

**Renaissance Module**  
**Unitarian Universalist History**  
**Leaders Guide**

**By Gail Forsyth-Vail**  
**revised 2016**

**Pat Kahn**  
**Developmental Editor**

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## **About the Author**

Gail Forsyth-Vail is the Director of Adult Programs at the Unitarian Universalist Association. She is a Credentialed Religious Educator, Master Level, who served congregations for twenty-two years before joining the UUA staff. She is the author of *Stories in Faith: Exploring Our Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources Through Wisdom Tales* and co-author of *Harvest the Power: Developing Lay Leadership*, *Bridging: A Handbook for Congregations*, and *Wisdom from the Hebrew Scriptures*, as well as editor of the UUA blog *Cooking Together: Recipes for Immigration Justice Work*. She was the 2007 recipient of the Angus MacLean Award for Excellence in Religious Education.

## **Acknowledgements**

We are grateful for the technical and editorial assistance of Alicia LeBlanc, Administrative and Editorial Assistant in the UUA's Faith Development Office, both in the module documents and especially the online presence!

## **Introduction**

Welcome to the Unitarian Universalist History Renaissance module. This module gives religious educators the background in our history that will help them be more effective as professional religious educators, bringing a deeper knowledge of our tradition as they serve the faith development mission of Unitarian Universalist congregations and organizations.

The module examines history in two ways: 1) introducing the broad themes of our theological and institutional history; 2) providing deeper knowledge of individuals and events which illustrate the broader themes. It is a program filled with stories of our faith and stories of our people, with each event and individual put into historical context. Religious educators are often called upon to share our history, and this approach gives them a method of sharing history that allows engagement with that history. Because religious education is the vehicle by which we guide children, youth, and adults to live their faith in the world, this module offers a glimpse of how our faith has called people to action in their times and places.

This module also includes a guided tour of some of the worship and faith development resources that religious educators might use in the course of their work. Tapestry of Faith stories from a number of programs for children, youth, and adults are included in the readings. Hymns and readings from *Singing the Living Tradition* are placed in their historical context, both to increase participants' familiarity with worship resources and to give them a sense of how the theology of each era is reflected in the hymns and readings we still use today.

### **Module Leaders**

A team of two should facilitate this program. Leaders should be:

- Knowledgeable about Unitarian Universalism and religious education

- Committed to the Unitarian Universalism and to the professional development of religious educators
- Effective at facilitating group process online
- Able to thoroughly prepare for each session, including technical competency
- Willing to track participant participation in sessions and assignments
- Willing to offer honest feedback and suggestions when presented with final project proposals.

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 for creating a good learning and experience than is extensive knowledge of Unitarian Universalist history.

### **Participant Requirements**

This module is an online learning experience comprised of six two-hour sessions with reading and assignments for each. Credit will be offered for full participation in the module. Full participation includes:

- On-line attendance at six two hour sessions
- Reading and reflection to prepare for each session, which will require about two or three hours' time
- Submission of a 250-word post to the discussion forum after each session with an idea for application of their learning in your professional work.
- Preparation of a final project and presentation, working individually, with a partner, or with a small group.

## Technical Requirements

This module requires the use of a videoconferencing platform that includes the ability to screen share audio, video, and document files, as well as internet sites. Zoom is highly recommended ([www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us)) as it allows for breakout rooms within webinars. It also requires the use of a shared document program such as GoogleDocs or Dropbox for posting final projects. Please consult with your sponsoring district, cluster, or group for recommendations about which platform to use and guidance in using the chosen platform. Participants and leaders must have a computer with internet connection and a video camera. Being able to see each other is **critical** to building online community.

Leaders should set up a shared folder in which final projects and other documents of interest can be shared with the group.

