated such doctrines as Original Sin and the eternal suffering of some while others were elected to salvation.

Channing's fourth point was about the purpose of Jesus' mission on earth. He rejected the idea that Jesus' death atoned for human sin, allowing God to forgive humanity. Channing admitted Unitarians differed on Jesus' role in human salvation. Some, he said, saw Jesus' life as a moral example. Others understood Jesus' death leading humans to repentance and virtue. Yet, he said, Unitarians did not consider Christ and his death as a blood atonement for human sin. Channing's fifth and final point was that Christian virtue had its foundation in the moral nature or conscience of humans, defined by love of God, love of Christ, and moral living.

Far from settling the simmering arguments, Channing's Baltimore Sermon brought them to a full boil. The Unitarian Controversy raged over the next quarter century. New England's churches continued to split along theological lines, and, within two decades of Channing's fateful sermon, one-quarter of Massachusetts' Standing Order churches became openly Unitarian. Other Unitarian leaders added defining voices to the movement, but Channing's Baltimore Sermon remains a key turning point in Unitarian Universalist history.

STORY: THE DEDHAM CASE

It wasn't the first of the Standing Order churches to split, but it sure made the biggest bang.

In Puritan New England, each town was organized around its church. The members of the *church* were those who made a confession of Christian faith, while members of the *parish* were those who lived in the town and paid the poll tax that supported the church, but hadn't had a religious experience of conversion in the church. Reflecting this two-tier arrangement, the minister was the spiritual leader of the church as well as the teacher of public morals to the townspeople. These were the Standing Order churches—church and parish in the same institution, with a religious leader and public preacher in the same person.

In Dedham, Massachusetts, a controversy about theology became an ecclesiastical, political, and legal battle—one of the first to challenge the Standing Order system. In 1818, the Dedham parish invited Alvin Lamson to be its candidate for the ministry. A majority of the church members, being orthodox, rejected Lamson's liberal views. They voted their refusal to have him as minister. By custom, the church members decided who the minister would be, but in Dedham, the parish—which was more liberal than the church membership—went ahead and called Lamson as the minister.

The church members weren't going to stand for that. So they left, taking the church records, the communion silver, and the financial assets with them. That's when Deacon Baker—of the liberal camp in the church membership—sued Deacon Fales—of the orthodox camp—for the return of all the church property. Fales and the church majority claimed that the assets were the property of the church, and since the majority of the church was leaving, the assets were theirs to take. Baker and the liberal church minority maintained that the assets belonged to the parish, and as the parish majority was staying put, they would like all their assets returned.

The liberal minority prevailed. A jury ruled that according to the law, the church was built and run at the parish's expense for the benefit of the whole parish, and the minister worked for the benefit of the whole parish. Therefore, the parish owned the assets, and what's more, the parish had the right to call the minister. Some cried "foul," noting that the presiding judge, Isaac Parker, was himself a Unitarian. But when all the appeals were finally over in 1821, the ruling stood.

The decision rocked the Standing Order churches, many of which had already started to come apart. In some towns, a liberal minority left to establish a new church. In others, an orthodox minority left to found a congregation

of their own. The reverberations went on for decades, with a quarter of Massachusetts Standing Order Congregational churches becoming Unitarian within the next twenty years. Three of the churches chose to become neither Unitarian nor Congregational, but Universalist.

STORY: THE IOWA SISTERHOOD

Some of the first women ordained in the United States were Universalist or Unitarian. At the turn of the 21st century, a majority of Unitarian Universalist ministers were women. However, the path for women ministers in our faith tradition has not been easy. Of those early women who achieved ordination, few were allowed to serve in full-time ministries. Others were relegated to small, struggling parishes or assistant positions alongside their clergy husbands.

Despite the lack of encouragement, at the end of the 19th century a group of extraordinary women claimed their role as ordained ministers. Following the Women's Ministerial Conference organized by Julia Ward Howe in 1875, 21 Unitarian women founded the Iowa Sisterhood to serve churches throughout the Great Plains. Life was hard in the Plains states, with little glory to be earned by bringing liberal religion to the settlers of the area. Few male scholars from the seminaries of the East were attracted to the life. But if the Plains were beyond the recognition of an Eastern religious hierarchy, they were also remote from that hierarchy's rules and control. It was a place where women were accepted for their willingness to step in and serve, for their tenacity in the face of hardship, and for their ministry.

Perhaps one reason for the success of the Iowa Sisterhood was the non-academic, pastoral approach these women brought to their churches. They sought to make their churches extensions of the domestic hearth, thereby expanding the traditional role of women beyond the home and into the church. The Sisterhood brought family matters into the church not only on Sundays, but seven days a week, with social events and classes on domestic arts.

Although Jenkin Lloyd Jones, leader of the Western Conference, was a staunch ally of the Iowa Sisterhood, the grassroots Western success of these women and their churches did not translate into wider denominational acceptance. The women were seen as an embarrassment among the clergy back in Boston. By the turn of the 20th century, society in general experienced a reassertion of male authority. Unitarianism's leaders began a concerted return to a more manly ministry in order to revitalize the denomination. The move of rural populations to the cities further undermined the Sisterhood's efforts and congregations.

Most of the women ministers were rushed into retirement. Others left to pursue work in peace, suffrage, and social work movements. Yet they remained vocal to the end about the rights of women and the place of church in society. It was not a large movement, nor was

it long-lasting. The Iowa Sisterhood did not radically alter the possibilities for women in Unitarian ministry. But in its time and place, it was a shining vision of women called to minister and men called to support their work.

STORY: UNITARIAN SUMMER — THE ISLES OF SHOALS

Excerpted and adapted from Frederick T. McGill, Jr. and Virginia F. McGill, *Something Like a Star* (Boston: Star Island Corporation, 1989). Used with permission.

In July of 1896, Thomas H. Elliot of Lowell, Massachusetts, brought his wife to the Oceanic Hotel, on Star Island, one island in the Isles of Shoals located off the coast of New Hampshire. The Oceanic was a grand wooden summer resort hotel operated by Cedric and Oscar Loughton, but its operation was suffering from the changing recreational habits of their New England clientele who were increasingly opting for mainland resorts with more amenities and better access. This was the Elliots' first stay at the Shoals. They typically attended the North Middlesex Unitarian Conference meetings at the Weirs in New Hampshire. But Mrs. Elliot had been unwell, and hoped that the sea air would revitalize her. Many years after that first visit, Mr. Elliot recalled a conversation he had the day after arriving at Star Island with the hotel manager, Harry Marvin:

Mr. Marvin: How are you enjoying yourself, Mr. Elliot?

Mr. Elliot: Fine. This place suits me. It is after my own heart. There is only one thing that would improve it for me.

Mr. Marvin: What is that?

Mr. Elliot: There are some meetings going on at The Weirs that I value very much. If only we had them here, I should be as near heaven as possible.

Mr. Marvin: Meetings? What kind of meetings?

Mr. Elliot: Religious meetings.

Mr. Marvin: Well, why can't we have those meetings down here?

Mr. Elliot: (You see, he was looking for business, and was very hungry for it. We were paying 3-dollar a day apiece — a pretty good rate for those days.) In the first place, we could hardly pay your rates.

Mr. Marvin: What do you pay at The Weirs?

Mr. Elliot: We get a pretty comfortable fare for 10 dollars a week.

Mr. Marvin: I couldn't make any such rate as that. (After thinking a bit). Mr. Elliot, suppose we could make you a 10-dollar rate. Do you think you could bring those meetings down here?

Mr. Elliot: (I looked around and took in the beauty of the situation. It was marvelous.) Mr. Marvin, if you will make me a 10-dollar rate here for next year, at both the

Oceanic and the Appledore, I will fill them to the ridgepoles. (And then, with more courage than was wise, as I think of it now, I added) I'll go further. I will come under bonds to fill both your hotels to the ridgepoles, if you will make me a rate of 10 dollars a week.

Mr. Marvin: I'll talk it over with the Loughtons and see what I can do. I'll do the best I can, for I want you to come.

Another source records Harry Marvin's conversation with Oscar Loughton, co-owner of the hotels. Loughton is reported to have said, "I told him we must act with caution. What is a Unitarian? Are they good people? It won't do to introduce any rough element." Marvin apparently replied that he did not know just exactly what a Unitarian was, but, judging from the Elliots, he would say that they were very nice, harmless people.

Marvin and Elliot prevailed, and, perhaps because of the financial incentive, perhaps because of the Elliots' enthusiasm, or perhaps it was just the right time, 610 people registered for, as it was advertised, "Unitarian Summer Meetings at the Isles of Shoals, ten miles at sea—10 dollars per week," six times the usual attendance at the Weirs. In fact, "one or two late applicants had to be turned away because a couple of Appledore employees had already given up their rooms to guests and were sleeping on cots in bathrooms."

Reminiscing about that first conference thirty-five years later, Thomas Elliot said, "The enthusiasm of that first year has never, I think, been quite equaled... Given 610 people of one mind and one purpose, and something was bound to happen, and did happen. I cannot but think that life that season on that sublime island was more like heaven than any other similar experience on this broad earth."

HANDOUT 1: THE ALMIGHTY LOVE

From Eugene B. Navias, *Singing Our History* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1975).

The lyrics of "The Almighty Love" were written by Theodore Parker (1810-1860). In 1841, early in his ministry, Parker preached a controversial sermon, "The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity." Eugene Navias summarizes the sermon:

Parker considered the transient elements of Christianity to be miracles, revelations, creeds and doctrines; and the permanent elements to be in the moral sense within the hearts of good persons. Any truths which are in the teachings of Jesus are there because they meet the practical tests of life, not because of the outward authority of Jesus, the Bible, the church, or creeds.

Soon after controversy erupted over the sermon, Parker was invited to become the minister of the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society (Unitarian) in Boston, which came eventually to meet in Boston's Music Hall, where Parker spoke weekly to congregations of up to 3,000 people. The hymn "The Almighty Love," written in 1864, reveals Parker's understanding of the nature of God.

Lyrics: Theodore Parker, 1864

Music: Transylvania L.M., 16th Century Hungarian Melody, or Old Hundredth L.M. (commonly known as the Doxology)

In darker days, and nights of storm,
Men knew Thee but to fear Thy form,
And in the reddest lightnings saw
Thine arm avenge insulted law.
In brighter days we read Thy love
In flowers beneath, in stars above;
And, in the track of every storm,
Behold Thy beauty's rainbow form.
Even in the reddest lightning's path
We see no vestiges of wrath,
But always Wisdom, —perfect Love,
From flowers below to stars above.
See, from on high sweet influence rains
On palace, cottage, mountains, plains;
No hour of wrath shall mortals fear,
For the Almighty Love is here.

HANDOUT 2: DEFINING MOMENTS

These readings accompany Leader Resource 2, From Antitrinitarian to Unitarian.

SECTION 1: Arius's Letter to Eusebius (319 C.E.)

But what is it that we say and believe, and that we have taught and teach? That the Son is not uncreated or any part of an uncreated being, or made of anything previously existent. He was brought into being by the will and counsel (of God), before time and before the ages, as unbegotten God in the fullest sense, and unalterable; and before he was begotten, created, determined or established, he did not exist. But we are persecuted because we have said, "The Son has a beginning, but God is without beginning" We are also persecuted because we have said, "He is made from nothing." But we have so said because he is not a part of God or made from any thing previously existent. It is for this reason we are persecuted; the rest you know.

SECTION 2: Faustus Socinus, the Racovian Catechism (1605)

What are the things relating to his Person, which I ought to know?

This one particular alone,—that by nature he was truly a man; a mortal man while he lived on earth, but now immortal.

SECTION 3: John Biddle, *His Confession of Faith Touching the Holy Trinity* (1648)

article iii. I believe, That Jesus Christ, to the intent that he might be our Brother, and have a Fellow-feeling of our Infirmities, and so become the more ready to help us, (the consideration whereof, is the greatest Encouragement to Piety that can be imagined) hath no other than a Human Nature, and therefore in this very Nature is not only a Person (since none but a Human Person can be our Brother), but also our Lord, yea our God.

article iv. Whence, though he be our God, by reason of his Divine Sovereignty over us, and

Worship due to such Sovereignty, yet he is not the most high God, the same with the Father, but subordinate to him.

SECTION 4: Jonathan Mayhew, *Seven Sermons* (1749)

Thus it appears that a regard to our own interest ought to put us upon examining and judging for ourselves religious concerns. The same thing might be argued for the faculty of reason itself, which is common to all. If we suppose an intelligent author of our nature, who had some design in giving us our present constitution, it is plain that his end in endowing us with faculties proper for the investigating of truth and right, was, that we should exercise them in this way.

SECTION 5: Willam Ellery Channing, *Baltimore Sermon*, 1819

We do, then, with all earnestness, though without reproaching our brethren, protest against the irrational and unscriptural doctrine of the Trinity... "To us," as to the Apostle and the primitive Christians, "there is one God, even the Father." With Jesus, we worship the Father, as the only living and true God. We are astonished, that any man can read the New Testament, and avoid the conviction, that the Father alone is God. We hear our Saviour continually appropriating this character to the Father. We find the Father continually distinguished from Jesus by this title... "God sent his Son." "God anointed Jesus." Now, how singular and inexplicable is this phraseology, which fills the New Testament, if this title belong equally to Jesus, and if a principal object of this book is to reveal him as God, as partaking equally with the Father in supreme divinity! We challenge our opponents to adduce one passage in the New Testament where the word God means three persons, where it is not limited to one person, and where, unless turned from its usual sense by the connexion, it does not mean the Father. Can stronger proof be given that the doctrine of three persons in the Godhead is not a fundamental doctrine of Christianity?

HANDOUT 3: REMEMBERING THE IOWA SISTERHOOD

The words "Great Over-Soul and Inter-Heart" were written by Mary Safford (1895) and edited by Eugene B. Navias to be sung to the tune Duke Street L.M., Hymn 35 in *Singing the Living Tradition*.

Ministers of the Iowa Sisterhood

Mary Augusta Safford
Eleanor Gordon
Florence Buck
Mary Collson
Caroline Julia Bartlett Crane
Adele Fuchs
Marie Jenney Howe
Ida Hultin
Mary Leggett
Rowena Morse Mann
Mila Tupper Maynard
Amelia Murdock Wing
Marion Murdock
Anna Jane Norris
Margaret Titus Olmstead

Elizabeth Padgham
Gertrude Von Petzhold
Helen Grace Putnam
Eliza Tupper Wilkes
Helen Wilson
Celia Parker Woolley

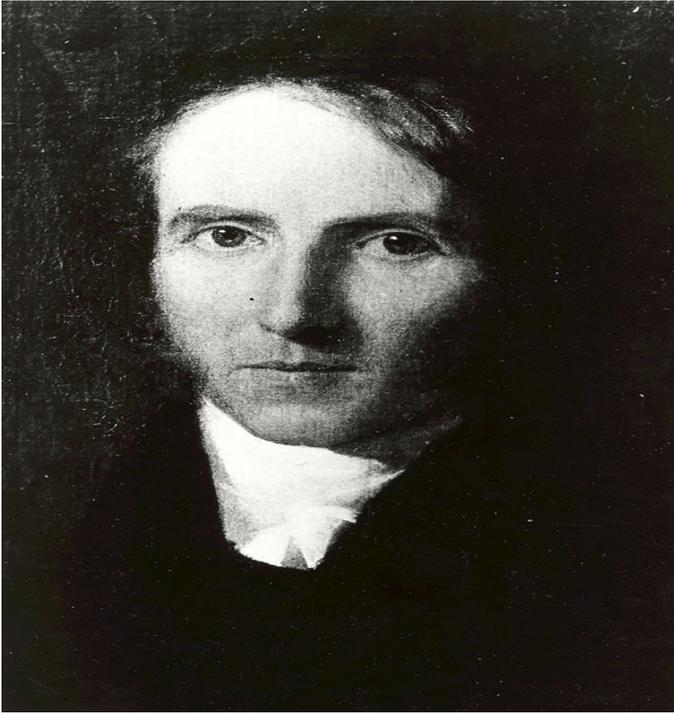
Hymn: Great Over-Soul and Inter-Heart

Great Over-Soul and Inter-Heart,
Of whom we feel ourselves a part,
To whom all souls forever tend,
Our Father, Mother, nearest Friend.
This church with love to thee we bring,
And while our spirits inly* sing,
We pray that it may ever be
A Home for all who seek for thee.
The home of faith in all things true,
A faith that seeks the larger view,
The home of love that yearns to bless.
The home of truth and righteousness.
Long may it stand, the outward sign
Of that indwelling Life divine,
Which makes thy children truly free,
And draws them ever nearer thee.

*The word "inly" was in common usage in Mary Safford's day and means inwardly, intimately, thoroughly.

**FAITH LIKE A RIVER: WORKSHOP 9:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, PORTRAIT**

From the Unitarian Universalist Association archives.



LEADER RESOURCE 2: FROM ANTITRINITARIAN TO UNITARIAN

The five readings requested below are provided on Handout 2, Defining Moments.

Distribute Handout 2, Defining Moments and invite volunteers to read quotes from the handout as indicated while you present this material.

Antitrinitarianism is the theological idea that God is one, whole and complete, a unity that rejects division into the three persons of the Trinity. The idea dates back to the first centuries of Christianity, but it became most dynamically present in the work of Arius (c. 250-336 CE), a priest from Alexandria, Egypt. In 325, the Council of Nicea declared Arius' view of a created Christ—, similar to, but not the same as, God the Father—to be a heresy.

(Leader: Ask a volunteer to read aloud Section 1 on the handout, Arius's letter to Eusebius.)

In the following centuries, isolated groups arose to challenge the doctrine and authority of the Christian Church. In 1517, when Martin Luther famously nailed his 95 Theses to the door of Wittenberg Cathedral, the Protestant Reformation was born. One of the most radical dissenters of the time was Michael Servetus (1511-1553), who set forth his antitrinitarian beliefs in his best known work, *On the Errors of the Trinity*, written at the age of 20. For this heresy, Servetus spent most of his adult years running from both the Catholic Inquisition and the Protestant Reformers. He was captured and put to death in 1553.

Arius and Servetus held similar antitrinitarian views—of a Christ less than God, yet still divine. A second stream of antitrinitarianism held that Christ was not of a lesser divinity than God, but fully human. This was the view of Faustus Socinus, who fled persecution in Italy and went on to inspire the founding of the Polish Brethren (the Minor Reform Church of Poland). Although Socinus did not seek to establish a new religious sect, the community of Socinians which formed around him represents one of the first instances when the theology became embodied in an institution. Before the Socinians were forced to flee Poland in 1660, the community of Polish Brethren included worshipping congregations, a school, and a publishing enterprise. Socinus wrote a number of works, but his Racovian Catechism is perhaps the best well-known.

(Leader: Ask a volunteer to read aloud Section 2, Faustus Socinus, The Racovian Catechism.)

From Poland and Transylvania, antitrinitarian thought spread west where it encountered similar movements in England and Holland. In the 17th and 18th centuries, leading voices for antitrinitarianism included people such as the teacher John Biddle (1615-1662), the poet John Milton (1608 -1674), the philosopher John Locke (1632-1704), ministers Thomas Emlyn (1663-1741) and Theophilus Lindsey (1723-1808), and the scientist Joseph Priestley (1733-1804).

(Leader: Ask a volunteer to read aloud Section 3, John Biddle, His Confession of Faith Touching the Holy Trinity (1648).)

The English and Irish Dissenters parted from the Church of England on both theological and organizational grounds. They included antitrinitarians, Baptists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and others. They sought not only freedom of belief, but freedom to organize their church societies as they saw fit. Groups of these Dissenters made their way to Holland and eventually to the New World where they became the genesis of New England churches.

Like the churches in Europe, over time the New England churches took on more liberal theological ideas about the nature of God, the nature of Christ and the nature of humanity. In reaction to this growing liberalism, the Great Awakening revival movement began in 1734, seeking to restore both orthodoxy and a religious passion its leaders saw waning. But liberal ministers were quick to respond, and we can see in their responses that liberal thought had widened beyond just antitrinitarianism to include other concepts that stood in direct opposition to Calvinist orthodoxy—free will, the ability to both discern and choose between good and evil, innate human goodness, and the use of reason in religion.

(Leader: Ask a volunteer to read aloud Section 4, Jonathan Mayhew, Seven Sermons (1749).)

But it was not only the Standing Order Puritan churches that felt the growth of liberalism. The First Episcopal Church in Boston (King's Chapel), unable to attract a minister from England, called James Freeman (1759-1835) to fill its pulpit in 1782. When Freeman could no longer reconcile the church's Trinitarian liturgy and Book of Common Prayer with his antitrinitarian beliefs, the congregation responded by removing all mention of the Trinity from their worship in 1785.

The same year that King's Chapel became avowedly antitrinitarian, the First Parish Church in Worcester, Massachusetts, split over the candidacy of the liberal minister Aaron Bancroft. This started almost a century of

schism as liberal and conservative New England churches parted ways over matters of theology. In 1819, William Ellery Channing preached his famous Baltimore sermon at the ordination of Jared Sparks, embracing the name "Unitarian" and laying out for the first time a comprehensive Unitarian theology.

(Leader: Ask a volunteer to read aloud Section 5, William Ellery Channing, Baltimore Sermon (1819).)

FIND OUT MORE

The History of Unitarianism

Howe, Charles A. [*For Faith and Freedom: A Short History of Unitarianism in Europe*](#) (Boston: Skinner House, 1997)

Parke, David. [*The Epic of Unitarianism: Original Writings from the History of Liberal Religion*](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=599) (Boston: Skinner House, 1985)

Wright, Conrad, ed. [*Three Prophets of Religious Liberalism: Channing, Emerson, Parker*](#) (Boston: Skinner House, 1978); *The Beginnings of Unitarianism in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955)

The Iowa Sisterhood

Tucker, Cynthia Grant. *Prophetic Sisterhood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990)

Star Island (the Isle of Shoals)

McGill, Frederick T., Jr. and Virginia F. McGill. *Something Like a Star* (Boston: Star Island Corporation, 1989)

Williams, Lois. *Religion at the Isles of Shoals* (Portsmouth, NH: Peter Randall Publisher, LLC, 2006)

The website of the [Council of Unitarian Universalist Camps and Conferences](#) (at www.cu2c2.org/)

On Researching and Presenting a Congregational History

Coeyman, Barbara. "[Creating Congregational Histories](#)," an article on the website of the Unitarian Universalist Historical Society

"[Knowing Where You've Been: Maintaining Records and Archives](#)," an article on the Unitarian Universalist Association website

WORKSHOP 10: RISE IN THE SEA — UNIVERSALISM

INTRODUCTION

Universalists are often asked to tell where they stand. The only true answer to give to this question is that we do not stand at all, we move.
— L. B. Fisher, *A Brief History of the Universalist Church for Young People (1904)*

This workshop examines the character and contributions of Universalism, both as part of our faith tradition and as an influence in the wider society. It considers the history of Universalism as an institution, and highlights important people and events that shaped its path before consolidation with the Unitarians.

Before you lead this workshop, review the Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters in the program Introduction and prepare to accommodate anyone who may be in the group.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Explore the unique identity of Universalism through key people and events from its history
- Trace the theological and institutional history of Universalism
- Examine some social contributions of Universalist individuals and of the denomination.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Become familiar with the key events that defined Universalism as a theology and an institution
- Learn about the lives and contributions of some important Universalists of the past
- Understand the impact of Universalism on society and religion in North America.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: John Murray and the Deacon	20

Activity 2: Universal Salvation to Universalism	15
Activity 3: We Are Universalists	35
Activity 4: Life-Changing Beliefs	30
Faith in Action: Exploring Your Congregation's History — Long-Term Project	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Paradise Is Ours	30
Alternate Activity 2: Origen	20
Alternate Activity 3: A Generous Heaven	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Set aside time to consider the meaning of "salvation" to you. History has seen many ideas of salvation. One dictionary definition of salvation is "God's activities in bringing humans into a right relationship with God and with one another." Consider these questions:

- How would you define salvation?
- What would salvation feel like or look like?
- Is it available to everyone?
- For you, is salvation contingent on faith? Good works?
- Does your idea of salvation have anything to do with God? Do you have a non-deist idea of salvation? What is it?

You may wish to ask participants to engage in this same spiritual practice so that they, too, arrive at the workshop centered and ready to engage with the material and the group.

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Sign-in sheet and pen/pencil
- Name tags and markers
- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1, [Schedule Template](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Create and post a workshop agenda on newsprint. The Workshop-at-a-Glance section provides time estimates. Create a welcome table near the entrance. Set out name tags and markers, the sign-in sheet and pen/pencil, and copies of the schedule.
- Make copies of the Time Line of UU History handout (Workshop 1, Handout 2), if you need some. Place time line handouts on the welcome table.
- Optional: Post the Time Line of UU History display.

Description of Activity

Welcome everyone to the workshop as they enter. Ask them to sign in, make (or pick up) name tags, and pick up the schedule and time line handouts from the welcome table. Point out the posted agenda for this workshop.

Including All Participants

Write the agenda in large, clear lettering and post it where it will be easily visible to all participants. Provide name tags large enough and markers bold enough so names will be easily visible.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Optional: Decorative cloth

Preparation for Activity

- Set up a worship or centering table with the chalice and (optional) decorative cloth.
- Optional: Invite a participant in advance to act as chalice lighter or reader to make the workshop more participatory.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice with these words by Alfred Storer Cole, a 20th-century minister and professor at the School of Religion of Tufts University, written in 1959:

Touch not my lips with the white fire
From the glowing altar of some peaceful shrine.
Thrust not into my hands the scroll of wisdom
Gleaned through the patient toil of the centuries;
Give me no finished chart that I may follow
Without effort or the bitter taste of tears.
I do not crave the comfort of the ancient creeds,
Nor the sheltered harbor where the great winds
cease to blow;
But winnow my heart, O God; torture my mind
With doubt. Let me feel the clean gales of the
open sea,
Until thy creative life is my life and my joy;
One with the miracle of Spring and the blowing
grain,
The yearning of my fellowmen and the endless
reach of stars.

ACTIVITY 1: JOHN MURRAY AND THE DEACON (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[John Murray and the Deacon](#)" (included in this document) "
- Leader Resource 1, [John Murray, Portrait](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer and digital projector
- Optional: Hand-held or wireless microphones

Preparation for Activity

- Copy the story "John Murray and the Deacon" for all participants.
- Invite two volunteers to read and act out the roles of John Murray and the Deacon. Give them the story and their assignments before this workshop. Encouraging them to play their parts to the audience of participants and to play them "large."
- Print out the portrait of John Murray to pass around.
- Optional: Download Leader Resource 1 and prepare the portrait of John Murray as a digital slide. Test the computer and projector.

Description of Activity

Distribute the story "John Murray and the Deacon." Say in these words, or your own:

John Murray, a Methodist preacher from England, is often credited as the founding father of Universalism in America. In his memoirs, Murray recounted a story of his encounter with a Methodist deacon.

Invite the two volunteers to read and act out the dialogue.

Thank the volunteers. Then, lead a discussion of these questions:

- What was at stake for the Deacon if what Murray said was true, that salvation was available to all, regardless of belief or non-belief?
- If you had been present at this exchange, would you have been convinced by Murray? the Deacon? neither? Why?

Including All Participants

To better include participants with hearing limitations, invite the group to follow the enacted conversation on their handouts, and provide portable or lapel microphones for the volunteers who are acting out the story.

ACTIVITY 2: UNIVERSAL SALVATION TO UNIVERSALISM (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 2, [Universal Salvation to Universalism](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 2, Universal Salvation to Universalism and become familiar with its contents.
- Write these questions on two separate sheets of newsprint, and set aside:
 - The prime years for the development of Universalism in the United States closely parallel the development of the country itself—1770 to the Civil War. What themes of the United States' political or cultural history in those years might have helped Universalism thrive?
 - Much of Universalism's growth happened on the edge, or frontiers, of the young United States. What might make Universalism an attractive faith for new settlers in the country's hinterlands?

Description of Activity

Present or read aloud Leader Resource 2, Universal Salvation to Universalism. Invite comment and questions about the material. Then, post the two questions you have written on newsprint. Invite participants to reflect on the questions for a minute or two and then invite responses.

ACTIVITY 3: WE ARE UNIVERSALISTS (35 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 3, [We Are Universalists](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 4, [Photos of Early 1900s Universalists in North Carolina](#) (included in this document)
- Bowl or basket
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 3, We are Universalists and cut the biographies apart. Place all the slips in the bowl or basket.
- Print out the two photos from Leader Resource 4 to pass around.
- In order to allow ample time for conversation following the reading of biographies, select 10 or 12 from those given, or simply plan to let participants choose some of the biographies.
- Optional: Download Leader Resource 4 and prepare the two photos as digital slides. Test the computer and projector.

Description of Activity

Explain that participants will learn about some of the people who helped forge the identity of Universalism. Say the basket contains short biographies which they will be invited to read aloud.

Pass the basket, inviting each participant to select a slip with a biography. If your group is small, participants may choose more than one. Invite each person in turn to read the biographies in a loud, clear voice. After each biography is read, ask if anyone would like to add anything about that historical figure. Mark the life of each person on the Time Line of UU History.

Following the readings, engage participants in conversation about the biographies using some or all of the following observations and questions:

- What common and defining characteristics do you see in the collected stories of early Universalists?
- Point out that most of the people whose biographies were read came from other religious backgrounds and converted to Universalism. Many were Baptist, Methodist, or Congregational. In large part, this is because most of these selected biographies are of people born very early in the history of established Universalism, but it is also true today that the majority of Unitarian Universalists come from other religious backgrounds. Do you see this as a strength that lends diversity and tolerance to our denomination, or do you have a different view? What does this mean in terms of your own religious journey?
- Many of the early Universalists were itinerant preachers (both lay and ordained) moving from place to place as they spread their message. Do you recognize any similar practices in contemporary Unitarian Universalism? How do we spread our message today?

Including All Participants

Select a bowl or basket that is lightweight enough for participants to easily pass. Be sure to tell participant they may "pass" or request that another person read for them if they do not wish to read a biography aloud.

ACTIVITY 4: LIFE-CHANGING BELIEFS (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newspaper, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 5, [Life-Changing Beliefs](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 5, Life-Changing Beliefs and prepare to present its contents.
- Write these questions on separate sheets of newsprint, and set aside:
 - What is the moral nature of humankind? Are humans essentially good, bad, or a combination?
 - What is the basis of moral behavior? What motivates ethical action?

- What are the ultimate rewards and punishments of human existence?

Description of Activity

Present Leader Resource 5, Life-Changing Beliefs. Then say, in these or similar words:

The story of Mary Livermore and the information about the Southold Debate and the Women's National Missionary Association highlight a common charge against Universalism which was the source of so much of the derision and discrimination Universalists experienced: Universalism, as understood by the orthodox, undercut morality. The orthodox believer asked, If there is no retribution, what keeps everyone in line?

Today, many mainline Christian traditions hold beliefs similar to our Universalists ancestors, yet the core questions remain rich opportunities for debate.

Have participants form three groups. Give each group a sheet of newsprint and invite them to discuss the question printed on it.

Allow ten minutes for the small group discussions. Then, re-gather the large group and invite each small group to report whether they reached a consensus and what the main arguments were for each position. After all groups have reported, invite general comment and discussion.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- A copy of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Faith in Action from this workshop and/or Spiritual Preparation from Workshop 11

Preparation for Activity

- Download and customize Taking It Home as a handout. You may wish to add the Faith in Action activity suggestion from this workshop and/or the Spiritual Preparation questions for the next workshop.

Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Announce the date, time, and place of the next workshop and any other "housekeeping" information. Request or remind volunteers if you want participants to read material aloud or perform other roles at the next meeting.

Invite participants to gather around the chalice. Read these words of Universalist preacher John Murray:

Go out into the highways and bi-ways. Give the people something of your new vision. You may possess a small light, but uncover it, let it shine, use it in order to bring more light and understanding to the hearts and minds of men and women. Give them not hell, but hope and courage; preach the kindness and everlasting love of God.

Extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: EXPLORING YOUR CONGREGATION'S HISTORY — LONG-TERM PROJECT

Description of Activity

If the group has not yet begun this activity, read Workshop 9, Faith in Action and plan to introduce it to the group.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

After the workshop, co-leaders should talk together to evaluate this workshop and plan future workshops. Use these questions to guide your shared reflection and planning:

- What parts of the workshop worked well and which did not? Why? How was the success, or lack of success, related to the topics? How was it related to the types of activities?
- How can we use this experience to make future workshops more effective? What would we change if we were to lead this workshop again?
- What was left unfinished in the workshop that should still be addressed? How and when will we address it?
- What strengths did we each bring to the workshop?
- As co-leaders, when did we work well together?
- What might help us be better leaders in future workshops?
- What do we need to prepare for the next workshop? Who will handle which tasks? Who will lead which activities?

TAKING IT HOME

Universalists are often asked to tell where they stand. The only true answer to give to this question is that we do not stand at all, we move.
— L. B. Fisher, *A Brief History of the Universalist Church for Young People* (1904)

The doctrine of universal salvation rests on a theology of a supreme deity of compassion, mercy, and forgiveness. Islam, Judaism, and Christianity teach that as humanity was created with the breath of God, humans contain the potential for divine attributes including those of compassion, mercy and forgiveness. Consider times in your life when you were called on to display compassion, mercy, or forgiveness. Under what circumstances did this come easily? When was it a challenge? Can you think of a time when you were in need of these same gifts from another person?

What does a saving faith call you to do in today's world? Journal your thoughts or share your insights with a trusted conversation partner.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: PARADISE IS OURS (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 6, [Paradise Is Ours](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 1, [Paradise in the Psalms](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 6, Paradise Is Ours and prepare to present its contents.
- Copy Handout 1, Paradise in the Psalms.

Description of Activity

Present Leader Resource 6, Paradise Is Ours, stopping where indicated in the text.

Invite participants to form groups of four. Distribute Handout 1, Paradise in the Psalms. Ask groups to identify any ways the psalm in Handout 1 describes aspects of paradise available in human existence. Tell them they will have 15 minutes to work and will be asked to share their insights when the large group re-gathers.

After 15 minutes, re-gather and ask participants to share what they found in the psalm. Conclude by reading the final section of Leader Resource 6, Paradise Is Ours.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: ORIGEN (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 7, [Origen of Alexandria](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 2, [Excerpt from De Principiis](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Become familiar with the contents of Leader Resource 7, Origen of Alexandria.
- Make copies of Handout 2, Excerpt from *De Principiis*.
- Prearrange with two volunteers to read Handout 2, Excerpt from *De Principiis* aloud, each one reading about half of the text. Give them the handout in advance.

Description of Activity

Present or read the information contained in Leader Resource 7, Origen of Alexandria. Distribute Handout 2, Excerpt from *De Principiis*. Explain that Origen's work was originally written in Greek, and only survives in fragments. Later translators added material in Latin, based on works that refuted Origen. The materials used today are yet another translation, into English.

Invite participants to read the handout once on their own. Then invite the two volunteers to re-read the material aloud. Ask participants to consider what the excerpt suggests about Origen's beliefs regarding (1) the nature of God, (2) the nature of Humanity, and (3) Creation, free will, heaven, and hell. Invite comment and reflections on Origen's work.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: A GENEROUS HEAVEN (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A recording of Susan Werner's song, "(why is your) heaven so small" from her CD *The Gospel Truth* (2007, Sleeve Dog Records), and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Download or obtain the MP3 file or CD, and test the music player.

Description of Activity

Universalism is associated with the idea of a generous and bountiful heaven, whether in a time to come or here on earth. Heaven can also be a rich metaphor for a time

and place when we each might be surrounded by all we regard as good and true. Listen to Susan Werner's song together, and then reflect on these questions:

- When is it easiest for you to imagine a "generous heaven?"
- When is it the hardest?

STORY: JOHN MURRAY AND THE DEACON

From John Murray, *Letters and Sketches of Sermons*, (Boston, 1812), as quoted in David B. Parke's book, *The Epic of Unitarianism*.

John Murray, a Methodist preacher from England, is often credited with being the founding father of Universalism in America. In his memoirs, Murray recounts the following story of his encounter with a deacon.

Deacon: I have heard much of you, and have come many miles to see and converse with you. Will you be so obliging as to permit me to ask a few questions?

Murray: Readily, Sir.

Deacon: I have heard—but I do not pay much regard to slanderous reports; nothing of that sort is to be depended upon— But I have heard— Excuse me, Sir, I really hope you will not be angry, but indeed, Sir, I have heard, I have been told, that you preached Universal Salvation, that is, that all mankind will be saved.

Murray: Well, Sir, as you seem to be an honest man, I will freely own to you, that God hath told me, "That he sent not his Son into the world, to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."

Deacon: Aye, the *believing* world.

Murray: No, Sir; the world are never called believers, nor believers the world.

(*Aside to audience*) The Deacon then proceeded to mention a variety of scriptures that proved, as the poor man believed, the damnation of the greatest part of the world, and I answered him from the same scriptures: At last, I mention that very obnoxious text, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Deacon: Aye, Sir, all that believe.

Murray: No, Sir, all who died in Adam.

Deacon: But, how can they be made alive in Christ without believing?

Murray: As well as they could die in Adam without believing. There are a very great multitude among mankind, who do not believe they died in Adam; and as they do not believe they died in Adam, then they did not die in Adam.

Deacon: O yes, Sir, they died in Adam, whether they believe it or not.

Murray: How can they, Sir, die in Adam without believing they did?

Deacon: Because the word of God declares, "they died in Adam," and that must be true whether they believe it or not.

Murray: But, Sir, the same word of God says, all shall be made alive in Christ; and yet you say it is only those who believe, that shall be made alive!

(*Concluding, to the audience*) This silenced the old gentleman, and thus ended our conversation; but another and another succeeded, until half past two o'clock, when I proceeded to a more public delivery of my testimony.

HANDOUT 1: PARADISE IN THE PSALMS

Psalms 65: A Psalm of David. A Song.

(1) Praise is due to you,

O God, in Zion;

and to you shall vows be performed,

(2) O you who answer prayer!

To you all flesh shall come.

(3) When deeds of iniquity overwhelm us,

you forgive our transgressions.

(4) Happy are those whom you choose and bring near

to live in your courts.

We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house,

your holy temple.

(5) By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance,

O God of our salvation;

you are the hope of all the ends of the earth

and of the farthest seas.

(6) By your strength you established the mountains;

you are girded with might.

(7) You silence the roaring of the seas,

the roaring of their waves,

the tumult of the peoples.

(8) Those who live at earth's farthest bounds are awed

by your signs;

you make the gateways of the morning and the evening
shout for joy.

(9) You visit the earth and water it,

you greatly enrich it;

the river of God is full of water;

you provide the people with grain,

for so you have prepared it.

(10) You water its furrows abundantly,

settling its ridges,

softening it with showers,

and blessing its growth.

(11) You crown the year with your bounty;

your wagon tracks overflow with richness.

(12) The pastures of the wilderness overflow,

the hills gird themselves with joy,

(13) the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,

the valleys deck themselves with grain,

they shout and sing together for joy.

HANDOUT 2: EXCERPT FROM *DE PRINCIPIS*

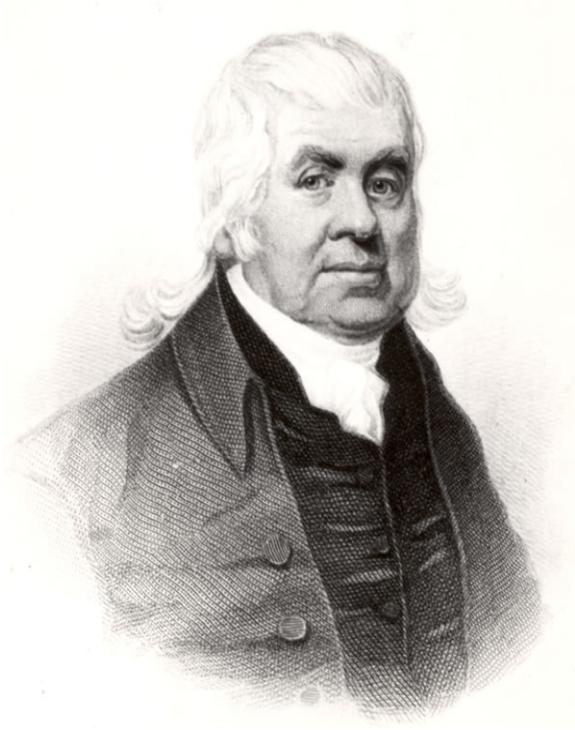
English translation of Origen's *De Principiis*, Book I, Chapter 6.3, "On the End of Consummation" from Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicean Fathers Translations of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325, Vol. 4* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994).

It is to be borne in mind, however, that certain beings who fell away from that one beginning of which we have spoken, have sunk to such a depth of unworthiness and wickedness as to be deemed altogether undeserving of that training and instruction by which the human race, while in the flesh, are trained and instructed with the assistance of the heavenly powers; and continue, on the contrary, in a state of enmity and opposition to those who are receiving this instruction and teaching. And hence it is that the whole of this mortal life is full of struggles and trials, caused by the opposition and enmity of those who fell from a better condition without at all looking back, and who are called the devil and his angels, and the other orders of evil, which the apostle classed among the opposing powers. But whether any of these orders who act under the government of the devil, and obey his wicked commands, will in a future world be converted to righteousness because of their

possessing the faculty of freedom of will, or whether persistent and inveterate wickedness may be changed by the power of habit into nature, is a result which you yourself, reader, may approve of, if neither in these present worlds which are seen and temporal, nor in those which are unseen and are eternal, that portion is to differ wholly from the final unity and fitness of things. But in the meantime, both in those temporal worlds which are seen, as well as in those eternal worlds which are invisible, all those beings are arranged, according to a regular plan, in the order and degree of their merits; so that some of them in the first, others in the second, some even in the last times, after having undergone heavier and severer punishments, endured for a lengthened period, and for many ages, so to speak, improved by this stern method of training, and restored at first by the instruction of the angels, and subsequently by the powers of a higher grade, and thus advancing through each stage to a better condition, reach even to that which is invisible and eternal, having travelled through, by a kind of training, every single office of the heavenly powers. From which, I think, this will appear to follow as an inference, that every rational nature may, in passing from one order to another, go through each to all, and advance from all to each, while made the subject of various degrees of proficiency and failure according to its own actions and endeavours, put forth in the enjoyment of its power of freedom of will.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: JOHN MURRAY, PORTRAIT

From the Unitarian Universalist Association archives.



LEADER RESOURCE 2: UNIVERSAL SALVATION TO UNIVERSALISM

Universal salvation, or universalism, is the theological belief that, through the goodness, mercy and love of God, all people will be saved; that is, all people will be forgiven their sins and granted eternal life. The idea that all people would be saved is a very old one. It can be seen as early as the works of Origen, an important scholar and theologian of the early church (c.185-250 CE), and surfaces in Christian history in the thought of theologians and faiths from the Roman Catholic Church to the radical arm of the Protestant Reformation. However, for the most part, the doctrine of universal salvation stood as contrary to the teachings of most Christian churches. And when universalism did "bubble up," it remained a theological idea rather than a formal or distinct church tradition.

That is, until universalist ideas came to America, where, at long last, universalism developed into a formal institution. There are different stories as to how this came about. The often recounted story is about John Murray (1741-1815), a Methodist lay preacher from England. In England Murray became converted to the idea of universal salvation by James Rely, author of the pamphlet *Union*. Following the death of his wife and infant son, Murray gave up preaching and, in 1770, immigrated to the United States. As the story is told, on the way to New York, Murray's ship became stuck on a sandbar off the coast of New Jersey. While waiting for the wind to shift the ship off the bar, Murray went ashore where he met a farmer, Thomas Potter. Potter is reported to have asked if Murray was the preacher sent by God to preach universal salvation in the meetinghouse he had built for that purpose. Murray declined, but Potter persisted. If, he said, the winds did not change by Sunday, it was a sign from God that Murray was meant to preach in the meetinghouse. If the winds did release the ship, Murray was free to continue his journey. The winds stayed quiet, and so on Sunday, Murray returned to the pulpit to preach universal salvation in Thomas Potter's meetinghouse. In the following years, Murray preached universalism along the east coast of the United States, and in 1779, founded the Independent Church of Christ (now known as the Independent Christian Church, Unitarian Universalist) in Gloucester, Massachusetts, which is recognized as the first Universalist church in America. Finally, an institution dedicated to universalist ideas was founded.

