

LOVE RESISTS

HANDOUT 2

**Love Resists Start Up
Conversation**

Engaging Your Congregation with Love Resists

- Start with your Board and staff and then discuss who in the congregation could be invited to start a Love Resists Team.
- Invite leaders and members of racial justice, migrant justice, Muslim solidarity, LGBTQ rights teams to come together to develop an intersectional Love Resists organizing team.
- Invite the whole congregation to a Love Resists Conversation either following a Love Resists Worship Service or before one.
- Invite a grassroots organizations or multi-faith coalition that is fighting criminalization in your community, or two organizations that are working together, to speak to your congregation about what is happening and what they need. Follow-up that gathering to assess what the congregation can do either as a second half of the meeting without the community leaders or at a following meeting.

(Learn more at [Starting Your Love Resists Team](#).)

Welcome – Chalice Lighting

[Bold and Courageous Together](#) by Erika Hewitt:

Reader 1:

The word courage comes from the Latin cor, which means heart. According to poet Mark Nepo, the original use of the word courage meant to stand by one's core: a "striking concept that reinforces the belief found in almost all traditions that living from the Center is what enables us to face whatever life has to offer."

Reader 2:

To "encourage" means to hearten; to impart strength and confidence. This is our work, as a religious community: to encourage one another; to be bold in engaging the world around us, as well as what scares us internally; to give one another the confidence and heart to live as fully as possible.

Congregation:

With full hearts,
we affirm our relationships with one another;
we recognize our agency and our connective power;
and we accept our responsibility to be bold and courageous.

We light this chalice,
symbol of all that we are, all that we have done together,
and all that we will be as our shared ministry encourages those within, and beyond, our walls.

Purpose of this gathering: To explore and plan for how our congregation can be part of Love Resists by expanding sanctuary and protecting our community, growing solidarity, raising our voices to shift public narratives toward justice and compassion, and fortify and sustain ourselves to act with courageous love.

Reading

[The Prophetic Liberal Church](#) by James Luther Adams (1912-1994), Unitarian Universalist theologian and social ethicist.

A church that does not concern itself with the struggle in history for human decency and justice, a church that does not show concern for the shape of things to come, a church that does not attempt to interpret the signs of the times, is not a prophetic church.

We have long held to the idea of the priesthood of all believers, the idea that all believers have direct access to the ultimate resources of the religious life and that every believer has the responsibility of achieving an explicit faith for free persons. As an element of this radical laicism we need also to affirm belief in the prophethood of all believers. The prophetic liberal church is not a church in which the prophetic function is assigned merely to the few.

The prophetic liberal church is the church in which persons think and work together to interpret the signs of the times in the light of their faith, to make explicit through discussion the epochal thinking that the times demand.

The prophetic liberal church is the church in which all members share in the common responsibility to attempt to foresee the consequences of human behavior (both individual and institutional) with the intention of making history in place of merely being pushed around by it. Only through the prophetism of all believers can we together foresee doom and mend our common ways.

From: *Transforming Liberalism: The Theology of James Luther Adams*, pg. 185 Skinner House Books, Boston, 2005.

Take a minute to reflect on these questions. Share in small groups or pairs:

- *What are the signs of these times?*
- *In the light of your faith, what do these times demand?*

Ask for a few reflections in the full group (popcorn style or 1 from each group).

In light of what we believe these times demand, let's get practical about how our congregation can meet the challenges our communities face.

The Love Resists Campaign is activating people of faith and conscience to resist the criminalization of our neighbors and communities, and create a safer, more just, welcoming, and sustainable world.

1. *First, what are we encountering? Who is being criminalized in our communities? What are we seeing?*

List the groups e.g. Muslims, people of color, Black youth, Black activists, immigrants, transgender people, others?

Ask for a few reflections in the full group (popcorn style or 1 from each group).

2. *How are we committed to protecting our communities and being part of Love Resists?*

Are we willing to take risks and make sacrifices?

Discuss in small groups what kinds of risks and sacrifices are called for. Are people willing to dig deep to raise funds, give more volunteer time, talk to others, do things they've never done before, do direct actions and risk arrests, go to demonstrations where reactionary forces and hostile policing may occur, provide sanctuary in their homes, other?

Ask for a few reflections in the full group (popcorn style or 1 from each group).

3. *Are there groups in your community providing services for, advocating with, and organizing people dealing with racial profiling, incarceration, deportation and targeting by the Trump administration?*
4. *Does the congregation or members have relationships with them?*

List the groups e.g. Black Lives Matter chapter, local immigrant rights group, Latinx churches, mosques and Islamic Centers, transgender advocacy organizations, progressive lawyers, UU state action network (most work with these organizations), multi-faith coalitions and the relationships.

If there are not relationships, choose a group and make an outreach plan. If contacting a faith community, it is often helpful to them if the minister (or if no minister the congregational president) reaches out first. (See *Choosing A Partner & Creating Effective Partnerships —Handout 3*)

You will want to begin by expressing your concern for what is happening in the community and your commitment for resisting and transforming that.

Ask them what kind of support they need. Let them know that you will ask the congregation what you can provide and get back to them. Build the relationship from there. Go to the organization's meetings if they desire you to. Invite them to your congregation. Engage in activities both together and apart.

5. *Assess what your congregation can provide in terms of physical, financial, and human resources.*

Many of the groups that are working to protect targeted communities need:

- Financial support

- Use of office equipment
- Office space
- Child care
- Sanctuary
- Volunteers for campaigns to make phone calls, to prepare for and go to protests, visit elected officials, ICE agencies, police chiefs
- Volunteers to accompany undocumented people to ICE check-ins and court hearings
- Volunteers to provide translation
- Volunteers to support families whose members are in prison
- Volunteers to engage in direct action and civil disobedience
- Volunteers to provide jail support, raise bail funds and call lawyers and families members for those who are arrested
- Volunteers to engage in voter registration and Get Out the Vote drives
- Have a form or sign-up sheet that people can fill out checking off what they can do and leave a space for other that they can fill in.

SAMPLE:

UU Congregation of XX, YY Love Resists Volunteer Commitment

I can:

- Help financially
- Assist with child care
- Volunteer with partner organizations:
- Make phone calls
- Attend events
- Help organize actions and campaigns
- Take direct action
- Engage in civil disobedience
- Raise \$
- Help with jail support
- Do voter registration and GOTV

6. *Create a Love Resists Commitment Covenanting Community*

Commit to supporting each other in the work of Love Resists, recognizing that not everyone can do everything but that together we will show up as a community of resisters working for transformation powered by courageous love.

Create a ritual that shows commitment e.g. join hands and read [Fire of Commitment](#) or place stones on an alter or in a bowl of water and name a quality that will help you sustain and grown your commitment or the name of an ancestor that will hold you in the work.

Agree to invite more people into the work.

7. *Create a Love Resists Team* (this can be done by asking people at the gathering to think about volunteering to lead the team OR congregational leaders could recruit team leaders beforehand and ask for volunteers to be on the team with the idea of creating opportunities for all in the congregation to participate in various ways.

Let the Love Resists Team know what you are doing and ask us for support if needed. Write to LoveResists@uua.org.