## Readers

Participants and leaders will read selections from three required books, and selections from Tapestry of Faith programs and other online resources:

- [\*Stirring the Nation's Heart\*](#) by Polly Peterson (UUA, 2010)
- [\*Missionaries, Builders and Pathfinders\*](#) by Polly Peterson and Gail Forsyth-Vail (UUA, 2014)
- [\*Darkening the Doorways: Black Trailblazers and Missed Opportunities in Unitarian Universalism\*](#) by Mark Morrison-Read (Skinner House, 2011)

You'll also need access to a copy of the hymnal [\*Singing the Living Tradition\*](#) (Unitarian Universalist Association, 1994)

## **Goal and Learning Objectives**

The goal of this program is to give participants a sense of the broad scope of Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist history and some of the key stories that are part of that history, so that participants are able to:

- Understand context for historical stories they tell in worship, small group, classroom, social media, and other settings
- Explain the history of our movement to lay people, to youth, and to children in age-appropriate ways
- Understand and explain how the history of their own congregation or geographical area fits in with the history of the broader movement
- Understand and articulate the history behind some of the theologies and traditions that are important to contemporary Unitarian Universalism
- Understand how we came to be who we are as a movement- and what strengths and challenges our history offers.

## **Participant Guide**

The [Participant Guide](#) offers session-by-session background information and specific reading and activity assignments.

## **Written Sharing**

After most sessions, participants will be asked to share in writing an idea for how the material from that session could be applied to their work. Shared ideas are to be about 250 words, and posted in the appropriate discussion forum online. Assuming that there are at least two weeks

between webinars, participants should complete the written sharing within a week after the webinar, and then do the reading to prepare for the next session the second week.

Leaders should keep track of the participant contributions, and be prepared to offer a positive comment or two to stimulate conversation, if necessary and appropriate, in the opening segment of each session.

### **Final Project**

Working alone or with a group of up to four people, participants prepare a final project that uses what they have learned about our Unitarian Universalist history in their professional work. Details and suggestions can be found in the Participant Guide, Session 6. The project should take about three hours to prepare. An individual project should take about 5-6 minutes to present, and a group project, about 15 minutes. Total presentation time is 80 minutes; adjust the presentation times for the group to accommodate the number of presentations.

Participants must submit a statement of what they plan to do and with whom they will be working by the start of the Session 5 webinar. You must approve the final project plan before they proceed. You may offer suggestions or request a revision if appropriate. Keep these points in mind as you evaluate the plan:

1. Does the project plan offer a practical application of something the participant(s) has learned about Unitarian Universalist history?
2. Does it fulfill one or more of the goals of the program (see above)?
3. Is the presentation plan clear? What form will it take?
4. Is it possible for the participant(s) to complete this project in three hours and to present it in the allotted time? If the project looks overly ambitious (or, conversely, not substantive enough), suggest changes.



## List of Timelines

Timeline Session 1a	Heretics
Timeline Session 1b	Founders
Timeline Session 2	Reformers
Timeline Session 3	Missionaries and Builders
Timeline Session 4	Humanists
Timeline Session 5	Making Life Religious

## Interactive Timelines

The interactive timelines below were created as the final project by two participants in the field test of this module, Sadie Kahn Greene and Mr. Barb Greve and recently updated using a new timeline program.

### Session 1A Heresy Timeline

[https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=1gWS96tlOVqEDRC4gpXkOV8b6fMIRGMJdei3IHps-Rnw&font=Default&lang=en&initial\\_zoom=2&height=650](https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=1gWS96tlOVqEDRC4gpXkOV8b6fMIRGMJdei3IHps-Rnw&font=Default&lang=en&initial_zoom=2&height=650)

### Session 1B Founders Timeline

[https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=16k4\\_CzJS3yHRpCLwia\\_YVcoYJ5PJCe-DMjeXZIY\\_Efg&font=Default&lang=en&initial\\_zoom=2&height=650](https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=16k4_CzJS3yHRpCLwia_YVcoYJ5PJCe-DMjeXZIY_Efg&font=Default&lang=en&initial_zoom=2&height=650)