Murray's was but one of the streams of universalism (the theological idea that all will be saved) and Universalism (the formalization of these thoughts as churches and other institutions) in America. Predating Murray's arrival

by almost 30 years, George de Benneville (1703-1793), a doctor and a preacher of universalism, immigrated to Pennsylvania in 1741. Though arrested several times in Europe for preaching universal salvation, de Benneville found a more sympathetic audience in America, and was instrumental in the conversion of several early universalists, including Elhanan Winchester. De Benneville also preached to Native Americans, and was instrumental in the 1753 publication of *The Everlasting Gospel* by Paul Siegvolk, a book which had great influence in spreading universalist notions, particularly the idea that God cannot be cruel or unjust.

A third stream of universalism arose in the Connecticut River Valley of northern Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. Caleb Rich, an itinerant lay preacher, spread belief in universal salvation after experiencing several mystical episodes. In 1773, Rich founded a specifically Universalist church in Warwick, Massachusetts, and soon also established additional churches in Richmond and Jaffrey, New Hampshire (but as they were not recognized to have legal standing, John Murray's Gloucester church of 1779 is considered the first Universalist church in America). Rich's preaching converted many to Universalism including several cousins of Hosea Ballou as well as David Ballou, Hosea's brother. Hosea Ballou (1771-1852), who later converted to the belief of universal salvation, became one of Universalism's leading figures.

At a regional meeting, or convention, in Oxford, Massachusetts in 1785, individual Universalist churches joined together to form a broader religious movement. The movement became even broader with the first national convention, in Philadelphia in 1790. The conventions provided opportunities to bring all the various streams of universalism together for a week of conversation, debate, socializing, revivalism, and activism. The Philadelphia Convention of 1790, which had 17 delegates, adopted a resolution that invoked the Universalist belief in the ultimate worth of every human being in opposing slavery. The meeting at Winchester, New Hampshire in 1803 resulted in codifying Universalist beliefs of the time in what became known as the Winchester Profession (see Workshop 7). By 1833 the General Convention became the national forum for Universalism. The three-day celebration in September, 1870 in Gloucester, Massachusetts that marked the centennial of John Murray's landing in America was the largest religious gathering ever to take place in the United States: 12,000 attended.

In 1805, Hosea Ballou published *A Treatise on Atonement*, perhaps the most influential Universalist document of the 19th century. The book articulated an

American understanding of Universalism, and the religion of universal salvation spoke to many in the youthful, optimistic nation. Because Ballou held that no soul was hellbound, whether by God's judgment or exclusion of election, his book represents the first real break universalism had with Calvinism. Ballou was a preacher and a founder of the *Universalist Magazine* (1819), but is perhaps best remembered for his role in the Restorationist Controversy of the 1820s. Ballou held the "ultra-universalist" view that all people were saved immediately upon death, while others, notably Paul Dean and Edward Turner, held that salvation came to all people only after an interim period of punishment and atonement after which souls would be restored to God's presence. The ensuing controversy threatened to split the young denomination, though it ultimately not only survived, but thrived.

Universalism grew rapidly in numbers as individuals left their former religious traditions, particularly the Baptist and Congregational faiths. By the time of the Civil War, there were estimated to be more than 600,000 Universalists in the United States. While attracted to the message of universal salvation, these "come-outers" from other traditions brought ideas that influenced the ways in which Universalists organized themselves.

Universalism developed theologically as well, and by the late 19th century promoted higher criticism of the Bible, the need for Universalism to establish a universal Beloved Community through social engagement, and reconciliation between religion and science, particularly in light of the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. In the 20th century, as Universalism moved further from its Trinitarian Christian roots, the term "universalism" took on the meaning of a religion for all people, rather than its original reference to the doctrine of universal salvation. Robert Cummins, the General Superintendent of the Universalist Church of America (UCA), succinctly declared in 1943, "Ours is a world fellowship."

LEADER RESOURCE 3: WE ARE UNIVERSALISTS

Phineas Taylor Barnum (1810-1891) — "The noblest art is that of making others happy, honesty, sobriety, industry, economy, education, good habits, perseverance, cheerfulness, love to God and good will toward men." This was the philosophy of P. T. Barnum, the greatest American showman of the 19th century and a dedicated Universalist. Barnum rose from poverty to bring entertainment to millions with his American Museum of curiosities and his traveling three-ring circus, "The Greatest Show on Earth." Converted to Universalism by his grandfather, Barnum was active in Universalist congregations in Connecticut and New York. After hearing a persuasive Universalist sermon on temperance, Barnum poured his entire wine collection down the drain! Barnum donated generously to Universalist churches, schools and causes.

Clarissa Harlowe Barton (1821-1912) — "I defy the tyranny of precedent. I cannot afford the luxury of a closed mind. I go for anything new that might improve the past." This philosophy led Clara Barton to work for reforms in education, to seek women's suffrage, and to found the American Red Cross. Born into an active Universalist family in Oxford, Massachusetts, Barton expressed interest in spiritualism and Christian Science and religiously defined herself at various times as a Universalist, a pagan, and "not what the world denominated a church woman." Known as the "Angel of the Battlefield," Barton dedicated much of her life to the care of the wounded and ill—on the battlefield, in the hospitals, and as founder of the American Red Cross and as its first president.

Olympia Brown (1835-1926) — "The grandest thing has been the lifting up of the gates and the opening of the doors to the women of America, giving liberty to twenty-seven million women, thus opening to them a new and larger life and a higher ideal." Although she was referring to women securing the right to vote, a cause for which she had worked tirelessly, Olympia Brown might well have been referring to her own impact on the vocation of religious women in the United States. Although Lydia Jenkins was ordained by a denominational body of the Universalists in 1858, Brown has long been considered the first woman ordained with full ministerial fellowship by a denomination (1863). Whatever the nuances of denominational authority, Brown stood as a model and inspiration for many others. Brown was inspired to the ministry by Antoinette Brown Blackwell, the first woman ordained by a congregation in America, and went on to inspire others such as Phebe Ann Coffin Hanaford (1829-1921).

Augusta Jane Chapin (1836-1905) — "Let the creeds remain as historic landmarks, but let the church the Master founded move on." Just six months after Olympia Brown's historic ordination in 1863, Augusta Chapin put these words into action by becoming the second woman ordained by the Universalists. Later she was the first woman to sit on the Universalist General Convention, as well as the first woman to receive an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree. Chapin served a number of Universalist congregations, worked for women's rights in education and suffrage, was a college lecturer on English literature, and chaired the Women's Committee of the 1893 World Parliament of Religions.

Maria Cook (1779-1835) — "But as the phenomenon of a female preacher appearing among us was so extraordinary, and curiosity was on tiptoe among the mass of the congregation, to hear a woman preach, our opposing brethren finally withdrew their objections, and she very cheerfully obliged us with a discourse." These words by Nathaniel Stacy describe the atmosphere that met Maria Cook's request to speak at the Universalist Western Association in 1811. Though Cook's application to the Western Association was met with skepticism, her successful address led to a letter of fellowship as the first woman to fill Universalist pulpits. However, repeated demonstrations of disrespect from crowds and colleagues, led Cook to doubt the sincerity and unanimity of support, and she destroyed the letter. Cook continued to preach sporadically for several years, but gave up the ministry after being arrested on a trumped up vagrancy charge. As a woman and a Universalist Cook faced unguarded discrimination, but blazed a path that others were to follow.

Nathaniel Gunnison (1811-1871) — "A good deed survives the hand that performed it. A great thought, once uttered, may pulsate the universe and overturn empires and themes which have withstood armies and resisted the onward march of time..." Nathaniel Gunnison was a living example of "a good deed" that survived well past its time. While on a winter's journey, and nearly penniless, the 16-year-old Gunnison was taken in and treated well by a couple who he learned were Universalists. He vowed to always do the same for others, and did so throughout western New York and eastern Canada in his long and active ministry. He was the minister in Halifax, Nova Scotia during the Civil War, a partisan for the North in a city—and, to some extent, a congregation—that sympathized with the South, the source of the cotton trade and prosperity. In a single year of ministry, Gunnison recorded in his journal that he preached "more than 100 sermons, and made more than 500 pastoral calls."

Lydia Ann Moulton Jenkins (1824-1874) — "We supposed that a woman could not do it, unless she were bold, masculine, and presuming. We are now sure that a woman can preach, can pray, in the pulpit, without throwing off her womanly dignity and modesty." With these words about Lydia Jenkins, influential Universalist leader Thomas Whittemore reversed his long-held stand against women in the ministry. Lydia Moulton came to Universalism as a young woman. In 1860, after several years of joint ministry with her husband Edmund Jenkins, Lydia was ordained by the Ontario Association of Universalists in Geneva, NY. Few records of the event remain, and given the controversy over the ordination of women, it was likely not well publicized. Thus the record of the first woman granted ordination by a denomination was lost for many years. In 1866 Jenkins left the ministry to become a physician. She continued working for women's rights until her death in 1874.

Joseph Fletcher Jordan (1863-1929) — "Then came Dr. Shinn and Dr. Shinn's 'beautiful gospel.'" This is how the *Universalist Yearbook* described the conversion of the Methodist preacher Joseph F. Jordan to Universalism after hearing the great evangelist Quillen Shinn. Thus Jordan, the child of slaves, became one of the first black Universalist ministers. Following preparation at St. Lawrence University, Jordan moved to Virginia to continue the work of Joseph Jordan (no relation). He led a congregation and served as principal of the Suffolk Normal Training School, revitalizing and growing both institutions. Until his death in 1929, Jordan remained principal of the school, was active in the Temperance movement, served as a probation officer for black youths, and edited the *Colored Universalist* periodical.

Joseph Jordan (1842-1901) — "He believes in us, and knows why." This was the conclusion of the ordination council that accepted Joseph Jordan into fellowship as the first African American Universalist minister. Originally a Baptist minister, Jordan was converted to Universalism through the writings of Thomas Whittemore, and other Universalists. Jordan wanted to return to his birthplace, Norfolk, Virginia, to start a school and Universalist congregation for the black community. In 1893 the General Convention granted Jordan's request for building funds and, with help from mentor Edwin Sweetser and Quillen Shinn, the Norfolk community was on its way. A second community was started in Suffolk under direction of Jordan's assistant, Thomas Wise. Following Jordan's death the Norfolk center declined and was closed in 1906, but the Suffolk community continued and grew under the leadership of Joseph Fletcher Jordan (no relation).

Thomas Starr King (1824-1864) — As a statue in his honor in Golden Gate Park reads, "In him eloquence, strength and virtue were devoted with fearless courage to truth, country and his fellowmen." As Starr King put it himself, "But, though I weigh only 120 pounds, when I am mad, I weigh a ton!" Either way, the might of Thomas Starr King is credited with saving California for Union. Starr King was born the son of a Universalist minister, though he was urged to the ministry by Unitarian preacher Theodore Parker, and would go on to serve both Universalist and Unitarian congregations. With Abraham Lincoln's campaign for President of the United States, Starr King became involved in politics as a spiritual leader to California Republicans. Starr King also worked to help elect Governor Leland Stanford, a member of his growing San Francisco congregation. Church work, politics and fundraising efforts on behalf of the Sanitary Commission and Red Cross took their toll on the slight minister, who contracted diphtheria and pneumonia, and died at the age of 39. The Unitarian Universalism theological school Starr King School for the Ministry is named in his honor.

Abner Kneeland (1774-1844) — "Universalists believe in a god which I do not; but believe that their god, with all his moral attributes, (aside from nature itself,) is nothing more than a chimera of their own imagination." This is but a sampling of the radical theology which landed Abner Kneeland in jail as the last man imprisoned in America on a charge of blasphemy. Once a teacher, Abner Kneeland began his ministerial career as a Baptist. Then he read the work of Universalist Elhanan Winchester, and was ordained to the Universalist ministry in 1805. Throughout his career, Kneeland's outspokenness and radical views brought him trouble. As a preacher, newspaper editor, and lecturer, he advocated free thought and free speech, women's rights, birth control, and labor reform. However, it was his attacks on Christian doctrine that finally landed Kneeland in jail for blasphemy. After his release, he moved to Iowa with plans to establish a community of freethinkers.

Angus Hector MacLean (1892-1969) — "He was a champion of the spiritual rights of children and a wise interpreter of the liberal spirit to their parents." These are words of tribute from Max Kapp, successor to Angus MacLean as dean of St. Lawrence University. A Presbyterian lay preacher as a young man, MacLean faced some difficulty gaining ordination due to his liberal views, but eventually prevailed. However, MacLean dedicated his life to education—in the university as dean and teacher, and in the church as religious educator and preacher. One of the leading reformers of religious education, MacLean advocated a child-centered, experience-based classroom in his pamphlet "The

Method is the Message." Adopting Universalism as his religious home in the 1940s, MacLean was ordained to the Universalist ministry in 1945.

Judith Sargent Stevens Murray (1751-1820) — "It doth not appear that she was governed by any one sensual appetite; but merely by a desire of adorning her mind; a laudable ambition fired her soul, and a thirst for knowledge." Thus Judith Sargent Murray defended the biblical Eve in her own quest for educational rights for all women. Though she regretted the lack of formal education available to young women in her day, Judith Sargent Murray accomplished much with her self-acquired knowledge, far more than most women of her generation. She was a poet and a prolific letter writer, and as a young widow following the death of her sea captain husband John Stevens, she supported herself with her writing. Two of her plays were produced in Boston. Her father was swayed by the writings of British Universalist James Rely, and invited John Murray to come to Gloucester, Massachusetts, in 1774. Judith found a friend and mentor in Murray, and they married 14 years later. Judith collaborated with Murray on his writings and continued to publish essays on the rights and capabilities of women and other social issues, some anonymously as "the Gleaner." In 1798 she finally published three volumes of essays by "The Gleaner," and admitted authorship.

Benjamin Rush (1745-1813) — "The Universal doctrine prevails more and more in our country, particularly among persons eminent for their piety, in whom it is not a mere speculation but a principle of action in the heart prompting to practical goodness." Benjamin Rush wrote these words to his friend Elhanan Winchester in 1791, and they were words that well described his own life. Perhaps best known as a signer of the Declaration of Independence, Rush was an eminent physician who supported medical advances and social reforms well ahead of his time. His work on mental illness and advocacy for treatment forecast a modern psychiatric approach. He was a staunch advocate of sanitation, hygiene, and temperance in preventing illness. He advocated for educational and penal reform, opposed the death penalty, and worked to abolish slavery. While the newly formed United States was creating the Department of War, Rush drew up plans for a Department of Peace.

Clarence Russell Skinner (1881-1949) — "The true social objective is the perfecting of human character by progressive improvement of those conditions and environments which are within the social control." In his work *The Social Implications of Universalism* (1915), Clarence Skinner declared the need for Universalism to move beyond the church to establish a universal

Beloved Community through social engagement. Strongly influenced by the Social Gospel movement of the time, Skinner advocated putting religious principle into social action. Skinner joined John Haynes Holmes in founding the Community Church of Boston, which was patterned on Holmes' New York church, and intended to serve a wider nonsectarian community in order to effect social change. Through his writings, as a minister, and as professor and dean of Crane Theological School at Tufts University, Skinner influenced a generation of Universalists. David Robinson wrote in *The Unitarians and the Universalists* that Skinner was "certainly the most important twentieth century Universalist leader."

Caroline Augusta White Soule (1824-1903) — "Fatigue in the cause of Universalism is infinitely better than inaction, apathy, indolence." Caroline Soule could hardly have been accused of inaction, apathy or indolence. Widowed before the age of 30, she turned to writing to support herself and her five children. Beginning with a memoir of her late husband, Universalist minister Henry B. Soule, she soon added poetry, stories, and books, as well as editorship of a Sunday School paper to her list of accomplishments. In 1869 Soule helped found the Women's Centenary Association, and added fundraising and lecturing to her repertoire. Ill health forced her to travel abroad to restore her strength, but while in Scotland she became an evangelist for Universalism. Three years later she returned to Scotland and helped organize the Scottish Universalist Convention. In 1880 she was ordained as the minister of St. Paul's Universalist Church in Glasgow, Universalism's first missionary.

Elhanan Winchester (1751-1797) — "I became so well persuaded of the truth of the Universal Restoration that I was determined never to deny it, let it cost me ever so much, though all my numerous friends should forsake me, as I expected they would." In fact, not all Winchester's friends deserted him, though he did know extraordinary loss in his life. He married and was widowed five times; seven of his eight children were stillborn and the eighth died before the age of two. Yet Winchester had many close friends who stood by him, including George de Benneville and Benjamin Rush. When he was forced from his Philadelphia Baptist pastorate for his belief in universal salvation, half the congregation came with him and founded the Society of Universal Baptists. Winchester went on to preach in South Carolina (where he founded a church for slaves), in England, and in New England, converting many to Universalism. Though his life was short, Winchester's influence was wide. Indeed it was Elhanan Winchester who ordained Hosea Ballou to the Universalist ministry.

LEADER RESOURCE 4: PHOTOS OF EARLY 1900S UNIVERSALISTS IN NORTH CAROLINA

From the Unitarian Universalist Association archives.



LEADER RESOURCE 5: LIFE-CHANGING BELIEFS

Even as a young girl, Mary Ashton Rice Livermore was tortured by the idea that only some were destined for salvation. She would awaken her parents in the middle of the night begging them to pray for her sisters lest their souls be eternally lost. She wrote in her memoir, *The Story of My Life*:

I was sometimes shaken to the very center of my being, and often expressed to my father, even when very young, what I frequently felt,--a bitter regret that I had ever been born. There were times when I envied the cat that purred at the fireside, or the dog that slept on the doorstep. They could be happy, for they had no souls to be saved or lost.

When a new baby was born into the family Mary begged her parents to send the baby back to God in case she was not destined to be a true Christian and therefore not one of the saved. Her father tried to reassure the young Mary saying they would pray for the baby and train her to be a good Christian, but the Calvinism Mary learned at the First Baptist Church of Boston told her this was not enough. Mary knew the doctrine of election: that God determined, even before birth, who was to be saved and who to be damned. She could find no assurance of this baby's ultimate salvation, and when another sister died at the age of fifteen Mary was cast into despair. "Happiness and I had parted company forever, unless in some certain and assured manner I could be convinced that my sister Rachel was not among the lost," she wrote.

It was some years before she found the reassurance she sought. One Christmas Eve she wandered into the Universalist Church in Duxbury, Massachusetts and heard the minister, Daniel Livermore, read from the Gospel of Matthew, "And thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Though Mary knew the Bible well, this was not the sort of passage that her Calvinist education stressed. It opened for her a new horizon, and she went on to write in her memoir about the new faith that cleared away all the anxiety and despair she had known until then.

In later years I have been compelled to so wide and thorough a study of the great subject of religion that I have gained a nobler comprehension of God, life, and human destiny than I was ever taught. I have learned a broader tolerance, a world-embracing sympathy, and a more stimulating and uplifting faith.

Mary Livermore's experience of encountering Universalism was not unusual in a world where eternal damnation was the prevalent theological position used to exact moral behavior from God-fearing Christians. The optimism of a faith that asserted that the love and mercy of God was stronger than human misdeeds changed people's lives. It was an optimism that paralleled the promise of a new nation, for it held that God is merciful, and preached that humans are capable of moral discernment and growth.

Universalism promised that humans were not only capable of distinguishing good from evil, but that they would choose righteousness for its own sake, without the threat of future damnation. This contrasted with the prevailing tradition, which said humans are by nature prone to evil and incapable of resisting the pull of innate depravity. Orthodox believers were not ready to release the moral hold of a promised eternal punishment. How were people to be made to act in moral and upright ways, they asked, if not under threat of dire, unceasing consequences? This question was widely debated in pamphlets, in religious periodicals, and in person. Theological debates between ministers began in the mid-18th century, and were still alive a century later.

One such debate was held in Southold, New York. The debate set the Methodist and Universalist ministers the task of deciding the eventual fate of all humanity. Held over the course of four evenings and two afternoons (a total of 18 or 20 hours) the debate was recorded as a victory by both sides. But the debate did not end there: It was subsequently published in several pamphlet versions and reported in New York's *Universalist Union* paper. Here one learns that the local Presbyterian minister, no supporter of the new upstart Methodist church, still found its views preferable to the dangers of Universalism. He wrote that the theology of Universalism had not "influenced any man that was vicious and abandoned, to turn and become a man of prayer, faith and holiness," but was prepared to go a good deal further in declaring that, even worse, the faith had the reverse effect. By removing the natural restraint of endless punishment for sins, Universalism had "emboldened" individuals in their sins and crimes. Accordingly he described Universalist church members as those expelled from evangelical churches. He concluded by accusing Universalism of flagrant and open materialism, semi-atheism, and absurdity.

Though but one local occurrence of theological discourse, the Southold Debate is representative of the challenges faced by early Universalists, challenges which continued into the late 19th and even the 20th century. Regardless, the Universalists found creative

and compelling ways to spread their message. The Women's Centenary Association, established to help raise money for the 1870 Universalist Centenary in Gloucester, later became a service organization, the Centenary Aid Organization. The earliest denominationwide women's group, it changed its name in about 1905 to the Women's National Missionary Association (WNMA) dedicating itself to mission work, and particularly funding rural church outposts of liberalism in areas of fundamentalism. The WNMA established and supported a string of small churches in the 1920s and 1930s, emphasizing education in rural areas. These small congregations offered an alternative to the dominant cultural and theological conservatism. In particular, the Universalist teaching against damnation of unbaptized infants offered comfort in small communities faced with infectious disease and high infant mortality.

LEADER RESOURCE 6: PARADISE IS OURS

In modern, Western, Christian conception, salvation occurs only after death. In their book *Saving Paradise* (Beacon Press, 2008), Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker write, "Theologians speak of sacred and profane time, of salvation history and of hope. They interpret the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise as the beginning of salvation history: the world runs along a hard arrow of time, beginning with human sin and culminating in a final New Age, kingdom of God, Second Coming or New Heaven and Earth."

Yet the early Christian church did not speak of salvation as something only in the future. Salvation had qualities of being not yet fully realized, but at the same time existed in the here and now. Brock and Parker write, "...in the early church, paradise—first and foremost—was this world, permeated and blessed by the Spirit of God." Paradise was a place of this earth and of this life, permeated with the goodness and loving spirit of God—a place available to all through the church.

In the 10th century, the Christian idea of paradise as an earthly abode changed with the launch of the first Crusade. As fighters in a war not only justified but sanctified by the church, crusaders were assured their place in paradise, not by right of baptism into the church, but upon their death in this holy war.

Champions of universal salvation, both ancient and modern, have challenged the theology of a wrathful God that withholds paradise as the future reward of an elected few. Some Universalists, such as Jane Leade, an English writer and mystic (1624-1704), saw paradise as a realm in this world. Clarence Skinner, in 20th-century Universalism, preached the creation of the Beloved Community or kingdom of God on earth through social engagement.

Early Universalist thought was deeply grounded in the Bible. One story, though likely apocryphal, tells that the 18th-century itinerant lay preacher Caleb Rich determined the truth of universal salvation by counting the number of biblical passages for and against it. The very fact that this story arose and was circulated shows the great value the Universalists placed on scripture. Orello Cone (1835-1905), a prominent biblical scholar and Universalist, helped shift understanding of the Bible from a literal to a metaphorical interpretation, promoting the use of modern biblical criticism.

Brock and Parker also highlight biblical passages that portray paradise as a dimension of existence, citing the books of the prophets and Leviticus, the Psalms,

Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. Let's see if we too can identify the signs of earthly paradise in the Psalms.

(Leader: Pause here and facilitate small group discussions as described in Alternate Activity 1, Paradise Is Ours, Description.)

This is the way that Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Parker see paradise as described in the here and now:

The Psalms affirm that the gifts of paradise are tangible in this life. "O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps. 34:8). They speak of respite from weariness, pleasure in companionship, freedom from oppression, comfort in sorrow, delight in beauty, satisfaction of hunger, and protection from danger. Though these precious aspects of life can be lost or compromised, they are real dimensions of human experience on the earth, not imaginary ideals. This is what it means to say that paradise is in this world: the actual tastes, sights, fragrances, and textures of paradise touch our lives. They call us to resist the principalities and powers that deny the goodness of ordinary life, threaten to destroy it, or seek to secure its blessings for a few at the expense of many.

LEADER RESOURCE 7: ORIGEN OF ALEXANDRIA

Origen of Alexandria (c. 185-250 CE) was an early Christian theologian who articulated ideas of universal salvation in ways that led his critics to charge him with heresy centuries after his death. From all accounts, Origen was a brilliant, gifted, and prolific scholar who studied science, philosophy, and theology and created the first systematic theology of Christianity, *De Principiis*, or *On First Principles*. This great work survived in its original Greek only in fragments; in the year 543, the emperor Justinian issued an edict condemning Origen's writings, and ordered them destroyed.

Origen's basic premises were:

- *First*, That the souls of humans had existed in a previous state, and that their imprisonment in material bodies was a punishment for sins which they had committed;
- *Second*, That the human soul of Christ had also previously existed, and been united to the Divine nature before the incarnation of the Son of God which is related in the Gospels;
- *Third*, That our material bodies shall be transformed into absolutely ethereal ones at the resurrection; and
- *Fourth*, That all humans, and even devils, shall be finally restored through the mediation of Christ.

While all these ideas were important in the development of Christian theology, of particular interest to Unitarian Universalists is Origen's "major heresy," that because Christ redeemed all humans, all would be saved in eternity. Origen did not believe in eternal suffering, and theorized that souls are re-born, over and again, to experience the educative powers of God until they finally and eventually achieve salvation.

Origen died c. 250 CE, from wounds he received from torture for expressing and spreading his ideas in nearly 2,000 separate written works.

FIND OUT MORE

More Universalist Stories in this Program

Adin Ballou (1803-1890) — Universalist minister and founder of the Hopedale utopian community, Workshop 13

Quillen Shinn (1845-1907) — Universalist evangelist, Workshop 16

Winchester Profession (1803) — A Collection of Covenants and Statements of Belief, Workshop 7

The History of Universalism

Ballou, Hosea. *A Treatise on Atonement*, reprint (Boston, MA: Skinner House Books, 1986)

Cassara, Ernest. *Universalism in America*, Skinner House Books (Boston, MA, 1971)

Hitchings, Catherine F. *Universalist and Unitarian Women Ministers* (Boston, MA: UU Historical Society, 1985)

Howe, Charles A. [*The Larger Faith: A Short History of American Universalism*](#) (Boston, MA: Skinner House Books, 1993)

Miller, Russell. *The Larger Hope* (Boston, MA: Unitarian Universalist Association) Volume I, 1979; Volume II, 1985

Moore, Edward. [Origen of Alexandria](#), The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

Scott, Clinton Lee. *The Universalist Church of America: A Short History* (Boston, MA: Universalist Historical Society, 1957)

Williams, George Hunston. *American Universalism* (Boston, MA: Skinner House Books, 1976)

Research and Presentation of Congregational Histories

Coeyman, Barbara. [Creating Congregational Histories](#) on the website of the Unitarian Universalist Historical Society

[Knowing Where You've Been: Maintaining Records and Archives](#) an article on the Unitarian Universalist website

WORKSHOP 11: AS TRANQUIL STREAMS THAT MEET AND MERGE — CONSOLIDATION

INTRODUCTION

If, recognizing the interdependence of all life, we strive to build community, the strength we gather will be our salvation... If we join spirits as brothers and sisters, the pain of our aloneness will be lessened, and that does matter. — Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley

This workshop explores issues and events in the consolidation of the AUA and the UCA into a single entity, the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. The workshop highlights important cooperative work done by the youth movements and religious educators of both denominations, which smoothed the way for the consolidation. Participants learn about some of the achievements of the young Association and its influence on the wider culture. They consider how the dual heritages of Unitarianism and Universalism have shaped our movement.

Before you lead this workshop, review the Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters in the program Introduction and prepare to accommodate anyone who may be in the group.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Tell the story of the Unitarian Universalist Association's creation
- Present stories of cooperation between Universalists and Unitarians prior to denominational consolidation
- Explore some events that have shaped the Unitarian Universalist Association and contemporary UU identity
- Consider the influence of our religious movement beyond Unitarian Universalist circles.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about initiatives, events, and cooperative ventures that preceded the AUA and the UCA consolidation

- Learn about the people involved in the consolidation
- Consider ways our faith movement and congregations have influenced, and might continue to influence, the broader culture and communities
- Reflect on ways the consolidation of Unitarianism and Universalism have affected their own religious paths.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: From Why? to Why Not?	25
Activity 2: Youth Lead the Way	20
Activity 3: Kindred Spirits — Angus MacLean and Sophia Lyon Fahs	30
Activity 4: Twelve Moments	25
Faith in Action: Exploring Your Congregation's History — Long-Term Project	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Sleepless in Syracuse	20
Alternate Activity 2: Stronger Than We Look	25

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time to consider:

- What does Unitarian Universalism mean to you?
- What has it given to you? What has it asked of you?
- What would be different in your life if this Association of congregations did not exist?

If you wish, read the stories of what their religious home means to other Unitarian Universalists from around the world on the [UUA stewardship web site](http://www.uua.org/giving/news/generosity/stories/index.shtml) (at www.uua.org/giving/news/generosity/stories/index.shtml).

You may wish to ask participants to engage in this same spiritual practice so that they, too, arrive at the workshop centered and ready to engage with the material and the group.

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Sign-in sheet and pen/pencil
- Name tags and markers
- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1, [Schedule Template](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Create and post a workshop agenda on newsprint. The Workshop-at-a-Glance section provides time estimates. Create a welcome table near the entrance. Set out name tags and markers, the sign-in sheet and pen/pencil, and copies of the schedule.
- Make copies of the Time Line of UU History handout (Workshop 1, Handout 2), if you need some. Place time line handouts on the welcome table.
- Optional: Post the Time Line of UU History display.

Description of Activity

Welcome everyone to the workshop as they enter. Ask them to sign in, make (or pick up) name tags, and pick up the schedule and time line handouts from the welcome table. Point out the posted agenda for this workshop.

Including All Participants

Write the agenda in large, clear lettering and post it where it will be easily visible to all participants. Provide name tags large enough and markers bold enough so names will be easily visible.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, for all participants
- Optional: Decorative cloth
- Optional: Keyboard or piano

Preparation for Activity

- Set up a worship or centering table with the chalice and (optional) decorative cloth.
- Distribute copies of the hymnbook.
- Optional: Arrange for musical accompaniment or a song leader.

Description of Activity

Gather the group around the chalice. Say:
The words of the hymn you will sing, "As Tranquil Streams," were written in 1933 to celebrate the growing connections between Unitarians and Universalists and published in the 1937 book *Hymns of the Spirit*, the first joint effort of the American Unitarian Association (AUA) and the Universalist Church of America (UCA). In 1960, after the denominations voted to merge, this song was the processional at the combined worship service.

Light the chalice and lead the group to sing Hymn 145, "As Tranquil Streams."

ACTIVITY 1: FROM WHY? TO WHY NOT? (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story, ["From Why? to Why Not?"](#) (included in this document)
- Modeling dough in two primary colors (red and yellow, or yellow and blue, or red and blue)
- Two bowls, one for each color of modeling dough

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story "From Why? to Why Not?" and prepare to present it.
- Divide the modeling dough into small pieces so each participant will have one of each color. Place the pieces in the two bowls.
- Optional: Review Alternate Activity 1, *Sleepless in Syracuse*, and decide whether you will use it to extend this topic.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story "From Why? to Why Not?" which tells of the consolidation of the Unitarian and Universalist faith traditions.

Invite participants to reflect silently on the changes each tradition had to make in order to join together. Lead a brief discussion: What were the losses? What were the gains?

After a few minutes, distribute the bowls of modeling dough and ask participants to select one piece of each color. Explain that one color represents Unitarianism and the other Universalism. Invite participants to use both colors to create a representation of Unitarian Universalism at the time of consolidation. Suggest they might keep the colors completely separate, somewhat blended, or completely blended; their representation can be expressive and abstract, or representational and recognizable.

After ten minutes, invite participants to share their creations with one another in groups of three.

Variation

If you have sufficient time, interest, and materials, invite participants to return to this activity at the end of this workshop. Instead of a representation of Unitarian Universalism at the time of consolidation, ask them to create a representation of Unitarian Universalism today.

Including All Participants

Encourage participants who do not consider themselves artistic by reminding that they may make an abstract expression.

ACTIVITY 2: YOUTH LEAD THE WAY (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Youth Lead the Way](#) (included in this document)
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the UUA hymnbook
- Leader Resource 2, [Liberal Religious Youth Photograph, 1953](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer and digital projector
- Optional: Keyboard or piano

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 1, Youth Lead the Way and prepare to present it.
- Place a hymnbook on each participant's chair.
- Print out Leader Resource 2, Liberal Religious Youth Photograph, 1953 to pass around.
- Optional: Prepare Leader Resource 2 as a digital slide. Test computer and projector.
- Optional: Invite a musician (or a musical participant) to lead and/or accompany the hymn.

Description of Activity

Read or present the contents of Leader Resource 1, Youth Lead the Way. Pass around (or project) Leader Resource 2, Liberal Religious Youth Photograph, 1953. Explain that the Unitarian and Universalist youth movements consolidated in 1953.

Invite participants to share any stories they may have of growing up in congregational youth groups, whether Unitarian, Universalist, Unitarian Universalist, or another faith tradition. Guide a conversation with these questions:

- What kind of mission or service work did your youth group engage in?
- What did your faith community youth group provide for you that was lacking in other youth social or educational groups?
- What would you hope Unitarian Universalist youth groups uniquely offer today?

Allow ten minutes for this discussion.

Then, distribute hymnbooks. Explain:

Hymn 318, "We Would Be One," was originally written as a youth anthem. Anthony Wright, the first executive director of the consolidated Liberal Religious Youth, wrote the words in 1952 as the American Unitarian Youth and the Universalist Youth Fellowship were in the process of consolidation. A few words were changed when the song was included in *Singing the Living Tradition*. Two changes were made for more inclusive language: "to show mankind a new community" was changed to "to show to all a new community," and "strive to make men free" was altered to "strive to make us free." The one other change was the change of "our hymn of youth" to "our hymn of love."

Lead the group in singing "We Would Be One."

ACTIVITY 3: KINDRED SPIRITS — ANGUS MACLEAN AND SOPHIA LYON FAHS (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 3, [Kindred Spirits](#) (included in this document)
- Plain paper and pencils, pens, and markers
- Optional: Books and other materials from the New Beacon Series

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 3, Kindred Spirits and prepare to present it.
- Write these quotes on newsprint and post:
 - The method is the message. — Angus MacLean
 - We need to learn how to help children to think about ordinary things until insights and feelings are found which have a religious quality. — Sophia Lyon Fahs
- Write on newsprint, and set aside:
 - Can you recall a specific experience when the method was the most important part of the message?
 - Can you recall a lesson offered when you were led to see something ordinary as having a religious quality?
- Optional: Check your congregation's religious education library for books and other materials from the New Beacon Series. If you find some, create a display.

Description of Activity

Read or present Leader Resource 3, Kindred Spirits. Then, invite participants to share any memories of having been in Unitarian, Universalist, or Unitarian Universalist religious education programs and using materials from the New Beacon Series. Point out items in your display, if you have created one.

Call attention to the two quotes you have prepared and post the questions. Invite participants to reflect for a few moments about their own experiences in either religious or secular education settings, as a child, youth, or adult. After two minutes, invite them to turn to a person near by and share their responses to the questions. Allow five minutes for sharing.

Mention to the group that both Fahs and MacLean have influenced not only children's religious education, but also the way Unitarian Universalists approach theology and faith development for all ages. Invite participants to consider the two posted questions again, this time reflecting on their adult experiences as Unitarian Universalists. Suggest they consider worship services, social action projects, small groups, adult education classes, and other experiences they have had in the congregation in the light of MacLean's and Fahs' educational philosophies. Invite two minutes of silent reflection. Then, invite participants to turn again to their previous conversation partner and share responses to the questions. Allow five minutes for this conversation.

Distribute the paper, pencils, pens, and markers. Invite participants to create a note of thanks to (or a note of appreciation about) either Angus MacLean or Sophia Lyon Fahs that describes their own experience as it relates to the philosophies of these two gifted religious educators. Say they may use words, drawings, symbols, or any other means to convey the message.

If there is time, invite volunteers to share their notes with the group.

ACTIVITY 4: TWELVE MOMENTS (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Twelve Moments That Shaped Today's UUA](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1.
- In advance, invite a few participants to read aloud from the handout, and provide each volunteer with a copy.

Description of Activity

Say, in your own words:

In 2001, historian Warren Ross wrote an article for *UU World* magazine looking back at the first 40 years of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. In the article, Ross listed twelve pivotal moments that shaped our present denomination.

Distribute Handout 1, Twelve Moments That Shaped Today's UUA. Have volunteers take turns read the points aloud.

Then say:

Now that you have heard one perspective on the defining events and their impact, I invite you to share any memories of those events or other moments you consider significant in our denomination's history since consolidation.

Lead a conversation. Then, if time allows, invite participants to share a moment significant in shaping their own connection with Unitarian Universalism.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Faith in Action from this workshop and/or Spiritual Preparation from Workshop 12

Preparation for Activity

- Download and customize Taking It Home as a handout. You may wish to add the Faith in Action activity suggestion from this workshop and/or the Spiritual Preparation questions for the next workshop.

Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Announce the date, time, and place of the next workshop and any other "housekeeping" information. Request or remind volunteers if you want participants to read material aloud or perform other roles at the next meeting.

Invite participants to gather around the chalice, and read these words from the 1960 worship service celebrating the consolidation of the AUA and UCA:

We declare our allegiance to the (new) Unitarian Universalist Association, and pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our faith to its highest purposes and sure upbuilding.

Extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: EXPLORING YOUR CONGREGATION'S HISTORY — LONG-TERM PROJECT

Description of Activity

If the group has not yet begun this activity, read Workshop 9, Faith in Action and plan to introduce it to the group.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

After the workshop, co-leaders should talk together to evaluate this workshop and plan future workshops. Use these questions to guide your shared reflection and planning:

- What parts of the workshop worked well and which did not? Why? How was the success, or lack of success, related to the topics? How was it related to the types of activities?
- How can we use this experience to make future workshops more effective? What would we change if we were to lead this workshop again?
- What was left unfinished in the workshop that should still be addressed? How and when will we address it?
- What strengths did we each bring to the workshop?
- As co-leaders, when did we work well together?

- What might help us be better leaders in future workshops?
- What do we need to prepare for the next workshop? Who will handle which tasks? Who will lead which activities?

TAKING IT HOME

If, recognizing the interdependence of all life, we strive to build community, the strength we gather will be our salvation... If we join spirits as brothers and sisters, the pain of our aloneness will be lessened, and that does matter. — Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley

In the opening to our workshop we sang "As Tranquil Streams," a hymn written to celebrate the relationship between the Unitarians and the Universalists before our consolidation. Do we, as a Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, live up to the promise recorded in its words? Consider these key phrases from the hymn:

- free from the bonds that bind the mind to narrow thought
- free from a social code that fails to serve the cause of human need
- a freedom that reveres the past, but trusts the dawning future more

Reflect on the meaning of the song today, in your journal or with a trusted conversation partner.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SLEEPLESS IN SYRACUSE (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Sleepless in Syracuse](#) (included in this document) "
- A copy of the story "[From Why? to Why Not?](#)" (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story "Sleepless in Syracuse" and prepare to present it.
- Read the story "From Why? to Why Not?" for background information.

Description of Activity

Briefly share the information from the story "From Why? to Why Not?" to provide background.

Read or tell the story "Sleepless in Syracuse."

Make this point: The one thing that almost brought a halt to the consolidation was the stated purpose of the new association: the story illustrates how important it is for religious bodies to know their purpose. Invite participants to discuss how the various purposes and objectives proposed for the new association defined the new movement differently. Use these questions as a guide:

- What is the difference between saying "our" Jewish and Christian heritage and "the" Jewish and Christian heritage? Explain that we no longer use the term "Judeo-Christian" because it implies that Judaism is a modifier to Christianity, rather than a distinct faith tradition.
- How does this debate resonate in contemporary Unitarian Universalism, as we seek to define our relationship to Christianity?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: STRONGER THAN WE LOOK (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 4, [Stronger Than We Look](#) (included in this document)
- A copy of the [Principles and Sources of the Unitarian Universalist Association](#) (at www.uua.org/visitors/6798.shtml)

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 4, Stronger Than We Look and prepare to present it.

Description of Activity

Tell the group, in your own words:

There are just under 222,000 people reported as belonging to a congregation, including nearly 165,000 who have signed the membership book and just over 57,000 children and youth registered in programs. There are no doubt mostly others who regularly or occasionally attend congregational services or events and/or who share our values and consider themselves Unitarian Universalist. Even so, we are still small in number.

Present Leader Resource 4, Stronger Than We Look which describes three moments in Unitarian Universalist history when our movement's influence outweighed our relatively small numbers. Pause after each story, and invite participants to name the Principles and/or values that were "lived out loud" by the actions described.

STORY: FROM WHY? TO WHY NOT?

At the emotional worship service that celebrated the vote to create the Unitarian Universalist Association in Boston in 1960, the Rev. Donald Harrington, a Unitarian, described the consolidation of the two faiths as "partly a new birth, partly a commencement, partly a kind of marriage." Looking back over the long journey to that historic moment, one can see threads of all three rites of passage.

Prior to the formal courting of one denomination by the other, ministers, members and churches from both faiths had, according to Universalist historian Russell Miller, "innumerable instances of friendship, collaboration, and harmony as well as antagonism, separateness, and discord." The differences and similarities were both legion, leading the 19th century minister Thomas Starr King to quip that "the only reason that the Unitarians and the Universalists haven't already joined that they were too closely related to be married." Indeed, the two traditions had similar, although not identical theological stances. Larger differences existed in church organization, the educational background of clergy, and the socio-economic status of their respective memberships. These differences proved far more difficult to overcome than the theological ones.

In the late 1840s, Henry Bellows, a prominent Unitarian minister in New York City, visited a number of Universalist churches in New York State. He found the Unitarians and Universalists in many places "drawing towards each other." He believed an eventual union was inevitable. In 1865, Bellows helped establish the National Council of Unitarian Churches, which, as one of its first pieces of business, passed a resolution "looking to union with the Universalists." Nearly 30 years later, the Universalist General Convention echoed that overture. Twice in the 1890s, the convention introduced, but tabled, motions calling for greater cooperation between the Unitarians and the Universalists. Meanwhile, some congregations did not wait for their denominations' blessing. In 1878, the first local merger took place in Mukwonago, Wisconsin, where Unitarian and Universalist congregations formally joined for the first time.

Resolutions continued to be written and passed by both denominational bodies, but there was little real action until 1931, when a Joint Commission was created to "consider possibilities" of joining together. By this time, both traditions were considering what they might have in common not only with one another, but with other liberal Protestant churches. In the 1930s, a broad group of liberal Christians attempted to forge closer ties through the Free Church Fellowship, but motivation soon waned.

While the two denominations tentatively approached the idea of consolidation, Unitarian and Universalist religious educators continued their history of collaboration, which began in 1903 when both Unitarians and Universalists were among the early members of the Religious Education Association. In the early 1930s, two members of the staff of the Universalist General Sunday School Society joined the Unitarian Curriculum Commission to begin a collaboration on curriculum. In 1937, the American Unitarian Association appointed Sophia Lyon Fahs as curriculum editor for a comprehensive series of curricula and support materials, the New Beacon Series in Religious Education. Both Unitarian and Universalist congregations used the materials.

The 1950s proved to be the charmed decade for the on-again, off-again process. In 1953, the American Unitarian Youth and the Universalist Youth Fellowship joined forces to create Liberal Religious Youth. In 1954, the Council of Liberal Churches was created. This time, substantive joint work was accomplished in the spheres of education, publications, and public relations. In 1955, the Joint Interim Committee recommended that the Unitarians and the Universalists determine a step-by-step process for "union." Also in 1955, The Unitarian Education Directors' Association, which had been founded in 1949, was renamed in recognition of the collaborative efforts of Unitarian and Universalist religious educators; the Liberal Religious Education Directors' Association (now Liberal Religious Educators Association, LREDA) was born. And in 1956, the Joint Merger Commission was established to guide the process itself.

That process was arduous, comprehensive, and inclusive. In 1959, the Commission's final report presented the "state of health" of both the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America; a plan for consolidation; and a full accounting of advantages and disadvantages of joining together. While the formal reports communicated the facts to the concerned memberships, there was much "side conversation" that reflected long-standing prejudices and fears on both sides. Unitarians were concerned that the Universalists were simply too different from them to forge a successful relationship. Universalists feared the more centralized, high-profile Unitarians would subsume them. These concerns were the same ones that had slowed joining for 100 years, yet now the time seemed right to take the next step.

In 1959, the final negotiations were worked out in Syracuse, New York. Over the next year, a plebiscite of congregations was called. Ninety-five percent of Unitarian and Universalist congregations participated; 88 percent of Unitarians said "yes," as did 79 percent of

Universalists. In 1960, the separate but side-by-side annual meetings of the AUA and the UCA voted "yes" to consolidation. A special worship service was held at Boston's Symphony Hall with the pulpits previously used by William Ellery Channing and Hosea Ballou.

A marriage? Perhaps, but one that has had much in the way of differences to negotiate. A birth? Yes, but with plenty of pre-history brought into the newness of the moment. A graduation? Maybe, inasmuch as a graduation is both an ending and a beginning.

STORY: SLEEPLESS IN SYRACUSE

As consolidation neared, feelings ran high. Though polling of congregations clearly showed most Universalists and Unitarians favored merger, some still questioned its advisability. Would consolidation dissipate resources that could be better used to strengthen congregations? Would merging churches mean lessening the presence of liberal religion in many communities? What would each denomination give up of its character, values, and traditions?

Doubts came to a boil in Syracuse, New York in 1959. Approximately 1,000 delegates gathered to vote on the Plan to Consolidate offered by the Joint Merger Commission. After a short time together, the Universalists and the Unitarians broke into separate sessions to consider the plan. The agreement was that as each group found something that required amendment, they would propose an amendment and send it to the other group for their consideration, for, in the end, both groups had to agree to the same plan. Fifty-seven amendments were made and voted on in this back-and-forth manner.

But the most contentious point, the only one that brought the assembly to a halt, was the wording of the Purposes and Objectives of the yet-to-be association. The wording the Commission first proposed read:

To cherish and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition, immemorially summarized in their essence as love to God and love to man.

The Universalist delegation overwhelmingly adopted this wording, and then waited for their Unitarian counterparts to do likewise.

But in the Unitarian assembly, the reaction was intense. Some wanted the clause struck as coming too close to a creed. At the other end of the spectrum, others were offended that the wording made no mention of the religion of Jesus or the "Judeo-Christian" heritage. A new version was proposed:

To cherish and spread the universal truths taught by Jesus and the other great teachers of humanity in every age and tradition, and prophetically expressed in the Judeo-Christian tradition as love to God and love to man.

This set off a debate on the very nature of Unitarianism. It was a debate that dated back to the 19th century. Did Unitarianism stand firmly in the tradition of Christian churches, or did it offer a new, universal religion for all people? Ultimately, the statement proved too narrow to be accepted.

Another version was offered, removing the reference to Jesus but retaining the phrase "our Judeo-Christian heritage:"

To cherish and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition, immemorially summarized in our Judeo-Christian heritage as love to God and love to man.

This, too, was unacceptable to the Unitarians who felt it placed the religion firmly in the stream of Protestant Christianity. The vote to reconsider the new wording failed by seven votes of the 600 delegates present.

The meetings ran late into the night. With no agreement at hand, the assembly and the merger were at deadlock. Still, most of the delegates stayed in their seats. Unitarian Donald Harrington, then minister of the Community Church of New York, later wrote about that night in Syracuse:

I felt very discouraged and went to bed. About one o'clock, somebody pounded on my door. It was Percival Brundage (an AUA leader) saying, "Don, can't we do something about this?" and he showed me wording that he and some others had continued to work on. I said I agreed but that since we'd already lost the vote to reconsider I didn't know what could be done. At about three o'clock, there was another knock on my door. It was one of the leading Unitarian Christians and he said, "Don, we've got better wording. Are you still with us?" And he explained that he had persuaded the Universalists to reconsider, which meant that the rules permitted the Unitarians to vote again, as well.

The new proposal passed, with only one word changed. "Our" became "the," and the Unitarian Universalist Association was created "to cherish and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition, immemorially summarized in *the* Judeo-Christian heritage as love to God and love to man."

HANDOUT 1: TWELVE MOMENTS THAT SHAPED TODAY'S UUA

1. Greeley Forges a Strong Presidency

In 1961 the first General Assembly elects the Rev. Dr. Dana McLean Greeley, last president of the American Unitarian Association, to be the first president of the new UUA. Charismatic and deeply engaged in public issues, Greeley raised visibility, membership, and morale, essentially defining the office. He also ran out of funds, leading to a financial crisis at the end of his second term.

2. Reeb's Death Galvanizes a Movement

Greeley leads the UUA in joining the civil rights movement, a natural fit for a movement affirming the "supreme worth of every human personality." The Rev. James Reeb, killed while participating in the Selma voting rights campaign in 1965, galvanizes UU participation. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivers the UUA's Ware Lecture in 1966.

3. Black Empowerment Bitterly Divides

"Black power" radicalizes the civil rights movement after Stokely Carmichael (who coined the phrase) challenges Martin Luther King's goal of racial integration in 1966. The debate about the future of the civil rights movement divides the UUA when the Black UU Caucus presents "non-negotiable demands" to the 1968 General Assembly. The Assembly commits 1 million dollars over four years to black empowerment programs, but backs off in 1969 when the board realizes that the UUA is broke. After cutting all funding in 1970, the UUA loses approximately 1,000 African-American members and retreats from active involvement with the civil rights movement.

4. Beacon Press Infuriates Nixon

Beacon Press, the UUA's independent book publisher, found a spot on Richard Nixon's enemies list for publishing the complete text of the Pentagon Papers in 1971. The FBI tried to obtain the UUA's bank records, but a legal battle—and Nixon's resignation—finally took the UUA off the hook.

5. Natural Gas to the Rescue

Thank one congregation—and one generous member—for most of the money used to spread Unitarian Universalism in the last 40 years. Caroline Veatch bequeaths the royalties to her late husband's pre-World War II oil discoveries to the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, New York, in 1953. The congregation and its Veatch Fund provide millions over the years, funding the UUA's extension

programs, establishing the UUA's endowment (with 20 million dollars in 1985), providing grants to UU and social justice-related programs, and—twice in the early '70s— saving the UUA from bankruptcy. Veatch's legacy inspires thousands of others to invest in the UUA's future.

6. Religious Education Is Revitalized

The UUA publishes its groundbreaking "About Your Sexuality" curriculum for teenagers in 1971, but religious education enrollment drops throughout the '70s. The baby boom, new curricula, and professional development programs for religious educators revive "RE": enrollment is now 57.6 percent higher than in 1985. (The UUA begins offering credentials to religious educators in 1967, and in 1979 accepts ministers of religious education into ministerial fellowship.) Liberal Religious Youth is replaced by the more denominationally-minded Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU) in 1982, and youth and young adult involvement surges in the late '90s.

7. New Symbols Define a Movement

The flaming chalice, first used as a denominational logo in the 1976-77 *UUA Directory*, becomes a ritual part of many UU services in the '80s. A revised statement of UUA principles, adopted by the General Assembly in 1985, proves especially popular in defining what Unitarian Universalism is.

8. Women Transform the Ministry

Only four women are ordained to the UU ministry in the UUA's first decade. The first gathering of women clergy—at Grailville, Ohio, in 1978—brought 29 ministers together. How times have changed! Since then, the number of women in parish ministry has jumped to 44.8 percent. Counting community ministers (62 percent of whom are women) and ministers of religious education (85 percent), our ordained leadership is now half female.

9. Humanism Meets the New Spirituality

In the '60s, UUs overwhelmingly identified as religious humanists; almost 30 percent believed the concept of God was either irrelevant or harmful in 1967. Fifteen years later, that number had dropped to 20 percent. Today, newcomers are often trying to fill a religious void in their lives. Many UUs are rediscovering spirituality and ritual; Buddhist and Pagan UU groups are common. The General Assembly in 1995 added a "sixth Source" to the UUA's statement of principles, affirming "spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions." Humanism hasn't gone away, though. Nine out of ten UU congregations still identify humanism as a primary perspective—and human reason (37 percent), UU

principles (33 percent), and personal experience (24 percent) are considered the foundational source of authority in UU congregations, according to a 1999 study of more than 500 UU congregations.

10. The Welcoming Denomination

The General Assembly begins calling the UUA to fight discrimination against homosexuals in 1970, establishing a UUA Office of Gay Concerns in 1974 (now the Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Concerns). The General Assembly affirms services of union for gay and lesbian couples in 1984, and establishes the Welcoming Congregation program in 1989 to help congregations extend a genuine welcome to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. More than 300 congregations have now completed the program.

11. On a Journey Toward Wholeness

The UUA begins tackling racism again in 1981 with a board resolution to become a "racially equitable institution." Momentum builds slowly until the General Assembly calls for racial and cultural diversity within the UUA in 1992, and in 1997 adopts "The Journey Toward Wholeness"—committing the UUA to becoming an "anti-racist, multicultural association." In 1999, the U.S. Presidential Commission on Race identifies the UUA's program as one of the nation's 100 best racial justice efforts.

12. First Black President of a White Denomination

The Rev. William G. Sinkford is elected president of the UUA in 2001, becoming the first African American elected to lead a historically white denomination in the United States.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: YOUTH LEAD THE WAY

There were a number of other consolidations and collaborations between Unitarian and Universalist organizations which paved the way for the consolidation of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America. A few individual churches merged and some ordained ministers held dual fellowship. The denominations under the umbrella of the Council of Liberal Churches collaborated in the areas of religious education, public relations, and publications. Among the most important considerations was in the youth movements of the two denominations.

The 19th century saw the rise of voluntary associations in both Unitarian and Universalist churches—for example, women's associations, Sunday Schools, altar guilds, men's clubs, and youth organizations. Following the creation of similar groups for young people in other denominations, the Western Unitarian Conference, under the leadership of Jenkin Lloyd Jones, organized Unity Clubs in the late 19th century. These groups were largely literary and philosophical in nature. The youth they served were not the high school-aged youth we think of today, but people in their twenties and thirties. In the East, Universalist churches organized young people's Christian Endeavor Societies, oriented toward religion and social service. These societies, in turn, spurred the rise in the Eastern Unitarian churches of young people's guilds with similar goals.

In 1889, individual Universalist Christian Endeavor Societies organized into the Young People's Christian Union (YPCU). In 1896, the Unitarians followed suit, combining various groups into the Young People's Religious Union (YPRU). From that time on, the YPCU and YPRU met jointly in "Uni-Uni" rallies, in addition to meeting for their individual conferences.

The YPCU's great focus was missionary work, both domestic and international. In 1893 they hired Quillen Shinn as the national organizer for missionary work, and a year later began the "Two Cents a Week Plan" which

asked every YPCU member to donate one dollar annually (or two cents per week) to missionary work. The "Two Cents a Week Plan" was extraordinarily successful, lasting (with several name changes) until 1927 and raising tens of thousands of dollars to spread the word of Universalism. The Unitarian YPRU was more modest in its goals. Centered largely in New England, its fundraising was done through semi-annual bazaars held in Boston, Massachusetts.

Over time, partly because the military draft for two world wars took young men away from home, the age of members began to drop. In 1894, YPCU had started the first organization for high school-age youth, the Junior Union, which after one year boasted 40 chapters nationally. In the early 1940s both YPCU and YPRU deliberately lowered their age requirements. In 1941, YPCU reorganized as the Universalist Youth Fellowship (UYF) serving young people ages 13 to 25. The following year YPRU became American Unitarian Youth (AUY) with members ages 15 to 25.

In the 20th century, the youth organizations of both denominations took similar paths. Each experienced times of growth and times of challenge in response to World Wars, the Great Depression, and tensions over generational, denominational, and social issues. From the beginning, the two organizations had shared close relations, meeting jointly, printing joint publications, and taking on service projects such as the 1930s Peace Caravans to respond to the escalating international arms race. By the 1950s they were ready to make their partnership formal. When it appeared their parent denominational bodies would merge into the Council of Liberal Churches—a precursor to the Unitarian Universalist Association—the youth organizations began the work of consolidation. The 1950 annual meetings of both youth groups selected representatives to a joint committee to explore the possibility of consolidation and what would need to happen to make it possible and desirable. After three years of joint investigation and discussion the two youth organizations merged in 1953, becoming the Liberal Religious Youth.

LEADER RESOURCE 2: LIBERAL RELIGIOUS YOUTH PHOTOGRAPH, 1953



LEADER RESOURCE 3: KINDRED SPIRITS

Angus MacLean and Sophia Lyon Fahs, two of the most important religious educators for the Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist movements, left indelible—and foundational—marks on the landscape of liberal religious education.

Angus MacLean was Professor of Religious Education and Psychology, and later Dean, at Canton Theological School of St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York. Born in 1892 to a Scottish Presbyterian family in Nova Scotia, MacLean was educated in Canada and the U.S., becoming an instructor at Columbia University's Teachers College in the mid-1920s. There he was introduced to, and greatly influenced by, the philosophy and writings of the progressive educator John Dewey. After his move to Canton in 1928, MacLean formally left behind the religious tradition of his younger years. In his book *The New Era in Religious Education* (1934), he charted a new direction, proposing a child-centered, experience-centered approach to church school philosophy. He was ordained to the Universalist ministry in 1945, and in 1946, was the first chair of a new committee created to oversee the Department of Education in the Universalist Church of America (UCA).

While at Canton, MacLean increased the offerings for those training for a vocation in parish ministry and in religious education, adding courses in philosophy of education, child growth and development theory, curriculum development, and the use of the creative arts in religious education. MacLean believed religious education must be relevant to the child, the church, and the problems of the world; above all, he proclaimed "the method is the message," meaning that *how* children are taught is likely more important than *what* they are taught. In a 1962 UUA pamphlet, he said, "Such values as we are concerned with cannot be communicated except as they are set in operation, given life, in the human relations in which teachers and taught are involved." When he died in 1969, he was eulogized as a "champion of the spiritual rights of children."

Sophia Lyon Fahs, MacLean's senior by 16 years, was also born into a Presbyterian family, but in Hangchow, China in 1876. She, too, was greatly influenced at Columbia University Teachers College by the work of John Dewey. After earning a degree in divinity from Union Theological School, Fahs began teaching at Union as well as serving on the church school staff at Riverside Church in New York. While at Union, Fahs had learned about the Beacon Series of religious education curricula published by the American Unitarian

Association (AUA), and, through those books, was introduced to Unitarianism. In 1930, Fahs was invited to the religious education conference at Star Island, New Hampshire, marking her formal, and henceforth active, involvement with Unitarianism. In 1937, at the age of 60, she was invited by the AUA to become Editor of *Curricula*, a post she held for 17 years. She was ordained to the Unitarian ministry in 1959.

Along with Ernest Kuebler, Fahs was responsible for the New Beacon Series, a visionary, expansive, and ambitious curriculum published by the AUA from the 1930s through the mid-1960s. The series brought together, for the first time, understandings from progressive education, liberal theology, and biblical criticism, and lifted up a child's natural experiences and their questions as central to the religious life of children and youth. Fahs summed up her optimistic and grand philosophy thus: "We need to learn how to help children to think about ordinary things until insights and feelings are found which have a religious quality." In her groundbreaking book, *Today's Children and Yesterday's Heritage*, she wrote, "Beliefs... should be the products of maturing emotional experiences, meditation, and critical thought, and not assumptions with which to begin."

In more than 30 published works, Fahs explored themes such as the relevance of religion in the modern world, the integration of religion and science, and the universality of religious experiences. In *Beginnings*, she demonstrated through creation stories and scientific explanations that the same questions of meaning and mystery are asked by all peoples at all times. The *Martin and Judy* series included stories for every age level and emphasized that religious values exist in the home and community as well as at church. Stories from the Bible included insights from contemporary scholarship and biblical criticism. Consultants for the curricula included authorities from the fields of child development, education, and psychology. Curricula included books children could read themselves, activities drawn from the arts and the natural world, and guides for teachers and parents.

MacLean and Fahs shared much. They both came from another religious tradition, finding Universalism and Unitarianism as adults. Both were influenced by the work of John Dewey and applied his theories of public education to religious education. Both were loved by their students for their creative spirits and their clear devotion to their work.

Institutional conditions laid the path for both MacLean's and Fahs' work, as both the AUA and the UCA came to better understand the role of religious education in revitalizing and renewing churches. In 1936, the AUA

Commission of Appraisal Report, *Unitarians Face a New Age*, called for more emphasis on religious education for the benefit of all Unitarians. At the same time, the UCA recognized that growth in their churches was closely tied to the activity of their General Sunday School Association.

The two denominations found common ground through sharing materials. By the mid 1940s, most Universalist churches were using the AUA's New Beacon Series. The work of Fahs and MacLean strongly influenced the religious development of the generation who would come to adulthood in the new Unitarian Universalist Association.

LEADER RESOURCE 4: STRONGER THAN WE LOOK

First Story

When the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) conceived, created, and promoted a sexuality education program for youth, the project had no parallel in contemporary secular or religious education. Here's what happened.

In the mid-1960s, the United States experienced liberation movements in rapid succession, including a "sexual revolution." Unitarian Universalist parents from around the country sought advice from their religious educators about their how to communicate with their teenagers about sexuality. Some contacted the UUA's Division of Education in search of positive, accurate, and affirming curricula addressing human sexuality. The 1967 Fall conference program of the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) featured deryck calderwood, Associate Professor of Health Education at New York University and a noted sexuality researcher. At this conference, the idea of developing a UU sexuality curriculum emerged. Hugo Hollerorth, at the time the UUA's director of curriculum, reviewed existing sexuality education materials. He found a complete lack of materials that supported the "conviction that sex is a positive and enriching force in life, that some expression of it is normal and to be expected at all age levels, and that there is no one right norm of sexual behavior for all people." With the full support of religious educators, the UUA took on a mission to address this issue. engaging calderwood to develop what would become a the groundbreaking curriculum, *About Your Sexuality* (AYS).

Informed by the basic principles of sex as positive and enriching and young people as possessing a right to accurate information, AYS included explicit portrayals of human anatomy, masturbation, and both heterosexual and homosexual lovemaking. Presented as still photographs in a series of filmstrips, these visuals meant to be educational, were controversial. As the AYS sessions were made available to congregations for field testing and word spread about the contents, the District Attorney of Brookfield, Wisconsin charged that the photographs violated the obscenity statutes of the State of Wisconsin. (The case, essentially about whether the state could interfere in the affairs of a local church, was tied up in court processes for a time; ultimately the actions ceased when a new District Attorney was elected.) Even religious educators and parents within the UUA were divided about the materials' appropriateness. Some questioned the age at which youth should view such explicit visuals, and how much detailed information should be presented.

About Your Sexuality also used a new, four-part educational model that moved beyond previous Unitarian Universalist efforts in its level of interactivity and integration with values. The new model (1) encouraged youth to raise personal questions, (2) offered accurate information, (3) connected information with values, and (4) encouraged ways of expressing those values in life. Over the years, the curriculum was occasionally supplemented or updated with emerging information about homosexuality, HIV and AIDS, date rape, reproductive rights, and sexual abuse. A few congregations adapted the material for older youth and adults. The materials were also used beyond Unitarian Universalist congregations, including in other religious and secular educational settings.

In 1999-2000, AYS was replaced by a new sexuality education series for children, youth, and adults called *Our whole Lives*, developed jointly by the UUA and the United Church of Christ. At the same time, explicitly religious companion resources—*Sexuality and our Faith*—were published.

Unitarian Universalist comprehensive sexuality education curricula are widely used in liberal religious and in secular settings, and have had a huge positive impact on the lives of thousands of young people and adults for more than four decades.

(Leader: Pause and invite participants to name the Unitarian Universalist Principles and/or values embodied in the actions described.)

Second Story

It was not a match made in heaven—the executive branch of one of the most powerful nations on the planet, and a small, religiously-affiliated publishing house. But sometimes circumstances, and people, bring together unlikely sparring parties. Here's what happened.

In 1971, secret material that related to the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, the so-called "Pentagon Papers," was made public by Daniel Ellsworth, a former consultant to the Department of Defense. Excerpts published in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* revealed the government's duplicity in involving the United States in the war and manipulating the public to support the war's course. The public was outraged. The Nixon Administration enjoined the newspapers to halt publication, and, though the Supreme Court decided in favor of the freedom to publish this material, no publisher would agree to publish the full, 7,000-page document.

That is, until Alaska Senator and Unitarian Universalist Mike Gravel brought the prospect to Beacon Press, the

nonprofit independent book publisher founded in 1854 as the press of the American Unitarian Association (by then, UUA). Gravel had entered the Pentagon Papers into the public record in Congress, and he was further determined to make the full transcript available to the public. The UUA and Beacon Press agreed that a full release of the complete record was necessary as a demonstration of the democratic process and an affirmation of the right to freedom of the press.

As soon as the FBI learned Beacon Press had agreed to publish the five volumes of materials, the agency swept in, demanding to see the UUA's financial records to determine who supported the publication. The case wound its way to the Supreme Court, which ruled that Beacon Press was not immune from prosecution (though Mike Gravel was, as a U.S. Senator). But the Justice Department dropped the case as Nixon's troubles around Watergate deepened and diverted the country's attention.

Gobin Stair, the director of Beacon Press at the time, reflected on the link between the UUA's stand and the eventual resignation of Richard Nixon as President, noting that the Pentagon Papers helped to change public thinking about the actions of the Administration:
(It was a) watershed event in the denomination's history and a high point in Beacon's fulfilling its role as a public pulpit for proclaiming Unitarian Universalist principles.

(Leader: Pause and invite participants to name the Unitarian Universalist Principles and/or values embodied in the actions described.)

Third Story

The Civil Rights Movements in the United States have had enormous implications for individuals and communities. They have also brought great challenges to institutions, whether public or private, secular or religious. For a religious body to involve itself in movements for civil rights takes courage, integrity, and commitment. Most recently, the right of same-sex couples who seek to marry and raise families with the full rights and protections of the law has been a focus of the UUA's public witness and social justice work. But there has been a long road leading to this very public advocacy. Here's how it happened.

In 1967, the Unitarian Universalist Committee on Goals conducted a survey of the beliefs and attitudes of individual Unitarian Universalists. The results were eye-opening: Seven and seven-tenths percent of those responding believed that homosexuality should be discouraged by law; 80.2 percent that it should be discouraged by education, not law; 12 percent that it should not be discouraged by law or education; and only

.1 percent that it should be encouraged. These findings offered an opportunity for introspection, education, and dialogue that eventually launched within the UUA an intentional commitment to fight negative attitudes and institutional practices that harmed gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people.

Within five years of the study, the UUA published the About Your Sexuality curriculum, including explicit, positive understandings of homosexuality, and The Invisible Minority, an adult religious education curriculum about homosexuality. The UUA Office of Gay Affairs (later the Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Concerns) was established and funded in 1973 by General Assembly resolution. Resolutions concerning gay and lesbian issues routinely became part of the UUA General Assembly's business. Even so, the 1984 General Assembly resolution affirming the practice of UUA clergy who performed services of union between same-sex couples stands out as a significant moment. The General Assembly that adopted that resolution could not have anticipated the controversies that would play out in the coming decades as religious denominations, state legislatures, courts, Congress, and even the Executive Branch of the national government hotly debated the rights of same-sex couples. The text of the 1984 resolution barely hints at its import:

Whereas, the Unitarian Universalist Association has repeatedly taken stands to affirm the rights of gay and lesbian persons over the past decade; and whereas legal marriages are currently denied gay and lesbian couples by state and provincial governments of North America; and whereas, freedom of the pulpit is a historic tradition in Unitarian Universalist societies; be it resolved: that the 1984 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association: Affirms the growing practice of some of its ministers of conducting services of union of gay and lesbian couples and urges member societies to support their ministers in this important aspect of our movement's ministry to the gay and lesbian community ...

Over the following years, the Association's advocacy created the Welcoming Congregation program, a voluntary program for congregations that seek to become more inclusive toward Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender people; worked to protect the rights of people diagnosed with HIV/AIDS; and opposed the Boy Scouts of America's policy of discrimination against gay (and atheist) scouts and leaders. Advocacy took various forms in response to individual state laws, which varied widely, and the policies of federal agencies. Within a single year UUA advocacy included efforts as varied as a public protest against "crime against nature" laws in

one state and support for acceptance of openly gay, lesbian, and bisexual people in the U.S. military.

In 1996, the UUA Board of Trustees passed a resolution in support of same-sex marriage, followed in the same year by a General Assembly Resolution in Support of the Right to Marry for Same-Sex Couples. These resolutions came during national controversies about the State of Hawaii's decision to legally recognize same-sex marriages.

The resolutions proved invaluable in guiding the UUA's later support for marriage rights—rather than the less inclusive civil unions offered by some states—as a component of full equality. Perhaps the culminating moment came in May, 2004 when UUA President Reverend William Sinkford officiated at the legal marriage of Hillary and Julie Goodridge, the successful lead plaintiffs in *Goodrich v. Massachusetts Department of Health*, the case which established full and legal marriage in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts—the first decision of its kind in the United States by a final appellate court. Since that shining moment, the UUA has continued to "Stand on the Side of Love" in states across the country as the issue goes from court to legislature to voters to governors, and sometimes back again. On Valentine's Day 2005, Unitarian Universalist children, youth, and adults in California made Valentines for their governor, urging him to support equal marriage. Unitarian Universalists have participated in protests and vigils, lawsuits, letter-writing, phone calls, testimony before law-makers and other organized actions state by state and initiative by initiative in support of equal marriage. As proudly proclaimed by the 12-by-20-foot banner outside the east wall of the UUA's headquarters, at 25 Beacon Street in Boston—clearly visible to its neighbor, the Massachusetts State House—the denomination has pursued a fiercely public and determined path to a goal, "Civil Marriage is a Civil Right."

(Leader: Pause and invite participants to name the Unitarian Universalist Principles and/or values embodied in the actions described.)

FIND OUT MORE

Consolidation and the Early Years of the UUA

Commission on Appraisal Report [The Unitarian Universalist Merger 1961-1975](#) (Boston: UUA, 1975)

Ross, Warren. [The Premise and the Promise: The Story of the Unitarian Universalist Association](#) (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2001)

History of the Unitarian and Universalist Youth Movements

Arnason, Wayne and Rebecca Scott. [We Would Be One: A History of Unitarian Universalist Youth Movements](#) (Boston: Skinner House, 2005)

Information about MacLean and Fahs and their philosophies

Biography of [Angus MacLean](#) (at www25-temp.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/angusmaclean.html), Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography, Unitarian Universalist Historical Society

Fahs, Sophia Lyon. *Today's Children and Yesterday's Heritage* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952)

Hunter, Edith. *Sophia Lyon Fahs: A Biography* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966)

Hunter, Edith Fisher. [Sophia Lyon Fahs: Liberal Religious Educator](#), Harvard Square Library, Herbert F. Vetter, editor

MacLean, Angus. *The New Era in Religious Education* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1934)

MacLean, Angus. *The Wind in Both Ears* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965)

Nelson, Roberta M., ed. *Claiming the Past, Shaping the Future: Four Eras in Liberal Religious Education 1790-1999* (Providence, RI: Liberal Religious Educators Association, 2006)

Thandeka. "[Sophia Lyon Fahs](#) (at www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/whatmoves/workshop6/index.shtml)," Workshop 6 of What Moves Us: Unitarian Universalist Theology, published by the UUA as part of Tapestry of Faith.

About Researching and Presenting Congregational Histories

Coeyman, Barbara. [Creating Congregational Histories](#)
[Knowing Where You've Been: Maintaining Records and Archives](#), an article on the Unitarian Universalist Association website

WORKSHOP 12: I'VE GOT TEARS LIKE THE RAINDROPS — FREEDOM

INTRODUCTION

We can choose between hating our neighbors or feeling kindly toward them. We can avenge or forgive. We can participate in political life; we can also leave politics to the demagogues. We can help the suffering, the ill, the unfortunate; we can let them die. We can encourage the search for truth and free expression of ideas or we can join in the clamor for suppression of all with which we disagree. We can work toward a united world community, or we can work for American dominion or isolation. These are all fateful choices, and it is our duty to choose. — The Rev. Howard Brooks, Unitarian Service Committee staff, 1949.

Freedom is a value integral to the Unitarian Universalist tradition. As a people of faith, we have had many opportunities in history to represent this value in the wider world. Does valuing freedom primarily mean that we uphold the right to individual stances in religious, social, or political life? Or does it call us to movements of liberation for all who are oppressed? Unitarian and Universalist individuals and institutions played a variety of roles in many important social justice struggles within our faith communities and in the broader society. This workshop explores key moments in our history when questions of freedom and justice were in the forefront of our movement. It shines an honest light on ways our forebears sometimes contributed to oppression as well as worked for liberation.

Before leading this workshop, review the Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters in the program Introduction and make any preparations needed to accommodate individuals who may be in the group.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Present stories of several key moments in our history in which social justice was a primary concern
- Explore the roles Unitarian Universalism, and Unitarian Universalists, have played in those stories

- Invite participants to consider how best to heed the pull of our religious tradition and work toward freedom and justice in our congregations and in our world.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about times when Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist individuals and groups perceived "freedom" as a religious imperative and describe how they worked toward it
- Explore stances taken by the Unitarian Universalist individuals and congregations in response to our own contemporary social issues
- Consider the ways in which our religious tradition calls us to active engagement on behalf of freedom and liberation
- Consider ways to commit to "peace, liberty and justice for all" as a way of life.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Slavery and Antislavery	25
Activity 2: How Is Freedom Achieved?	25
Activity 3: Martha and Waitstill Sharp	20
Activity 4: Litany of Allies	30
Faith in Action: Our Congregation's Justice Work	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Working for Freedom	30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time to reflect on these questions:

- What does freedom mean to you?
- How is your freedom related to others' freedom?

You may wish to ask participants to engage in this same spiritual practice so that they, too, arrive at the workshop centered and ready to engage with the material and the group.

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Sign-in sheet and pen/pencil
- Name tags and markers
- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1, [Schedule Template](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Create and post a workshop agenda on newsprint. The Workshop-at-a-Glance section provides time estimates. Create a welcome table near the entrance. Set out name tags and markers, the sign-in sheet and pen/pencil, and copies of the schedule.
- Make copies of the Time Line of UU History handout (Workshop 1, Handout 2), if you need some. Place time line handouts on the welcome table.
- Optional: Post the Time Line of UU History display.

Description of Activity

Welcome everyone to the workshop as they enter. Ask them to sign in, make (or pick up) name tags, and pick up the schedule and time line handouts from the welcome table. Point out the posted agenda for this workshop.

Including All Participants

Write the agenda in large, clear lettering and post it where it will be easily visible to all participants. Provide name tags large enough and markers bold enough so names will be easily visible.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, for all participants
- Optional: Decorative cloth
- Optional: Keyboard or piano

Preparation for Activity

- Set up a worship or centering table with the chalice and (optional) decorative cloth.
- Distribute copies of the hymnbook.
- Optional: Arrange for musical accompaniment or a song leader.

Description of Activity

Gather the group around the chalice. Light the chalice and invite participants to sing Hymn 156, "Oh, Freedom."

Including All Participants

If the group is more comfortable reading together than singing, lead, in unison, Reading 462 in *Singing the Living Tradition*.

ACTIVITY 1: SLAVERY AND ANTISLAVERY (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Slavery and Antislavery](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 2, [Slavery and Antislavery Quotes](#) (included in this document)
- Bowl or basket

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 1, Slavery and Antislavery and prepare to present its contents.
- Print out Leader Resource 2, Slavery and Antislavery Quotes. Cut apart the quotes so there is one quote per slip of paper. Place the slips in a bowl or basket.

Description of Activity

Read, or present in your own words, the contents of Leader Resource 1, Slavery and Antislavery. Explain that while much has been written and celebrated about Unitarian and Universalist abolitionists, we may forget there was a range of opinion about *how* freedom for those enslaved should be achieved. There were even those among our religious ancestors who supported the institution of slavery, passively or actively. Explain that in this activity, participants will hear some of these voices.

Pass the basket of quotes, inviting each participant to select a slip with a quote to read aloud. With a small group, invite participants to choose more than one. Remind participants they are welcome to "pass" or to ask someone else to read a quote they have picked.

After slips are chosen, invite each reader to identify the date of the quote so the group can read the quotes in chronological order. Have participants read each quote aloud and share the information on the slip about the person quoted.

Following the readings, lead a conversation about the quotes using some or all of these prompts:

- Many who engaged in the debate about slavery believed the prosperity and stability of the nation relied on social order. Some sought gradual, or limited, change; some felt the tactics of many abolitionists were simply too radical and disruptive. In what ways do you see freedom and a regard for harmony and order as connected? In tension?
- Some Unitarians who were particularly invested in the economic engines of the North, such as mills, banks, and shipping were reluctant to undermine their own financial interests. How do you reconcile self-interest and freedom for all?
- What does this 19th century issue teach us about our response to contemporary social issues?

ACTIVITY 2: HOW IS FREEDOM ACHIEVED? (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 1, [How Is Freedom Achieved?](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 3, [Mary Livermore, Portrait](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 4, [Olympia Brown, Portrait](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1, How is Freedom Achieved?
- Print out Leader Resource 3 and 4 to pass around the group. Or (optional), download the two portrait images to project for the group, and test your computer and projector.
- In advance, ask two volunteers to read the words of Mary Livermore and Olympia Brown, and give them each a copy of Handout 1.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - Are there many ways to move toward justice? Other than the strategies

advocated by Livermore and Brown, what other strategies or combination of strategies might be effective?

- Can the ideal be the enemy of real progress? When should we seek incremental change? When must we insist on nothing short of full justice?
- What factors do you weigh in considering which strategies are most appropriate and effective?
- What might keep you from adopting a prophetic stance in support of freedom from oppression?

Description of Activity

Introduce this activity in these words, or paraphrase. Pass around (or project) the portraits of Livermore and Brown as you speak about each woman.

How is freedom best achieved? For people who are oppressed or marginalized to achieve equality and freedom, when is it most effective for people to work within existing structures of power? When is it most effective to work outside those structures? When is it most effective to work as a separatist movement? How forceful must demands be in order to be achieved? These questions have been played out through human history and extend into our own congregations. In struggles over issues from theology to administration, some people will break away while others will work within the existing structures.

In the second half of the 19th century, the rights of women became a topic of debate in society at large and in Unitarian and Universalist congregations. Should women vote? Take an equal part in the affairs of business and the nation? Have full participation in our churches as professional and lay leaders? Mary Livermore and the Rev. Olympia Brown agreed that women were capable of larger roles in society and in the churches. They disagreed over how such freedom was best achieved. Mary Livermore, married to Universalist minister Daniel Parker Livermore, was a tireless worker for the rights of women. When she addressed the Universalist Centenary Assembly in 1870, she believed women were capable of great things, but that their work should be under the direction of the male leadership of the church. She would later come to work for women's right to the vote.

Universalist minister Olympia Brown was the first woman in the United States ordained by a

denominational body. She believed women could (and should) work at an equal level with men, independent of male direction.

Distribute Handout 1, *How Is Freedom Achieved?* Invite the designated volunteers to read the words of Mary Livermore and Olympia Brown aloud. Then, ask for comments and observations, using these questions:

- Which woman advocated for change by working within the system?
- Which believed in working outside the center of institutionalized power? Lead a discussion using the posted questions.

ACTIVITY 3: MARTHA AND WAITSTILL SHARP (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- A copy of the story "[Righteous Among the Nations — Martha and Waitstill Sharp](#)" (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Print out the story "Righteous Among the Nations — Martha and Waitstill Sharp" and prepare to present it.
- Write on newsprint, and set aside:
I became acutely aware of the necessity for explicit commitment, in contrast to a vague sort of liberalism opposed to prejudices and promoting openness of mind. — James Luther Adams

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story "Righteous Among the Nations — Martha and Waitstill Sharp." and then invite questions or comments.

Say:

In 1935-36, Unitarian theologian James Luther Adams traveled to Nazi Germany to study. There he met many church leaders, including the minister of the largest Unitarian church in Germany, who accepted the Nazi philosophy in order to protect themselves and keep their churches open. Adams later wrote extensively of that time in Germany.

Display the prepared quote from James Luther Adams. Pause for a moment to allow people to gather their thoughts, then invite them to turn to a partner and share their responses to the quote and the story.

After five minutes, gather the large group. Invite participants to offer examples of ways Unitarian Universalists have demonstrated explicit commitment to freedom and justice for all people. Invite conversations about how your congregation makes explicit its commitment to social justice. How might that work be strengthened?

ACTIVITY 4: LITANY OF ALLIES (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Paper, pens, and markers
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the UUA hymnbook
- Optional: Percussion instruments

Preparation for Activity

- Write on newsprint:
We would remember those in bonds as bound with them. — Russell Lant Carpenter, English Unitarian minister

Description of Activity

Introduce the activity with these or similar words:

As we have seen in the stories in this workshop, striving for freedom from oppression is rarely a solo enterprise. Unitarian Universalist minister David Pettee writes: "the work of justice making is never an individual passion. I've discovered that if our commitments are only on an individual basis and we fail to engage our religious communities in this work, we are unlikely to change the realities of systematic racism ... I believe it is only through the communal work of building the Beloved Community that we will find liberation."

The work of liberation is rooted in the lives of those who have experienced oppression, and also in the lives of those who serve as their allies. An ally is someone who takes on another's struggle as their own, and manifests that stance through both deeds and words. Every one of us needs allies at times, and every one of us can choose to be an ally for someone else. In this context, we will consider the choice to be an ally for people who are oppressed or marginalized by social, legal, or cultural structures and practices.

A litany is a set of readings that has a repeating response. We will create and read a Litany of Allies.

Distribute hymnbooks. Invite participants to read Reading 637, "A Litany of Atonement," in *Singing the Living Tradition* responsively with you—that is, you read the standard text, and the group responds by reading aloud the italicized text. Point out the structure of the reading: Not only does the refrain repeat, but the opening of each new phrase begins with the word, "for." The reading also includes action phrases such as "remaining silent," "struck out in anger," "falling short," and "losing sight" which help the reader embody or inhabit the words. Ask participants for any other observations they have about the reading, its structure, and its impact.

Invite participants to form groups of two or three. Distribute paper, pens and markers and invite them to focus on one way in which people experience oppression today—for example, oppression based on race, gender, social class, religion, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, or age. When each small group has identified a focus, invite them to brainstorm words that relate to that oppression, as well as words that relate to liberation and freedom. If useful, suggest examples from this workshop such as freedom, commitment, harmony, order, self-interest, conflict, power, privilege, and reconciliation.

Once they have brainstormed some words, invite each pair or triad to write a short litany, using as a refrain the Russell Carpenter words you have posted. Allow 15 minutes for groups to work. If you have provided percussion instruments, point them out, telling participants they are welcome to accompany their words with rhythm if they so choose.

Re-gather the large group and invite each small group, in turn, to present their litany, with the whole group responding with the common refrain.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Faith in Action from this workshop and/or Spiritual Preparation from Workshop 13

Preparation for Activity

- Download and customize Taking It Home as a handout. You may wish to add the Faith in Action activity suggestion from this workshop and/or the Spiritual Preparation questions for the next workshop.

Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Announce the date, time, and place of the next workshop and any other "housekeeping" information. Request or remind volunteers if you want participants to read material aloud or perform other roles at the next meeting.

Invite participants to gather around the chalice. Extinguish the chalice with these words, adapted from Francis Ellen Watkins Harper, as the chalice is extinguished:

We want more soul, a higher cultivation of our spiritual faculties
We need more unselfishness, earnestness and integrity of high and lofty enthusiasm and beacons of light and hope,
People ready and willing to lay time, talent and money on the altar of freedom.

FAITH IN ACTION: OUR CONGREGATION'S JUSTICE WORK

Preparation for Activity

- Talk with your minister, religious educator, congregational historian, and/or long-time members about your congregation's history of social justice work. Invite them to visit the workshop to share what they know.

Description of Activity

Even our younger congregations may include members who personally remember, for example, the work of Martha and Waitstill Sharp during World War II or who attended a General Assembly when resolutions concerning LGBTQ were passed. Some, older congregations cherish stories of individuals or actions in support of abolition of slavery, rights for African Americans, or women's rights.

Invite your minister, religious educator, congregational historian, or longtime members to visit your workshop to discuss ways one of the issues explored in this workshop touched your congregation. Has your congregation done research to identify connections to slavery and/or the abolition movement, the movement for marriage equality, or the fight against discrimination on the basis of gender or sexual orientation? Is there something left incomplete in the work your congregation has participated in? What is there to celebrate? Is there something for which to atone?

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

After the workshop, co-leaders should talk together to evaluate this workshop and plan future workshops. Use

these questions to guide your shared reflection and planning:

- What parts of the workshop worked well and which did not? Why? How was the success, or lack of success, related to the topics? How was it related to the types of activities?
- How can we use this experience to make future workshops more effective? What would we change if we were to lead this workshop again?
- What was left unfinished in the workshop that should still be addressed? How and when will we address it?
- What strengths did we each bring to the workshop?
- As co-leaders, when did we work well together?
- What might help us be better leaders in future workshops?
- What do we need to prepare for the next workshop? Who will handle which tasks? Who will lead which activities?

TAKING IT HOME

We can choose between hating our neighbors or feeling kindly toward them. We can avenge or forgive. We can participate in political life; we can also leave politics to the demagogues. We can help the suffering, the ill, the unfortunate; we can let them die. We can encourage the search for truth and free expression of ideas or we can join in the clamor for suppression of all with which we disagree. We can work toward a united world community, or we can work for American dominion or isolation. These are all fateful choices, and it is our duty to choose. — The Rev. Howard Brooks, Unitarian Service Committee staff, 1949

Pick one of the issues covered in this workshop to journal about. Try to enter a time period of struggle for the issue you've chosen. Using these words from James Luther Adams as a starting point, think and write about what might have stopped someone at the time from taking a stand or acting for freedom. Adams wrote:

I became acutely aware of the necessity for explicit commitment, in contrast to a vague sort of liberalism opposed to prejudices and promoting openness of mind.

You might try writing this as an "excuse note," explaining the reasons. Then, reflect on what might have caused a person to act on behalf of freedom and justice under the same circumstances.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: WORKING FOR FREEDOM (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Write on newsprint and post:
 - What made you decide to act?
 - What concerns or fears did you have about being involved?
 - What moral or religious values called you to be involved?
 - What shining moments can you recall? What setbacks did you encounter?
 - What events, people, or trends in the broader society had an effect on your work?

Description of Activity

Introduce the activity with these or similar words:

Movements in support of liberation and freedom by and for those who have experienced discrimination, oppression, and other violations of their human and civil rights often require a long time to come to fruition. The road to freedom can be rocky, full of pitfalls and, detours, setbacks, and even unexpected successes. No matter how determined a group might be to effect change, every social justice effort is subject to the larger forces of society, including politics, counter-activists, cultural and social trends, epidemics, and wars. This activity invites you to share your own stories of working for freedom or liberation, either as part of a congregational group or as part of a political or social movement.

Invite participants to form groups of three to share their own stories, one at a time, using the posted questions as a guide. Allow 15 minutes for small groups to meet, then re-gather the large group and lead a conversation using these questions:

- How important was it to you to be part of a group while working for freedom and liberation? Is there a difference between being part of an on-going group, such as a congregation, that works for freedom as part of its mission, and being part of a group formed to work on a particular issue?
- What kind of cooperation and tension is there between those who are working for freedom and

liberation for themselves and their families and those who are working on behalf of others?

- What observations or comments can you make as a result of your small group sharing about ways in which the larger forces of society influence work for freedom and liberation, either positively or negatively?
- What difference does it make strategically to be part of a group or community when working for freedom? What difference does it make spiritually?

STORY: RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS — MARTHA AND WAITSTILL SHARP

Working through the night, Martha and Waitstill Sharp burned all their notes and papers. After this they would keep no records of the refugees they smuggled out of Nazi-occupied Europe. For their own safety and for the safety of those they were assisting, nothing could be written. A simple church mission had turned into a dangerous cloak-and-dagger proposition.

The Sharps, who had degrees from Harvard and Radcliffe and two beautiful young children, had left behind a life of comfort and privilege in Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts, where Waitstill served as minister of the Unitarian church. Now they found themselves secretly burning documents in an office in Prague, Czechoslovakia, on the night of March 14, 1939. What had led them to that moment?

In September of 1938, the Munich Pact ceded the Sudetenland, the border regions of Czechoslovakia, to the Nazis in exchange for a promise of peace. The flow of refugees to Prague's Unitarian church increased as Jews, political dissidents, intellectuals, and others targeted by the Nazis fled the Sudetenland following the Nazi annexation. The American Unitarian Association (AUA) asked Rev. Waitstill Sharp to visit Czechoslovakia and coordinate relief work there. The Sharps left for Europe in February, 1939, leaving their children, ages 3 and 6, in the care of close friends from the congregation. When they accepted that mission they did not know what lay ahead.