### Session 2 Timeline Reformers

[https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=1PNHNXaZJpwStvohdlyKKq5pS2o\\_xovq71ZhMakMvbn4&font=Default&lang=en&initial\\_zoom=2&height=650](https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=1PNHNXaZJpwStvohdlyKKq5pS2o_xovq71ZhMakMvbn4&font=Default&lang=en&initial_zoom=2&height=650)

### Session 3 Mission Builders

[https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=1AzdF7G8NC6BnFgbVR9\\_qr5YTz2Yf6HnMogrzKdGITtc&font=Default&lang=en&initial\\_zoom=2&height=650](https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=1AzdF7G8NC6BnFgbVR9_qr5YTz2Yf6HnMogrzKdGITtc&font=Default&lang=en&initial_zoom=2&height=650)

### Session 4 Humanists Timeline

[https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=11BxcCh8jYHaE9nUVNTc32d-zZJGgwOhq9mnuugOWM7o&font=Default&lang=en&initial\\_zoom=2&height=650](https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=11BxcCh8jYHaE9nUVNTc32d-zZJGgwOhq9mnuugOWM7o&font=Default&lang=en&initial_zoom=2&height=650)

#### Session 5a Making Life Religious Timeline

[https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=1GFFnDIFGtVGm8anZTgah6NAy15VD40BdeBhw31i-K4E&font=Default&lang=en&initial\\_zoom=2&height=650](https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=1GFFnDIFGtVGm8anZTgah6NAy15VD40BdeBhw31i-K4E&font=Default&lang=en&initial_zoom=2&height=650)

#### Session 5B The Living Tradition Timeline

[https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=1rTw0u4SGgRSwjZltlVgDZi5Ovkfb8roDkF4HqgY6zb8&font=Default&lang=en&initial\\_zoom=2&height=650](https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=1rTw0u4SGgRSwjZltlVgDZi5Ovkfb8roDkF4HqgY6zb8&font=Default&lang=en&initial_zoom=2&height=650)

Outline of Webinars

**Session 1: Heretics and Founders**

Activity 1 Introductions	15 minutes
Activity 2 Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting	5 minutes
Activity 3 Covenant	5 minutes
Activity 4 Opening Discussion	15 minutes
Activity 5 Going Deeper - Heretics	20 minutes
Activity 6 Partner Church	10 minutes
Activity 7 Break	10 minutes
Activity 8 Going Deeper - Founders	20 minutes
Activity 9 Singing the Living Tradition	10 minutes
Activity 10 Closing	10 minutes
Total Time: 2 hours	

**Session 2: Reformers**

Activity 1 Gathering	5 minutes
Activity 2 Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting	5 minutes
Activity 3 Sharing	20 minutes
Activity 4 Opening Discussion	20 minutes
Activity 5 Break	10 minutes
Activity 6 Lifting Up Voices from the Margins	20 minutes
Activity 7 Going Deeper	30 minutes
Activity 8 Closing	10 minutes
Total Time: 2 hours	

**Session 3: Missionaries and Builders**

Activity 1 Gathering	5 minutes
Activity 2 Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting	5 minutes
Activity 3 Sharing	20 minutes
Activity 4 Opening Discussion	20 minutes
Activity 5 Break	10 minutes
Activity 6 Going Deeper	30 minutes
Activity 7 Lifting Up Voices from the Margins	20 minutes
Activity 8 Closing	10 minutes
Total Time: 2 hours	

#### **Session 4: Humanists**

Activity 1 Gathering	5 minutes
Activity 2 Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting	5 minutes
Activity 3 Sharing	20 minutes
Activity 4 Opening Discussion	20 minutes
Activity 5 Break	10 minutes
Activity 6 What Might Have Been	20 minutes
Activity 7 Facing a New Age	30 minutes
Activity 8 Closing	10 minutes
Total Time: 2 hours	

#### **Session 5: Making Life Religious**

Activity 1 Gathering	5 minutes
Activity 2 Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting	5 minutes
Activity 3 Sharing	10 minutes
Activity 4 Making Life Religious	20 minutes
Activity 5 Origin Stories	20 minutes
Activity 6 Break	10 minutes
Activity 7 Sharing History in Our Work	15 minutes
Activity 8 Continuing Stories	20 minutes
Activity 9 Closing	15 minutes
Total Time: 2 hours	

#### **Session 6: Final Projects**

Activity 1 Gathering	5 minutes
Activity 2 Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting	5 minutes
Activity 3 Final Projects Part 1	40 minutes
Activity 4 Break	10 minutes
Activity 5 Final Projects Part 2	40 minutes
Activity 6 Closing	20 minutes
Total Time: 2 hours	

## Suggested Opening and Closing Words

Post these selections with the volunteer sign up in the shared folder.

### Session 2

Opening: “The Oversoul” by Emerson, Reading 531 in *Singing the Living Tradition*

Closing: Theodore Parker, Reading 683, in *Singing the Living Tradition*

### Session 3

Opening: “Stand by this Faith” by Olympia Brown, Reading 569 in *Singing the Living Tradition*

Closing: Words of Hymn 187, “It Sounds Along the Ages” in *Singing the Living Tradition*

### Session 4

Opening: “Unto the Church Universal” Reading 474 in *Singing the Living Tradition*

Closing: Excerpt from a speech by Fannie Barrier Williams, a Black woman and a Unitarian, addressing the World’s Parliament of Religions in 1893:

*What can religion further do to advance the condition of the colored people? More religion and less church. . . . Less theology and more of human brotherhood, less declamation and more common sense and love for truth. . . . The tendency of creeds and doctrine to obscure religion, to make complex that which is elemental and simple, to suggest partisanship and doubt in that which is universal and certain, has seriously hindered the moral progress of the colored people of this country...It should be the province of religion, to unite, and not to separate, men and women according to the superficial differences of race lines.*

### Session 5

Opening: “It Matters What We Believe,” Reading 658 in *Singing the Living Tradition*

Closing: Reading 466, “Religion,” by Vincent B. Silliman in *Singing the Living Tradition*

### Session 6

Opening: “Principles and Purposes for All of Us,” Reading 594 in *Singing the Living Tradition*

Closing: Reading 459, “This is the mission of our faith,” by William F. Schulz in *Singing the Living Tradition*

## Session 1: Heretics and Founders

### Session-at-a-Glance

<b>Activity 1: Introductions</b>	15 minutes
<b>Activity 2: Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting</b>	5 minutes
<b>Activity 3: Covenant</b>	5 minutes
<b>Activity 4: Opening Discussion</b>	15 minutes
<b>Activity 5: Going Deeper - Heretics</b>	20 minutes
<b>Activity 6: Partner Church</b>	10 minutes
<b>Activity 7: Break</b>	10 minutes
<b>Activity 8: Going Deeper - Founders</b>	20 minutes
<b>Activity 9: Singing the Living Tradition</b>	10 minutes
<b>Activity 10: Closing</b>	10 minutes

**Total Time: 2 hours**

### PREPARATION FOR SESSION

- Review materials in the Participant Guide and read the designated selections from the readers.
- Review suggested discussion questions and choose which are most appropriate for the group and context.
- Set up shared folder for final projects and provide link to participants.
- Test the technology you will use for the session and prepare to offer guidance to participants.

- Remember to record the webinar! After the webinar, send the link to renaissance@uua.org be posted online.

## **ACTIVITY 1: Introductions (15 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Greet participants as they join the meeting. As appropriate, give a short tour of the features of your chosen platform, such as how to mute and unmute, location of chat box, etc. Leaders should introduce themselves, and then ask participants to introduce themselves.

## **ACTIVITY 2: Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting (5 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Leaders should read responsively Reading 566 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, Invite each participant to light a chalice or candle in their own space or use the Illuminations app on their phone. Explain that in future sessions, participants will volunteer to offer opening and closing words (suggestions are posted in each session online).