At first, the Sharps' work in Prague included setting up a network of volunteers to obtain visas, passage, education, and employment for refugees. However, the situation for refugees rapidly deteriorated. When it became clear that the Nazis were approaching the Sharps, instead of returning home, burned their records and vowed to continue their work. The following day, the Nazis marched into Prague.

That same day, Martha guided a top resistance leader to asylum at the British embassy. Stopped by Nazi guards three times, Martha used her American passport to get both of them safely through each checkpoint. A few days later, Waitstill arranged for a member of the Czech parliament to be smuggled from a hospital morgue in a body bag.

The Gestapo would not allow the work of people like the Sharps to continue. In July their office was closed and the furniture thrown into the street. Still they stayed on in Prague. In August, Waitstill attended a conference in

Switzerland and was not allowed to re-enter occupied Czechoslovakia. Under threat of imminent arrest by the Gestapo, Martha fled Prague alone. The Sharps reunited in Paris, and sailed for home.

In May of 1940, Frederick May Eliot, president of the AUA, asked the Sharps to return to Europe as representatives of the newly formed Unitarian Service Committee (USC). With much of Europe now under Nazi occupation they worked from Marseilles in Free France and in Lisbon, Portugal, the last port of hope for many refugees from Nazi-occupied lands.

Among those helped were Nobel laureate physicist Otto Meyerhof and writers Heinrich Mann, Franz Werfel, and Lion Feuchtwanger. Smuggling Feuchtwanger out of Europe posed particular problems as he was on the Nazi's "most wanted" list. Dressed as a French peasant woman, Martha accompanied Feuchtwanger by train from Marseilles to the Spanish border where she distracted the guards so they would not discover him. When no extra tickets were available, Martha gave up her own ticket so that Feuchtwanger and his wife could sail to New York with Waitstill.

But not all of those the Sharps helped were famous. Martha worked tirelessly to find ways to break through the anti-Semitic United States immigration bureaucracy to allow Jewish children to come to the United States. In 1940, Marianne Scheckler was 12 years old, one of triplet sisters who had fled Vienna with their parents just steps ahead of the Nazis. Now a resident of Laguna Hills, California, Marianne Scheckler-Feder still remembers that day and Martha Sharp: "I remember a figure. She was a very, very elegant lady. Kind of serious and very concerned. You looked up to her... What she did for us was outstanding. It will never be forgotten."

What Martha Sharp did, she did for many, but she did not do it alone. The Sharps worked with others from the Unitarian Service Committee and other agencies. One of their closest associates was Varian Fry from the Emergency Rescue Committee. Varian Fry was the first American to be honored by Israel's *Yad Vashem* ("Hand of God," the state Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority) as one of the Righteous Among the Nations, a list that includes Oskar Schindler and Raoul Wallenberg. Martha and Waitstill Sharp are the second and third Americans so honored.

In addition to being honored by *Yad Vashem* in 2006, the Sharps have been recognized by The United States Holocaust Museum and the United States House of Representatives. But more importantly, their work is recognized by more than 2,000 adults and children that

the Unitarian Service Committee helped rescue from
Nazi persecution.

HANDOUT 1: HOW IS FREEDOM ACHIEVED?

Mary Livermore, in addresses to the Women's Centenary Aid Society and the mass meeting of the Centennial Assembly of Universalists in Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1870 said:

I long for the women of our church to come up to their birthright, to take their places. I do not mean by this that I have any thought that they shall oust men from any place they occupy, that they shall crowd themselves in officiously where men desire to stand; I only mean by this, that whenever they find a chance to help the cause of Universalism or advance this glorious faith, I long to have them do it.

So I want all the women to work together for our church. Be not content with doing a little; let us do all we can; and when this centenary year closes, let us all reorganize, fall into line, and be ready, when the leaders tell us what to do, to obey. Let us learn one thing, which Universalist men and women have been slow to learn. Let us learn to obey orders, to stand in our rank, in every place, and to do what we are told to do, whether we like to do it or not, and not hang back, and haggle, and palter.

This, then, ladies and gentlemen, is my parting word. We part here, but we women are coming together again, the heart of the denomination, better instructed, larger, warmer, grander, more glowing, and then we are to stand by the side of our brothers, instructed by them, aided by them; for I do not believe in any divorce of the men and the women, all the way through, only we will take our stand by the side of them.

Olympia Brown wrote in "The Higher Education of Women" (1874):

Woman must from the streams of knowledge which come seething from the brains of the wise, forge for herself an armor in which to do battle with the world. There can be for her no great victories without conflict. He is no true soldier who expects to bear off the honors, while he sits on cushioned chairs in luxurious parlors and simply reads books of military tactics. He only is worthy of the name of soldier, who has been the hero of a hundred fights, whose noble scars bear witness of his valor on the field of battle, and whose muscles have been trained to endurance by long and perilous marches and the strict discipline of the camp. So woman must earn her title to valuable attainments, not by merely memorizing bits of information, but by

brave and faithful service on the world's great battlefield.

Just the experience in the business of the world which develops character in men, women need to make them self-reliant, brave and true... (It) is only by an experience in the great world of business that woman's knowledge can be ripened, and her character matured. If boys after leaving school went home to be supported, and devoted themselves to needle-work and novels, we should look for no noble manhood, and only when girls cease to do this and seek some business of life whereby to independently support themselves, and benefit society can we look for the truest womanhood. But, says some objector, women will no longer be angels when brought in contact with the rude world. Alas! the United States of America in 1874 is not a favorable place for angels, nor are the men of the nineteenth century suitable companions for them. An angel in American society at the present time, would be sadly out of place and very uncomfortable.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: SLAVERY AND ANTISLAVERY

The debate about slavery in the United States proved contentious within both Unitarianism and Universalism. While some of the country's leading abolitionists were women and men who identified as Unitarian or Universalist, each of the young denominations struggled to articulate a unified stand. Churches in the Southern states felt the stresses acutely, because their congregational membership was drawn from both the North and the South and their ministers were most often Northerners. In the North, too, Unitarians and Universalists took a variety of positions on slavery, and some prominent Unitarians and Universalists debated on the national stage. For example, John Quincy Adams, a Unitarian, stood up against the agreement that kept Congress from debating slavery. In 1850, another Unitarian, President Millard Fillmore, signed the Fugitive Slave Law, reviled by most Unitarians in the North. Unitarian John C. Calhoun, Vice President under both John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson, defended slavery, predicting chaos and hardship for both black and white people in the South, were slavery to end. The debate stretched over decades and generations as people changed their stances.

Elhanan Winchester, an American Universalist, spoke out against slavery in Virginia and published an anti-slavery address in 1787 in England. However, the first denominational action on antislavery came in 1790 when the Universalist Convention in Philadelphia adopted an antislavery resolution by the well-regarded Universalist Benjamin Rush, a signator of the Declaration of Independence.

As the 19th century opened different approaches to the abolition, accommodation, and critique of slavery emerged in both denominations. Conrad Wright has suggested that most Unitarians fell into one of three groups: those influenced by the prominent abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, who acted for the immediate cessation of slavery; those who sought a gradual end to the institution of slavery, so as to minimize disruption of the social, economic, and political order; and those who opposed slavery on moral grounds, but resisted making a political commitment to end it. *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans*, written by Unitarian Lydia Maria Child, firmly established the "Garrison" perspective within Unitarianism. Her work also greatly influenced William Ellery Channing.

The Transcendental movement, with its emphasis on self-culture and moral growth that required human freedom, added energy to the antislavery movement. In 1841, Theodore Parker preached powerfully, calling

slavery "the great national sin" and ably linking his theology with his politics. In the 1840s, collective antislavery action intensified in both denominations. In 1841, the Universalists held their first Anti-Slavery Convention in Lynn, Massachusetts, followed by annual conferences that declared slavery inconsistent with Universalism. In 1845, when 173 Unitarian ministers signed *A Protest Against American Slavery* they mentioned the foundational documents of the country, saying to "constantly to profess one thing and constantly to practice another must destroy the sinews of national virtue."

By the end of the 1840s, the positions either promoting or discouraging antislavery action were well framed. Although most were opposed to slavery itself, not all Unitarians or Universalists supported the abolitionist position. Some preferred a more gradual approach to abolition, one that would assure financial compensation for those who had invested in the purchase of slaves and avoid major economic and social disorder. Many involved in churches and other traditional institutions believed continued prosperity and stability relied on social order and the tactics of many abolitionists were simply too radical and disruptive. Many Unitarians and Universalists, reluctant to condemn all slaveholders as sinners, acknowledged mitigating circumstances such as treating slaves in a manner co-religionists could deem "kind." In addition, some Unitarians had a large stake in the economic engines of the North—mills, banks, and shipping—and were reluctant to take actions that would threaten their own financial interests. Many who were willing to engage slavery as a moral and religious issue resisisted engaging it as a political issue: Their consciences fully appreciated the immorality of slavery, but they realized respect for law and order and feared the risk to the nation's unity.

The issues surrounding slavery brought the potential for conflict wherever they were aired. Ministers and congregations sometimes opposed one another, as did factions within congregations.

A significant turning point came in September, 1850 when Congress passed, and President Millard Fillmore signed into law, the Fugitive Slave Act. The law required the return of fugitive slaves to their masters in the South and required private citizens in the North to assist in their capture. Fillmore's aim in signing the bill into law was the protection of personal property and the Union. He wrote to Daniel Webster, "God knows I detest slavery, but . . . we must endure it and give it such protection as is guaranteed by the Constitution till we can get rid of it without destroying the last hope of free government in the world." However, the Fugitive Slave Act went too far for even some of the antislavery

gradualists, and energized those already impatient for slavery to end. The growing presence of abolitionist forces in Unitarianism, made the survival of fledgling Unitarian congregations in the South nearly impossible.

The story of Unitarianism, Universalism, and slavery continued beyond the Fugitive Slave Law, the Civil War, and Reconstruction of the South. In our own time, Unitarian Universalist minister David Pettee discovered that one of his white ancestors had been a slave trader and that enslaved Africans had lived in another ancestor's home. The discovery set Pettee on a search to uncover his familial roots to slavery, a search that led from Rhode Island to Ghana to Jamaica, New York, where he made contact with descendents of people who had been enslaved by his ancestors. Pettee's story is just one reminder that the legacy of slavery is with us still.

LEADER RESOURCE 2: SLAVERY AND ANTISLAVERY QUOTES

1. The 1790 Universalist Convention, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania passed this resolution, On Holding Slaves, written by Benjamin Rush, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence:

We believe it is to be inconsistent with the union of the human race in a common Savior, and the obligations to mutual and universal love, which flow from that union, to hold any part of our fellow creatures in bondage. We therefore recommend a total refraining from the African trade and the adoption of prudent measures for the gradual abolition of the slavery of the negroes (sic) in our country, and for the instruction and education of their children in English literature, and in the principles of the Gospel.

2. In 1833, Unitarian Lydia Maria Child wrote in *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans*:

In a community where all the labor is done by one class, there must of course be another class, who live in indolence; and we all know how much people that have nothing to do are tempted by what the world calls pleasures; the result is, that slave-holding states and colonies are proverbial for dissipation. Hence too the contempt for industry, which prevails in such a state of society. Where none work but slaves, usefulness becomes degradation.

3. In 1835, Unitarian minister William Ellery Channing wrote, in *Slavery*:

He who cannot see a brother, a child of God, a man possessing all the rights of humanity, under a skin darker than his own, wants the vision of a Christian. He worships the outward. The spirit is not yet revealed to him. To look unmoved on the degradation and wrongs of a fellow-creature, because burned by a fiercer sun, proves us strangers to justice and love, in those universal forms which characterize Christianity.

4. In 1838, Theodore Clapp, Unitarian minister of the Independent Unitarian Society, New Orleans wrote:

I would say to every slave in the United States, 'You should realize that a wise, kind, and merciful Providence has appointed for you your condition in life; and, all things considered, you could not be more eligibly situated. The burden of your care, toils and responsibilities is much lighter than that, which God has imposed on your Master. The most enlightened

philanthropists, with unlimited resources, could not place you in a situation more favorable to your present and everlasting welfare than that which you now occupy...'

5. In 1844, Unitarian Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote: Slavery is no scholar, no improver; it does not love the whistle of the railroad; it does not love the newspaper, the mailbag, a college, a book or a preacher who has the absurd whim of saying what he thinks; it does not increase the white population; it does not improve the soil; everything goes to decay.

6. "A Protest Against Slavery, by One Hundred and Seventy-Three Unitarian Ministers," published in 1845, stated:

... by our political, commercial and social relations with the South, by the long silence of Northern Christians and Churches, but the fact that Northern men, going to the South, often become Slaveholders and apologists for Slavery, we have given the Slaveholders reason to believe that it is only the accident of our position which prevents us from engaging in this system as fully as themselves. Our silence therefore is upholding Slavery, and we must speak against it in order not to speak in its support... We contend for mental freedom; shall we not denounce the system which fetters both mind and body? We have declared righteousness to be the essence of Christianity; shall we not oppose that system which is the sum of all wrong? We claim for all men the right of brotherhood before a universal Father; ought we not to testify against that which tramples so many of our brethren under foot?...

7. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a Unitarian minister, wrote and published this hymn, "The Nation's Sin," in 1846 while he was a student at Harvard Divinity School:

The land our fathers left to us
Is foul with hateful sin:
When shall, O Lord, this sorrow end,
And hope and joy begin?
What good, though growing might and wealth
Shall stretch from shore to shore,
If thus the fatal poison-taint
Be only spread the more?
Wipe out, O God, the nation's sin,
Then swell the nation's power;
But build not high our yearning hopes,
To wither in an hour!
No outward show nor fancied strength
From Thy stern justice saves;
There is no liberty for them

Who make their brethren slaves!

8. In 1851, Theodore Parker wrote in a sermon "On the Fugitive Slave Law:"

I have in my church black men, fugitive slaves. They are the crown of my apostleship, the seal of my ministry. It becomes me to look after their bodies in order to 'save their souls.' This law has brought us into the most intimate connection with the sin of slavery. I have been obliged to take my own parishioners into my house to keep them out of the clutches of the kidnapper. Yes, gentlemen, I have been obliged to do that; and then to keep my doors guarded by day as well as by night. Yes, I have had to arm myself. I have written my sermons with a pistol in my desk, - loaded, with a cap on the nipple, and ready for action. Yea, with a drawn sword within reach of my right hand. This I have done in Boston; in the middle of the nineteenth century; have been obliged to do it to defend the innocent members of my own church, women as well as men!...

9. Orville Dewey, a Unitarian minister, who was Channing's assistant, and later served congregations in Massachusetts and New York City, wrote in 1851:

(If a fugitive came to me, professed his divine right to be free, and asked for help, I would reply): your right to be free is not absolute, unqualified, irrespective of all consequences. If my espousal of your claim is likely to involve your race and mine together in disasters infinitely greater than your personal servitude, then you ought not to be free. In such a case personal rights ought to be sacrificed to the general good. You yourself ought to see this, and to be willing to suffer for a while — one for many. If I were in your situation I should take this ground ...

10. Dr. Richard Dennis Arnold, mayor of Savannah, Georgia, and a lay leader of Unitarian Congregation, Savannah, wrote in 1851:

Servitude is happiness to the negro; liberty is a means of happiness to the Anglo-Saxon, and the present relative condition of both races is the best security for the prosperity and well being of the whole community... It has worked well, and would have worked well forever if left alone.

11. In 1854 Samuel Atkins Eliot, vestryman and warden of the King's Chapel, Boston, wrote:

Great as are the moral and political wrongs and evils of slavery, they are probably not so great as those of anti-slavery agitation.

12. In 1860, Caroline Howard Gilman, author and the wife of Samuel Gilman, minister of Archdale Street Unitarian Church, Charleston, South Carolina, wrote in "Letters of a Confederate Mother:"

... the old thirteen states made laws together, called a constitution, and promised to keep them. One of the laws was that runaway slaves should be returned to their owners. The North has broken the law, encourages the slaves to run away, and sends them to Canada. They do not take them home and make ladies and gentlemen of them, but put them in a freezing climate, to labor for their own living, good and bad together.

13. In 1866, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, African American writer, lecturer, and activist, wrote in "We Are All Bound Up Together:"

We are all bound up together in one great bundle of humanity, and society cannot trample on the weakest and feeblest of its members without receiving the curse in its own soul. You tried that in the case of the negro. You pressed him down for two centuries; and in so doing you crippled the moral strength and paralyzed the spiritual energies of the white men of the country... This grand and glorious revolution which has commenced will fail to reach its climax of success until throughout the length and breadth of the American Republic the nation shall be so color-blind as to know no man by the color of his skin or the curl of his hair. It will then have no privileged class, trampling upon and outraging the unprivileged classes, but will be then one great privileged nation, whose privilege will be to produce the loftiest manhood and womanhood that humanity can attain.

14. In May, 2007, in "Claiming Our History, Warts and All" David Pettee, a Unitarian Universalist minister, wrote:

I have wrestled long and hard to understand if I am now responsible for the actions and deeds of those who lived before me. If I allow myself to be disconnected from history, then I am off the hook. But when I acknowledge my true relationship to our community of memory, I can no longer make sense of the privileges I have inherited. I know that these comforts I enjoy are a direct product of the labors of others who were denied the opportunity to pursue their own dreams... We must be willing to claim all of our history, warts and all.

15. In 2007, UUA President and Unitarian Universalist minister William Sinkford wrote:

There's a kind of liberation that comes with being able to actually know our past and talk about it freely. If we're not able to talk about it

freely, the past gets built into the walls in ways that we have a hard time seeing.

LEADER RESOURCE 3: MARY LIVERMORE, PORTRAIT

From the Unitarian Universalist Association archives.



LEADER RESOURCE 4: OLYMPIA BROWN, PORTRAIT

From the Unitarian Universalist Association archives.



FIND OUT MORE

Unitarians and the Fugitive Slave Law

Strange, Douglas. "[From Treason to Antislavery Patriotism: Unitarian Conservatives and the Fugitive Slave Law,](https://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/2573358?n=12332&s=4)" (at pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/2573358?n=12332&s=4) *Harvard Library Bulletin*, Vol. XXV, No. 4 and "[Abolitionism as Maleficence: Southern Unitarians Versus 'Puritan Fanaticism' — 1831 — 1860,](https://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/2573358?n=12550&s=4)" (at pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/2573358?n=12550&s=4) *Harvard Library Bulletin*, Vol XXVI, No. 2

Martha and Waitstill Sharp and the History of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

[Celebrating the Work of Martha and Waitstill Sharp](#) (Cambridge, MA: Unitarian Universalist Service Committee)

Diversity and Welcoming Congregations

James, Jacqui and Judith A. Frediani, *Weaving the Fabric of Diversity* (Boston, MA: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1996)

[Unitarian Universalist Association Office of Multicultural Growth and Witness](#)

Unitarian Universalism and the Quest for Racial Justice (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1993)

The Welcoming Congregation Handbook: Resources for Affirming Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and/or Transgender People (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1999)

WORKSHOP 13: MIRAGES AND OASES — IDEALISM AND UTOPIANISM

INTRODUCTION

Humanity must ever reach out towards a New Eden. Succeeding generations smile at the crude attempts, and forthwith make their own blunders, but each attempt, however seemingly unsuccessful, must of necessity contain a germ of spiritual beauty which will bear fruit. — Clara Endicott Sears, founder of the Fruitlands Museum

A vibrant stream of idealism runs through Unitarian Universalist history. This workshop introduces Transcendentalism, spiritualism, and Utopianism, three 19th-century movements which perhaps represent a high point of idealism in the United States as well as in both Unitarianism and Universalism. Participants explore the reasons for these expressions of idealism, examine how these movements shaped our faith, and identify strains of idealism in Unitarian Universalism today.

Before leading this workshop, review the Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters in the program Introduction. Make preparations to accommodate individuals who may be in the group.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Highlight the role idealism played in the development of Unitarianism and Universalism in 19th-century America
- Introduce the Transcendental movement of the 19th century
- Tell the story of Hopedale, an experimental socialist community of the 19th-century Utopian movement
- Consider the continuing threads of idealism in our movement today and the challenges inherent in expressing ideals as action.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand ways a foundational optimism has shaped our movement

- Make connections between world events and religious idealism
- Learn about Transcendentalists, Utopians, and other 19th-century idealists and compare their movements with contemporary movements grounded in idealism
- Identify ways our Unitarian Universalist Principles reflect our heritage of idealism
- Consider how to put religious principles into action through financial and social means.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: An Idealistic Time	25
Activity 2: The Hopedale Community	25
Activity 3: Transcendentalism	20
Activity 4: Innocence and Action	30
Faith in Action: Values and Actions	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Brook Farm	15
Alternate Activity 2: Fruitlands	15
Alternate Activity 3: Spiritualism	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take a few minutes to center yourself to meditate, pray, or contemplate what is ultimate in your life. Consider the meaning of living by your ideals and reflect on the benefits and challenges this offers. What are your deepest values? How do you put them into action in the world?

You may wish to ask participants to engage in this same spiritual practice so that they, too, arrive at the workshop centered and ready to engage with the material and the group.

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Sign-in sheet and pen/pencil
- Name tags and markers
- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1, [Schedule Template](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Create and post a workshop agenda on newsprint. The Workshop-at-a-Glance section provides time estimates. Create a welcome table near the entrance. Set out name tags and markers, the sign-in sheet and pen/pencil, and copies of the schedule.
- Make copies of the Time Line of UU History handout (Workshop 1, Handout 2), if you need some. Place time line handouts on the welcome table.
- Optional: Post the Time Line of UU History display.

Description of Activity

Welcome everyone to the workshop as they enter. Ask them to sign in, make (or pick up) name tags, and pick up the schedule and time line handouts from the welcome table. Point out the posted agenda for this workshop.

Including All Participants

Write the agenda in large, clear lettering and post it where it will be easily visible to all participants. Provide name tags large enough and markers bold enough so names will be easily visible.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Optional: Decorative cloth

Preparation for Activity

- Set up a worship or centering table with the chalice and (optional) decorative cloth.
- Optional: Invite a participant in advance to act as chalice lighter or reader to make the workshop more participatory.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice with these words by spiritualist and trance lecturer Cora L. V. Scott Hatch Daniels Tappan Richmond, 1897:

Have you ever seen the sun rise on the ocean?
The first gray lines tremble on the horizon.
Streaks of gold and crimson slowly rise. A gray cloud moves across the path and then it turns a crimson cloud, moving across the sky. On the verge of the horizon trembles the pale morning star, and then the full bright orb Phoebus, in his golden chariot, ascends, and a flood of light spreads over the Universe. Even thus will dawn the new age of humanity, and not only slavery, but fear, darkness and death will be conquered in the light of the new morning.

Including All Participants

Remind volunteer readers to speak slowly and clearly so all can hear.

ACTIVITY 1: AN IDEALISTIC TIME (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 1, [Unitarian Universalist Idealism](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 2, [World Situation](#) (included in this document)
- Time Line of UU History from Workshop 1

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Leader Resource 1, Unitarian Universalist Idealism and Leader Resource 2, World Situation and familiarize yourself with their contents.
- Post the Time Line of UU History and mark these events:
 - Revolutions and revolts in Europe, 1848.
 - Publication of *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848.
 - Mexican-American War, 1846-1848.
 - Darwin publishes "On the Origin of Species," 1859.
 - American Civil War, 1860-1865.
- Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

Say, in your own words:

The focus of this workshop is idealism in 19th-century Unitarianism and Universalism. The 19th century was a time of great change—technological, social, political, and cultural.

Summarize the information in Leader Resource 1, Unitarian Universalist Idealism using the time line as a reference. Invite discussion as well as any additional information participants may offer to enhance your brief summary.

Read or paraphrase the material in Leader Resource 2, World Situation. Take note of the ways idealism has been a part of both the United States story and the Unitarian Universalist story. Invite comments and observations, and engage a discussion about the parallel growth of our liberal faith and of the nation.

Then ask:

- Who was being swept aside, exploited, or left on the margins of our national story at this time?

List historically marginalized groups on newsprint as participants name them. Suggest "low wage laborers," "enslaved Africans," "women," and "ethnic minorities/new immigrants," if participants do not.

Invite participants to bear these groups in mind during the workshop, and try to discover to what extent our 19th-century Unitarian Universalist story also marginalized them. Did idealist religious and social movements move Unitarians and Universalists closer to fully inhabiting their own theology and values?

ACTIVITY 2: THE HOPEDALE COMMUNITY (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[The Hopedale Community](#)" (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story "The Hopedale Community" and prepare to present it.
- Pre-arrange with two volunteers to read, respectively, the excerpt from the Standard of Practical Christianity and the words of Sarah Bradbury. Give them copies of the story "The Hopedale Community" in advance.
- Write on newsprint, and post:

- The Hopedale Community chose to engage with the larger society only on its own terms. Do our contemporary Unitarian Universalist congregations make choices such as this?
 - The community chose to learn about social justice issues through speakers and programs as well as through participation in social justice movements. Is this pattern familiar to Unitarian Universalists today?
 - Is there anything familiar in Sarah Bradbury's assessment of the Hopedale community?
 - What does the story say about the intersection of religious principle and political action?
 - In what ways does our congregation work to live out our religious principles?
- Optional: Download the questions and prepare them as one or more digital slides. Test the computer and projector.

Description of Activity

Share the story "The Hopedale Community." Act as the narrator, inviting volunteers to read the words of the Standard of Practical Christianity and of Sarah Bradbury.

Engage a whole group discussion, using these questions:

- In Hopedale, Ballou aimed to put into action his declaration of Practical Christianity, to live according to what he saw as the will of God and the command of Jesus to live a life of personal integrity and social responsibility. On what basis should we evaluate the success or failure of this experiment?
- In founding Hopedale, Ballou did not wish to withdraw from all society, but rather to create a new model. Yet he felt he had to withdraw from "all interference with the governments of this world." Why? What does this suggest about the implementation of religious principles in society at large?
- Many residents and visitors to Hopedale were deeply committed to social justice through abolition of slavery, women's suffrage, temperance, or peace movements. They used social, political, and financial means to act on these goals. What does the story suggest about

the intersection of religious principle and political action?

Allow about ten minutes for this large group conversation.

Then, post the questions you have written on newsprint and invite participants to consider these questions in groups of three. After ten minutes, re-gather the large group and invite the small groups to share from their discussions. Note similar observations the small groups made about their own congregation and/or contemporary Unitarian Universalism.

ACTIVITY 3: THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 3, [Transcendentalism](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 4, [Words of the Transcendentalists](#) (included in this document)
- Basket or bowl to pass among the group

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 3, Transcendentalism, and familiarize yourself with its contents.
- Print out Leader Resource 4, Words of the Transcendentalists. Cut the quotations apart and place all the strips in the basket or bowl.

Description of Activity

Read or present the information in Leader Resource 3, Transcendentalism. Then, pass around the basket of quotes, inviting participants to select one quote when the basket comes to them. Ask participants to read their quotes silently. Pass the basket a second time, and invite participants, if they wish, to return the quote and choose another. Explain that they need not agree with the quote in order to keep it. If the group is small, invite participants to choose more than one slip of paper.

Once everyone has selected a quote, invite participants to read their quote aloud or request that a volunteer read it. After all the quotes have been read, invite comments and discussion, using these questions as a guide:

- Which of the quotes speaks to you?
- Which ones seem frozen in time?
- Where do you hear echoes of the Transcendentalists in contemporary Unitarian Universalism?

ACTIVITY 4: INNOCENCE AND ACTION (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 1, [Love and Power](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 2, [Of Madmen and Martyrs](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1, Love and Power and Handout 2, Of Madmen and Martyrs.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - Which author resonates with you most? Why?
 - Which challenges you? Why?
 - Some might say it is our idealism, our ability to hold on to our values and our hope, which allows us to put our UU Principles into action working toward a world of peace, liberty, and justice. How do the actions of our forbears hold up to the critiques presented in these two handouts?
 - How do the actions of your congregation hold up in light of the critiques?
- Optional: Download the questions and prepare them as one or more digital slides. Test the computer and projector.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to examine how our Unitarian Universalist tradition of idealism is reflected in our contemporary faith.

Distribute Handout 1, Love and Power and Handout 2, Of Madmen and Martyrs and invite participants to read them silently.

Then, call attention to the posted questions and invite participants to move into groups of four to respond to the two contemporary writers, using the questions as a guide.

Give each group markers and a sheet of newsprint. Instruct the small groups to first offer each person an opportunity to speak without comment or discussion, sharing their individual responses to the handouts. Tell them that after each person has had an opportunity to speak, the group may consider the posted questions

together and record their responses on the sheet of newsprint.

After 15 minutes, re-gather the large group. Invite each small group to post and share their comments.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Faith in Action from this workshop and/or Spiritual Preparation from Workshop 14

Preparation for Activity

- Download and customize Taking It Home as a handout. You may wish to add the Faith in Action activity suggestion from this workshop and/or the Spiritual Preparation questions for the next workshop.

Description of Activity

Gather the group around the chalice. Distribute Taking It Home. Announce the date, time, and place of the next workshop and any other "housekeeping" information. Request or remind volunteers if you want participants to read material aloud or perform other roles at the next meeting.

Extinguish the chalice with these words of Clara Endicott Sears, founder of the Fruitlands Museum:

Humanity must ever reach out towards a New Eden. Succeeding generations smile at the crude attempts, and forthwith make their own blunders, but each attempt, however seemingly unsuccessful, must of necessity contain a germ of spiritual beauty which will bear fruit.

FAITH IN ACTION: VALUES AND ACTIONS

Materials for Activity

- Two sheets of poster board
- Collage materials, including markers, photos, scissors, tape and glue sticks

Preparation for Activity

- Research past and current social action stands taken by your congregation.
- Obtain documents that state your community's shared values and ideals, such as your congregations' covenant, mission statement or bylaws.

Description of Activity

Consider actions taken by your congregation, both in the past and currently, in light of the community's stated ideals and values. Consider whether the values have been and are being lived out in concrete, transformative ways.

Create two collages, one describing the shared values and ideals of your congregation, the other depicting actions of your congregation that are founded in those ideals.

Ask the minister, worship committee, or lifespan faith development committee about the possibility of presenting the results to the congregation during a worship service or at another appropriate time.

Post the collages in your congregation with some blank paper and markers set nearby; invite all members of the community to add their reflections on how your congregation puts your ideals into action or might do so in the future.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

After the workshop, co-leaders should talk to evaluate this workshop and plan future ones. Use these questions to guide your shared reflection and planning:

- What parts of the workshop worked well and which did not? Why? How was the success, or lack of success, related to the topics? How was it related to the types of activities?
- How can we use this experience to make future workshops more effective? What would we change if we were to lead this workshop again?
- What was left unfinished in the workshop that should still be addressed? How and when will we address it?
- What strengths did we each bring to the workshop?
- As co-leaders, when did we work well together?
- What might help us be better leaders in future workshops?
- What do we need to prepare for the next workshop? Who will handle which tasks? Who will lead which activities?

TAKING IT HOME

Humanity must ever reach out towards a New Eden. Succeeding generations smile at the crude attempts, and forthwith make their own

blunders, but each attempt, however seemingly unsuccessful, must of necessity contain a germ of spiritual beauty which will bear fruit. — Clara Endicott Sears, founder of the Fruitlands Museum

Consider more contemporary expressions of idealism you have read or heard. What idealistic or Utopian sentiments exist in our Unitarian Universalist congregations today?

Journal about ways idealism has been made manifest in the world, how it is lived out and made into action. They may be actions occurring today or actions you have witnessed in your life.

Share the handouts from the workshop with family members or Unitarian Universalist friends. Explore ways you can put your ideals into action in the world, either as an individual or with a group of others who share your values and vision.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: BROOK FARM (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Brook Farm](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Print out the story and prepare to read or tell it. Or, invite a participant to read or tell it, and provide them with the story in advance.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story, or invite a participant to read it aloud. Use these questions to engage a group conversation:

- Like Brook Farm, our congregations attempt to bring people together in a religious community. We share many of their concerns for maintaining finances and physical buildings while living out our Principles. What can we learn from the Brook Farm experiment about living in committed religious community?
- Brook Farm was founded as an experiment in Utopian living, that is, as a community based on perfect social and political systems. Even though the community was not able to overcome its financial problems, were the social and political parts of the experiment a success? In what ways did it succeed or fail?
- Ripley's chief goal in founding Brook Farm was to create a community true to the Christianity he preached but did not see lived out in the world.

One of his primary aims was to remove class distinctions by sharing the physical labor so that everyone would have time for self-improving study and intellectual contemplation. What does the story tell us about class structures in 19th-century New England?

- Ripley's goal of removing class distinctions can be seen as an idealism yearning to provide the best life for each individual where all are truly equals. It can also be seen as an upper class elitism that sees all others below their level and wishes to "raise" the other rather than acknowledge the nobility of where the other is already. Do you agree with Ripley's philosophy of removing class distinctions and his methodology for doing so?
- Does our congregation struggle with class issues? In what ways?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: FRUITLANDS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Fruitlands](#) (included in this document) "
- Leader Resource 5, [Louisa May Alcott, Portrait](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Print out the story and prepare to read or tell it. Or, invite a participant to read or tell it, and provide them with the story in advance.
- Print out Leader Resource 5, Louisa May Alcott, Portrait.
- Optional: Download Leader Resource 5 and prepare to project it as a digital slide.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story, or invite a participant to read it aloud. Use these questions to engage a group conversation:

- Our congregation's families today face the same challenge that confronted the Con-Sociate Family: living in accordance with stated principles in a *society of individuals*. What can we learn from the Fruitlands experiment that will help us build stronger congregations, that will help us forge the bonds of community while respecting the unique contribution of each individual?

- Of her time in the Con-Sociate Family Louisa May Alcott wrote, "Transcendental wild oats were sown broadcast that year, and the fame thereof has not yet ceased in the land; for futile as this crop seemed to outsiders, it bore an invisible harvest, worth much to those who planted in earnest." Do you think Fruitlands was a success in providing a place where people could learn about living a principled life in community or was it ultimately a failure?
- In our congregations we do not face the kinds of hardship for survival that the residents of Fruitlands faces. We do not depend on each other for food and shelter, but we do depend on each other to do the work of the community. What might Fruitlands tell us about putting community over self or ideal over desire?
- At Fruitlands the behavior of each person was dictated in the matter of dress, study, work, diet, and even bathing habits. As covenantal congregations we, too, live according to a code of communal behavior rather than one of proper belief. What is the difference between a requirement of compliance and a covenant? Given that those who chose to live at Fruitlands did so voluntarily and in agreement with its aims, was it reasonable to expect them to comply with these dictates? What experience do you have with being part of a group with restrictions on dress or behavior? Do you view compliance with those restrictions as necessary if you wanted to be part of the group?
- Louisa May Alcott wrote of her father, "He has seen several of his ideals become facts and that is more than most of us ever do..." Is seeing the reality of an ideal worth the risk of failure? What risks does your congregation take based on living according to its principles?

- On a sheet of newsprint draw a continuum—a horizontal line with "Cessation" at one end and "Continuation" at the other.

Description of Activity

Present the information in Leader Resource 6, Spiritualism.

Post the continuum you have drawn on newsprint. Say, in your own words:

Throughout Unitarian and Universalist history, people have held a variety of ideas about an afterlife. These ideas have ranged from full cessation of the human personality at death to the full continuation of distinct personality after death. These have included concepts of rebirth, separate realms for eternal spirits, spirits dwelling among the living and more.

Ask participants to consider the benefits or struggles the spiritualists faced from their beliefs about life after death. Then, ask them to locate themselves on the continuum of beliefs. Reminding participants to maintain an atmosphere accepting of all people's beliefs, invite them into conversation on how their beliefs interplay with or differ from those of the spiritualists. Keep the discussion focused, and allow time for your own concluding remarks.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: SPIRITUALISM (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 6, [Spiritualism](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 6, Spiritualism and familiarize yourself with its contents.

STORY: BROOK FARM

The Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education of West Roxbury, Massachusetts (1841-1847) was the idea and creation of Unitarian minister and Transcendentalist George Ripley. After serving the Purchase Street Church in Boston, Ripley became discontented with a society that did not live fully by Christian values. He believed an intentional community could more closely embody the Transcendentalist ideals of principled living, a spiritual union between physical labor and healthy intellectual development, and individual freedom.

In 1840, the year before the founding of Brook Farm, Ripley wrote to friend and fellow Transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson that he hoped the community would foster "a more natural union between intellectual and manual labor than now exists." Ripley planned to accomplish this by providing everyone with work, according to their tastes and talents, as well as the fruits of their labor. The goal, as Ripley wrote, was:

...to do away with the necessity of menial services, by opening the benefits of education and the profits of labor to all; and thus to prepare a society of liberal, intelligent, and cultivated person, whose relations with each other would permit a more simple and wholesome life, than can now be led amidst the pressures of our competitive institutions.

While Ripley felt strongly about removing class distinctions, this paragraph seems to suggest he meant to remove them by "elevating" all to the educated class. However, Ripley felt strongly that all work was valuable and uplifting to the one who performed it. A Brook Farm resident, Georgiana Brice Kirby, remembered:

At the farm Mr. Ripley said, as illustrating the spirit prevailing there, that Wm. A., a young farmer from New Hampshire, and recently an employee of Theodore Parker's, was going into Boston the next day, and that nothing would give him, Mr. R., more pleasure than to black his boots before he left. This was not intended as an insinuation that this member's boots were in a bad state most of the time, but that Mr. R. had reached a point in brotherly love which had swept the class feeling entirely away. Such facts were almost incredible!

Life at Brook Farm began in a common farmhouse known as the Hive. Soon the community was able to add buildings, including a factory, a greenhouse and a school. A separate residence was built for the Ripleys, but the Hive continued on as the main dormitory. Although the community was initially founded on the

principles of Transcendental Christianity, in 1845 it was reorganized to more closely conform to the work of French social scientist Charles Fourier (FOR-ee-ay) whose intentional communities, called phalanxes, were meant to create a perfect economic and social climate for happiness and harmonious living.

Life at Brook Farm was characterized by early rising, wholesome living, and hard work—ten hours a day in summer and eight in winter. Still, personal improvement was much prized and recreational pursuits were seen as a way of expanding one's intellectual, cultural, and spiritual horizons. Ripley and his wife, Sophia, entertained nightly at their home, the Eyrie, with musical evenings, parties, tableaux vivants, and poetry readings. This, along with the members' enjoyment of entertainments such as cards and dancing, led the more austere Bronson Alcott of the Fruitlands Utopian community to scorn Brook Farm as "an endless picnic." Although Brook Farm did not become the enduring model for society George Ripley had envisioned, it did succeed for a time—six years, while Fruitlands lasted only seven months.

Membership at Brook Farm guaranteed an equal opportunity of education and labor, but the right to vote in the affairs of the community was based on property ownership. Shares, each costing 500 dollars, offered a vote and 5 percent interest, but no other claim on the farm's production.

During its time, Brook Farm drew the interest, support or involvement of some of the most famous literary and social figures of the day including Elizabeth Peabody, Theodore Parker, Orestes Brownson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and even Adin Ballou before the founding of his own community, Hopedale. Margaret Fuller was such a regular visitor that a cottage was named after her. Nathaniel Hawthorne lived at Brook Farm from April through November 1841 and remained a trustee for an additional year. Although Hawthorne eventually sued (unsuccessfully) for the return of his 1,500 dollar investment, ten years after leaving Brook Farm he wrote fondly of the community in the preface to his novel *The Blithedale Romance* based on his experiences there.

The community suffered from a lack of funding almost from the beginning, but in 1846 the situation became insurmountable. While the community celebrated completion of the new central residence, the Phalanstery, the building caught fire and burned to the ground. Without insurance, the loss was more than the fragile finances could bear. The community all but closed in 1846 and was officially disbanded in August of 1847.

STORY: FRUITLANDS

The Con-Sociate Family of Harvard, Massachusetts (June 1843-January 1844) was popularly known as Fruitlands because its founders planned to live off the fruits of the land. Members expected a daily schedule of farm work mixed with literary pursuits and philosophical discussion. Early rising, cold baths, and a diet of bread, fruit, vegetables, and pure water helped build body and spirit. Linen sufficed for clothing, because the community would not use cotton produced by slave labor or any animal products, including wool. In all things the members sought occupation as directed by the spirit, so the union of spirit and flesh would be made manifest.

The Con-Sociate Family was the project of Amos Bronson Alcott, noted educator, author, and philosopher from Concord, Massachusetts and Charles Lane, an English educator and reformer. Both men wished to build a "New Eden," free from traditional societal restrictions, where all persons could seek their full potential. Fruitlands was not to be simply a closed community for a few individuals, but a model on which all future society would be based. A leader in the Transcendental movement of New England, Alcott saw the world of nature as a tangible manifestation of a universal divinity. The Con-Sociate Family was to live in harmony with this divinity by eschewing trade, property ownership, the imposition of institutions, and the use of animals for food, labor, or clothing. They embraced a life of the mind, work driven by the spirit's inclination, social responsibility in all things, and universal respect for all creatures.

Although Utopian communities were common during the period of Fruitlands' founding, not everyone saw such experiments as viable. Thomas Carlyle called Alcott "a venerable Don Quixote. All bent on saving the world by a return to acorns and the golden age." Many outside of the Transcendentalist movement saw it as "high purpose and thoughtful action... beclouded by a reputation for vagary and absurdity." Louisa May Alcott, daughter of Bronson Alcott, charmingly lampooned the absurdity of her time at Fruitlands in her tale "*Transcendental Wild Oats*", published in 1875 in a Boston newspaper.

Membership in the community dwindled, but the crisis of food dealt the death blow. With the men off at speaking engagements, Mrs. Alcott was left alone with the children to harvest the grain as storms threatened. As the New England chill settled in, it was discovered that the Family had insufficient food to make it through the winter. Charles Lane left for a nearby Shaker community, but Mrs. Alcott refused to follow, unwilling to be separated from any member of her family by the

Shakers' religious views requiring total separation of the sexes. Lane characterized her actions as selfish. Indeed, Lane wrote that the residents found Mrs. Alcott "arbitrary or despotic," which made Fruitlands no longer bearable. Others claimed that, in fact, Lane was "the serpent who sowed the seed of discord in Alcott's new Eden." Still others would blame the sheer impracticality of feeding a community with hand labor when the members preferred reading philosophy and writing poetry to land cultivation. In *A. Bronson Alcott: His Life and Philosophy* Franklin B. Sanborn wrote, "The rigors of a New England winter promoted the dissolution of the 'Fruitlands' Community, but did not alone break it up. A lack of organizing power to control the steady current of selfishness, as well as the unselfish vagaries of his followers, was the real cause."

Whatever the truth of personalities and power, the Fruitlands experiment was formally disbanded in January 1844, just seven months after it began.

STORY: THE HOPEDALE COMMUNITY

In 1839, Adin Ballou, a radical minister who served both Universalist and Unitarian churches, was one of those who published the "Standard of Practical Christianity." The Standard read, in part:

We are Christians. Our creed is the New Testament. Our religion is love. Our only law is the will of God. Our grand object is the restoration of man, especially the most fallen and friendless. Our immediate concern is the promotion of useful knowledge, moral improvement, and Christian perfection... Therefore, we can make no earthly object our chief good, nor be governed by any motive but the love of Right, nor compromise duty with worldly convenience, nor seek the preservation of our property, our reputation, our personal liberty, or our life, by the sacrifice of Conscience. We cannot live merely to eat, drink, sleep, gratify our sensual appetites, dress, display ourselves, acquire property, and be accounted great in this world; but to do good.

Ballou's vision was the establishment of a community wherein all members would adopt and live out this Standard of Practical Christianity. In the spring of 1842 his vision was realized when the Hopedale Community was established on farmland just west of Milford, Massachusetts. By 1846, the community had grown to 70 residents with a dozen houses, a machine shop, and a sawmill. The Community even started a factory that manufactured components for weaving looms.

While the Standard of Practical Christianity called for withdrawal "from all interference with the governments of this world," Ballou hoped not to cut ties with the larger society. Instead, his idea was for Hopedale to stand as a beacon and model and to be the first of many such communities. The Hopedale Community was to embody Christian living and working for justice and peace. The vision included a rejection of the sovereignty of any human government; the Hopedale Community saw itself as beholden to God alone.

During the 14 years of Hopedale's existence its founders and members were committed to the improvement of the human mind and spirit. They were active in movements for abolition, for women's rights, for peace, and for temperance. Visitors to the community, including Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, and Lucy Stone, spoke to large crowds about contemporary topics of social justice.

By 1852, the community had reached its peak population of approximately 200 and its land area had grown to 500 acres. The community had achieved its goal of becoming a village with its own school, chapel, post office, factory, and bank. Yet, Hopedale suffered from serious financial problems. In 1856 the majority shareholders, Ebenezer and George Draper, felt the community's debt was too large to be borne. They withdrew their support, about three quarters of the community's holdings, and the Fraternal Community of Hopedale was forced to close.

In his *History of the Hopedale Community* published in 1897, Adin Ballou wrote that the failure of the community went beyond its financial bankruptcy. Although he cited poor planning, lack of resources, and the rigidity and inflexibility of the founding Constitution as factors, he believed the community's primary failure was a moral one:

... the predominating cause of the failure of The Hopedale Community was a moral and spiritual, not a financial one—a deficiency among its members of those graces and powers of character which are requisite to the realization of the Christian ideal of human society, such as that enterprise was designed to represent and exemplify. In other and more general terms, the movement was too far ahead of and above the world, in its then existing or present state of advancement, to be practicable.

In her reminiscences, one-time resident Sarah Bradbury paints a more sympathetic picture of Hopedale's varied population:

The members were men and women drawn together by a common interest in the great principles of liberal and practical Christianity at a time when church doctrines were narrow. In addition to the vital principles of ultimate salvation for all, temperance, non-resistance, etc. each one brought some fad of his own—a belief in Spiritualism, or the vegetable diet. Some were non-shavers, and all, I think, were non-smokers. The fads, which were almost as dear to the hearts of their owners as the principles, were often discussed in public, and the free play of the various natures, grave and gay, matter of fact and mischievously humorous, made these meetings a "continuous performance" of vast entertainment. The argument was earnest on either side, and usually closed by each with the same emphatic utterance, "So it seems to me and I cannot see it otherwise!" Neither party convinced the other, but the war of words afforded a certain relief to

strenuous natures who, as good-non-resistants
could indulge in no other form of warfare.

These fond words seem a fitting tribute to an experiment
in Utopian living that lasted for more than a decade and
touched many lives. `

HANDOUT 1: LOVE AND POWER

Excerpted from "Love and Power: The Universalist Dilemma" by the Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt, first presented as the John Murray Distinguished Lecture at the UUA General Assembly in Boston, June 2003. Used with permission.

The story we Unitarian Universalists tell about ourselves is a story of heroic dissent. Much of that story is true: For a long time, and in many places, we have affirmed life in the face of death; we have stood for justice in the face of injustice. That has been our gift and a small part of our blessing to this world. But what looks to us like heroic dissent has often gone unnoticed in the larger world. We call for a world of love and justice, but who is listening? The truth is that liberal religious people, including Unitarian Universalists, have been politically marginalized for some time...

We Unitarian Universalists are extraordinarily faithful witnesses. We are willing to call attention to injustices by the score; our congregations' social justice and faith in action committees are worn out and burnt out from the gestures of sympathy and solidarity with which we burden them and ourselves. We are vigorous and vocal in our unwillingness to allow anyone within the sound of our voices to believe, even for a second, that the regressive behavior of our government, or the racist behavior of the local police force, or the homophobic behavior of state legislators, has anything whatsoever to do with us. We are not that kind of people, we say, and we are proud of it, proud of being able to say that as bad as things periodically get, we do not remain silent. We speak up; we speak out.

We feel good about the commitments we make, and in so doing, we make a point as well: We make sure that our hands are clean, that we are disconnected from the big horrors and the small ones that plague this broken world. We make it clear that our hearts are pure. "Don't blame me," in the words of the bumper sticker, "I voted for the other guy." Above all else, we are wedded to our innocence. We believe that "love will guide us through the hard night." But I am not so sure of that as I once was; I have found myself afraid for our faith—afraid that we have embraced a love too sentimental, too anemic, too powerless to matter in a world filled with unspeakable acts committed by people who have no interest in our witness. I am afraid that we have embraced only the symbols of love and justice and peace with no commitment, and often no clue about what we will face at the moment we attempt to make these things real. I am afraid we have consistently underestimated the people and the systems we oppose, and overestimated our own skill, our own willingness,

and our own resilience. I am afraid that we have settled for cheap grace in a very expensive world...

I have rediscovered in these past few months that I have a healthy tolerance for fear, but that I really cannot bear the idea that I might be a coward. I cannot abide the idea that the faith I love so much is so often paralyzed by purity, so often blocked by a certain kind of cowardice that we render our good news worthless to those whose lives are under siege.

HANDOUT 2: OF MADMEN AND MARTYRS

Excerpted from "Of Madmen and Martyrs: A Unitarian Take on Knoxville," a blog post by Sara Robinson published July 28, 2008 on the Orcinus website. Used with permission.

We are an odd group, we Unitarians.

Conventional wisdom says that we're soft in all the places our society values toughness. Our refusal to adhere to any dogma must mean that we're soft in our convictions. Our reflexive open-mindedness is often derided as evidence that we're soft in the head. Our persistent and gentle insistence on liberal values is evidence of hearts too soft to set boundaries. And all of this together leads to a public image of a mushy gathering of feckless intellectuals that somehow lacks cohesion, backbone, focus, or purpose.

You can only believe this if you don't know either the history or the modern reality of Unitarian Universalism. The faith's early founders, Michael Servetus and Francis David, were executed for the radical notion that belief in the Trinity—which excluded Muslims and Jews—should not be a requirement for participation in 16th-century public life. Four hundred years later, in the same part of the world, other Unitarians died in concentration camps for having the courage of their humanist convictions. Viola Liuzzo, a 39-year-old mother from Michigan who was killed by the Klan in the days following the Selma march in 1965, was one of ours, too.

And then there are the thousands of us who lived to fight another day—surviving not because we were weak and indecisive, but because we were unshakable in our convictions and unwilling to back down out of sheer cussedness. That Unitarian-bred belief in the nobility of the human spirit was the spiritual foundation on which a plurality of America's founders found sure footing as their convictions crystallized into revolution against tyranny. It fueled the passionate oratory of Daniel Webster, the wisdom of Ben Franklin, and the incisively clear writings of Tom Paine. It sent Paul Revere out into the cold of an April evening, and set Thomas Jefferson to the task of writing a Declaration. It recklessly bet the church's entire existence—and the lives of its leaders, who willingly and knowingly committed a capital act of treason—in order to publish the Pentagon Papers.

When you sign up to become a UU, this is the legacy you take on, and from then on attempt to live up to. It's not God's job to make the world a better place. It's yours. This has never been work for the faint of heart, mind, or spirit—and in this era of conservatism gone crazy, it still isn't.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST IDEALISM

Unitarian Universalism has historically embraced both an exalted view of human nature and a confidence in the grace of God. Our Universalist forebears embraced the doctrine that all are saved. Our Unitarian forebears came to believe that humans, created in the image of God, could draw closer to God by perfecting themselves. Thomas Starr King (1824-1864), who served churches in both movements, when asked the difference between the two reportedly quipped, "The Universalists think God is too good to damn them forever; the Unitarians think they are too good to be damned forever."

John Murray (1741-1815), the 18th-century preacher who brought the doctrine of universal salvation from England to the United States, is said to have written:

Go out into the highway and by-ways. Give the people something of your new vision. You possess a small light, but uncover it, let it shine, use it in order to bring more light and understanding to the hearts and minds of men and women. Give them not hell, but hope and courage; preach the kindness and everlasting love of God.

Murray's call was taken up not only by Universalist but also by Unitarian preachers. William Ellery Channing (1780-1842), the great Unitarian minister of the 19th century, was known for preaching the love and grace of God rather than any punitive or frightening aspects of divinity. He painted a lofty picture of humanity with a moral nature and sense of reason made in the very image of God. In 1828 he wrote, "the soul, by its sense of right, or its perception of moral distinctions, is clothed with sovereignty over itself, and through this alone, it understands and recognizes the Sovereign of the Universe."

Transcendentalist James Freeman Clarke (1810-1888) summarized unitarian optimism when he revised the five points of Calvinism in an 1886 book of essays, *Vexed Questions in Theology*. Clarke's "Five Points of the New Theology" became belief in:

- the fatherhood of God
- the brotherhood of man
- the leadership of Jesus
- salvation by character
- the progress of mankind onward and upward forever.

The religious idealism of our forebears was consonant with the philosophical and political optimism represented in ideals of the United States. Even before the nation's founding, European settlers gathered in communities—usually religiously based—to pursue a new and better life. The vision of this "new and glorious nation" was fed by an unbridled spirit of lofty aspiration, optimism, and possibility. It would only be late in the next century when common understanding opened these vast possibilities to Americans who were not males of European origin.

With the founding of the United States an idealist view of human nature was embodied even in the documents of government. The Preamble to the Constitution reads:

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Surely, if ever there was a nation founded on high ideals, this was it.

The idealism and aspiration of the American experiment was not new to the world or sprung full grown on American soil. Such philosophies and ideals had been seen before in other societies, and would be seen again in the founding of other nations, but in the intersection of the United States, Unitarianism, and Universalism they took on new energy. In the 19th century, a time of great expansion for Unitarianism and Universalism, they flowered.

As the century unfolded, a sense of optimism and idealism that permeated the arts, culture, and thought of the century were expressed also in the spiritualist and Transcendental movements and in the founding of Utopian communities. During the 19th century more than 130 Utopian communities—housing more than 100,000 people—existed at least long enough to be recorded by history. In the year 1840 alone, more than 40 communities were founded in the United States. Three from our own history are Brook Farm, founded by Transcendentalist and Unitarian minister George Ripley; the Hopedale Community, founded by Universalist and Unitarian minister Adin Ballou; and Fruitlands, founded by Transcendentalist leader Amos Bronson Alcott and Charles Lane.

LEADER RESOURCE 2: WORLD SITUATION

One of the most remarkable periods of idealism for both Unitarianism and Universalism arose during the 1800s. Spurred by the mechanical and industrial revolutions, the 19th-century was a time of great fermentation of new ideas. On the scientific front, the century saw the development of general anesthesia, advances in the understanding of genetics, and the 1859 publication of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution in *On The Origin of the Species*. The world was immeasurably broadened by advances in transportation and communication with the invention of the telegraph, the telephone, and the gasoline-powered automobile. While the Suez (completed in 1869) and Panama Canals facilitated transport by water, railroads were replacing ships as the primary means of transporting goods.

Just as in science and industry, the social order was undergoing a revolution. In the arts, a new Romanticism grew in response to the rationalism of the Age of Enlightenment and a social order of aristocratic imperialism. Philosophers brought revolutionary new ideas about the nature of human beings, and of morality. Indeed it was a time of revolution as freedom and egalitarianism stood as new ideals against monarchy and a social order of privilege and obedience. Revolutions for independence from foreign or monarchic rule arose in many places around the globe including the 1848 revolutions and revolts in Italy, France, Germany, Denmark, Hungary, Belgium, Ireland and Brazil. Although the Russian Revolution was not to come until the 20th century, publication of *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848 introduced the political philosophy of Karl Marx.

In the United States, the success of the American Revolution ushered in a time of expansion, optimism, and enthusiasm for the new ideals of freedom and egalitarianism. The boundaries of the new nation were still being set with Canada and Mexico, and the potential of the United States was seen as unlimited.

Yet, the first part of the 19th century saw a dramatic increase in the African slave trade as people were captured and brought in bondage to serve the demands of an expanding United States economy. Like all periods of human history, the 19th century embodied contradictions. Prosperity and idealism were the call of the day, but the new order was not without cost or problems. The Mexican-American War (1846-1848) and the American Civil War (1860-1865) were just two conflicts that scarred the continent, while the Napoleonic Wars, the Crimean War, the Opium Wars, the Boer Wars and the Barbary Wars scarred the world.

Indigenous peoples were swept aside or exploited by European and American imperialism and expansionism. Arguably, working class people and the indigent in the U.S. neither benefitted from, nor enjoyed discussion about, the century's optimism; some voices were raised against economic expansion they saw characterized by greed and dehumanization. It was a time characterized by sweeping shifts of revolution and counter-revolution, expansion and withdrawal, and the breaking apart of one world order and the establishment of a new one.

LEADER RESOURCE 3: TRANSCENDENTALISM

In the climate of 19th-century Romanticism, a philosophy of religion arose that incorporated the new ideal of personal emotional experience.

Transcendentalism was never an organized religion in its own right; many who espoused a Transcendentalist philosophy remained part of the Unitarian church. The Transcendental movement centered itself in the vicinity of Boston and Concord, Massachusetts, with figures such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Margaret Fuller its leading lights.

Where the liberal Christianity of the time took reason, tradition, and biblical scholarship as its foundations, Transcendentalism made personal spiritual experience and individual conscience its guides. Viewing the Unitarianism of the day as cold and dry, the Transcendentalists wanted a religion unmediated by priest or church, one that allowed for a personal connection to the Divine.

As a movement, Transcendentalism originated with Ralph Waldo Emerson. In 1832 Emerson resigned his position as a Unitarian minister at Second Church of Boston because he declined to serve communion, a

ritual he saw as empty of meaning. In 1836, his essay *Nature* introduced principles that would become recognized as Transcendental philosophy. In that same year, the Transcendental Club was organized. Sometimes called the Aesthetic Club or Hedge's Club (after member Henry Hedge, a Unitarian minister), the symposium provided a forum for discussion and generated the Transcendentalist periodical *The Dial*.

The followers of Transcendentalism felt a deep calling to live lives of personal integrity and to bring about social change. Henry David Thoreau both practiced and wrote about social responsibility. Theodore Parker was well known for his anti-slavery stance while Margaret Fuller championed the rights of women and Bronson Alcott worked for the reform of education. Two utopian communities, Brook Farm and Fruitlands, were founded by Transcendentalists as models for all society.

The Transcendentalist Club met for the last time in 1840, the same year *The Dial* began publication. Although Transcendentalism never became a lasting institution or a codified body of thought, adherents promulgated their views for several more decades, and, as Mark Harris writes in *The A to Z of Unitarian Universalism*, "their vision for the world remained ever hopeful."

LEADER RESOURCE 4: WORDS OF THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS

The Religion that is afraid of science dishonours God and commits suicide. It acknowledges that it is not equal to the whole of truth, that it legislates, tyrannizes over a village of God's empires but is not the immutable universal law. Every influx of atheism, of skepticism is thus made useful as a mercury pill assaulting and removing a diseased religion and making way for truth.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Do not be too timid and squeamish about your actions. All life is an experiment. The more experiments you make the better.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Our age is retrospective. It builds the sepulchres of the fathers. It writes biographies, histories, and criticism. The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs?

— Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*

Standing on the bare ground, — my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, — all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*

Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Great men are they who see that spiritual is stronger than any material force, that thoughts rule the world. No hope so bright but is the beginning of its own fulfillment.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Letters and Social Aims*

Talk of mysteries! — Think of our life in nature, — daily to be shown matter, to come in contact with it, — rocks, trees, wind on our cheeks! the solid earth! the actual world! the *common sense!* *Contact! Contact! Who are we? where are we?*

— Henry David Thoreau, *The Maine Woods*

The law will never make men free; it is men who have got to make the law free.

— Henry David Thoreau, *Slavery in Massachusetts*

The perception of beauty is a moral test.

— Henry David Thoreau

The wisest man preaches no doctrines; he has no scheme; he sees no rafter, not even a cobweb, against the heavens. It is clear sky. If I ever see more clearly at one time than at another, the medium through which I see is clearer.

— Henry David Thoreau, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*

Simplify, simplify.

— Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.

— Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

How many persons must there be who cannot worship alone, since they are content with so little!

— Margaret Fuller, letter to Rev. W. H. Channing

Very early I knew that the only object in life was to grow.

— Margaret Fuller

All around us lies what we neither understand nor use. Our capacities, our instincts for this our present sphere are but half developed. Let us confine ourselves to that till the lesson be learned; let us be completely natural; before we trouble ourselves with the supernatural. I never see any of these things but I long to get away and lie under a green tree and let the wind blow on me. There is marvel and charm enough in that for me.

— Margaret Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*

Our ideals are our better selves.

— Amos Bronson Alcott

Thought means life, since those who do not think so do not live in any high or real sense. Thinking makes the man.

— Amos Bronson Alcott

Dreaming is an act of pure imagination, attesting in all men a creative power, which if it were available in waking, would make every man a Dante or Shakespeare.

— Frederick Henry Hedge

The immortality of the soul is assented to rather than believed,— believed rather than lived.

— Orestes Brownson

The little flower that opens in the meadows lives and dies in a season; but what agencies have concentrated themselves to produce it! So the human soul lives in the midst of heavenly help.

— Elizabeth Palmer Peabody

But is it not the fact that religion emanates from the nature, from the moral state of the individual? Is it not therefore true that unless the nature be completely exercised, the moral state harmonized, the religion cannot be healthy?

Fidelity to conscience is inconsistent with retiring modesty. If it be so, let the modesty succumb. It can be only a false modesty which can be thus endangered.

— Harriet Martineau

If a test of civilization be sought, none can be so sure as the condition of that half of society over which the other half has power.

— Harriet Martineau

You had better live your best and act your best and think your best today; for today is the sure preparation for tomorrow and all the other tomorrows that follow.

— Harriet Martineau

LEADER RESOURCE 5: LOUISA MAY ALCOTT, PORTRAIT

From the Unitarian Universalist Association archives.



LEADER RESOURCE 6: SPIRITUALISM

The spiritualist movement that emerged in Europe and the United States in the 19th century held that humans could communicate with the spirits of those who had departed the earthly realm. It posited parallels between the earthly plane and that of the spirit world where the human spirit would dwell and continue to evolve toward perfection following bodily death.

Partly based on the writings of Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg, spiritualism's beliefs and practices affirmed not only the continued existence of the human soul after physical death but also the possibility of communication between the living and the departed. Swedenborg said there were levels or planes of existence through which the spirits traveled as they continued their evolution toward perfection. Moreover, the spirits acted as intermediaries between God and humanity, and could therefore act as moral guides. Seances, table-turning, and spirit-writing practices were common methods individuals or sensitive "mediums" used to contact spirits which then imparted information about the afterlife. The term "spiritualism" came to include a range of metaphysical arts such as mesmerism (hypnotism) and phrenology.

Spiritualism became popular in the United States following the 1847 publication of the book *The Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations, and a Voice to Mankind*, by Andrew Jackson Davis of Poughkeepsie, New York. Davis claimed to have received the book's content from the spirit of Emanuel Swedenborg while in a trance. When, in the following year, the Fox sisters of Rochester, New York, made contact with the spirit of a deceased peddler through audible rappings, they and spiritualism became a sensation.

At its peak in the United States, spiritualism was estimated to have eight million followers. So although its optimistic beliefs were a natural fit for both Unitarianism and Universalism, spiritualism as a religion far outstripped either in numbers of followers.

In the idealistic, romantic atmosphere of the 19th century, spiritualism was seen as scientific proof that the human soul not only continues after death, but continues to grow and improve. This idea offered comfort to the bereaved and gave credence to the idea of universal salvation. Many Universalist ministers and parishioners espoused spiritualism and practiced its arts. Universalist ministers Adin Ballou, John Spear, Joshua Ingalls, and Linus Smith were all adherents as were former ministers Samuel Brittan, William Fishbough, and James Peebles. One of the most popular trance lecturers was the much-

married Cora L. V. Scott Hatch Daniels Tappan Richmond whose family had been members of Adin Ballou's Hopedale Community.

Spiritualism also spoke to Unitarians, as evidence of their belief in the continual upward progress of humankind, and, since it was purported to be scientifically based, appealed to rationality and the contemporary belief that science could reveal all truths. Reinforced by Transcendentalism's penchant for mystical experience, spiritualism became favored by many radical Unitarians. Ministers John Pierpont, Theodore Higginson, Allen Putnam, and Herman Snow openly embraced spiritualism while others like William Henry Channing and Theodore Parker acknowledged its benefits but never publicly associated with the movement.

Although books were published on its philosophy and practices, and more than three dozen spiritualist periodicals were in circulation worldwide by the 1880s, 19th-century spiritualism never institutionalized into a religious denomination. Nevertheless, it was practiced widely in the public sphere. Mediums and mesmerists filled large auditoriums with people seeking evidence of life beyond life through communication from spirits.

While many Universalists and Unitarians embraced spiritualism, their numbers also included many detractors. Universalist clergy such as Thomas Whittemore, Thomas Sawyer, and Hosea Ballou 2nd spoke against it. On the Unitarian side, Ralph Waldo Emerson described spiritualism as "midnight fumbblings over mahogany," referencing the table-rappings of the spirits. Some supporters turned against spiritualism as mediums and practices were increasingly exposed as fraudulent.

Beginning in the 1920s, interest in spiritualism decreased though remnants of the movement may still be found in the Spiritualist Church and New Age movements.

FIND OUT MORE

Ballou, Adin. [History of the Hopedale Community](https://books.google.com/books?id=sXdDAAAIAAJ&dq=ballou+history+hopedale&printsec=frontcover&source=bl&ots=1Tjfuq8Vth&sig=N84e8RKmeKrDtXDzBCp29qnnH3c&hl=en&ei=VRKTSY6GOdeitgeVlfdVCw&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=1&ct=result) (at books.google.com/books?id=sXdDAAAIAAJ&dq=ballou+history+hopedale&printsec=frontcover&source=bl&ots=1Tjfuq8Vth&sig=N84e8RKmeKrDtXDzBCp29qnnH3c&hl=en&ei=VRKTSY6GOdeitgeVlfdVCw&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=1&ct=result) (Lowell, MA: Thompson and Hill — The Vox Populi Press, 1897)

Buescher, John B. *The Other Side of Salvation: Spiritualism and the Nineteenth-Century Religious Experience* (Boston: Skinner House, 2004)

Kirby, Georgiana Bruce. [Years of Experience: An Autobiographical Narrative](#) (Brooklyn, NY: AMS Press, Inc., 2003)

Sears, Clara Endicott. *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company); (Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1915)

Read an article on the [history of Brook Farm](#) in the Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography.

WORKSHOP 14: THE SEVEN SEAS — GLOBALIZATION

INTRODUCTION

The best religionists are broad instead of bigoted, and they are open and compassionate and kind. In a town and in the world they build bridges more than walls or fences or moats. — Dana McLean Greeley, first president of the UUA (1961-1969)

Unitarian Universalism has enjoyed contact and engagement with people from many religions and cultures through much of its history. This workshop presents representative stories of different ways people in our religious tradition have related to other religious traditions and cultures. Participants explore ways this engagement has enriched our movement through dialogue and cooperative action, and consider ways Unitarian Universalism may have enriched the cultures and traditions of others.

Activity 4, Women, Faith, and Service touches on issues of cross-cultural power imbalance. If you have more time, substitute the longer version (Alternate Activity 3) for a deeper exploration.

Before leading this workshop, review the Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters in the program Introduction. Make preparations to accommodate individuals who may be in the group.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Explore ways Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalists have been influenced and enriched by encounters with cultures and heritages outside North America and Western Europe
- Introduce past and present Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist faith communities located outside the United States
- Explore the dynamics of partnering with Unitarian Universalists across cultures.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about several Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist efforts to support service and mission outside the United States

- Learn about Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist faith communities located outside North America and Western Europe
- Identify ways partnerships between Unitarian Universalist congregations in North America and those in other parts of the world can be mutually empowering.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Khasi Hills Creation Story	25
Activity 2: 1893 World's Parliament of Religions	25
Activity 3: Unitarian Universalism around the World	25
Activity 4: Women, Faith, and Service	25
Faith in Action: Where in the World Are Unitarian Universalists?	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Institutional History and Support	25
Alternate Activity 2: Caroline Soule — Universalism's First Missionary	25
Alternate Activity 3: Women, Faith, and Service — Longer Version	45

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Consider what you have learned about the history of Unitarian Universalism thus far. Do you view Unitarian Universalism as a North American and/or European religion, its historical development primarily connected to the establishment and growth of the United States, Canada, and Western Europe? Do you think of Unitarian Universalism as a religion of, and for, the world? Perhaps you think of it as both.

You may wish to ask participants to engage in this same spiritual practice so that they, too, arrive at the workshop centered and ready to engage with the material and the group.

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Sign-in sheet and pen/pencil
- Name tags and markers
- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1, [Schedule Template](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Create and post a workshop agenda on newsprint. The Workshop-at-a-Glance section provides time estimates. Create a welcome table near the entrance. Set out name tags and markers, the sign-in sheet and pen/pencil, and copies of the schedule.
- Make copies of the Time Line of UU History handout (Workshop 1, Handout 2), if you need some. Place time line handouts on the welcome table.
- Optional: Post the Time Line of UU History display.

Description of Activity

Welcome everyone to the workshop as they enter. Ask them to sign in, make (or pick up) name tags, and pick up the schedule and time line handouts from the welcome table. Point out the posted agenda for this workshop.

Including All Participants

Write the agenda in large, clear lettering and post it where it will be easily visible to all participants. Provide name tags large enough and markers bold enough so names will be easily visible.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Optional: Decorative cloth

Preparation for Activity

- Set up a worship or centering table with the chalice and (optional) decorative cloth.
- Optional: Visit the [International Council of Unitarian Universalists \(ICUU\) website](#) (at icuu.net/resources/) and print out the chalice lighting words in their original Hungarian, as well

as the English, French, and German [translations of the chalice lighting](#). (at icuu.net/resources/chalice_archives/CL2007.pdf)

- Optional: Invite a participant in advance to act as chalice lighter or reader to make the workshop more participatory. If any participants are able to read the chalice lighting in one of the languages other than English, invite them to do so. Give volunteers a copy of the reading before the workshop.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice with these words by Transylvanian Unitarian Bishop Janos Erdo (1913-1996), published by the International Council of Unitarian Universalists (ICUU) in July 2007. These words are an English translation from the original Hungarian:

Every time we light a candle, we remember the past. Whoever forgets the past must live through it again. But those who remember the past find in it directions for the present and the future, and can revive tradition in all its richness. It is the duty of each generation to study history, so that in the light of the past it may see clearly what is its own special task. It is our duty too, on this special occasion.

Including All Participants

Remind volunteer readers to speak slowly and clearly so all can hear.

ACTIVITY 1: KHASI HILLS CREATION STORY (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Seven Tribes](#)" (included in this document)
- Drawing materials including paper markers, charcoal, and/or color pencils
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story "The Seven Tribes" and prepare to read or tell it to the group.
- Make sure you have table space where all participants can draw with a partner. Set out materials, making sure they are accessible to all participants.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - What does the creation story of the Khasi Hills tell us about the traditional

values and world view of the Khasi people?

- In what ways are these traditional values similar to or in harmony with Unitarian Universalist values?
- How are the two sets of values dissimilar?
- Optional: Download the questions and prepare them as a digital slide. Test the computer and projector.

Description of Activity

Invite participants to sit at tables. Introduce the story with these or similar words:

The culture of the Khasi Hills of India is rich with legends. There are legends that explain the presence of natural phenomena such as the spots on the moon and the elaborateness of peacock feathers. There are stories that explain all the varied relationships among the gods, people, animals, and the earth.

The first, and still extant, Unitarian church in India was founded in 1795 in Madras by Thirvengatam, a Hindu who, while travelling in England, was influenced by the Unitarian writings of Theophilus Lindsey and Joseph Priestley and was christened with the name William Roberts. The largest Unitarian group in India, however, includes the nearly 10,000 Unitarians who belong to the Khasi and Jaintia Hills congregations founded by Hajom Kissor Singh. In 1887, dismayed by the strict Calvinist Christianity of British missionaries, Singh founded his own church that welcomed those teachings of Jesus, but honored those teachings alongside the practices and teachings of the area's indigenous religion, and the teachings of Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism. Inspired by the work of Charles Dall, a Unitarian missionary in Calcutta, and the writings of William Ellery Channing, Singh named his church the Unitarian Church of North East India. Singh's Unitarianism rejected narrowness of interpretation and the doctrine of the Trinity while remaining strongly theistic. Singh's church drew wisdom from indigenous stories such as the creation story of the Seven Tribes as well as from Unitarian Christianity. In order to help his congregations thrive, Singh wrote a number of hymns, many still in use today, and a prayer book from which anyone could lead a service. By the time of his death in 1923, there were ten Unitarian congregations in North East India. Today there are more than three times that number.

Explain that you will share a creation story from the indigenous culture of the Khasi Hills. Invite participants to listen for spiritual values they hear reflected in the story.

Read or tell the story. When you are done, ask participants to consider the questions you have posted and then turn to a partner to share their responses. Allow five minutes for paired sharing.

Invite participants to remain in pairs and create a drawing together that illustrates the Khasi Hills creation story. Invite them to illustrate the values inherent in the story, particularly those values which are in harmony with Unitarian Universalist values. Invite participants to post their drawings when complete.

ACTIVITY 2: 1893 WORLD'S PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [The 1893 World's Parliament of Religions](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 1, [Time Line, 1893](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 2, [Voices from the Parliament](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 1, The 1893 World's Parliament of Religions, and familiarize yourself with its contents.
- Copy Handout 1, Time Line, 1893 and Handout 2, Voices from the Parliament.
- Choose several diverse "voices" from Handout 2, Voices from the Parliament and recruit volunteers to read those parts. Provide volunteers with their assignments ahead of time.
- Write on newsprint, and set aside:
 - Is it possible to mediate competing religious claims?
 - Do you see an evolutionary progression in religion over time?
 - How might adherents of one religion learn truths from another in ways that do not presume conversion?

- Do you see the identification of those things that religions hold in common as the first step toward a universal religion? Why?
- Optional: Download the questions and prepare them as a digital slide. Test the computer and projector.

Description of Activity

Distribute Handout 1, Time Line, 1893. Give participants a moment to review the major events of 1893. Invite any additions.

Present or read the contents of Leader Resource 1, The 1893 World's Parliament of Religions.

Then, distribute copies of Handout 2, Voices from the Parliament. Invite volunteers to read the words of women and men who presented papers and wrote about the Parliament. Invite participants to use Handout 1, the 1893 time line, to notice the events that shaped the experiences of those speaking.

Post the questions you have prepared and invite comments and discussion.

To conclude, invite the group to reflect on the discussion they have just had. Ask:

- Do you think your answers would be different if you were a Unitarian or Universalist living in 1893? Why?

ACTIVITY 3: UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM AROUND THE WORLD (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [Unitarian Universalism around the World](#) (included in this document)
- Wall map of the world
- Push pins or sticky notes

Preparation for Activity

- Display a world map where all participants will be able to see it and reach locations where they will put a push-pin or a sticky note. (Consider using an alternative to the traditional Mercator projection map such as the [Peters Projection](#) (at www.petersmap.com/) that shows relative land size without distortion or a [south-up](#) (at www.odtmaps.com/south-up-world-maps.48.0.0.1.htm) projection that places the North Pole at the bottom of the map.)

- Print out Leader Resource 2, Unitarian Universalism around the World. Cut along the lines so the story of each location is on a separate slip of paper. If you are not using push pins, tape each slip to a sticky note.
- Be sure you can locate on the map all the locations mentioned on the Leader Resource.
- Optional: Faith in Action, Where in the World Are Unitarian Universalists? asks you to display this world map, with the locations of Unitarian Universalism already marked, for the congregation to see. If you plan to do the Faith in Action, identify a bulletin board or other wall space for the map now. You may wish to gather participants and conduct this activity at that wall, rather than in the usual meeting space.

Description of Activity

Introduce the activity:

I am going to distribute information about Unitarian Universalism in a number of places outside of the United States, invite you to read the information aloud, and then locate the region on the world map.

Distribute the slips of paper from Leader Resource 2. Invite participants to read their slips aloud one at a time. After each slip has been read, invite the reader to attach the slip to the world map in its appropriate location. After all the slips have been read and posted on the map, invite participants to offer additional information about these or other Unitarian Universalist congregations or organizations with which they are familiar.

Including All Participants

If attaching slips to the wall map might be difficult for one or more participants, invite one person to attach all the slips.

ACTIVITY 4: WOMEN, FAITH, AND SERVICE (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 3, [Women, Faith, and Service](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- If you have time for a longer, deeper version of this activity, consider using Alternate Activity 3 instead.
- Print out Leader Resource 3, Women, Faith, and Service and prepare to present it.

- Prepare and set aside a sheet of newsprint with this quote:
I spent 34 years working among the Khasi people in India, but I was never a missionary! Let's get that straight right at the beginning. I went to India from my native England with the intent of identifying myself as completely as possible with the people of India and to become one with them in every way. I had no wish for them to think of me as in any way, through either Government or Missions, identified with the British in India, save by the accident of my birth which had made me British. — attributed to Margaret Barr
- Post a sheet of blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

Using Leader Resource 3, Women, Faith and Service, present the stories of Margaret Barr and the Blackmer Girl's Home of Tokyo.

Invite participants to brainstorm words that come to mind in response to the words "mission" or "missionary" and record responses on the blank sheet of newsprint. After the group has brainstormed a list, invite participants to identify which words have positive associations, which have negative connotations, and which are neutral.

Display the quote you have prepared and invite comments. Suggest that there is more than one way for people of different cultures and religions to be in relationship. Three models can be described by the terms *power over*, *power with*, and *empowering*. Write these terms on newsprint. Invite participants to react to these three phrases. Ask if anyone would like to add others. Then ask:

- Using these terms, how would you characterize the work of Margaret Barr? The Association of Universalist Women and the Blackmer Girl's Home?
- Thinking about the differences among the three types of relationships, what might happen with each model when the original supporters pull out—or are thrown out?

Point out that both of the stories have been reconstructed here through a combination of primary and secondary sources, not all of which are in agreement. Ask:

- How might our view of a particular effort be affected by its documentation?
- In what ways is history shaped—and reshaped—by its writers?

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Taking It Home
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook
- Optional: Faith in Action for this workshop and/or Spiritual Preparation for Workshop 15

Preparation for Activity

- Download and customize Taking It Home as a handout. You may wish to add the Faith in Action activity suggestion from this workshop and/or the Spiritual Preparation questions for the next workshop.

Description of Activity

Gather the group in a circle around the chalice. Distribute Taking It Home. Announce the date, time, and place of the next workshop and any other "housekeeping" information. Request or remind volunteers if you want participants to read material aloud or perform other roles at the next meeting.

Invite the group to read in unison the words of Keshab Chandra Sen, Reading 474 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, "Unto the Church Universal." Extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS?

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [Unitarian Universalism around the World](#) (included in this document)
- Wall map of the world
- Push pins or sticky notes
- Pen/pencil

Preparation for Activity

- Investigate and secure a space where the wall map may be mounted for several weeks or months.
- Write a paragraph describing the purpose of the map and inviting members of your congregation to participate by adding to it.

Description of Activity

Post, in an easily accessible location:

- World wall map
- Slips about international Unitarian Universalists (Leader Resource 2)
- The description you have written

Invite others to examine the map and the information about international Unitarian Universalists and to add their contributions. Set extra sticky notes and pencils/pens nearby.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

After the workshop, co-leaders should make a time to talk together to evaluate this workshop and plan future workshops. Use these questions to guide your shared reflection and planning:

- What parts of the workshop worked well and which did not? Why? Were the success, or lack of success, related to the topics, or to the types of activities?
- What would you change if you led this workshop again?
- How can you use this knowledge to make future workshops more effective?
- Is there anything left unfinished from the workshop that should still be addressed?
- What strengths did you each bring to the workshop?
- As co-leaders, when did you work well together?
- What might help you to be better leaders in future workshops?
- What preparation is needed for the next workshop? Who will handle these tasks? Who will lead which activities?

TAKING IT HOME

The best religionists are broad instead of bigoted, and they are open and compassionate and kind. In a town and in the world they build bridges more than walls or fences or moats.

—Dana McLean Greeley

Does your congregation already have a connection to one of the global Unitarian Universalist communities explored in this workshop? If so, find out more about the relationship and how you can become a part of it. Or, choose one of the Unitarian Universalist communities from Activity 3, or one of the international organizations from Alternate Activity 1, and investigate it. Is this an organization that you could individually support with your

time, talent, or treasure or encourage your congregation to support?

Read about then-UUA president William Sinkford's [2008 pilgrimage to Africa](#), visiting some of Unitarian Universalist communities there. You can find photos, videos, and written reflections from the pilgrimage group in a [blog from the pilgrimage](#).

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY AND SUPPORT (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 4, [International Organizations](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 4, International Organizations and cut along the lines so each organization's story is on a separate sheet of paper.
- Arrange for five participants to read the five stories. Give them their assignments ahead of time.
- Write on newsprint this quote from U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations and Unitarian, Adlai Stevenson to UUA President Dana McLean Greeley, April 1962, and the follow-up questions:
In this disastrous and shrinking world it is no longer possible—if it ever was—for local communities to be more secure than the surrounding world. Our ultimate security therefore lies in making the world more and more into a community... All of you have the opportunity to share in the answer, and thus help us build a peaceful world.
- What is our responsibility as an association to connect with Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalists around the world?
- What is our responsibility as an association to connect with other faith groups around the world?
- What is our local responsibility in reaching out to other faith groups?
- Optional: Prepare the quotation and the questions as one or two digital slides. Test the computer and projector.

Description of Activity

Explain that they will hear about some of the UUA-authorized Unitarian Universalist organizations that have supported and continue to support international cooperation. Have the five volunteers read the stories of the organizations aloud.

Then, ask participants if they have experience with any of these organizations or other UU organizations that do international work. Some are: the UUA's Office of Internal Resources, the Holdeen India Program, and the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation.

Read the displayed quote aloud. Invite participants to consider and discuss the questions.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: CAROLINE SOULE — UNIVERSALISM'S FIRST MISSIONARY (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Universalism's First Missionary](#) (included in this document) "
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to read or tell it to the group.
- Write on newsprint:
 - Who have been the "missionaries" in your life? Have there been people whose enthusiasm for Unitarian Universalism has called you into deeper relationship with your faith?
 - What challenges do you think they had to overcome in being able to share their faith with you?
 - Have you shared your faith with others? In what ways was it easy or challenging?
- Optional: Prepare the quotation and the questions as one or two digital slides. Test the computer and projector.

Description of Activity

Read the story "Universalism's First Missionary" aloud or present it in your own words.

Post the prepared questions. Explain to participants that missionary work was often a challenge for Caroline Soule. As we heard in her own words, she had to overcome a natural shyness in speaking to gatherings, and her poor health and rigorous schedule often taxed

her strength. But she was dedicated to, and energized by, her cause of bringing Universalism to a wider circle of people.

Ask participants to consider the questions. Invite them to share the stories of those who have been missionaries in their lives.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: WOMEN, FAITH, AND SERVICE — LONGER VERSION (45 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 3, [Women, Faith, and Service](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 3, Women, Faith, and Service and prepare to present it.
- Prepare a sheet of newsprint with this quote, and set it aside:

I spent 34 years working among the Khasi people in India, but I was never a missionary! Let's get that straight right at the beginning. I went to India from my native England with the intent of identifying myself as completely as possible with the people of India and to become one with them in every way. I had no wish for them to think of me as in any way, through either Government or Missions, identified with the British in India, save by the accident of my birth which had made me British. — attributed to Margaret Barr
- Prepare another sheet of newsprint with this role play assignment, and set it aside:
 - An American Unitarian Universalist youth is backpacking, independently seeing the world. The youth meets another Unitarian Universalist youth from another part of the world. They begin a conversation, comparing their two congregations. They discuss things each church needs, and resources each church can offer.
- Post a blank sheet of newsprint.
- Optional: Prepare the quotation and the role play assignment as two digital slides. Test computer and projector. Display the quotation.

Description of Activity

Use this activity in place of Activity 4, if you have time, to allow deeper reflection on the question of power in relationships between religions and cultures.

Using Leader Resource 3, Women, Faith and Service, present the stories of Margaret Barr and the Blackmer Girl's Home of Tokyo.

Invite participants to brainstorm words that come to mind in response to the words "mission" or "missionary" and record responses on the blank sheet of newsprint. After the group has brainstormed a list, invite participants to identify words which have positive associations, have negative connotations, or are neutral.

Display the quote you have prepared and invite comments. Suggest there is more than one way for people of different cultures and religions to be in relationship. Three models can be described by the terms *power over*, *power with*, and *empowering*. Write these terms on newsprint. Invite participants to react to these three terms. Ask if anyone would like to add others. Then ask:

- Using these terms, how would you characterize the work of Margaret Barr?
- How would you characterize the Association of Universalist Women's relationship with the Blackmer Girl's Home?
- Thinking about the differences among the three types of relationships, what might happen with each model when the original supporters were to pull out? What if they were thrown out?

Point out that both of the stories have been reconstructed here from a combination of primary and secondary sources, not all of which are in agreement. Ask:

- How might our view of a particular effort be affected by its documentation?
- In what ways is history shaped—and reshaped—by its writers?

Now, invite participants to form three groups. Post the role play scenario you have written on newsprint. Read it aloud.

Invite each small group to develop a role play based on the scenario. Invite one group to develop a conversation between the two youths that reflects "power over;" another, a conversation that represents "power with;" and the third, a conversation of "empowering."

Allow the groups 15 minutes to develop their role plays. Then invite them to re-gather and present their sketches to one another.

STORY: THE SEVEN TRIBES

A traditional story of the Khasi people, as relayed by Darihun Khriam, the first woman minister in the Khasi Hills.

Early in the history of the world, heaven and earth were connected by a great tree that grew on the crest of a high hill. Using this tree as a ladder, the sixteen families of heaven could move back and forth between earth and heaven, enjoying the bounty of each as they liked. The people lived in peace and prosperity for many years. But, eventually, they became discontented that the great tree was so large that it covered all the land with shade. This made it hard to grow crops, and they longed for the sunshine. Some say it was the urging of an evil spirit that led them to the plan of cutting down the tree. Perhaps it was just their own hubris deciding they no longer needed this connection to heaven, but the people set to cutting down the tree with axes and saws. Although they worked all day, they could not cut through the great girth of the tree so at nightfall they took their axes and their saws, and returned to their homes to rest.

In the morning when they returned to their work, they found no sign of the progress they had made the day before. The tree had healed completely! And so they set to work with greater urgency the second day, but again were unable to cut all the way through the trunk in the span of that day. And when they returned the next day to complete the task, again, the tree had healed leaving no sign of their work. This went on, day after day until, in their confusion and frustration, the people called a council to see what was to be done. At the council, a small bird gave them the solution to their problem. Each night, after they returned to their homes, the tiger would come and lick the wounds of the tree. He would lick and lick until he had erased all traces of the cuts and the tree was made whole. To cut down the tree they must stop the tiger.

Accordingly, at the end of the next day's work, the people left their axes and saws in the tree, with the cutting blades pointing outward. That night when the tiger came, the tools cut his tongue, and he was unable to heal the tree. In this way the people were able to complete the destruction of the tree. It is said that the branches that fell on the Bengali country flattened the land into plains, and the leaves created a rich mulch to make that land fertile. The thickest branches fell on the land of the Khasis creating great mountains and gorges so rugged that they exist to this day.

But, mostly, the result of felling the great tree was to sever the link between heaven and earth. Those who were on the earth could no longer visit heaven, and those who were in heaven could no longer visit the

earth. There were seven families on the earth that day, those who became the ancestors of the seven tribes of the Khasi Hills.

STORY: UNIVERSALISM'S FIRST MISSIONARY

Caroline Augusta White Soule had many "firsts" to her credit. She was the first president of the Universalist Women's Centenary Aid Association and the first president of its successor organization, the Women's Centenary Association. She was the first Universalist missionary and the first woman to be ordained in Europe.

Caroline Augusta White, born September 3, 1824 in Albany, New York took academic honors in her hometown on graduation from the Albany Female Academy; she won a gold medal for her essay, "The Goodness of God Not Fully Demonstrated Without the Act of Revelation." Following graduation, she took an unpaid position as principal of the young women's department of the Universalist Clinton Liberal Institute in Clinton, New York. There she met and married the Rev. Henry Soule, head of the young men's department.

The couple soon left Clinton. Henry was called to serve churches in New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Always suffering from ill health, Henry Soule died of smallpox in 1852 at the age of 37, leaving Caroline with five young children. To support her family, Soule turned to teaching, writing, and editing. To live more economically, she moved them from Connecticut to a log cabin in Iowa.

In 1863, with her children grown, Soule returned to New York to seek treatment for her failing eyesight. She remained in the east, and in 1869 became one of the founders of the Women's Centenary Aid Association (WCAA) and its first president, traveling extensively to raise funds for the centennial celebration of Universalism in the United States. When the celebration was accomplished, Universalist women who had established a voice and a presence in the denomination through their work voted to continue the organization permanently. In 1873, the Women's Centenary Association (WCA) was chartered, with Caroline Soule as its first president. Soule's 11-year presidency of the two successive organizations included duties such as fundraising, writing, preaching, lecturing, and spreading the word about Universalism. Although it was required by her position, public speaking was a challenge for her. She wrote of her struggles in a letter to her friend, the Rev. A. B. Grosh, "After our W.C.A. began its work, I was necessarily obliged to speak to our women; but my sufferings were intense always, and only my love for the cause carried me through."

One of the WCA's goals was to raise funds for foreign mission work, so when Soule vacationed in Scotland in

1875 to restore her health it was natural that she should take an interest in the Universalist congregations that had existed in that country since the early 1700s. While in Scotland, Soule preached, helped to found the Scottish Universalist Convention, and dedicated a new church building in Larbert—a moment of joyful celebration for a working class congregation that had shoveled piles of snow from the interior of the former building in winter and moved from pew to pew to avoid raindrops in summer.

After returning to the United States, Soule became minister of the Universalist church in Elizabeth, New Jersey in 1876. Her time in Elizabeth was short, however, as the WCA elected to send her as their first missionary to Scotland the following year. Arriving in 1878, Soule spent her first year traveling throughout the country, preaching in Dumfriesline, Larbert, Braidwood, Lochee, Dundee, and Glasgow. Soule considered herself a conservative "Bible Universalist," and was pleased to find little theological difference between the Universalists and the Scottish Unitarians who, unlike their American contemporaries, held to a belief in revealed religion. After touring the isolated and largely poverty-stricken Universalist congregations of Scotland, Soule concluded that Universalism was spreading satisfactorily, but that a lack of organization was hampering its growth. She chose Glasgow as the new center of Scottish Universalism and helped organize St. Paul's Universalist Church of the informal group of Universalists that had been gathered in the city since the early 1870s. Some of Soule's worship innovations, such as hymn singing and Christmas celebrations for children, were seen as highly unorthodox and reeking of "popish festival," but when her missionary tour was done, the congregation of St. Paul's petitioned to have her stay another year.

Soule returned to the United States to serve the congregation of Hightstown, New Jersey for four years, then returned to Glasgow and St. Paul's in 1886, staying until her retirement six years later. In 1894 Soule wrote of her career of firsts, "I was always tired, for there was never a chance to rest... but fatigue in the cause of Universalism is infinitely better than inaction." Caroline Augusta Soule died in her adopted homeland of Scotland in December of 1903.

HANDOUT 1: TIME LINE, 1893

The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition took place in the midst of a time of radical cultural and societal change in the United States. While the overall mood of the nation was mixed as the country felt the real effects of intensified urbanism, industrial capitalism, and the higher profile of science and technology, the message of the Exposition was one of optimism and faith in progress. Here are some of the events that occurred that year:

January 6 — The Great Northern Railway connected Seattle with the East Coast.

January 17 — The U.S. Marines landed in Hawaii, resulting in the overthrow of the government of Queen Liliuokalani of Hawaii.

February 1 — Thomas A. Edison finished construction of the first motion picture studio in West Orange, New Jersey.

February 23 — Rudolf Diesel received a patent for the diesel engine.

March 4 — U.S. President Benjamin Harrison was succeeded by Stephen Grover Cleveland.

April 6 — The Mormon Temple in Salt Lake City, Utah was dedicated.

May 1 — The 1893 World's Fair, also known as the World's Columbian Exposition, opened to the public in Chicago, Illinois.

May 5 — A crash on the New York Stock Exchange, later known as the Panic of 1893, started an economic depression.

June 7 — Gandhi committed his first act of civil disobedience in India.

June 21 — The first Ferris Wheel premiered at Chicago's Columbian Exposition.

June 27 — Stocks crashed on New York stock exchange.

July 6 — The small town of Pomeroy, Iowa was nearly destroyed by a tornado; 71 people were killed and 200 injured.

July 12 — Frederick Jackson Turner gave a lecture titled "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" before the American Historical Association in Chicago.

July 22 — Katharine Lee Bates wrote "America the Beautiful" in Colorado.

August 27 — The Sea Islands Hurricane hit Savannah, Charleston, and the Sea Islands, killing 1,000-2,000.

September 11 — The World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago opened its first meeting. The event lasted until September 27. A standing ovation was given to Hindu Swami Vivekananda after the salutation for his address, "Sisters and Brothers of America... "

September 19 — New Zealand became the first country in the world to grant women the right to vote.

September 21 — Brothers Charles and Frank Duryea drove the first gasoline-powered motorcar in America on public roads in Springfield, Massachusetts.

September 23 — The Baha'i Faith was first publicly mentioned in the United States at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago.

October 1 — The third worst hurricane in United States history killed 1,800 in Mississippi.

October 28 — Carter Harrison, mayor of Chicago, was shot and killed by an assassin.

October 30 — The 1893 World's Fair, also known as the World's Columbian Exposition, closed.

November 7 — Colorado women were granted the right to vote.

December 20 — Georgia approved the first state anti-lynching statute.

HANDOUT 2: VOICES FROM THE PARLIAMENT

Though their numbers were modest compared to other denominations, the Unitarians and the Universalists were each well represented at the Parliament. Unitarian minister Jenkin Lloyd Jones was the Executive Secretary to the General Committee responsible for organizing the Parliament, and Augusta Jane Chapin, the second woman ordained to the Universalist ministry, also served on the Committee. Men and women of both faiths presented papers on a wide range of topics. As part of the Parliament, both the Unitarians and the Universalists also held denominational meetings attended by laypeople and clergy from around the country.

Here are some voices of Unitarian and Universalist women and men heard at the Parliament or soon after.

Augusta Jane Chapin (1836-1905), spoke at both the opening and closing ceremonies. This is from her presentation on Opening Day:

Welcome. I am strangely moved as I stand upon this platform and attempt to realize what it means that you all are here from so many lands representing so many and widely different phases of religious thought and life and what it means that I am here in the midst of all this unique assemblage to represent womanhood and woman's part of it all... The World's first Parliament of Religions could not have been called sooner and have gathered the religionists of all these lands together. We had to wait for the hour to strike, until the steamship, the railway and the telegraph had brought men together, leveled their walls of separation and made them acquainted with each other; until scholars had broken the way through the pathless wilderness of ignorance, superstition and falsehood and compelled them to respect each other's honesty, devotion and intelligence. A hundred years ago the world was not ready for this parliament. Fifty years ago it could not have been convened, and had it been called but a single generation ago, one-half of the religious world could not have been directly represented... Few indeed, were they a quarter of a century ago who talked about the Divine Fatherhood and Human Brotherhood, and fewer still were they who realized the practical religious power of these conceptions.

Fannie Barrier Williams (1855-1944), an African American Unitarian and social reform activist, was a member of All Souls Church (Unitarian) in Chicago. She

spoke at the World's Parliament of Religions on "The Condition of the American Negro:"

In nothing do the American people so contradict the spirit of their institutions, the high sentiments of their civilization, and the maxims of their religion as they do in denying to our men and women the full rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The colored people have appealed to every source of power and authority for reliefs, but in vain... It is a monstrous thing that nearly one-half of the so-called evangelical churches of this country repudiate and haughtily deny fellowship to every Christian lady and gentleman happening to be of African descent... The golden rule of fellowship taught in the Christian Bible becomes in practice the iron rule of race hatred... The hope of the negro and other dark races in America depends upon how far the white Christians can assimilate their own religion.

In addition to his role in organizing the Parliament, Jenkin Lloyd Jones (1843-1914), was part of an effort to continue the work begun by the Parliament the following year at the First American Congress of Liberal Religious Societies. Jones subscribed to the belief that the key to religious unity was not theology, but the ethical and spiritual impulses found in all peoples:

Believing as we do that the Parliament was more than... a spiritual sensation, we must take to heart the prophecy we find in it. We think it pointed to the possibility to unite men of diverse races and faiths in an actual fellowship, in working organizations, potent, inspiring, in short the Parliament of Religions predicted a movement that will undertake a new church in the world... the glimmering lights of the future guide us. We go to build the church of the twentieth century — open temples of reason, holy shrines of helpfulness, confessionals where the soul will not be afraid to confess its ignorance.

Julia Ward Howe (1819-1910), the Unitarian author of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," writer, reformer, and peace advocate, addressed the Parliament in a talk titled "What Is Religion?"

Now, it seems to me very important that from this parliament should go forth a fundamental agreement as to what is religion and as to what is not religion. I need not stand here to repeat any definition of what religion is. I think you will all say that it is aspiration, the pursuit of the divine in the human; the sacrifice of everything to duty for the sake of God and of humanity and of our own individual dignity. What is it that

passes for religion? In some countries magic passes for religion, and that is one thing I wish, in view particularly of the ethnic faiths, could be made very prominent — that religion is not magic...

I think nothing is religion which puts one individual absolutely above others, and surely nothing is religion which puts one sex above another. Religion is primarily our relation to the Supreme—to God himself. It is for Him to judge; it is for Him to say where we belong—who is highest and who is not; of that we know nothing... Any religion which sacrifices women to the brutality of men is no religion.

From this parliament let some valorous, new, strong, and courageous influence go forth, and let us have here an agreement of all faiths for one good end, for one good thing — really for the glory of God, really for the salvation of humanity from all that is low and animal and unworthy and undivine.

Joseph Henry Allen (1820-1898), a former editor of the *Unitarian Review*, wrote commentary about the Parliament's effect in his 1895 article "The Alleged Sympathy of Religions:"

It is quite possible, no doubt, by the powerful solvent of metaphysics, to reduce the intellectual elements of these warring faiths into some colorless compromise which we might call a 'universal' or 'absolute' religion... But history tells us much of the conflicts of religions, little of their sympathy... The great success of our Parliament is not to be had by merging the great faiths of humanity in what at best would only be a flavorless neutral compound; but rather in showing how they may best flourish, independently, side by side.

John White Chadwick (1840-1904), a Unitarian minister, reflected on the Parliament in his article "Universal Religion," published in 1894:

We have been far afield in quest of a universal religion, and we have come back with empty hands... Would Christianity be better for the Mohammedan, the Brahman, the Buddhist than the religions to which they adhere?... Let their absolute values be what they may, relatively, to the peoples who acknowledge them and believe in them, they are doubtless the best religions possible because they have come into existence in answer to their special needs.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: THE 1893 WORLD'S PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

The World's Columbian Exposition, a spectacular and exuberant world's fair, was held in Chicago on the shores of Lake Michigan in 1893 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in North America. The architecture alone, Daniel Burnham's "White City," was unlike any other temporary construction, its grandiose neoclassical architecture arrayed amidst lagoons, fountains, monumental statuary and acres of buildings. As a part of the Exposition, which drew thousands of visitors in the single season it was open, several "Congresses" were held on specific topics and issues. Perhaps the most impressive of these meetings was the World's Parliament of Religions, held for 17 days in September, 1893. No event of its kind, bringing together thousands of representatives of the great historic religions of the world, had ever been attempted. So central was religion to the Exposition that these words were featured on the grand Peristyle, at the heart of the complex:

Toleration In Religion Is The Best Fruit Of The
Last Four Centuries.

Planning for the Parliament began three years before the actual event. A 16-person General Committee was charged with settling on a mission and program, inviting participants, and hosting the event. Unitarian minister Jenkin Lloyd Jones served as the Committee's Executive Secretary.

As a percentage, Christian Protestants dominated the Parliament, both as speakers and attendees. Yet there was, from the beginning, an intentional effort to include representation from the world's major religions: Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Shintoism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Jainism. (There was no inclusion of indigenous religions, as these were considered "primitive," and represented at the Exposition, if at all, in the anthropological displays. Neither was the newest of American religions, Mormonism, represented.)

From the beginning, people who participated in or attended the Parliament had different, and sometimes opposing, purposes and expectations. Some, especially those interested in the field of comparative religions, hoped that one result would be an increased interest in the study of religions. Others aimed to demonstrate the supremacy of one (their) religion above another, or to clarify the public's misunderstandings of (their) religion. The Archbishop of Canterbury, who did not participate in the Parliament, wrote to the committee that his

disapproval rested on "the fact that the Christian religion is the one religion. I do not understand how that religion can be regarded as a member of a Parliament of Religions without assuming the equality of the other intended members and the parity of their position and claims."

The General Committee, which included representation from different sects and faiths, tried to lay a foundation that promoted an environment of openness and possibility, but there were no existing models of interfaith conversation or cooperation to guide them. Here are a few of the objectives the committee stated in 1891:

- To show men, in the most impressive way, what and how many important truths the various religions hold in common.
- To promote and deepen the spirit of human brotherhood among religious men of diverse faiths, through friendly conference and mutual understanding, while not seeking to foster the temper of indifferentism, and not striving to achieve any formal and outward unity.
- To set forth, by those most competent to speak, what are deemed the important distinctive truths held and taught by each Religion, and by the various branches of Christendom.
- To inquire what light each Religion has afforded, or may afford, to the other religions of the world.

A review of the 216 presentations made during the Parliament's 17 days and the subsequent commentary reveals great diversity. That participants from different faith traditions would interpret the Parliament in different ways was understandable, perhaps inescapable, given the tensions that attach to any multi-faith effort, even today: How are competing religious claims to truth mediated? Is there an evolutionary progression in religion (and is Christianity the pinnacle of that process)? Can the adherents of religions learn truths from one another in a way that does not presume conversion? Is the identification of those things that religions hold in common the first step towards a universal religion? The answers to these questions had profound implications for white, Protestant Americans in 1893, who were being challenged by ever-growing numbers of immigrants who practiced Catholicism, Judaism, and other faiths. They also had implications for the Protestant denominations' mission work overseas. These words from John Henry Barrows, the General Committee's chairperson, illustrate what must have sometimes seemed a chasm between the Parliament's objectives and its participants. He reflects on his understanding of the ultimate influence of the Parliament:

The Parliament has shown that Christianity is still the great quickener of humanity, that it is now educating those who do not accept its doctrines, that there is no teacher to be compared with Christ, and no Saviour excepting Christ ... The non-Christian world may give us valuable criticism and confirm spiritual truths and make excellent suggestion as to Christian improvement, but it has nothing to add to the Christian creed.

The sense of religious superiority reflected in Barrows' words was not shared by all at the Parliament. One of the most popular speakers, Swami Vivekananda, reflected that "every religion is only evolving a God out

of the material man; and the same God is the inspirer of all of them. Why then are there so many contradictions? The contradictions come from the same truth adapting itself to the different circumstances of different natures."

World's fairs serve at least two purposes. One, they hold a mirror to the present moment, showing the state of the "world," albeit often in idealized ways. But world's fairs also portend, if not help set, the future course of progress. The World's Parliament of Religions did indeed serve both purposes. It offered a panoramic view of the vast diversity of existing religions and their beliefs and practices. It also laid groundwork for an emerging ecumenical, and eventually pluralistic, religious America.

LEADER RESOURCE 2: UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM AROUND THE WORLD

Africa

In 2000, there were only a handful of Unitarian Universalist congregations in Africa. Now there are dozens. The first Unitarian Universalist churches were founded in South Africa, where four congregations were organized between 1867 and 1986, and in Nigeria. In Lagos, Nigeria, the First Unitarian Church of Nigeria was founded in 1994, joining the Unitarian Brotherhood Church (Ijo Isokan Gbogbo Eda), which was founded in 1917 when Bishop Adeniran Adedeji Isola's liberal theology led to a break with the Anglican Church of Nigeria. More recently congregations have been founded in Uganda, Burundi, Republic of the Congo, and Kenya, the country which has experienced the most remarkable growth in Unitarian Universalism.

Brahmo Samaj (BRAH-moe sah-MAZH)

In India, in 1821, Rammohun Roy, a Hindu of Brahmin caste, convinced William Adam, a Scottish Baptist missionary, of the truth of Unitarianism. Together they founded the Unitarian Committee and the Calcutta Unitarian Society. However, Roy struggled with being identified as Christian and hoped to create a progressive religious organization that could more fully integrate his native Hinduism. He founded the Brahmo Samaj (Society of God) in 1828 to accomplish this aim. Roy maintained ties to Unitarianism throughout his life, and following his death the Brahmo Samaj continued to interact with Unitarian groups in India, England and the United States.

Canada

Both Universalism and Unitarianism in Canada were, by and large, imports from the United States and Great Britain. The first Universalist preacher in Canada was Christopher Huntingdon who moved to Compton (in what is now Quebec) in 1804. The first congregation was organized in Stanstead, Quebec, in 1830. On the Unitarian side, the first preacher was David Hughes of England, and the first church was organized in Montreal in 1842. While the Universalists experienced little growth in Canada, Unitarianism spread westward in the late 19th century thanks to a large Icelandic immigrant population. (Although Unitarianism was never an established faith in Iceland, many Icelandic Unitarian congregations were started in Canada and the United States.) The Canadian Unitarian Council, created in 1961, was part of the Unitarian Universalist Association until 2001, when it became an autonomous organization, independent from the UUA.

The Czech Republic

In 1910, Norbert Capek, a Baptist minister, was introduced to leaders of the American Unitarian Association by Tomas Masaryk, future president of Czechoslovakia, who was himself married to an American Unitarian. Threatened for his outspoken liberal views, Capek moved to New York to serve a Baptist church in 1914, but by 1919 he had become a Unitarian. Returning to Czechoslovakia in 1921, Capek founded the Liberal Religious Fellowship (later the Religious Society of Czechoslovakian Unitarians) in Prague. The Prague congregation grew to 3,500 with outreach to eight other cities. In 1941 Capek was arrested for his opposition to the Nazi regime and put to death in Dachau. Although the churches faced oppression under Nazi and Communist regimes as well as internal discord, Unitarian congregations continue to thrive in the Czech Republic today.

England

Elements of universal salvation and antitrinitarian had appeared in the British Isles from the earliest days of the Radical Protestant Reformation. In the 18th century, Universalism was carried from England to America by George de Benneville (1741) and John Murray (1770).

In 1774 Unitarianism began its institutional life in England with the opening of Theophilus Lindsey's Essex Street Chapel in London. In 1806 the Unitarian Fund for Promoting Unitarianism by Means of Popular Preaching was organized, and by 1810 more than 20 Unitarian congregations were holding services in England. Ten times that number of congregations existed in 1825 when the British and Foreign Unitarian Association was organized (by coincidence on the same day, May

25, the American Unitarian Association was founded). John Biddle, Joseph Priestley, Thomas Belsham, and James Martineau are just a few of the names associated with the growth of British Unitarianism.

Hungary

Although the tradition of Unitarianism among Hungarian-speaking people stretches back to the 16th century, it occurred primarily in parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire that are not part of Hungary today. The first Unitarian church in Budapest was organized in 1873. In 1920, when the portions of Transylvania that gave rise to Unitarianism were ceded to Romania, the several churches in Hungary organized as a separate group, but remained subordinate to the Romanian bishop until 1971 when Jozcef Ferencz became the first bishop of Hungary. Today there are about 2,000 Unitarians in ten or more congregations in Hungary.

India

In addition to the Brahmo Samaj and Khasi Hills movements, Unitarian congregations were started in Madras and Calcutta. The Madras (Chennai) Unitarian Church was founded in 1795 by William Roberts (born Thiruvengkam Vellala). Roberts came to know the work of Joseph Priestley, Theophilus Lindsey, and Thomas Belsham after he was brought to England as a servant by the East India Company. Returning to Madras, Roberts brought his Unitarian beliefs and founded a congregation which continues to this day. William Adam, converted to Unitarianism by Brahmo Samaj founder Rammohun Roy, served as a Unitarian missionary in Calcutta from 1821 until 1838 and was followed by Americans Charles Brooks in 1854 and Charles Dall in 1855. Dall's mission of 31 years was the longest continuous Unitarian mission in India.

Jamaica

Amidst controversy, Egbert Ethelred Brown founded the Unitarian Lay Center in Montego Bay, Jamaica, in the early part of the 20th century. After he was ordained in 1912 at Meadville Theological School with backing from the Montego Bay community, Brown served as a missionary of both the American and British Unitarian Associations. Within a few years, funding for his work was discontinued and the AUA transferred Brown to Kingston, where he had to start over. Support for the mission was always tenuous, and in 1917 funding for the Kingston mission was withdrawn. Despite unimaginable hardship and denominational resistance, Brown moved to the United States where he founded and led the Harlem Unitarian Church.

Japan

Both the American Unitarian Association and Universalist Church of America had missions in Japan by the end of the 19th century. Arthur Max Knapp represented the Unitarians beginning in 1888, and George Perin began the Universalist mission in 1890. Both operations published religious literature, founded churches, and began schools for the ministry. The Universalist mission also included kindergartens and schools. Although the Unitarian mission was effectively ended by financial troubles in 1920, the American Universalist mission continued until Americans were forced to leave at the beginning of the Second World War. During the war, native-born ministers continued the work. John Shidara founded Kamagame Universalist in Nagano after the Tokyo church was destroyed. After the war, Shinchiro Imaoka founded the Tokyo Unitarian Church. Both churches, as well as Tokyo's Koishikawa Universalist Center, remain in operation today.

Khasi Hills

The largest Unitarian group in India is the nearly 10,000 Unitarians of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills congregations founded by Hajom Kissor Singh. In 1887, dismayed by the strict Calvinist Christianity of British missionaries, Singh founded his own church that welcomed the teachings of Jesus, but held them alongside the native religion of the area, as well as the teachings of Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism. By the time of his death in 1923, there were 10 Unitarian congregations in North East India. Today there are more than three times that number.

Philippines

Although the turn of the 20th century saw a strong unitarian influence in the Philippine Independent Church (including then Civil Governor of the Philippines and Unitarian William Howard Taft), the influence was never converted into a formal movement, and the church eventually became affiliated with the Episcopal Church. Rev. Toribio Quimada brought a more lasting Universalism to the Philippines in the 1950s. Excommunicated from his former church for using materials from the Universalist Service Committee, Quimada founded the Universalist Church of the Philippines in 1954. The name was changed to Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines when the church formally joined the UUA in 1988. Tragically, Quimada was murdered that same year for his social activism among poor farmers. The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines continues today with approximately 2,000 members.

Poland

Antitrinitarian thought had been espoused in Poland for nearly a decade before the Minor Reformed Church (often called the Polish Brethren) was formally constituted in 1565. Beginning with the arrival of Faustus Socinus in 1579, the town of Rakow became a major center for publishing and teaching Unitarianism. Socinus wrote widely, but his revision of a catechism, originally written in 1574 and published after his death as the Rakovian Catechism, was perhaps his most enduring legacy. Unitarians were forced from Poland by the turn of the 17th century and it was not until the early 20th century that Unitarian congregations began to reappear. The Second World War again interrupted the rise of Unitarianism in Poland, but the Unitarian Church in Poland was organized in the 1980s.

Scotland

Unitarian and Universalist thought dates back to at least the 17th century in Scotland. In 1755, a small group of congregations in the Scottish Borders region declared themselves Universalist, and St. Mark's Unitarian Church in Edinburgh traces its history back to 1776 (it avowed belief in universal salvation in 1792 and adopted the name Unitarian in 1813). Beginning in the mid-19th century, ties were forged between Scottish and American Universalists, giving rise to a 20-year joint venture mission between the Women's Centenary Association (WCA) and the General Convention late in the same century. The Rev. Caroline Soule, first president of the WCA and the first American missionary for Universalism, served as minister of St. Paul's Universalist Church in Glasgow from 1879 until her retirement in 1892.

South Africa

The Free Protestant Church in Cape Town, South Africa was founded by Dawid Faure in 1867. After studying for ministry in the Dutch Reformed Church, Faure found that he needed a church unbound by traditional dogma and open to new insights. The church he organized became part of the Unitarian movement in 1921. The church was served by ministers from the United States or Great Britain until native South African Robert Steyn was called in 1979. The Unitarian Church of Cape Town was joined by congregations in Johannesburg (founded in 1956), Somerset West (1984), and Durban (1986).

Transylvania

In Transylvania, official recognition of the Unitarian faith dates back to 1571, with close to 500 congregations gathered by 1579. But official recognition was short lived, and, in the face of political and religious oppression, the number of Transylvanian churches had shrunk to 125 by 1800. In the mid-19th century, there was a resurgence in Unitarianism and the churches grew stronger, partly due to the fact that they were no longer illegal and partly due to increased contact with Unitarian congregations abroad. After World War I, the American Unitarian Association increased its support of churches in Transylvania and Hungary and introduced a sister church program. Contact between American Unitarians and those in Transylvania continued, at a reduced level, throughout Nazi occupation and Communist rule. Since 1992, the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council (UUPCC) has strengthened ties between congregations in North America and those in Eastern Europe, the Philippines, and India.

LEADER RESOURCE 3: WOMEN, FAITH, AND SERVICE

Unitarian and Universalist women have a history of creating important organizations of their own. Some of these organizations came to play a role in supporting the work of Unitarians and Universalists in places beyond their own country's borders.

In 1869, the Women's Centenary Aid Association was founded by American Universalist women to help raise funds to support denominational efforts at the hundredth anniversary celebration of Universalism in the U.S. Through the years, the organization changed its name and funding priorities several times. Some of its projects included missionary work in Japan and the British Isles; "supporting schools for African American children in the American South;" providing financial support for floundering parishes, ministerial students, disabled ministers, and ministers' widows and orphans; and publishing and distributing denominational literature.

American Unitarian women founded The Women's Auxiliary Conference in 1880. It, too, changed its name and its focus through the years. It supported leadership training and religious education, and offering financial support to congregations.

In 1908, British Unitarian women founded the British League of Unitarian and Other Liberal Christian Women (also known as the Women's League), and initially focused their efforts on publications and correspondence.

At the end of the 19th century, the Women's Centenary Association, descendant of the Women's Centenary Aid Association, became active in missionary work in Japan. Its primary project was the Blackmer Girl's Home in Tokyo. The project's history was recounted by the Rev. G. F. Keirn, Superintendent of Nippon Dojin Kirisuto Kyokai (nee-PONE doe-JIN kee-DEE-stoe kee-oh-KAI), in "Twenty-Five Years of the Universalist Japan Mission, 1890-1915:"

At a meeting held Feb. 17, 1896, in Miss Osborn's residence No. 4 Daimachi, Koishikawa [dah-ee-MAH-chee koe-EE-shee-kah-wah], Tokyo, Miss Osborn presented a proposition to establish a girl's home. The proposition was approved, and it was voted that she might use the surplus of mission funds, about forty yen per month, for this purpose. She also reported that there were three girls now ready to enter and it was confidently expected that more would apply soon. Though one of the three girls had for some time been living with Miss Osborn, this

was the first official beginning of what is now known as The 'Blackmer Universalist Girl's Home.' When Miss Osborn was on her next furlough in America, she saw Mr. Lucian Blackmer, of St. Louis Mo, who then was, and continued to the end of his life to be, an ardent supporter of the Mission. On hearing from her the needs of the Home, he was moved to give money sufficient to buy land and erect a building for its use. In recognition of this generous gift the Home bears his name... Though English and music are taught, this is not a school, neither is it a rescue home as some have erroneously supposed. It is simply a Christian home where girls may live under its helpful influence while attending school. It is estimated that at least one hundred and ten girls have had residence of different duration in the Home since its founding.

There was a Sunday School and kindergarten connected to the Blackmer Home, with the resident girls apparently serving as teachers, or teachers-in-training.

Interestingly, several more modern sources mention the Blackmer project, and though they all agree on the Universalist women's support for the project, and that the project served girls, they vary in some key details. One account reports that its "mission was the rescue of Japanese girls whose families would otherwise sell them into domestic slavery or to brothels (not to be confused with girls who trained to be Geisha). Rescued girls in the Blackmer School were educated and trained to become good Japanese wives; the school helped arrange marriages for older students." Another account elaborates on the source of funding: "By 1913, the women were entirely supporting the work at Blackmer, releasing the General Convention's money for other aspects of the mission project." Yet another source reports that Blackmer House was "where orphans and the poor could be trained in English, homemaking, and kindergarten teaching skills."

The ultimate demise of the Blackmer Girl's Home is also reported in different ways. It is clear that the Home was destroyed in the World War II bombing of Tokyo. But some accounts report that, before that fateful end, the Americans who ran the churches and missions had been ousted by the war, leaving a very few Japanese trained ministers to keep the project going as best they could. Another account relates that, in 1942, "salaries to several Universalist women from the United States who were employed at the Blackmer School had been discontinued, since they had not been heard from since December 1941... " Later accounts indicate that "the

women survived the war in internment camps but that one of them had gone over to the Catholics."

Though accounts clearly disagree, it seems clear that the Universalist women's organization was involved, from beginning to end, in a project that served girls in a country that most of its members would never visit. It is curious that time has erased so many details, and that no one can completely agree on either the purpose or the population served.

Another example of a women-to-women project is the work of Margaret Barr. Barr was born in 1899 in Yorkshire, England. Her family was Methodist, but when Barr attended college in Cambridge, she discovered Unitarianism. After qualifying as a teacher, Barr studied for the ministry at Manchester College, Oxford. While serving a Unitarian church in Rotherham, Barr attended a British General Assembly and heard about the work of Hajom Kissor Singh and the Unitarians of Khasi Hills, India. Already drawn to Gandhi's work, Barr sought a ministerial appointment to India. She was denied, however, as the General Assembly was unwilling to send a single woman to work in such a remote location.

Undaunted, Barr secured a teaching position in Calcutta, and from there, worked her way to the Khasi Hills in 1936. The British General Assembly eventually granted her a one-year exploratory commission for her work, and the (British) Women's League contributed funding, an effort they would sustain for nearly 30 years. From Barr's base in Shillong, she assisted local Unitarian communities in opening schools and orphanages. After ten years, convinced that those institutions were sufficiently established, she moved to remote Kharang and established a rural center with a residential school. At the same time, she maintained her position as Superintendent for the Unitarian Union of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills.

Barr resisted any label that implied that she was a "missionary." Instead, she considered herself a bridge-builder between religions and peoples. In 1963, she was awarded the UUA's Award for Distinguished Service. She died as she lived, at work in her adopted homeland of India, in 1973.

LEADER RESOURCE 4: INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF)

Following the success of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions, there was interest in forming an organization that could continue the work of bringing together different religious groups in dialogue and cooperation. In 1900, the International Council of Unitarian and other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers was founded on May 25th, the 75th anniversary of the American Unitarian Association.

The name was changed in 1930 to the International Association for Liberal Christianity and Religious Freedom, and again in 1969 to the current name, the International Association for Religious Freedom. The name changes reflect the evolution of the organization. Initially dominated by North American Unitarians, the organization grew to have greater representation from around the globe and from other liberal Christian groups. The most recent name change was prompted by the membership of the Risscho Kosei-Kai, a liberal Buddhist group. The IARF now welcomes representation from member groups including Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Jews, Humanists, Shintoists, Zoroastrians, and Christians.

The IARF continues its original mission of promoting dialog and understanding through international congresses. It also sponsors community development projects and maintains representation at the United Nations.

International Association of Liberal Religious Women (IALRW)

Although women were not excluded from the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF), their role was limited in the early decades, and women came together to found the International Union of Liberal Christian Women. The organization traces its history to its first meeting in Berlin in 1910 and was formally chartered in 1913. In recognition of a widening scope and membership, the organization changed its name in 1975 to the International Association of Liberal Religious Women. The IALRW links women around the world to promote friendship, education, networking, and financial support for women and children. IALRW is a member organization of the IARF.

Partner Church Council (PCC)

As the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) grew in size and scope, its role of connecting Unitarians around the world diminished. In the absence of an existing international organization, several new groups arose to meet specific needs, the Partner Church Council and International Council of Unitarians and Universalists among them.

Following World War I, when Transylvania was transferred by treaty from Hungary to Romania, the Unitarian churches came under harsh oppression. Many Unitarians left Transylvania for Budapest or other destinations. In response, relief efforts were begun by American Unitarians which included a "sister church" program. Under this program, American churches sent 100 dollars per year to their "sister" congregation in Transylvania, and scholarships for training ministers were established by Meadville Lombard and Starr King theological schools. By World War II these connections had largely faded.

Through the efforts of several leaders including Transylvanian-born Judit Gellerd, Natalie Gulbrandson (then UUA Moderator and a former IARF President), and others, a Partner Church Program was formed in the early 1990s. When funding was cut during UUA budget tightening, Leon Hopper, Judit Geller, and Richard Boeke moved to form the independent Partner Church Council.

The PCC, founded in 1993, now supports partnerships between North American congregations and churches in Transylvania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, the Khasi Hills of India, the Philippines, and Poland.

International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU)

The ICUU was another of the organizations that grew in response to the need for international connection and cooperation among Unitarians and Universalists. The idea was first proposed to the British General Assembly in 1987 by Rev. David Usher. At the time, there were tensions between those who thought that international groups should join the UUA and those who thought that the UUA should join international groups, and it would take eight years of talks and

planning for Usher's proposed organization to be realized. In 1995, in Essex, Massachusetts, representatives from fourteen countries met to found the ICUU.

Every other year, ICUU delegates meet to transact the business of the Council and forge closer ties for mutual support and the growth of the faith. Past programs have included leadership schools, youth conferences and educational symposia.

Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office (UU-UNO)

Unitarians and Universalists have been involved with the United Nations since its founding in 1945, and with its precursor, the League of Nations. Both denominations passed resolutions in support of the United Nations in the 1950s and upon merger, the UUA created an advisory council on the UN.

At the suggestion of United States Ambassador to the UN, Unitarian Adlai Stevenson, Unitarian Universalist congregations began in 1962 to appoint envoys to the UU United Nations Office. By 1965, more than 300 envoys had been identified. Today, the UU-UNO represents 138 congregations and 1,855 members through 496 Local Envoys and 25 District Envoys.

FIND OUT MORE

Learn more about the history of Unitarian Universalism outside of the United States and explore partnerships and relationships of our own time:

Hewitt, Phillip. *Unitarians in Canada* (Ontario, Canada: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1978)

[International Association for Religious Freedom website](#)

[International Association of Liberal Religious Women website](#)

[International Council of Unitarians and Universalists website](#)

Lavan, Spencer. *Unitarians and India*. (Boston: Skinner House, 1977)

[Rev. William G. Sinkford's 2008 Pilgrimage to Africa](#)

Seager, Richard Hughes. *The World's Parliament of Religions*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995.

[Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council website](#)

[Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office website](#)

WORKSHOP 15: THE WATER IS WIDE — MULTICULTURALISM

INTRODUCTION

On every step of our journey, each of us carries the unique perspectives of our age, gender, color, ethnic heritage, language, spiritual belief, sexual orientation, physical, mental and emotional nature, and economic circumstance. We can choose to see these differences as divisions, or to view cultural diversity as a gift to be cherished and nurtured. Our community is not a dull fabric of a single colored thread, but a tapestry of vibrant colors and rich textures, woven into a vital, ever-changing design. For our world to survive in this time of intense and quickening change, we need the vision and insight of each person, the strength and wisdom of each culture. — jona olsson, contemporary educator and activist

Although the term "multicultural" is fairly new, the challenge and opportunity to embrace those with different experiences, perspectives, and ways of being in the world are not. As Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalists, we have at times in our history followed societal norms in our willingness or reluctance to welcome diversity. At other times, we have confronted and refuted the accepted ways—sometimes our own accepted ways—in order to embrace diversity and invite it to transform us. This workshop explores stories of multicultural encounter from our tradition; some are inspiring, and some ask us to examine past actions with candor and compassion.

Before leading this workshop, review Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters in the program Introduction and make preparations to accommodate anyone who may be in the group.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Explore how Unitarians, Universalists and Unitarian Universalists have historically viewed cultural differences, including the unique identities of individuals and groups
- Invite participants to reflect on their own experiences of inclusion and exclusion in Unitarian Universalist settings

- By examples from our history, both exemplary and cautionary, point the way toward building the multicultural, welcoming congregations and Association that manifest our highest values, expectations, and capabilities.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Define "culture"
- Consider how their personal cultural identities and the cultural identities of Unitarian Universalism manifest and interact in our institutions and practices
- Learn about times in our history when Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalists faced the promise and challenge of welcoming diversity into our congregations and movement engaged with differences in culture, identity, perspective, or experience
- Consider ways they do, or can, share their own cultures with others.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	10
Activity 1: What Is Culture? What Is Hospitality?	20
Activity 2: The Utes and the Unitarians	20
Activity 3: The Empowerment Controversy	35
Activity 4: Our Unitarian Universalist Culture	20
Faith in Action: Generational Diversity	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Claiming Our Identities	30
Alternate Activity 2: Joseph Tuckerman — Father of American Social Work	30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Call to mind the first time you came to a Unitarian Universalist congregation, or the first time you visited a

congregation other than the one with which you were most familiar.

- What was the experience like?
- Can you identify some of the things you encountered that seemed "like you?"
- What aspects of your visit made you feel you were "different?"
- In what ways did you feel included? Excluded?

You may wish to ask participants to engage in this same spiritual practice so that they, too, arrive at the workshop centered and ready to engage with the material and the group.

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Sign-in sheet and pen/pencil
- Name tags and markers
- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1, [Schedule Template](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Create and post a workshop agenda on newsprint. The Workshop-at-a-Glance section provides time estimates. Create a welcome table near the entrance. Set out name tags and markers, the sign-in sheet and pen/pencil, and copies of the schedule.
- Make copies of the Time Line of UU History handout (Workshop 1, Handout 2), if you need some. Place time line handouts on the welcome table.
- Optional: Post the Time Line of UU History display.

Description of Activity

Welcome everyone to the workshop as they enter. Ask them to sign in, make (or pick up) name tags, and pick up the schedule and time line handouts from the welcome table. Point out the posted agenda for this workshop.

Including All Participants

Write the agenda in large, clear lettering and post it where it will be easily visible to all participants. Provide name tags large enough and markers bold enough so names will be easily visible.

OPENING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, for all participants
- Optional: Decorative cloth
- Optional: Keyboard or piano

Preparation for Activity

- Set up a worship or centering table with the chalice and (optional) decorative cloth.
- Prepare to lead the hymn using the tune you have chosen.
- Distribute copies of the hymnbook.
- Optional: Arrange for musical accompaniment or a song leader.

Description of Activity

Light the chalice and invite participants to sing Hymn 382 "De todos bajo el gran sol" in *Singing the Living Tradition* using whichever of the suggested tunes (371, 372, or 373) is familiar. If some participants are unfamiliar with Spanish, invite a Spanish speaker to read each line and invite participants to repeat it. If no Spanish speakers are present, use the following pronunciation guide. When you have read each line for pronunciation, lead the group to sing the hymn together. A rough English translation of the words can be found in Hymn 381.

After the hymn, invite participants to share any thoughts or feelings they have about singing together in Spanish.

Pronunciation

De todos bajo el gran sol / Day TOE-dose BAH-hoe el grahn sole

Surja esperanza, fe, amor / SOOR-hah es-per-AHN-sa, fay, ah-MORE

Verdad, y belleza cantando / Ver-DAHD, ee bay-YAY-sa cahn-TAHN-doe

De cada tierra, cada voz. / Day CAH-dah tee-AY-rah, CAH-dah vose.

ACTIVITY 1: WHAT IS CULTURE? WHAT IS HOSPITALITY? (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 1, [Culture and Hospitality](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Write the quote and poem from Leader Resource 1, Culture and Hospitality on newsprint.
- Optional: Copy Leader Resource 1, Culture and Hospitality for all participants.

Description of Activity

Say, in these or similar words:

One of the most common ways we experience both hospitality and culture is through food. Specific foods, the ways they are prepared and consumed, and who is invited to share meals together can all demonstrate histories and cultural traditions, sometimes centuries old. In families, we can offer welcome and acceptance with food, such as when a new relative at a shared meal is deeply touched by the inclusion of food representing their cultural background. Other food experiences can highlight painful differences, such as when a family member adopts beliefs that preclude eating foods once enjoyed together with the family. Anyone who has participated in a meal that involves multiple faiths or cultures will have encountered this most basic challenge: Can we all eat together? Shared meals invite us to become aware of one another's holy days and holidays, as well as the theologies and spiritual practices that restrict consuming specific foods. We also must consider how to accommodate others' needs while at the same time holding on to our own values and beliefs.

Invite participants to think of a meal they attended which highlighted differences in cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs, or other values among those gathered. Offer examples: a multi-ethnic potluck dinner at a community center, church, or school; a rite of passage of a friend from a different cultural background; traveling in a different country. Ask them to recall their feelings at the time. Were they excited, before the meal? Nervous? Worried? Curious? Well prepared?

Allow a few moments for individual reflection. Then, invite participants to turn to a partner and briefly share their stories—the specifics of the meal, and their feelings at the time, and any ways their feelings about the experience may have changed or new reflections that have emerged over time. Was there something which once caused anxiety that no longer does?

Allow pairs to talk for 10 minutes. Then, re-gather the large group. Display or distribute the quotation and the poem. Suggest that both describe cultural practices of sharing food while also offering them as metaphors for cultural diversity and hospitality. Invite participants to share their thoughts about culture and hospitality as reflected in the quote and poem. Do they offer any insights for congregational life?

ACTIVITY 2: THE UTES AND THE UNITARIANS (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- A copy of the story "[Under Our Charge — the Utes and the Unitarians](#)" (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer with Internet access, and projector

Preparation for Activity

- Print out this story "Under Our Charge — the Utes and the Unitarians" and prepare to present it.
- Write on newsprint the quote and questions, and post:
It is terribly arrogant to suppose that because we can see, with hindsight, mistakes of the generations before us, it's okay to demonize them. Without demonizing them, we need to be as clear as we can be about their gifts to us and their mistakes, because the consequences of both still shape us. — Alice Blair Wesley
- How did you feel when you heard this story?
- What do you see as the gifts in this story? The mistakes?
- What is the enduring legacy of this story for Unitarian Universalists? What do we take away from this story, and what can we do with it?
- Optional: Watch the video of the [opening worship](#) at General Assembly 2009, in which representatives of the Ute Nation join with UUA presenters to tell the story of the Utes and the Unitarians. Select a portion of the video to show the group. Test the computer and projector.

Description of Activity

Read the story aloud.

Then, point out that the story is told from the point of view of Unitarian Universalists and not from the point of view of the Utes. If you have time, show the clip you have selected from the telling of this story at General Assembly 2009.

Post the prepared quote and questions. Read the quote aloud and lead the group to discuss the first two questions.

Then, introduce the third question with these or similar words:

There are different approaches to social action. All of them start with engagement with the stories of others. From there, we can educate ourselves about the history and challenges of those whose stories are not often told in the wider culture. We can share what we learn. We can stand as compassionate witnesses to the suffering, struggle, and liberation of others. We can engage in social or political advocacy. And we can undertake a variety of other actions that seek justice and equity. At any point in time, no matter how many years have passed, we can undertake some form of engagement and action.

Invite participants to discuss the final questions of how we have already, or could continue to, interact with this story.

ACTIVITY 3: THE EMPOWERMENT CONTROVERSY (35 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Empowerment Controversy Time Line](#) (included in this document)
- Pens/pencils
- Time Line of UU History from Workshop 1

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1, Empowerment Controversy Time Line.
- Write on newsprint:
 - Were you present for any of the events of the Empowerment Controversy? If so, what do you remember? How did you feel then? Have your feelings changed over time?
 - How does it feel to hear this story?
 - As the story unfolded, did your feelings or the stance you held change?
 - Is there anything from your responses to the handout that you would like to share?
 - Given that not all details of the many conversations that took place at that time are known or included here, whose voices are present? Whose voices are absent?
 - Which voices had an impact on you? How?

Description of Activity

Introduce the activity with these words, which have been carefully prepared to present the Empowerment Controversy in a way that honors the diverse, sometimes contradictory memories and perspectives of its participants and recorders:

The handout represents some of the events, actions and tensions about race in Unitarian Universalist Association during the 1960s and 1970s, a period that has come to be known as the Empowerment Controversy. After more than 40 years and multiple attempts at healing and reconciliation, feelings about this episode in our denominational past still run high. As part of the 2001 "Conversation with Participants in the Black Empowerment Movement Within the Unitarian Universalist Association" published by Starr King School for the Ministry as *In Their Own Words*, Julie Kain compiled a time line that bears this note, "This time line is based on interviews provided by various sources, and may not reflect the perspectives of some participants in the events outlined." This small note is an indication of the strong feelings that have shaped perceptions and memories.

Distribute Handout 1, Empowerment Controversy Time Line and pens/pencils. Read the handout aloud, pausing where indicated to invite participants to complete the statements on their handout silently. Allow one minute for each response period.

Then, post the prepared questions and invite participants to discuss them.

ACTIVITY 4: OUR UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CULTURE (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [First Experiences](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 3, [Newcomers' Bios](#) (included in this document)
- Bowl or basket

Preparation for Activity

- Recruit two volunteers to read the pieces in Leader Resource 2, First Experiences. Give each their assignment in advance.
- Print out Leader Resource 3, Newcomers' Bios. Cut it into strips, one bio per strip, and place the bios in a bowl or basket suitable to be passed.

Description of Activity

Read or paraphrase the following:

Unitarian Universalist historian Conrad Wright reminds us that boundaries are essential to any group in order to describe their identity. Our congregations are covenantal communities, gathered for a common purpose defined, if not by theological beliefs, then by shared values and ethics. We express our boundaries through the formal instruments common to groups of all kinds: mission statements, covenants, bylaws, and principles and purposes. These are important to define who belongs to our congregations.

Many may be drawn to visit our congregations because they share values we articulate as Unitarian Universalists. However, in ways both subtle and informal, our congregations can either extend a welcome to newcomers or send a message that a difference they represent or embody from the congregation's culture is too great to be bridged.

Invite two volunteers to read Leader Resource 2, First Experiences aloud, one reading the words of Joseph Fabry, and another the words of Gail Geisenhainer. Ask the group for reactions to the stories.

Then, invite participants to call to mind the first time they came to a Unitarian Universalist congregation, or the first time they visited a congregation other than the one with which they were most familiar. How did they feel when anticipating what the experience would be like? What was the actual experience like? Can they identify aspects of the encounter which made them feel the congregation was "like them?" What about aspects of the encounter which made them feel "different?" In what ways did they feel included? Excluded?

Once all who wish to have shared, pass the bowl or basket in which you have placed the Newcomers' Bios (Leader Resource 3). Explain that each slip has a short description of a person who might one day visit the congregation for the first time. Invite each participant to select a slip of paper, read it to themselves, and imagine being the first to greet this individual on a Sunday morning before a service. In what ways might they expect the newcomer to bring some difference to the congregational culture? In what ways might the newcomer find similarities with members? How might the newcomer feel included? Excluded?

Allow two minutes for silent reflection. Then, say:

One aspect of religious hospitality that is sometimes overlooked is that hosts must be open to being changed by their guests. When a

genuine welcome is offered to a newcomer—that is, when guests are received as who they are, without the need to conform to the established culture—the stage is set for transformation of both hosts and guests. When such a welcome is extended to a newcomer, the group risks being transformed by the newcomer's presence and gifts.

Lead a discussion, using these questions as a guide:

- In what ways might the congregations that welcomed Joseph Fabry and Gail Geisenhainer have risked being changed by their presence?
- How might you, as an individual, be changed by the newcomer whose bio you have selected?
- How might that newcomer change the entire congregation?

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Faith in Action from this workshop and/or Spiritual Preparation from Workshop 16

Preparation for Activity

- Download and customize Taking It Home as a handout. You may wish to add the Faith in Action activity suggestion from this workshop and/or the Spiritual Preparation questions for the next workshop.

Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Announce the date, time, and place of the next workshop and any other "housekeeping" information. Request or remind volunteers if you want participants to read material aloud or perform other roles at the next meeting.

Invite participants to gather around the chalice and read in unison these words of Margaret Mead:

If we are to achieve a richer culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities, and so weave a less arbitrary social fabric, one which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place.

Extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: GENERATIONAL DIVERSITY

Materials for Activity

- Handout 3, [Generations Theory Summary](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: A copy of Strauss, William and Neil Howe, *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 3, Generations Theory Summary, for all participants.
- Optional: Explore Strauss and Howe's "Generation Theory" in their book, *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069*.

Description of Activity

Most of us tend to assume our own world view is the "norm." Our own view, in turn, involves multiple lenses particular to us, such as gender, race, religion, level of education, or urban versus rural or suburban upbringing. One of the most subtle and pervasive lenses through which we see the rest of the world has to do with our age—the stage of life we are currently in and the values and experiences we share with our peer group.

Age differences play out in our faith communities. Although faith communities are among the few institutions in our contemporary world with potential to be truly multigenerational, they are not immune to the generation gaps and gulfs that have come to dominate modern life.

In his book, *All are Welcome: A Primer for Intentional Intergenerational Ministry and Dialogue*, James V. Gambone suggests congregations might be places where generational differences can be bridged, resulting in added richness for all. However, he asserts that it takes concerted effort and intention to do so. He writes, "...intentional intergenerational ministry means the entire church makes a commitment to involve as many generations in as many parts of the church as possible." Such an approach would honor the fact that "each generation in our society has a unique and important perspective on current personal, political, economic, religious and cultural issues."

William Strauss and Neil Howe have examined how generational differences color our experiences. They differentiate five current generations: G.I.s (born 1901-1924), Silents (1925-1942), Boomers (1943-1960), Generation Xers (1961-1981), and Millennials (born after

1982). Distribute Handout 3 that presents a summary based on their work.

Does your congregation currently face a project, issue, or concern that might benefit from the perspectives and gifts represented by the different generations of your members? If so, invite several representatives from each generation into a conversation about the issue. Invite each generational cohort to meet and discuss their ideas for a solution or approach. Then have one representative from each group join a panel to present the variety of viewpoints to the group as a whole.

You may choose to share a summary of the characteristics of each of the generations defined by Strauss and Howe. Do the responses of your generational representatives bear out Strauss and Howe's Generation Theory?

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Make time to talk together to evaluate this workshop and plan future workshops. Use these questions to guide your shared reflection and planning:

- What parts of the workshop worked well and which did not? Why? Were the success, or lack of success, related to the topics, or to the types of activities?
- What would you change if you led this workshop again?
- How can you use this knowledge to make future workshops more effective?
- Is there anything left unfinished from the workshop that should still be addressed?
- What strengths did you each bring to the workshop?
- As co-leaders, when did you work well together?
- What might help you to be better leaders in future workshops?
- What preparation is needed for the next workshop? Who will handle these tasks? Who will lead which activities?

TAKING IT HOME

On every step of our journey, each of us carries the unique perspectives of our age, gender, color, ethnic heritage, language, spiritual belief, sexual orientation, physical, mental and emotional nature, and economic circumstance. We can choose to see these differences as divisions, or to view cultural diversity as a gift to

be cherished and nurtured. Our community is not a dull fabric of a single colored thread, but a tapestry of vibrant colors and rich textures, woven into a vital, ever-changing design. For our world to survive in this time of intense and quickening change, we need the vision and insight of each person, the strength and wisdom of each culture. — jona olsson, contemporary educator and activist

In the coming weeks, keep in mind the Newcomer's Bio you selected in Activity 4 as you participate in different aspects of congregational life. Imagine how the newcomer might experience a worship service, a committee meeting, a special event, a lifelong learning workshop, and other activities. In your journal, record your observations of the congregation's culture as seen through the newcomer's eyes.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: CLAIMING OUR IDENTITIES (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Face-sized ovals cut from construction paper or card stock, one for each participant
- Colorful craft materials, including a variety of construction paper, yarn, color markers, color pencils, paint, collage materials, scissors, glue, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Prepare table space where participants can do art work individually while sharing craft materials and distribute or arrange materials for easy access.

Description of Activity

Say, in these words or your own:

The identities we each carry have many facets. We are shaped by many forces including the cultures in which we were born, raised, and live; our racial and ethnic backgrounds; the values, practices, likes, and dislikes of people and groups we connect with, and more. We play roles, some chosen, some not. We each have facets of identity we show to the world each day and others that are perhaps not so apparent. We are fathers and sisters, students and nurses, daughters and uncles, musicians, Latinas, Italian Americans, readers, gardeners, teens and elders, immigrants and tenth-generation Americans, learning challenged, Buddhists, gay, bilingual, hearing impaired, athletes, middle class, and great-grandparents. We each have aspects of

nationality, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic class, education, age, sexual orientation, and physical ability. In some times and places we choose to emphasize one or more aspects of our identity, or others may notice one aspect of who we are. Our identities may change with the changing circumstances of our lives. But all aspects inform how we experience the world. And being able to share the story of our identities and be truly seen by another person is a holy act.

Invite participants to create masks that symbolize the various elements of their identities. Allow 15 minutes.

Ask participants to pair up and share their mask with their partner and tell why they chose the elements they did and what those elements mean to them. Remind participants: The goal is to witness and to understand one another, not to judge. Allow 10 minutes for the sharing.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: JOSEPH TUCKERMAN — FATHER OF AMERICAN SOCIAL WORK (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 2, [Joseph Tuckerman \(1778-1840\)](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Make copies of Handout 2, Joseph Tuckerman (1778-1840).
- Recruit three volunteers to read aloud the roles of Narrator, Tuckerman, and Peabody. Give them Handout 2 and their assignments well in advance.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - What obstacles that Tuckerman faced in trying to create a ministry across social or economic class lines might we still encounter today? Class prejudices? Denial of prejudices? Reluctance to engage across differences? Others?
 - How might we make social engagement with others a two-way street?
 - What is one way you might implement one of the modalities of social justice work (education, witness, advocacy, or action) to bridge economic or social class divides?

- How would bridging those divides move us closer to the idea of radical hospitality?

Description of Activity

Say, in these or similar words:

The concept of class can be complex and confusing, as well as uncomfortable. As R. H. Tawney wrote in his book *Equality*, "The word 'class' is fraught with unpleasant associations, so that to linger upon it is apt to be interpreted as the symptom of a perverted mind and a jaundiced spirit."

There are many reasons we might find talking about class issues difficult—for example: it is hard to agree on a definition of "class;" class oppression is closely linked with other forms of oppression; we are sometimes reluctant to acknowledge that a democratic society can be a classist society. Yet Joseph Tuckerman's ministry at the turn of the 19th century had class inequities at its very heart. Tuckerman came to be known as the father of American Social Work for promoting the idea that those with fewer resources be approached in the wholeness of their humanity, and given not a handout, but the means to improve their own lives.

Distribute Handout 2, Joseph Tuckerman (1778 — 1840). Ask the volunteers to read their assigned parts aloud. Then, post the questions you have prepared and use them to lead a discussion.

STORY: UNDER OUR CHARGE — THE UTES AND THE UNITARIANS

By Ted Fetter.

Although the relationship between the Ute tribe and the American Unitarian Association, a principal forerunner to the UUA, is not well known, the two share a significant story together. The Unitarians became, in effect, agents of the United States Government in its policy toward Native Americans.

In the 1870s, President Ulysses S. Grant set out a new policy toward Native Americans. Dubbed the "peace policy," it involved religious organizations in the operation of the 69 Indian agencies that were located throughout the country on reservations. There were at least three reasons for involving religious professionals: there would be less corruption, a greater chance for resources from the denominations, and increased likelihood of converting the Indians to Christianity, a major step toward assimilation.

As part of that program, the American Unitarian Association (AUA) accepted responsibility for two Ute agencies in Colorado. Between 1871 and 1878, the Unitarians nominated five different men, including four ministers, to serve as Indian agents for the two agencies. The responsibilities of Indian agents were to carry out government policy, distribute the supplies as guaranteed by treaty (but seldom delivered in full or on time), hear Indian grievances against whites (but without any power over white settlers), and investigate and deal with white complaints against the Indians. Indian agents were also to insist that the Natives learn English and learn how to farm.

The Utes were a proud people. They lived in what they called the "Shining Mountains," most of what is now Colorado. They prospered as hunter-gatherers, using summer and winter camps to follow buffalo and other game. Houses that could not be moved seemed impractical, and there was no need or desire to cultivate crops. In Robert Emmitt's book *The Last War Trail: The Utes and the Settlement of Colorado*, Saponise Cuch is quoted: "It was a life with little hunger and want, where play and humor were taught to smother pain, sickness and death; a life where the good play of the hunt brought food, and the pleasure of the dance brought a man a wife, a woman a husband; a life where a man owned little and belonged to everything."

When whites came to Colorado, the Utes emphasized diplomacy to avoid war. They agreed to limit their lands in the Treaty of 1868. When gold discoveries fed settlers' appetite for Ute territory, they were forced to give up more land. Nevertheless, the Utes sought to live

on the land they still had and in accord with the dictates of the treaties.

The Unitarians who came as Indian agents were hard working, honest, and dedicated. They saw the needs of the Utes and tried their best to assist them. For example, when the supplies guaranteed by the treaties were not provided as promised the agents entreated Washington to meet its obligations. When white settlers came onto the reservation in violation of the treaties, they objected to this encroachment, but were unable to force the whites to leave or to get local law enforcement to remove them. When the government insisted that the Utes farm their lands, the agents pointed out that much of the reservation was arid, experienced frost twelve months a year, and was infested with grasshoppers.

Rev. Edward H. Danforth, Indian Agent at White River, Colorado, wrote this in his annual report dated August 31, 1877: "Fourteen different families have commenced in a small way at farming. Unfortunately for them and the esteem in which the work will be held in future the grasshoppers, the extraordinary drought, and July frost have cut their crops off entirely. About twelve acres were prepared and planted by Indians — potatoes, corn, garden vegetables, and oats were planted and sown, but they will get nothing for their labor."

While well-intentioned, the Unitarian Indian agents were not very effective. Though they tried to be helpful, they were politically naive in their relations with the Indian Affairs Office in the Department of the Interior and with local political leaders. They were not able to secure added funding from the AUA for schools; generally the agents' wives were the teachers for Ute children. And they were not good managers of the resources and staff the government supplied.

In addition, some of the Unitarian agents had personalities that stood out as odd on the Colorado frontier. The best example is Rev. J. Nelson Trask. Trask arrived at the Los Pinos Agency in 1871, and from the start he seemed strange. One historian writes: "Trask walked about the agency in a dark blue swallow-tail coat, skin-tight trousers, and, to protect himself from the sun, an old-fashioned floppy beaver hat with a broad brim, and a set of green eye goggles." Trask was one of several agents who had a strong moral sense that the Indians were not being treated fairly but who could not establish a satisfactory relationship with the Utes, to say nothing of a working relationship with local officials in Colorado.

Most importantly, the Unitarian Indian agents were part of the United States government policy towards Native Americans, a program that forced the Indians to choose between annihilation and assimilation. These agents

implicitly adopted a stance that supported assimilation of the Utes into the dominant culture, trying hard to teach English, encouraging adoption of settled agriculture in an unforgiving climate, and succumbing to white intrusion on Ute land. While sympathetic to the Utes, they could see no alternative.

The interaction between the Utes and the Unitarians ended in 1878 and 1879. Rev. Danforth had wanted to end his service at White River. In 1878, without consulting the AUA, the United States government appointed Nathan C. Meeker as its Indian agent. Although Meeker was not a Unitarian, he continued to correspond with the AUA and to seek its guidance and assistance. Meeker was much stronger than his predecessors in his insistence on agriculture and his forcefulness in dealing with Ute leaders. His intransigence led to conflict and strife with many Utes. The difficulties climaxed with his murder. "The Utes killed Meeker for his inability to understand the Indian people he was supposed to represent. They drove a barrel stave through his throat so in the afterlife he could not tell lies." As a result of the so-called Meeker Massacre, the Utes were forcibly removed from their precious Colorado homeland in 1880 and relocated to parched, dry land in eastern Utah. The program in which the Unitarians played a part had reached its conclusion: the Utes lost their Shining Mountains forever.

HANDOUT 1: EMPOWERMENT CONTROVERSY TIME LINE

Adapted from a time line created by the Reverend Julie Kain, originally published in *In Their Own Words*, Alice Forsey, ed. (Starr King School for the Ministry, published as part of an oral history project, Conversation with Participants in the Black Empowerment Movement within the Unitarian Universalist Association).

July, 1964 — Harlem Riots, New York

February 21, 1965 — Malcolm X assassinated, New York

February 26, 1965 — Jimmie Lee Jackson shot and killed, Alabama

A young African American man and a deacon of his church, Jimmie Lee Jackson was killed while attempting to defend his family from Alabama state troopers.

March, 1965 — Civil rights marches, Alabama

Marches in Selma and Montgomery led to clashes between civil rights workers and police. Unitarian Universalist minister James Reeb and Unitarian Universalist civil rights worker Viola Liuzzo were murdered by white supremacists.

August, 1965 — Voting Rights Act signed by President Lyndon Johnson, Washington, DC

August 1965 — Watts Riots, Los Angeles

July 1967 — Newark Riots, New Jersey

October 1967 — Emergency Conference, Biltmore Hotel, New York City

Following racial unrest and rioting in the United States, the UUA's Committee on Religion and Race and Department of Social Responsibility, headed by Director Homer Jack, convened the "Emergency Conference on Unitarian Universalist Response to the Black Rebellion." Of the approximately 135-140 participants, 37 were African American. Early in the conference, 30 of the African American participants gathered at the invitation of members of Black Unitarian Universalists for Radical Reform (BURR), an organization from the Los Angeles Unitarian Universalist church that supported the Black Power movement. The gathered caucus, which came to be known as the Black Unitarian Universalist Caucus (BUUC), drew up and presented to the conference a list of "non-negotiable demands" including

- Establish a Black Affairs Council (BAC) for Black self-determination
- Fund BAC at 250,000 dollars per year for 4 years (12 percent of the UUA's annual budget)

- Grant BAC sole authority over the use of the funds
- BAC members were to be elected by BUUC

The caucus' recommendation was accepted by the Emergency Conference delegates by a 2/3 majority, though the vote had no binding authority with the UUA Board of Trustees. Among the caucus members was Hayward Henry (later Mtangulizi Sanyika), a board member of Boston's Second Church, who would go on to chair the national BUUC effort.

Please respond to the passage above.

I feel these actions were...

I would have supported...

I feel it might have been better if...

November 1967 — Board of Trustees Meeting, Boston

At an emotionally charged meeting, representatives from BUUC presented their proposal to the UUA Board of Trustees asking for an up or down vote on each item. The Board, itself divided over the proposal and methods of BUUC, voted down the proposal and passed a resolution to reorganize the Commission on Religion and Race, inviting BUUC participation. In bitter disappointment, BUUC recommended that Unitarian Universalist churches withdraw financial support from the UUA Annual Program Fund until the next General Assembly could meet.

Please respond to the passage above.

I feel these actions were...

I would have supported...

I feel it might have been better if...

November 1967 — SOBURR, Los Angeles

At a meeting of approximately 50 delegates of the Pacific Southwest District, Louis Gothard of BURR reported on the Board's actions. The primarily white group present formed the Supporters of BURR (SOBURR) to organize White support of Black empowerment efforts. Los Angeles ministers Stephen Fritchman and Roy Ockert were among the supporters.

February 1968 — National Conference of Black Unitarian Universalists, Chicago

Two hundred and seven delegates represented 600 Black Unitarian Universalists. Among the attendees were Ben Scott from Boston, Richard Traylor (later Mjenzi Traylor) from Philadelphia, Renford Gaines (later Mwalimu Imara), a theological student from Meadville Theological Seminary, and George Johnson from

Oakland, who had been hired by the UUA to develop congregational participation in civil rights activities. The conference established the Black Affairs Council (BAC) with six Black and three White members.

March 1968 — UUA Board of Trustees Meeting

The Board, still divided over the best course of action, invited BAC to have affiliate status. Although BUUC and BAC called for support of groups with Black leadership, the Board, saying they could not forfeit their own responsibility in race empowerment, instead formed two UUA groups: the Fund for Racial Justice and the Commission for Action on Race. Hayward Henry charged that the Board's refusal to fund BAC and to allow the BAC to control such funding reflected "a traditional racist and paternalistic approach to black problems."

April 4, 1968 — Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated, Memphis

April 1968 — FULLBAC, Philadelphia

Patterned after SOBURR, a new organization for the Full Recognition and Funding of BAC (FULLBAC) was created. Leadership came from two Philadelphia ministers, David Parke and Rudolph Gelsey. During the meeting at which FULLBAC was organized, the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. was announced.

May 1968 — BAWA, New York City

Responding to the formation of groups of White allies who supported the pro-empowerment groups, a group of Black and White Unitarian Universalists formed a pro-integration group, Black and White Alternative, which later became Black and White Action (BAWA). Cornelius MacDougald, board chair of the Community Church in NYC and chair of the UUA's Commission on Religion and Race at the time of the Emergency Conference, and Donald Harrington, minister of Community Church, provided leadership.

Please respond to the passage above.

I feel these actions were...

I would have supported...

I feel it might have been better if...

May 1968 — General Assembly, Cleveland

The General Assembly (GA) resolution to meet BUUC's demands for BAC funding of one million dollars over four years passed by vote of 836 to 327. Victor Carpenter later wrote that this showing of support for BAC's agenda "gave the nation its first example of a denomination's making a significant 'reparational' response to the conditions of racism in America."

Please respond to the passage above.

I feel these actions were...

I would have supported...

I feel it might have been better if...

June 1968 & May 1969 — UUA Board of Trustees Meetings

Following the commitment of funding for BAC, the UUA administration and Trustees discovered that all of the UUA's unrestricted endowment funds had already been spent. The denomination did not have adequate funding to continue its current operations. At the May meeting, the administration recommended to the Trustees that BAC funding not be reduced, but that it instead require reaffirmation each year, and that an additional 50,000 dollars be used to fund BAWA.

Please respond to the passage above.

I feel these actions were...

I would have supported...

I feel it might have been better if...

July 1969 — General Assembly, Boston

The issue of funding for BAC and BAWA was highly controversial at the General Assembly. Matters came to a head over a proposal to change the agenda and move the funding issue from the end of the agenda to the beginning. The contentious debate led first to a forced possession of the microphone by members BUUC/BAC, FULLBAC and Liberal Religious Youth (LRY), and later to a walkout by BUUC members. Jack Mendelsohn, BAC vice-chair and minister of Boston's Arlington Street Church, addressed the Assembly saying, "Our Black delegates of BAC have now left the room. They have left this Assembly, and they have left our movement, because life and time are short...the Assembly is returning to business as usual and to the position of Black people at the back of the bus." Mendelsohn invited all who wanted to discuss the issues to leave the GA and meet at Arlington Street, just blocks away. More than 400 people participated in "The Walkout" (the GA had 1379 voting delegates) calling themselves "The Moral Caucus." Dana Greeley, outgoing UUA President, convinced them to return the following day. In a close vote, BAC funding of 250,000 dollars was reaffirmed, and BAWA received no funding. Robert West was elected the next president of the UUA.

Please respond to the passage above.

I feel these actions were...

I would have supported...

I feel it might have been better if...

December 1969 — BAC Bond Program

Under the leadership of Richard Traylor, Ben Scott, and Hayward Henry, BAC traveling workshops began. Churches were asked to convert half their investment portfolio to BAC bonds for Black Humanistic economic development.

January 1970 — UUA Board of Trustees Meeting

Under severe economic pressure, the Board voted to pay 200,000 dollars per year for five years rather than 250,000 dollars for four, extending the time frame for paying the promised million dollars to BAC. BAC moved to disaffiliate from the UUA, making the organization free to seek independent funding.

Please respond to the passage above.

I feel these actions were...

I would have supported...

I feel it might have been better if...

June 1970 — General Assembly, Seattle

BUUC/BAC officially boycotted GA, but workshops and seminars on the BAC bond program to fund economic development were presented. Over the course of a few months, the bond program raised 800,000 dollars. At the Assembly, a motion to restore BAC funding was defeated.

March 1972 — UUA Board of Trustees Meeting

Financial support for BAC and BAWA was obtained through a Veatch Fund grant. 180,000 dollars was allocated for BAC and 45,000 dollars for BAWA. BAC was voted Associate organization status.

February 1973 — BUUC Sixth Annual Meeting, Philadelphia

Due to major disagreements over the future of BAC and BUUC, the organization split. One faction voted to reorganize as the Black Humanist Fellowship (BHF) in order to forge closer ties with other Black empowerment movements and sever ties with the UUA. Two organizations claiming to be BAC emerged. Litigation followed.

1979 — BAC Associate Status Ends

Although BAC's status as a UUA Associate formally ended in 1979, it is estimated that following the controversy of the late 60s and early 70s, over 1,000 Black Unitarian Universalists left the denomination.

Please respond to the passage above.

I feel these actions were...

I would have supported...

I feel it might have been better if...

HANDOUT 2: JOSEPH TUCKERMAN (1778-1840)

Embedded quotes, except where noted, are from Joseph Tuckerman, *Principles and Results of the Ministry-at-large in Boston* (1838).

Narrator:

In his 1838 book about his street ministry, *Principles and Results of the Ministry-at-large in Boston*, Joseph Tuckerman wrote about how a stranger from a land where Christianity was unknown might perceive Sunday in an American city. His description tells about 19th-century American class distinctions as he saw them.

Joseph Tuckerman:

We can but very inadequately conceive of the overpowering interest with which such a stranger would witness this change. Worldly cares and occupations, he is told, are to be suspended on this day. The master and servant, the employer and the employed, the rich and the poor are to unite in the worship of the common Father of them all. He is told that the Author and Finisher of our faith came to bring to us, and to the world, a religion, which reveals one God and Father of all; which proposes to extend all its blessings to the poor and the poorest, the lowest and most debased; which recognises [sic] enduring distinction, but of the just and the unjust; which addresses all as children, and brothers of one family; and which calls all to live by one law, and to look for one eternal inheritance. Here, then, is a spectacle for the admiration of angels. The ministers of our religion are at their respective altars. The assemblies are gathered for worship; and the stranger there looks about him for representatives of all classes of the busy multitudes, amidst which he had passed the preceding days of the week. But are representatives of all classes to be found there? Alas, how saddening the illusion! From a quarter, to a third of the population of this city, who might be there, do not enter one of these churches. The poor are even excluded from them, except upon the condition of taking their place there as the poor. These are churches for those who can own, or who at least can rent, pews in them. And the laborers who had toiled from Monday morning till Saturday night are, — where?

Narrator:

Tuckerman felt the class distinctions in cities keenly. In his first ministry (1801-1826) in Rumney Marsh (later Chelsea and now Revere), Massachusetts, he had founded the first religious mission to seamen, ministering to a wider community than the members of his church. After resigning his pastorate, Tuckerman became minister-at-large in Boston, ministering primarily to the poor, first under the sponsorship of an ad hoc group of Boston ministers including his friend William Ellery Channing, but soon under the administration of the fledgling American Unitarian Association.

Tuckerman believed poverty was an intended condition of human existence, that there would always be those who depended upon alms for survival, and this in itself was not a degraded or degrading condition. It was poverty coupled with debasement of the human spirit that was unacceptable, and this Tuckerman held to be an unnatural condition imposed by humanity itself.

Joseph Tuckerman:

I have said that I regard poverty as one of the intended conditions of man in this world. So I think Christianity regards it. But so it regards not sin in any of its forms; or in any one whom it holds, or will finally hold accountable for his conduct. Poverty may consist, and is to be found in connexion [sic] the highest religious and moral excellence to be attained in this world. But poverty, as we see it connected with filth, and ignorance, and recklessness, and sin, not only is not an intended condition of humanity, but it is a condition from which it is a most plainly expressed intention of Christianity to redeem every individual who has fallen into it. God intended that there should be trade and commerce among men; and therefore that there should be capitalists, as well as laborers. But did God intend the pride, and the oppression of wealth? Did he intend that the laborer should be as a mere machine of his superior in condition? Did he intend that a few should enrich themselves by the toils of the many, and live in luxury and at ease, while the many should but obtain a bare subsistence, and be considered as much below their employers in worth, as in their outward circumstances?

Narrator:

Tuckerman frequently took the upper classes to task for their role in creating and maintaining the system that kept some in want while others prospered. More, he criticized them for an attitude that poverty was the fault of the impoverished and their due lot, an attitude that dehumanized the poor and made them lesser in the eyes of even those who gave them charity.

Joseph Tuckerman:

Not unfrequently, however, we are brought into connection with these families, primarily through their physical wants. These I have said, are real and great; and great are their sufferings under these wants. Aye, very far greater often are these sufferings than they are supposed to be by the casual observer; of by those who, reasoning of them as abstractions, and referring them to the laws of habit, sagely conclude that, intolerable as the condition would be to themselves, it is yet no very great evil to them who are accustomed to it. May God have more mercy upon these self-complacent arbitrators upon the sensibilities and sufferings of their fellow-beings, than they have toward those against whom they thus shut out their sympathy and compassion!

Narrator:

Tuckerman believed the situation could be addressed in two ways. For one, people of means needed to change their attitudes and behaviors—to improve themselves in Christian character. Without this foundation of sincere goodwill, attempts to help the poor better their own condition would continue to fail.

Joseph Tuckerman:

We all need greater disinterestedness, and greater wisdom. We all need, for our own soul's good, a closer connection with the less favored, and even the lowest in condition of our fellow-beings. I believe that by no means could those in the prospered classes be so advanced in the best qualities of the Christian character, as by a more Christian connection than they have ever had with the laboring classes, and the poor. Seek then connection, and maintain it. Learn to see in the poorest, and the lowest, a fellow-being, and a child of God... From the absence of this conviction in the prospered, and from its feebleness where it is felt, arise far the greatest obstacles to the success of moral enterprises.

Narrator:

The second way Tuckerman felt the condition of degraded poverty could be ameliorated was by bringing Christianity, and thereby moral and spiritual improvement, to the poor. He recognized the very real needs for food, clothing, shelter, education and employment, but he believed that if those who were poor were provided with a moral basis for living, their lives would be permanently changed for the better.

Joseph Tuckerman:

Let us not neglect the physical wants of these sufferers, for they are real, and many, and great. But listen I pray you to the cry which comes up from the depths of their souls, and which would find its way to the depths of your soul. This is the voice to which I would peculiarly give my ear, and my heart, and for which I would obtain your ear, and your heart. Let it never be unheeded, that these are men; human beings; and if to be saved, to be raised, to be improved, to be what God intends that men shall be, we must look to their whole nature, and act in regard to them in accordance with their whole nature. Let it never be forgotten, that by wisely directed aids, these sufferers may do for themselves what the united benevolence of the world, without their own co-operation, can never do for them. They are men, and yet have hardly the slightest comprehension of what it is to be men. They are immortals, and have yet hardly a sensibility of their immortality. They are sinners, yet with few and feeble convictions of sin. Christ died to redeem them. Yet what do they know of Christ, or of his redemption, or of their need of it? They are not however, thank God, even the lowest and most depraved among them, wholly without knowledge and sensibility of good and of evil. God has not left himself without a witness in their souls... Would you then be a Christian friend, a minister of God for the objects of the gospel to any of this class? I would say in the first place, look then to the whole of their condition.

Narrator:

In 1834, Tuckerman helped found the Benevolent Fraternity of Christian (later Unitarian) Churches, a consortium of nine Boston Unitarian churches partnering to bring Christianity to the poor. The "Ben Frat," as it was known, founded chapels throughout Boston to serve the poor and by 1835 employed seven ministers. Some have suggested that by founding these chapels, Tuckerman's elite Unitarian backers aimed to bring Christianity to the poor while not suffering to share a pew with them. In the same year the Benevolent Fraternity was founded, Tuckerman also organized an association to coordinate the services of 21 Boston charities. Elizabeth Peabody, a prominent reformer and educator of the time, wrote of Tuckerman.

Elizabeth Peabody:

As he made progress in his benevolent work—endeavoring to recover the lost, helping the feeble-minded, and recognizing the unknown brethren, who were not perhaps sealed with the

name of Christ, though they were his in spirit—he grew less speculative and more practical himself. He would say: "Christianity is a life, not a scheme of metaphysical abstractions. Its sphere is rather the heart and will than the brain and imagination. Its fruits are not words, but moral growth, enabling men to work with their hands day after day, and grow meanwhile more sweet, noble, kind, helpful, pure, and high-minded.

Narrator:

Although the chapels of the "Ben Frat" did not last, some still live in new ways. One chapel became the basis of today's Goodwill Industries. The "Ben Frat" itself became, in 1990, the Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry. In an effort to restore his health after a decade of decline, Tuckerman sailed for Havana, Cuba, with his daughter in 1840. He died there on April 20, 1840.

HANDOUT 3: GENERATIONS THEORY SUMMARY

These summaries are based on the work of William Strauss and Neil Howe, in *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992) and *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation* (New York: vintage Books, 2000).

Below is a brief summary of the forces that shapes the generations of people in our congregations, as well as a list of broad generational characteristics. As is the case with any generalization, the lists may not accurately describe particular individuals.

The GI Generation (born between 1901 and 1924)

Shaped by the Great Depression, World War II

Characteristics:

- Many experienced upward mobility, faring better financially than their parents
- Institution builders and leaders, conformist

The Silent Generation (born between 1925 and 1945)

Shaped by Roosevelt Presidency, Korean War, Cold War, Anticommunism, technological and scientific advances, Civil Rights movement

Characteristics:

- Many experienced steadily rising affluence
- Engaged in defining and humanizing the world-founded organizations of political dissent that boomers would later radicalize
- Generation limited in numbers caught between GIs and Boomers
- Uncertain about roles and expectations — both personal and national

The Baby Boomers (born between 1943 and 1963)

Shaped by Civil Rights, Vietnam, sexual revolution, liberation movements, political unrest and assassination, Watergate scandal

Characteristics:

- Revolt, rebellion, mistrust of institutions
- Quest for "self" — decision making based on internal standards
- Committed to values of gender equality, racial equality, environmental stewardship
- Counter-culture gave way to strong right/left ideological divide

Generation X (born between 1964 and 1980)

Shaped by the Regan and George H.W. Bush presidencies, the end of the Cold War, AIDS, the home computer, the internet as a tool for social and business purposes, high parental divorce rate, high incarceration rate

Characteristics:

- Cynical and disengaged
- Pragmatic
- Self-contained
- Pessimistic about economic future
- Believe that a person's success or failure is based on their own choices

Millennials (born between 1981 and 2001)

Shaped by highly involved and protective parents and institutions, electronic social networking and new media, targeted marketing, Columbine, September 11, unemployment, War on Drugs, environmentalism

Characteristics:

- Tech-savvy
- Seek instant gratification
- Idealistic and community focused
- Team players
- Culturally liberal

As-yet-unnamed Generation (born after 2001)

Shaped by communications and technology, War on Terror, and forces as yet unknown

Characteristics:

To be revealed.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: CULTURE AND HOSPITALITY

The Meredith Tax quote is taken from the pamphlet "The Power of the Word: Culture, Censorship, and Voice" by Meredith Tax with Marjorie Agosin, Ama Ata Aidoo, Ritu Menon, Ninotchka Rosca, and Mariella Sala, published by the Women's World Organization for Rights, Literature and Development , August 1995.

"The Arabs Used to Say" by Naomi Shihab Nye from *Prayers for a Thousand Years* (Harper San Francisco: San Francisco, CA, 1999).

Culture is who we are and who we are becoming. It is the food we put on the table, the way we cook it, the utensils in which we eat it, the relations between the people who sit at the table and the people who cook and serve, what is done with the leftovers, what is discussed during the meal, what music, dancing, poetry or theatre accompany it, and the social and spiritual values of those present — for when we say culture, we include the visions, dreams and aspirations of humanity. — Meredith Tax, writer and political activist

The Arabs Used to Say

by Naomi Shihab Nye

The Arabs used to say,
When a stranger appears at your door,
feed him for three days
before asking who he is,
where he's from,
where he's headed.
That way, he'll have strength enough
to answer.
Or, by then you'll be such good friends
you don't care.
Let's go back to that.
Rice? Pine nuts?
Here, take the red brocade pillow.
My child will serve water
to your horse.
No, I was not busy when you came!
I was not preparing to be busy.
That's armor everyone put on
at the end of the century
to pretend they had a purpose
in the world.
I refuse to be claimed.
Your plate is waiting.
We will snip fresh mint
into your tea.

LEADER RESOURCE 2: FIRST EXPERIENCES

Excerpted from Joseph Fabry, *Making Sense: The Meaning of a Life*, and Gail R. Geisenhainer, "We Who Believe in Freedom Cannot Rest."

Joseph Fabry was a Jewish survivor of the Holocaust who emigrated from Austria to the United States and settled in Berkley, California. In response to questions about God and Jesus from his daughter, Wendy, Fabry and his family became involved in the local Unitarian church, where the Rev. Raymond Cope was the minister. These words are from Fabry's autobiography *Making Sense: The Meaning of a Life*.

The word "church" had painful connotations for me. It was the place where "they" went, and in Vienna "they" were the Christians, the Aryans, the anti-Semites, the Nazis. Although the Unitarian Church displayed none of the symbols and paintings of the churches I had seen in Vienna, I felt uncomfortable. As the minister stepped to the pulpit in his churchly robe I was ready to leave.

I cannot remember everything Cope said that morning, but I know he answered questions I hadn't even known to ask. He mentioned two images that immediately had significance to me. Every carpenter knows, he said, that wood has to be sawed with the grain, not against it, or he will get hurt. In the same way we have to live with the grain of the universe and not against it. He also spoke of a "gyroscope" we all carry within us that keeps its balance... This was the first time since I left Vienna that I was assured that there was an order in the universe, and that it was up to me to discover it and live in accordance with it.

When I shook Raymond Cope's hand at the church door after that first service and he heard my accent, he asked me about my background. He said something to the effect that he hoped I would become active in his church, because as a Jew and a refugee I would have some special contributions to make to his congregation. And this after having been called a louse, spit on in the face, imprisoned, and unwanted by every country to which I applied for asylum!

Cope proved that he meant what he said. Not much later, he offered me the chairmanship of a committee that formulated the church school education. I told him I had never been on any committee, much less a chairman, and that I knew nothing about religious education. He said, with convincing assuredness, that he knew I

could do it. So I tried. I later was given several leadership positions... Of course, I was scared. But Cope's unflinching confidence in me helped me overcome my self-doubts.

The Rev. Gail R. Geisenhainer has served several Unitarian Universalist congregations. These words are from her sermon "We Who Believe in Freedom Cannot Rest" which she preached at the 2006 General Assembly.

I was forthrightly evangelized into Unitarian Universalism. I was 38 years old, living in Maine, driving a snow-plow for a living and feeling very sorry for myself when a friend invited me to his church. He said it was different. I rudely refused. I cursed his church. "All blank-ing churches are the same," I informed him, "they say they're open—but they don't want queer folk. To Heck with church!" My friend persisted. He knew his church was different. He told me his church cared about people, embraced diverse families, and worked to make a better world. He assured me I could come and not have to hide any elements of who I was. So I went. Oh, I went alright.

And I dressed soooo carefully for my first Sunday visit. I spiked my short hair straight up into the air. I dug out my heaviest, oldest work boots, the ones with the chain saw cut that exposed the steel toe. I got my torn blue jeans and my leather jacket. There would be not a shred of ambiguity this Sunday morning. They would embrace me in my full Amazon glory, or they could fry ice. I carefully arranged my outfit so it would highlight the rock hard chip I carried on my shoulder, I bundled up every shred of pain and hurt and betrayal I had harbored from every other religious experience in my life, and I lumbered into that tiny meetinghouse on the coast of Maine.

Blue jeans and boots. Leather jacket, spiked hair and belligerent attitude. I accepted my friend's invitation and I went to his church. I expected the gray-haired ladies in the foyer to step back in fear. That would have been familiar. Instead, they stepped forward, offered me a bulletin, a newsletter and invited me to stay for coffee. It was so... odd! They never even flinched!

They called me "dear." But they pronounced it "dee-ah." "Stay for coffee, dear."

I stayed for coffee. I stayed for Unitarian Universalism. Over time, the good folks of that church loved up the scattered parts of me and guided me from shattered to whole; from outcast

to beloved among many. And those folks listened to me. I and my life partner became their poster-children for the brand new Welcoming Congregation program. And they

went on to provide important local pastoral and legislative ministries to gay folks in Down East Maine. We walked together and we helped each other to grow.

FAITH LIKE A RIVER: WORKSHOP 15: LEADER RESOURCE 3: NEWCOMERS' BIOS

My name is Susan.

I'm 45 years old, single, unemployed, and pregnant.

My mother is a Unitarian Universalist in another state, so I thought I would come to the local UU congregation to see what they have to offer. I haven't been inside a church in 35 years.

My name is Edwin.

I'm 68 years old, and my wife of 40 years recently died of cancer. I'm retired, and I have a lot of health problems. I was raised Catholic, but I don't feel like I can trust the church. But I can't stay home by myself, either.

My name is Gerry.

I'm 42 years old, and I teach in a public school. No one knows that I'm gay—not my family or friends or, most importantly, people at the school. Naturally I spend a lot of time alone, and several times I've considered ending my life.

My name is Ariel.

I'm 19 years old. My three-year-old daughter and I recently moved to this area after leaving my abusive boyfriend. I'm looking for a job, but I don't have anyone to watch my daughter. I've never been to a church, but I'm trying to make a "fresh start" in life.

My name is David.

I'm 25 years old, and I have a form of autism that makes it hard for me to have a regular job. I live in a group home around the corner, and since I can't drive, I have to walk everywhere. I noticed this church, and your sign that "All Are Welcome."

My name is Barbara.

I was raised as a Unitarian Universalist, and I haven't been active in a congregation since high school. But I've recently moved to this area with my new husband and baby, and I can't find anyone around who seems to be like me. I'm vegan, and I walk everywhere, and I plan on nursing my baby as long as she wants to nurse.

My name is Humberto.

When I was young I thought I wanted to be a priest, and I even went to seminary for a while. But I couldn't make the commitments required for that lifestyle, and became disenchanted with religion. Lately I've been feeling this great emptiness inside of me, and a friend suggested that I check out the church he goes to in Seattle—the Unitarian Universalist congregation.

My name is Margaret.

I'm 14 years old, and my parents are divorced. When I'm with my mom, I go to her fundamentalist Christian church. My dad hasn't really had a church, but he's so upset that I have to go to church with her, he's decided he wants me to go to another church when I'm with him. This is the one he picked.

My name is Diane.

I was raised in the Catholic Church, but I didn't go after I turned 18. My husband was raised as a Unitarian Universalist, and so, when we had a son, I thought we might go back to his church. But my husband won't go, he says he doesn't much like those people.

My name is Carlene.

I'm 44 years old, a successful businesswoman, working in cosmetics for African American women. My work has forced me to move away from my family and church too many times to count, but it looks like I'll be here for a while. When I go to the local churches of my faith tradition, it seems as though all the people there are poor, and I'm not.

My name is Bert.

I'm 50 years old, and I recently lost my job through "downsizing." I can't stand being at home with my wife, who keeps asking me when I'm going to go back to work. I came to a public event at this church, and instead of listening to the speaker, I spent my whole time reading literature about your religion.

My name is Jeff.

I'm 32 years old, and work in construction. I come to this church for NA meetings; I've been clean for 6 months. The first time I came here I read the UU Principles on the wall and I started remembering how much I used to read about world religions when I was in college.

My name is Shirley.

I'm 83 years old, and I was once a part of this congregation, but there were things happening back then that made me angry, and I left. I've broken my hip—twice—and the doctor says that I have to get out more and move around.

My name is Arthur.

I'm 48 years old, and I have been living with HIV for about 10 years. My partner left me five years ago, and except for people in my AIDS support group, I don't have many friends. Since last month, when my benefits ended, I've been living in my car. I can't say why I decided to come to this building this particular Sunday, I just seem to find myself here.

My name is Huang.

I am 27 years old and studying at the university. I grew up in China and was an engineer there, but, my certifications are no good here, so I must study more before I will be able to work in my profession. My religion is my family religion, basically Buddhist and Confucian, but I am not very religious and I am certainly not a Christian. I decided to come to this church because I am living alone here and do not know many people. Each Sunday I see people gathering at this church so I decided to come and see.

My name is Maria.

I'm 65 years old, highly educated, and fluent in three languages. I know that my English is heavily accented, but I also know that it is absolutely grammatically correct. My experience in mainline congregations is that people shake my hand, nod politely, and walk away. I wonder if the UU church will be different.

My name is Lisa.

I'm 36 years old, single, and have an 8-year-old son. I work two jobs to earn enough to live, so there isn't a lot of extra time in the day. I'm worried that my son's only time with other kids is in school.

My name is Oscar.

I'm 78 years old, and my wife Mary has Alzheimer's disease. We've gone to the Methodist church all of our lives, but recently Mary has become disruptive in services, and the minister talked to me about whether it was "good"—for Mary and for the congregation—to have her there. One of the reasons we go to church is so that, for one hour, I don't have to watch her like a hawk.

My name is Jane.

I am 67 years old, and my husband died 15 years ago. I have five children, all of whom have moved away from the area. I have my women friends, and we go out to lunch, shopping, and so forth. They all have a church that they go to on Sundays, but my husband was an atheist, so we never had that tradition. They've all invited me to come to their religions, but I don't want to be proselytized.

My name is Amber.

I'm 18 years old, and I grew up in a really cool Unitarian Universalist congregation in Washington, D.C. —that's where all my friends were. But my dad took a job here and now I have to finish high school here. My parents are thinking that if they join the local Unitarian Universalist congregation, I'll feel more "at home." Oh, and as a moving "present," they let me get my tongue, eyebrow and nose pierced.

My name is Jules.

I'm a large person. I weigh about 400 pounds. My social worker told me that I needed to get away from my apartment more often because when I'm home I eat constantly. I used to go to church, but as I grew heavier, people started avoiding me.

My name is Frank.

I've come here a number of times, and started talking to the folks who seem to be in charge. They all seem really nice, but I don't have much patience for religion. And they haven't asked me many personal questions—which is good, because I'm an ex-convict, and that tends to drive people away.

My name is Reba.

I'm 42 years old, and I'm an out lesbian—have been since I was 14. I drive a Harley, and as an EMT, I move in some pretty tough circles. My partner, a singer, and I came here on Coming Out Day—and I have to say the words I heard in that service were unlike any I had heard in a church.

My name is Tanya.

I'm a Republican, and I work for the county. I've never heard of Unitarian Universalism, but when I was reading the local paper, I noticed a piece about a UU congregation hosting a program about the war in Iraq. I'm not sure what to think about a church that speaks openly about politics, but my interest has been piqued.

My name is Beth.

My son, James, is 12 now. He was diagnosed as autistic when he was 18 months old. He's taller, and stronger, than me now, and moving into adolescence, too. When he was young, we went to the church where he went to nursery school, because everything was familiar to him, and so it was easier on both of us. But now I need a place for my own religious and spiritual growth. Leaving him home alone is not an option.

My name is Ben.

I am Latino-looking, and I have come this morning dressed as I would on any Sunday—clean, pressed jeans, and a clean, pressed shirt. I know people will notice me. They always do, because I don't look like most UUs. I know I'll be treated "differently," but I'm always curious about what that will be. You see, I'm a Unitarian Universalist minister, and I like to visit different congregations while I'm on vacation, although I don't identify myself as a minister.

FIND OUT MORE

Diversity and Multiculturalism

James, Jacqui and Judith A. Frediani, *Weaving the Fabric of Diversity* (Bston, MA: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1996)

Morrison-Reed, Mark D. *Black Pioneers in a White Demonination* (Boston: Skinner House, 1992)

[Unitarian Universalist Association Office of Multicultural Growth and Witness](#)

The Empowerment Controversy

Carpenter, Victor H. [Long Challenge: The Empowerment Controversy](#) (Chicago: Meadville Lombard Theological School Press, 2003)

Forsey, Alicia McNary, ed. [In Their Own Words](#) (Berkeley, CA: Star King School for the Ministry, 2001)

[Unitarian Universalism and the Quest for Racial Justice](#) (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1993)

"Generation Theory"

Strauss, William and Neil Howe. *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992)

Intergenerational Ministry

Additional information on intergenerational ministry and dialogue can be found in Gambone, James V. *All Are Welcome: A Primer for Intentional Intergenerational Ministry and Dialogue* (Elder Eye Press, 1998)

WORKSHOP 16: RIPPLES IN THE WATER — THE EVANGELISTS

INTRODUCTION

What's your idea of true religion? Unitarianism is a way of life, life of vigorous thought, constructive activity, of generous service—not a religion of inherited creeds, revered saints, or holy books... If you have given up "old time" religion, Unitarianism has the answer for you. — from an American Unitarian Association (AUA) pamphlet funded by the Laymen's League, c. 1955

We may not think of ourselves as an evangelical faith, but many over the years have worked to intentionally spread the good news of Unitarian and Universalist thought. This workshop looks at individuals and groups in our faith history that helped our movement to grow. This final workshop gives participants an opportunity to review and reflect on highlights of the program and explore ways we can continue to make our heritage a living history. Before this workshop, you might invite participants to review their journal entries.

If your congregation began as part of the Fellowship Movement, the conversation in Activity 2 may raise issues that touch on present or past conflicts in the congregation. Keep the conversation focused on general benefits and challenges of the heritage of the Fellowship Movement as experienced by those in your congregation.

Before leading this workshop, review the Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters in the program Introduction. Prepare to accommodate anyone who may be in the group.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Highlight individuals and movements that have sparked Unitarian Universalism to grow, sometimes in unexpected ways
- Review the stories, events, reflections, encounters, and discussions that have comprised this program
- Encourage participants to reflect on their experience of the program and imagine ways to

continue exploring the stories of our faith as a living history.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about individuals and groups that carried the good news of Unitarianism, Universalism, and Unitarian Universalism to new populations
- Explore and express an understanding of Unitarian Universalist "evangelism"
- Review and reflect on learnings from the program
- Plan how they will continue to engage our faith's history to shape their experience of Unitarian Universalism.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Quillen Shinn	20
Activity 2: The Fellowship Movement	25
Activity 3: Reflection	45
Faith in Action: Spreading the Word	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Shout it Out!	30
Alternate Activity 2: Is All News Good PR? 25	
Alternate Activity 3: Faith like a River	45

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

As you prepare for the workshop, consider how Unitarian Universalists sometimes "hide our light under a bushel." In what ways do individuals, congregations, and our association keep Unitarian Universalism "quiet?" Why might this be? What fears might be associated with living our faith more publicly, more "out loud?"

You may wish to ask participants to engage in this same spiritual practice so that they, too, arrive at the workshop centered and ready to engage with the material and the group.

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Sign-in sheet and pen/pencil
- Name tags and markers
- Workshop 1, Leader Resource 1, [Schedule Template](#) (included in this document)
- Workshop 1, Handout 2, [Time Line of UU History](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Create and post a workshop agenda on newsprint. The Workshop-at-a-Glance section provides time estimates. Create a welcome table near the entrance. Set out name tags and markers, the sign-in sheet and pen/pencil, and copies of the schedule.
- Make copies of the Time Line of UU History handout (Workshop 1, Handout 2), if you need some. Place time line handouts on the welcome table.
- Optional: Post the Time Line of UU History display.

Description of Activity

Welcome everyone to the workshop as they enter. Ask them to sign in, make (or pick up) name tags, and pick up the schedule and time line handouts from the welcome table. Point out the posted agenda for this workshop.

Including All Participants

Write the agenda in large, clear lettering and post it where it will be easily visible to all participants.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the UUA hymnbook, for all participants
- Optional: Decorative cloth

Preparation for Activity

- Set up a worship or centering table with the chalice and (optional) decorative cloth.
- Optional: Invite a participant in advance to act as chalice lighter or reader to make the workshop more participatory.

Description of Activity

Gather participants. Distribute copies of *Singing the Living Tradition* and lead the group to sing together "This Little Light of Mine," Hymn 118. After singing the lyrics provided in the hymnbook, invite participants to sing an additional verse:

This little liberal light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
Hide it under a bush? O NO! I'm gonna let it shine,
Hide it under a bush? O NO! I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Explain that this additional verse was a favorite of Unitarian Universalist youth gatherings, particularly Liberal Religious Youth (LRY). Ask if any members of the group have memories of singing this verse. After memories have been shared, light the chalice.

ACTIVITY 1: QUILLEN SHINN (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- A copy of the story "[Quillen Shinn — Grasshopper or St. Paul?](#)" (included in this document) "
- Leader Resource 1, [The Words of Quillen Shinn](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 2, [Quillen Hamilton Shinn, Portrait](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Print out the story "Quillen Shinn — Grasshopper or St. Paul?" and prepare to read or tell it.
- Print Leader Resource 1, The Words of Quillen Shinn and cut it apart, one quote per strip.
- Ask a few volunteers in advance to read aloud some quotations from Quillen Shinn. Provide them with Leader Resource 1.
- Print out Leader Resource 2 to pass around the room. Or download the portrait to project it for the group, and test your computer and projector.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
From this time forth, brethren, let our watchword be, 'Go forward!' or 'Come forward!' and all up and down your great rivers and scattered over your broad prairies will be set the beaconlights

of our holy faith to light up with hope and joy the coming years. — Quillen Hamilton Shinn (1845-1907)

- On another sheet of newsprint, write and post:
 - In Shinn's day, Universalist leaders debated the best way for the denomination to grow: Concentrate on large population centers, or grow small congregations anywhere and everywhere? Is this question still relevant?
 - What are benefits of concentrating on a few centers of large population? What might be challenges?
 - What are benefits of outreach to many small communities? What might be challenges?
 - What tools do we have today that might reframe this debate from Shinn's day?
 - Are Shinn's exhortations to all Universalists to act as missionaries still relevant? If so, how?

Description of Activity

Display or distribute Leader Resource 2, Quillen Hamilton Shinn, Portrait.

Read or tell the story.

Then, distribute the slips of paper from Leader Resource 1, The Words of Quillen Shinn. Invite volunteers to read a few quotations aloud.

Call attention to the prepared quote and questions you have posted on newsprint. Lead participants to discuss the questions.

ACTIVITY 2: THE FELLOWSHIP MOVEMENT (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- A copy of the story "[The Fellowship Movement](#)" (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print out the story "The Fellowship Movement" and prepare to read or tell it.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
The positive view maintains that the congregations planted as lay-led fellowships between 1948 and 1967 saved Unitarianism from near extinction and converted a regional

religious movement into a truly national one. Along with growing the denomination, fellowships brought innovation, vitality, and lay leadership into a religious community greatly in need of fresh air... At the other end of the spectrum is the view that the fellowship movement spawned small, introverted, even hostile groups that did not want to grow or welcome newcomers, did not identify with the larger denomination, and represented Unitarian Universalism in ways that did not reflect the larger movement's self-understanding. — Holly Ulbrich

- On another sheet of newsprint, write and post:
 - What do you see as the most positive contributions of the Fellowship Movement to Unitarian Universalism today?
 - What do you see as challenges brought by the Fellowship Movement which are still with us today?

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story "The Fellowship Movement."

Then, direct the group's attention to the quote and questions you have posted. Lead a discussion.

ACTIVITY 3: REFLECTION (45 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Lined paper and pens/pencils
- [Time Line of UU History from Workshop 1](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - What have you learned from these workshops that shifted your understanding of Unitarian Universalism or your sense of your identity as a Unitarian Universalist?
 - What feelings were associated with the shift? Recall both the circumstances of your new learning, and the feelings you experienced in response to that learning.
- Prepare a sheet of newsprint or a handout to refresh participants' memories of events and people discussed in the workshops. Use the

Workshop-at-a-Glance table at the beginning of each workshop to help you.

Description of Activity

This closing activity is designed for the final workshop in a series.

Display or distribute the list of workshop content you have prepared. Share time line handouts or remind the group where the time line is posted. Invite participants to reflect on what they learned during your time together. Prompt the group to think of something they learned about the history of your congregation or about Unitarian Universalism that somehow shifted their sense of identity as Unitarian Universalist.

Indicate the questions you have posted. Distribute paper and pens/pencils. Ask the group to take ten minutes to reflect on the questions in silence and jot notes if they wish. If you sense uncertainty about how to respond to the questions, you might offer:

If you recall a story of achievement or courage, did it make you feel unexpectedly proud? If the story that comes to mind is about a time when our forebears fell short of Unitarian Universalist ideals, what feelings did you experience? If the story told of a struggle to find the right thing to do in the face of difficult choices, did you feel a sense of connection to the struggle?

After ten minutes, invite participants to form groups of three and share their reflections. Allow ten minutes for sharing.

Re-gather the large group. Invite participants to share any appreciations or reflections on their workshop experiences.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Taking It Home
- Optional: Faith in Action from this workshop

Preparation for Activity

- Download and customize Taking It Home as a handout. You may wish to add the Faith in Action activity suggestion from this workshop.

Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite participants to gather around the chalice. Read these words attributed to John Murray:

Go out into the highways and by-ways. Give the people something of your new vision. You may

possess a small light, but uncover it, let it shine, use it in order to bring more light and understanding to the hearts and minds of men and women. Give them not hell, but hope and courage; preach the kindness and everlasting love of God.

Extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: SPREADING THE WORD

Description of Activity

Unitarian Universalist congregations are highly structured institutions that depend on both professional staff and lay volunteers to do the work of the congregation. In conversation with others in the congregation, try to identify any individuals and groups in your congregation that are specifically charged with the responsibility to "spread the word" of Unitarian Universalism. Invite them into a conversation about how communications and publicity have changed during their tenure in the congregation. In what ways can these individuals and groups help everyone in the congregation be an evangelist for Unitarian Universalism?

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

After this final workshop, make a time to talk together to evaluate this workshop and debrief the entire program. Use these questions to guide your shared reflection:

- What parts of the workshop worked well and which did not? Why? Were the success, or lack of success, related to the topics, or to the types of activities?
- How might we lead this final workshop differently, if we were to lead this program again?
- Are there loose ends from any workshops that need to be followed up?
- What strengths did you each bring to this workshop? To the program?
- As co-leaders, when did you work well together?
- What might help you to be better leaders in future workshops?

TAKING IT HOME

What's your idea of true religion? Unitarianism is a way of life, life of vigorous thought, constructive activity, of generous service—not a

religion of inherited creeds, revered saints, or holy books... If you have given up "old time" religion, Unitarianism has the answer for you. — from an American Unitarian Association (AUA) Pamphlet funded by the Laymen's League, c. 1955

In your meditations, reflect on your journey to, or in, Unitarian Universalism. Do you see Unitarian Universalism as a way of life for yourself? In what ways do you feel responsibility to spread the word about this religion?

Find a way to share some favorite stories from Unitarian Universalist history with family and friends, or with the congregation at a worship service, retreat, or other gathering.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHOUT IT OUT! (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 3, [Shout It Out!](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 4, [Layman's League Advertising, Mid-20th Century](#) (included in this document)
- Art materials including paper, markers, scissors, and poster board
- Optional: Computer with Internet connection, and projector

Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 3, Shout It Out! and Leader Resource 4, Layman's League Advertising, Mid-20th Century.
- Set art materials at work tables.
- Optional: Test the computer, projector, and access to the [Unitarian Universalist Association](#) (at www.uua.org/) website home page.

Description of Activity

Using Leader Resource 3, Shout It Out! share with participants the history of Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist print-based evangelism. Show Leader Resource 4, Layman's League Advertising, Mid-20th Century. Invite participants to share their memories or experiences of Unitarian Universalist marketing or advertising. How effective do participants perceive these efforts to have been in encouraging more people to discover Unitarian Universalism?

Invite participants to spend a few minutes imagining their own version of a campaign to bring Unitarian Universalism to more people. Ask guide questions:

- What words come to mind? What images?
- What media might you use?

If you have a computer with Internet access, display the UUA's home page as an example of how many people find Unitarian Universalism for the first time. Invite participants to explore the website.

Invite participants to use the art materials to sketch, write, storyboard, or otherwise show their ideas for spreading the word about Unitarian Universalism to a 21st-century population. Invite them to work alone or in groups for 15 minutes. Save time for volunteers to share their creations and ideas with one another.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: IS ALL NEWS GOOD PR? (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- A copy of the story ["We're in the News!"](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy the story "We're in the News!" for all participants and prepare to read it aloud.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
The press looks for the 5 Cs: conflict, controversy, contradiction, cast of characters and colorful language.

Description of Activity

Present the story "We're in the News!" or distribute copies for participants to read to themselves. Then, direct the group's attention to the posted statement. Invite participants to identify which of the 5 Cs they found in each of the story's two narratives. Ask:

- In what ways do stories such as these have positive value and outcomes?
- What negative values or outcomes are there?

Ask participants what other stories they know of Unitarian Universalism in the news. Can they identify both positive and negative values and outcomes of the press coverage?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: FAITH LIKE A RIVER (45 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Craft materials and supplies such as clay, wire, beads, fabric, paint, paper, markers, magazines for collage, scissors, glue, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - What event or person covered in the workshops spoke deeply to you?
 - What quality of that event or person would you like (or *not* like) to incorporate in your own life?
 - How will you commit to carry that quality forward? Will you do it alone or will you invite others to join you?
- To refresh participants' memories, prepare a sheet of newsprint or a handout that lists the events and people discussed during the workshop series. Use the Workshop-at-a-Glance tables to help you.

Description of Activity

Introduce the activity using these or similar words:

History is never a closed book. As Unitarian Universalists, we re-examine and continue the stories begun by our religious forebears, those we spoke about in these workshops and those we did not. Of course, we have the choice to close the book of history and return it to the shelf. Or, we can make our history a living history in which we ourselves play a part. Our inheritance as Unitarian Universalists lives on in our corporate forms of worship, governance, institutions, and Principles, but as individuals we also have the opportunity to play a unique role in its history.

If we choose to make our history a personal living Unitarian Universalist history, how might we go about doing that? One way is to incorporate something about a Unitarian Universalist forebear into our own lives.

Display or distribute the list you have prepared of people and events the program included. Then, indicate the posted questions and read them aloud. Invite participants to reflect on the questions, and use the craft supplies provided to create a work that expresses their responses, sharing with one another as they create.

Re-gather the group and invite volunteers to share their works and describe the quality they commit to carry forward.

STORY: QUILLEN SHINN — GRASSHOPPER OR ST PAUL?

Any diner at the Ferry Beach Conference Center can tell you the campers' favorite song. As coffee cups bounce off soundly thumped tables and kitchen ladles hit impromptu serving tray gongs in time to the tune of "There is a Tavern in the Town," the campers, with unnerving regularity, close the dinner hour by roaring, "Oh, Shinn, oh dear old Quillen Shinn. To you we raise this grateful din!" So who is this Quillen Shinn, and why is he memorialized in song by the campers at a Unitarian Universalist camp and conference center on the coast of Maine?

Quillen Hamilton Shinn (1845-1907) was perhaps the best known Universalist of his day, an indefatigable evangelist bringing the good news of Universalism to people across North America. Shinn's call to spread the word of universal salvation was apparent from the beginning of his ministry. Ordained in 1870, Shinn served eight New England churches in 19 years, and set up as many as 14 nearby preaching outposts for each congregation he served. After founding a church in Omaha, Nebraska (1889-91), Shinn decided that, henceforth, his would be a missionary ministry. By the time of his death from rheumatic fever at age 62, Shinn had crisscrossed North America preaching in every state in the Union as well as in Canada and Mexico, sometimes giving a sermon a day. He had founded eight churches, overseen the construction of at least 40 church buildings, and brought Universalism to hundreds, if not thousands, of people. He had reportedly encouraged more than thirty people to take up the Universalist ministry. He had organized four state conferences, a number of Young Peoples Christian Unions, Ladies Aid Societies, mission circles, and seven summer meetings. All this caused him to be dubbed the "Grasshopper Missionary" by a critic who thought he jumped too far afield and stayed too short a time to make his results lasting. But his supporters called him the "St. Paul of the Universalist Church."

Even before Shinn entered the ministry he had an effect on Universalism. As he traveled from his home in West Virginia to take his place at the Canton Theological School at Saint Lawrence University, Shinn stopped off at the 1867 Universalist General Convention in Baltimore. The Rev. Anson Titus later described the scene:

At the convention, after listening to the wordy and sharp discussions upon the Winchester Profession of Faith, for which the convention was noted, Mr. Shinn, overturning all parliamentary decorum, arose and said he was on his way to Canton to fit himself for the ministry, but felt more

like returning to his mountain home, for evidently Universalist ministers could write better than they could talk. The utter unexpectedness and sincerity of the stranger's words brought the doctrinaries face to face, not with conceited theories but with living problems. A new spirit was quickened and pandemonium was turned into a love feast.

Tall, handsome, and charismatic, with a dynamic delivery, evident enthusiasm, and seemingly tireless energy, Shinn was the perfect evangelist. Theologically he was a traditional Bible-centered Universalist Christian, and he fit well in a denomination that began as an evangelistic faith and continued as such for many years. Universalism was a faith meant to bring the good news of God's unwavering love and mercy to all humanity. The early Universalists—John Murray, Elhanan Winchester, Hosea Ballou—had been evangelists, traveling preachers spreading the word wherever they could. Their example gave rise to the Universalist circuit riders who were often young men, and sometimes women, of rural backgrounds and little education who were eager to travel. Travelling primarily on horseback, they had no denominational or financial backing and fended for themselves bringing the Universalist gospel across the country. Many of their names are forgotten, but several are still remembered for their work. Nathaniel Stacy, though in frail health, travelled the roads of New York and Pennsylvania. George Rogers, sturdy and humorous, brought word of Universalism to the Southern and Midwest states. T.C. Eaton logged 9,000 miles in fourteen months in what would later become the Iowa Territory. These were the people in whose footsteps Quillen Shinn would follow nearly half a century later, making his own mark as a missionary on horseback.

Shinn was more fortunate than the earlier evangelists had been; he had denominational backing. In 1895, the General Convention named him as General Missionary at an annual salary of \$3,000. By 1900, his special interest in the South was recognized with the title Missionary to the Southern States, which he bore until his death. Shinn worked as the Southern missionary ten months of the year and for two summer months led camp meetings in the North where he helped establish camps and conference centers including The Weirs, on Lake Winnepesaukee, New Hampshire, and Ferry Beach, on the Maine coast.

In his lifetime and following his death he received many accolades and tributes, from honorary doctoral degrees to churches named in his honor. But his work was not without controversy. Because he was willing to organize a Universalist congregation wherever he found two or more Universalists, Shinn set off a denominational

debate about whether it was better to concentrate effort in selected urban areas, or to expand anywhere and everywhere. Shinn's answer was unequivocal. He lived his life according to the belief he preached, that all Universalists must be missionaries. Registering for the summer conference at Ferry Beach in 1904, he listed his home as "Everywhere."

STORY: THE FELLOWSHIP MOVEMENT

Between 1948 and 1967, Unitarianism experienced a period of enormous growth, perhaps the most significant increase in numbers for any time in Unitarian, Universalist, or Unitarian Universalist history. One third of the people who swelled our ranks during these years came through the doors of newly organized "fellowships." The story behind the Fellowship Movement is one of the most interesting in all our efforts at evangelism.

The story begins with American Unitarian Association (AUA) President Frederick May Eliot who, while investigating the denomination's history of growth, rediscovered an early 20th-century plan for "lay centers." Based on this idea, a growth plan was conceived by staff taking into account the experiences of the fledgling Church of the Larger Fellowship, which served isolated religious liberals by mail; the AUA's Extension Department, which helped congregations unable to fully support a full program and professional ministry, and Lon Ray Call, the AUA's minister-at-large who was available "on loan" to congregations in need of short-term guidance. According to this plan, which was launched in 1947, the AUA would grant recognition and offer assistance to groups of religiously liberal laypeople gathered without a minister. Under the guidance of Lon Ray Call, AUA's minister-at-large, and Munroe Husbands, a lay leader who would eventually hold the AUA positions of Director of Fellowship and Associate Director of Extension, the Fellowship Movement proved an excellent vehicle for encouraging interest in Unitarianism in locations unlikely to support a church, as defined by size and professional ministerial leadership. A fellowship was defined as a minimum of ten religiously liberal laypeople who expressed sympathy with the purposes of the AUA, had bylaws, and made an ongoing financial commitment to the AUA. The first fellowship so recognized was the Unitarian Fellowship of Boulder, Colorado, in 1948.

Postwar America, with the Baby Boom and the movement of population centers to the West Coast, the South, the Southwest, and the Midwest, fostered the growth of Unitarian fellowships. Many began in heartland towns where universities were located, reflecting a growing interest among well educated Americans in individualism, humanism, and social activism. The Church of the Larger Fellowship and the Unitarian Laymen's League provided funding for advertising. The fellowships organized across the country were not conceived or intended as "churches in the making." They attracted people who were interested

in a strong degree of participation in their local religious community. Historian Conrad Wright reflected that Husbands' work was not to bring these groups under any form of denominational control, but to "facilitate their birth, (allow) them to find their own identity, develop their own style, and produce their own leadership."

By 1958, 323 fellowships had been organized, representing 12,500 members, 75 percent of whom were new to Unitarianism. In the single year 1958-59, 55 new fellowships were established.

In the beginning, fellowships differed from churches in a number of ways. One, of course, was their usually small size. Other characteristics included greater intimacy, spontaneity, informality, and directness. Do-it-yourself and lay-led, they offered and demanded more personal involvement and participation, more identification with the group, and a greater sense of responsibility for the community's operation. In the words of one observer, "fellowship members 'joined an experience' rather than an institution."

The spirit of individualism that characterized fellowships sometimes undermined efforts to create structures necessary for the group to function, and each year, some fellowships ceased operations. But an extraordinary number survived and even thrived.

The Fellowship Movement's approach to religious experience influenced larger, more tightly structured congregations in the Association. Fellowships understood from the beginning that lay involvement was essential to survival and success. While Unitarian Universalism has a long and proud history of lay leadership, some have seen in the Fellowship movement the birth of "shared ministry." The sharing, though, was among congregants, rather than with a minister. Lay people in fellowships created Sunday services, developed and carried forth religious education programs, and maintained an environment where differing voices might be heard. Lay people managed all the basic functions of a lightly funded organization.

Munroe Husbands noted that many who were first drawn to the fellowships had "developed an antipathy toward the entire religious vocabulary: worship, God, prayer, invocation, benediction." But interestingly, Husbands continued, "slowly the individual divests him- (or her-)self of this negativism, talks out the resentment accumulated over the years, and begins formulating a positive philosophy of religion." Though envisioned by some as a refuge from religion, fellowships were, in fact, also therapeutic, helping members to move through anger and rejection of a religion of the past towards a positive view of religion.

Husbands was the driving engine behind the Fellowship Movement, a tireless advocate, listener, and supporter of fledgling fellowships from coast to coast. When he received the UUA's Award for Distinguished Service in 1973, he was dubbed "circuit rider of mid-20th century, organizer of more Unitarian Universalist congregations than any one person in our history." Husbands' work, and the work of the Fellowship Movement, concluded primarily because of the financial stresses faced by the new UUA after the 1961 consolidation of the AUA and the Universalist Church of America (which had but eight intentionally lay-led congregations). The program formally ended in 1967.

Today opinions vary about the success of the Fellowship Movement. Holly Ulbrich author of *The Fellowship Movement: A Growth Strategy and its Legacy* writes:

The positive view maintains that the congregations planted as lay-led fellowship between 1948 and 1967 saved Unitarianism from near extinction and converted a regional religious movement into a truly national one. Along with growing the denomination, fellowships brought innovation, vitality, and lay leadership into a religious community greatly in need of fresh air... At the other end of the spectrum is the view that the fellowship movement spawned small, introverted, even hostile groups that did not want to grow or welcome newcomers, did not identify with the larger denomination, and represented Unitarian Universalism in ways that did not reflect the larger movement's self-understanding.

STORY: WE'RE IN THE NEWS!

Here are two stories of Unitarianism, Universalism, and Unitarian Universalism unexpectedly in the news which raised our name recognition across the country. For good or for ill? You decide.

The Last Blasphemer

Abner Kneeland (1774-1844) carried many banners through his lifetime: Universalist convert, minister, and evangelist; writer and editor; activist for progressive causes; and, perhaps most famously, convicted blasphemer. Though Kneeland's concerns and commitments may seem quite reasonable and even admirable today, they were not welcome in his own time.

Kneeland, the sixth of ten children, was born and raised in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. By 1801, he had joined a Baptist church in Vermont and was soon engaged as a lay preacher. After reading the works of Elhanan Winchester, he adopted Winchester's Universalist theology as his own. He also established a friendship with Hosea Ballou that weathered rough seas through Kneeland's changing beliefs.

Kneeland was ordained to the Universalist ministry in 1804, and subsequently served congregations in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania. Though his career started in a promising way—he was credited with converting several orthodox preachers while serving in Langdon, New Hampshire, and was deeply involved in the work of Universalist conventions—a combination of theological doubts and political activism soon troubled the waters with the congregations he served, with his colleagues, and ultimately, with public officials.

Kneeland's theological doubts first centered on the Bible. He asserted that the scriptures came from human experience and were not revealed by a divine source. Kneeland moved further from institutional Universalism when he claimed the right to interpret the church's Articles of Faith in his own way. He was increasingly influenced in his ideas by utopian Robert Owen and communitarian Frances Wright, and advocated for more "free thinking" than the Universalists could abide. He was removed from the Universalist ministry in 1829.

By 1831 Kneeland had moved to Boston, formed the First Society of Free Enquirers, and was drawing 2,000 people to his Sunday morning gatherings and Wednesday evening lectures. In this setting, Kneeland not only preached his belief "that God and Nature, so far as we can attach any rational idea to either, are synonymous terms," but also advocated labor reform, women's rights, birth control, and a radical understanding of free thought and the right of

conscience. When he published such contentions in the *Boston Investigator*, which he edited, he was charged with blasphemy by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for having "unlawfully and wickedly" published a "scandalous, impious, obscene, blasphemous and profane libel" of and concerning God. Most offensively, Kneeland had attacked his former religion, saying "Universalists believe in a God which I do not; but believe that their god, with all his moral attributes (aside from nature itself) is nothing more than a chimera of their own imagination." The line resulted in the charge of atheism, punishable by "imprisonment of up to one year, by the pillory, by whipping, or by being made to sit on the gallows with a rope around his neck." Kneeland defended himself, saying he was not an Atheist, but a Pantheist: "I believe that it is in God we live, move, and have our being; and that the whole duty of man consists ... in promoting as much happiness as he can while he lives."

Between convictions, hung juries and appeals, the charge of blasphemy dogged Kneeland, and kept both his name and Universalism in the press, for four years and five trials before the final conviction was upheld. Unitarian minister William Ellery Channing and 167 others—"the names read like a 'Who's Who' among the reformers and intellectuals"—drafted a petition to the governor for a full pardon, but to no avail. Kneeland served sixty days' jail time in Boston. Theodore Parker wrote about the final outcome:

Abner was jugged for sixty days; but he will come out as beer from a bottle, all foaming, and will make others foam... The charm of all is that Abner got Emerson's [Divinity School] address to the students, and read it to his followers, as better infidelity than he could write himself.

After his release, Kneeland's career in Boston was finished. He moved to Iowa to establish a utopian community, Salubria. He died there in 1844. No other person in the United States has ever been charged, tried, sentenced, or incarcerated for the charge of blasphemy.

AYS in the Public Eye

As the segment of CBS's "Public Eye with Bryant Gumbel" began, the camera panned across the New England countryside and dramatically zoomed in on the white clapboard church in a town center. The church was the First Parish (UU) in Concord, Massachusetts. The event that triggered Gumbel's visit involved the 20-plus-year-old human sexuality education program, About Your Sexuality (AYS).

The Reverend Diane Rollert recounts the events behind the story's broadcast on national news:

During my first year as the new (religious education) director, we had a very large class of 13- and 14-year olds participating in the program: twenty-two students with two teachers. Midway through the year, two sets of parents became upset about some of the program's visual materials.

In those days, the program for teens included a series of filmstrips. Filmstrips, for those of you too young to remember, were these long strips of film that were passed through a projector, one frame at a time—pretty much like looking at a slide show. No movement, just still photographs. Among these visuals, there was a filmstrip on anatomy, as well as several filmstrips on lovemaking. Yes, these were explicit, and yes they included straight, gay, and lesbian couples. For a series of complex reasons, we had failed to show these materials to the parents. We had made a mistake, but by the time we rectified the situation it was too late. These two parents had launched a campaign to discredit the program, the minister, the chair of the religious education committee, and me. It was a hard time. Angry, accusing letters were sent all over town. Explicit details of the materials were printed in the local papers, and became a source of gossip on the soccer fields, at cocktail parties and coffee klatches. Everyone, I mean everyone, was talking about the Unitarian church and sex. That summer we got word that a new television "news" magazine called "Public Eye" hosted by Bryant Gumbel had decided that a story involving a church, sex, and teens was the perfect foil for raising their ratings and viewership. Hello 15 minutes of infamy. Here we were in the heart of Puritan country, in a church with a history that went back to 1636, and we were about to be literally and figuratively exposed.

I'm proud of how the congregation handled the situation. We formed a task force. We began showing the filmstrips to all the adults in the congregation. We put the visuals into the context of the program and explained all the good reasons why these materials were used. That was a fearful time. What if the congregation was shocked and appalled by what they saw? What if this crisis pulled us apart? We lived in a puritanical and homophobic world. The conflict could have destroyed us.

As the congregation saw these materials and discussed them, the response was overwhelmingly positive and supportive. Yes, there were those who expressed their

discomfort. But the majority remarked how wonderful it was to see normal people, not airbrushed, not frighteningly thin, expressing their love. How wonderful it was that we were speaking openly to our youth and providing them with accurate information...

In the end, 19 students remained in the class. When "Public Eye" made it clear they were only planning to interview the two aggrieved families, our task force succeeded in getting the producer to also interview the other families. The day the film team arrived in our fellowship hall, they were shocked to find ten parents and ten teens waiting for them. They'd never had to mike so many people for sound before.

Of course, sensational TV is sensational TV, and as contrived and biased as you can imagine. Out of an interview that lasted more than an hour, only a less-than-flattering sound byte or two remained. All the thoughtful comments of our youth and their parents were dropped on the cutting room floor.

A week or so before the show was to be broadcast, we called an open congregational meeting. We set up two microphones at the front of the sanctuary so that anyone could share their thoughts or concerns about the program and the upcoming broadcast. (My husband) David and I had tears in our eyes as a large group of our former students presented a signed document to the community expressing their support. "We have gained a greater understanding of our lives, sexuality and religion... We are proud to say our church has stood for open-mindedness for generations."

The next week, the staff and other members of the church gathered to watch our 15-minutes of fame. In a flash, it was over. The next thing we knew, the whole world was busy analyzing the meaning of the word "it" and the relationship of Bill Clinton to an intern named Monica Lewinsky. We were quickly forgotten. Though not entirely. Suddenly, there were new families crossing our threshold. "Are you the church that isn't afraid to talk to kids about sexuality? Help! Our kids are so bombarded by sexual information on TV and the Internet we don't know what to do. When can we sign them up?"

"Are you the church that is open enough to talk about homosexuality with your children? Thank you. I can't imagine how different my life would have been if my church community had told me

that I am loveable, that I have inherent worth and dignity."
We grew and strengthened as a community, and our children reaped the benefits.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: THE WORDS OF QUILLEN SHINN

Writings of the Reverend Quillen Hamilton Shinn (1845-1907).

I am not on a pleasure trip wholly; the grandest recreation I get is working to spread our faith. Every liberal thinker in all this region is my parishioner. I own the mountains. Upon entering a new place the first impulse is to find if any Universalists are there. Missionary work! I can no more keep it out of a pleasure excursion than I can keep Universalism out of my sermons.

Our Church has had missionaries. We have some now, but the supply is meager while the demand is great. There ought to be adjustment here. It puzzles one to know why partialist churches get missionaries for every field they desire to enter. Our faith is more truly evangelical than any other. It means something better for all. Is not that good news? And spreading this is missionary work. The very faith compels every believer to be a missionary.

I am bold in saying that young men who are not ready to undertake hard things who are not willing to sacrifice much, and certainly such as are not willing to give up such inexcusable habits as the use of wine and tobacco, are not fit for Universalist missionaries. I know that the tobacco part of my statement is hard on some who are splendid fellows. I can't help it. I want to make them angry with me if only that will stir them to the heroism they are capable of. The greatest faith calls for the Church of the faithful.

Let us cultivate the missionary spirit. It is our great need. We must educate our people to be missionaries in desire and in action. Then we will grow as do other churches. Every Universalist must be kindled with the sense of obligation to do something for the spread of his faith. There ought not to be an idle Universalist, surely not an indifferent one, on the face of the earth. If there are any, they ought to be disturbed. The peace of inactivity cannot be afforded. The task that presses is developing a genius for missionary endeavor and mastery.

We need a tremendous shaking up. Don't be afraid of enthusiasm. It won't hurt us spiritually. If any are starving today, it is because of trying to live on culture only. Some great icebergs are floating around in these days, called 'culture.'

(Texas, Jan. 4, 1904, in a letter to his wife)

Glare of sunshine, but bitter cold! Northwest wind! Ice! Sand! A stretch of desolation dotted with houses! A desert place if there was ever one! New Year's day was spent at Sweetwater, and it was like summer. I stayed at a hotel making out reports for December. Next day, Saturday, it was bitter cold, and I took the stage, an open rattle-trap concern, for this place. Had not got out of the town when I saw I would freeze to death unless I got some protection. I went to a store and bought a blanket and wrapped it all around me. The cutting northwest wind went right through it and it blew so hard I had to hold my hat on all the way, twenty miles, and the wind would get between me and the blanket and blew the latter off repeatedly. My hat went off two or three times and so I had to clutch the ends of the blanket with one hand, hold on to my hat with the other, and as a result my hands ached fearfully and yesterday they were all swollen up and remain so yet. Deliver me from another trip like that, and yet the hack-driver sang and whistled all the way.

LEADER RESOURCE 2: QUILLEN HAMILTON SHINN, PORTRAIT

From the Unitarian Universalist Association archives.



THE MINISTER AT TWENTY-FIVE.

LEADER RESOURCE 3: SHOUT IT OUT!

Though the word "evangelism" may cause discomfort for Unitarian Universalists, Unitarians and Universalists over the years have been creative in finding ways to spread the "good news" of their liberal faith. Many of these efforts involved print media. As early as the 16th century in Europe, unorthodox views on the Trinity, God, and the nature of Jesus appeared in print. Rakow, Poland, the center of Unitarian thought in the 16th century, established a press that later moved to Krakow, and eventually published more than 500 titles that were widely distributed throughout Europe. Similar efforts spread the writings of James Rely, Joseph Priestley, and others, carrying Unitarian and Universalist thought across the British Isles and Northern Europe throughout the 17th and 18th centuries.

As Unitarianism and Universalism took root in 19th-century North America, both denominations reached out to attract new members and build new congregations. Universalists tended toward the spoken word, with preaching tours and circuit riding, while Unitarians leaned more on the written word of tracts and pamphlets, but both traditions put their beliefs into print.

When the American Unitarian Association (AUA) was founded in 1825, one of its primary purposes was to publish tracts. In its first year, the AUA distributed 17,000 copies of six different pamphlets; just three years later, 143,000 copies of 21 different publications were sold. Not all Unitarians were enthused about the new emphasis on publications. Minister Alpheus Harding of New Salem, Massachusetts remarked that his members "were not a reading people." Nevertheless, the Unitarian Book and Tract Society was established in 1835 to print and distribute materials for free. During this same time and into the 19th century, the Universalists published not only tracts and pamphlets, but generated more than 180 different weekly, monthly, and quarterly periodicals, with circulations from a few hundred to 5,000.

In 1854, the AUA established Beacon Press to produce denominational tracts. AUA President Samuel Kirk said, dedicating the new venture, "We can send forth a thousand volumes, to be read by ten thousand persons, for what it will cost to send one missionary to speak here and there to a few hundreds." In the early 20th century, AUA President Samuel Atkins Eliot, enlarged Beacon's mission. Eliot envisioned a press where "books of marked theology and religious note will continue to have a predominant place ... the wide interest in all subjects relating to social and moral betterment should be recognized by the Association's imprint. ... The evergrowing topics of war and peace and arbitration, or national amity and racial brotherhood will be represented." Beacon Press continues today to be a powerful voice of liberalism in the publishing world.

In 1877, the Unitarians began a Post Office Mission to send out tracts in response to inquiries from all over the country. The mission was later managed by the General Alliance of Unitarian Women. A similar effort on behalf of the Universalists was a project of the Young People's Christian Union.

The Unitarian Layman's League, founded in 1907, established the Unitarian Mission after World War I, which sent ministers to 115 towns and cities for rallies, public meetings, and interviews to "help to publicize the Unitarian faith." The League later played a significant role in promoting the Fellowship Movement with a popular advertising campaign in the *New York Times*, *Saturday Review*, *Harper's*, *The Atlantic*, *Chicago News*, and *Chicago Tribune* which posed questions such as "Are You a Unitarian without Knowing It?" "Are You a Closet Unitarian?" and "Are You a Religious Humanist?" The campaign, active from 1956 to 1963, drew as many as 7,000 new members to the faith.

The innovative Wayside Pulpit, initiated in 1918, provided an opportunity for congregations to display a poster-size "sharp, pithy sentence" outside their buildings to catch the eye of passersby. Examples include "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" (Martin Luther King) and "We need not think alike to love alike" (Francis David). Still going strong, this trademark practice is noticed even by those who have never crossed the threshold of a Unitarian Universalist church.

At the Unitarian Universalist Association, publications and publicity are an integral part of the life of the denomination. The Church of the Larger Fellowship, established as a Unitarian venture in 1944, produces and distributes worship and religious education materials for individuals, families, and small congregations. *UU World* magazine provides Association and congregational news and essays in both print and web formats. Groups of congregations in a single geographic area have come together to promote regional advertising campaigns, such as a San Francisco Bay Area "Imagine a Religion..." campaign. Skinner House Books is an imprint of the UUA, publishing books "to aid individuals and congregations in their search for truth and meaning."

In the quickly changing landscape of 21st century media, it is no small challenge to catch the ear and eye of those who may be searching for a new spiritual home. Unitarian Universalism has kept pace with an increased use of websites,

social media, podcasting, and streaming video. Recent campaigns have included branding Unitarian Universalism as "The Uncommon Denomination," and subsequently, an extensive national campaign stretching from Times Square billboards to *Time* magazine ads with the tag line, "Nurture Your Spirit; Help Heal Our World."

LEADER RESOURCE 4: LAYMAN'S LEAGUE ADVERTISING, MID-20TH CENTURY

**UNITARIANS
do not have an
easy religion**

It permits and demands that people think out their beliefs for themselves, and then live those beliefs.

The stress is placed upon living this life nobly and effectively rather than on the preparation for an after-existence.

SR3 Saturday Review
March 16, 1957

**Who are these
UNITARIANS?**

The 72 page paper-bound book, "A Pocket Guide to Unitarianism," will be sent to those interested in liberal religion. Thousands who previously have thought they had "to think alone and like it" have read this book and found for themselves a happy church home within the Unitarian Fellowship, in company with Emerson, Jefferson, Holmes, Priestley, Steinmetz, Darwin, Morse, Bret Harte, Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Lowell, and other great thinkers, past and present.

T3B New York Times March 16, 1957
T4B New York Times April 21, 1957

**Five Years
of
Unitarian
Advertising**

by the
Unitarian Laymen's League

**Who are these
UNITARIANS?**

The booklet, *Introducing Unitarianism*, will be sent to those interested in liberal religion. Thousands who previously have thought they had "to think alone and like it" have read this book and found for themselves a happy church home within the Unitarian Fellowship, in company with Emerson, Jefferson, Holmes, Priestley, Steinmetz, Darwin, Morse, Bret Harte, Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Lowell, and other great thinkers, past and present.



MAIL THIS COUPON WITH 10c TO
UNITARIAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE
Dept. 25 Beacon St., Boston 8, Mass.
Please send me booklets on Unitarianism

Name _____
Address _____

**are you a
UNITARIAN
without
knowing it?**



Do you believe that neither prophet nor priest can do your thinking for you?
Do you believe man is capable of self-improvement and is not condemned by the doctrine of "original sin"?
Do you believe that striving to live a wholesome life is more important than accepting religious creeds?
Do you believe in the practical application of brotherhood in all social relations?
Then you are professing Unitarian beliefs.

This coupon appeared below each of the ads

Mail this coupon with 10c to
UNITARIAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE
25 Beacon St., Boston 8, Mass.
Please, send booklets on Unitarian beliefs.

Name _____
Address _____

In the space before "25 Beacon Street" was the identifying key-letter and number. For example, Dept Al stood for the April 1957 ad in ATLANTIC.

- T10B New York Times Oct. 13, 1957
- S3A Saturday Review Dec. 15, 1957
- H3A Harper's Jan., 1958
- A4A Atlantic March, 1958
- AX2 Atlantic Oct., 1958
- HX3 Harper's Nov., 1958
- TX6 New York Times Nov. 16, 1958

- T10C New York Times October 20, 1957
- T13 New York Times January 12, 1958

**are you a
UNITARIAN
without
knowing it?**



Do you believe that religious truth cannot be contrary to truth from any other source?
Do you believe man is capable of self-improvement and is not condemned by "original sin"?
Do you believe that striving to live a wholesome life is more important than accepting religious creeds?
Do you believe in the practical application of brotherhood?
Then you are professing Unitarian beliefs.

This ad, exactly as reproduced here, has been used by over 70 Unitarian churches and Fellowships in their local papers. Sometimes a coupon has been attached, sometimes the message has been followed by announcements of their services and meetings.

FIND OUT MORE

UU Evangelism

Alexander, Scott W., ed. *Salted with Fire: Unitarian Universalist Strategies for Sharing Faith and Growing Congregations* (Boston: Skinner House Books, 1994)

Beacon Press

[Beacon Press: 150 Years of Independent Publishing](#)

The Fellowship Movement

Ulbrich, Holley. [The Fellowship Movement: A Growth Strategy and Its Legacy](#) (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2008)

Wayside Pulpit

[Quotations from the wayside](#) and instructions for [building a Wayside Pulpit](#).