## **ACTIVITY 3: Covenant (5 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION**

Invite participants to create a covenant for how they will work together in this group. Suggest these agreements:

- Arrive on time to module sessions. Test equipment and gather materials before the appointed gathering time
- Read the materials in advance of the session. Take notes that will be helpful to you in the discussion
- Share written ideas at least \_\_\_ days ahead of the sessions
- As time allows, read other participants' written reflections before the next session

- Be aware of your participation in discussions, and make every effort to share the floor.

Propose a process for making sure that all have a chance to share during discussions, and invite suggestions for making the process smoother. This process will vary according to the technology you are using. For example, will the leaders call on people to speak or will participants just “jump in”? Will the software platform allow people to “raise hands”? Make sure all understand the agreed-upon process.

## **ACTIVITY 4: Opening Discussion (15 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Lead a discussion, asking, “What did you learn about Unitarianism or Universalism from your reading for this session? What interested or intrigued you?”

## **ACTIVITY 5: Going Deeper - Heretics (20 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Lead a discussion using these guiding questions:

- What about heretic stories is still relevant today? Are we still heretics?
- Our tradition has a legacy of defining itself as a counter to religious orthodoxies. What are the strengths and challenges of this legacy? If the group has trouble with this question, here are some ideas:
  - Strengths include openness to new ideas and rejection of religious notions and practices that no longer serve
  - Weaknesses include the danger of defining our faith in the negative, i.e. what we *don't* believe



- What parts of the stories of heretics can we make relevant and interesting for UUs today? How can we simplify this information and not get bogged down in obscure theological arguments?

## **ACTIVITY 6: Partner Church (10 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Share your screen and go to the UU Partner Church Council website: [www.uupcc.org](http://www.uupcc.org). Say:

*Unitarianism in Transylvania goes back to the time of Francis David, and has survived many challenges. Today, a large number of Unitarian Universalist congregations have “partners” in other parts of the world; many of those partnerships are with Unitarian Congregations in Transylvania, congregations who had to struggle to maintain their religion and culture through the years of twentieth century dictatorship in Eastern Europe.*

Invite participants to explore the Partner Church Council website at their leisure. Call special attention to the “Pathways to Partnership” brochure and the religious education materials which can be found under the “Resources” tab. Lead a time of sharing, asking participants who have experience with Partner Churches to share some of what they and/or their congregation have experienced and learned from the partnerships.

## **ACTIVITY 7: Break (10 minutes)**

## **ACTIVITY 8: Going Deeper - Founders (20 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Lead a discussion choosing one of these questions as your beginning point, and moving on to others if time permits:

- These stories and readings bring alive the role of women in helping to shape our faith in North America. What similarities do you see in the roles played by Judith Sargent

Murray and Hannah Adams? What differences? How might we highlight the roles played by women in the way we talk about our history?

- Are the different origins of the two traditions from which Unitarian Universalism grew significant today? Does it matter today that Unitarianism came out of the Standing Order and that Universalism challenged the Standing Order? How does your congregation reflect the established social order and how does it challenge the established social order?

## **ACTIVITY 9: *Singing the Living Tradition* (10 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Remind participants of the materials in *Singing the Living Tradition* authored by those heretics and founders listed at the end of [Session 1, Heretics and Founders - Background and Preparation](#) in the Participant Guide. Say, “This and each of the next six sessions include material from the 1994 UUA hymnbook *Singing the Living Tradition*. Exploring this material will give you a sense not only of the theology, worship practices, and concerns of the times they were written, but also of the theology, worship practices, and concerns that are still with us.” Ask, “How does knowing something of the context enhance your understanding of those materials? How might you use these materials in your work?”

## **ACTIVITY 10: Closing (10 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Explain that in addition to the assigned reading for next session, participants are to reflect on the readings and discussions from Session 1, Heretics and Founders, and think of a way they might share what they learned in their professional work. Explain that they need not actually carry out this plan before the next session, but are asked to share it with the group in written form (roughly 250 words) in the session’s discussion forum. At the end of the module, each

participant will have a wide variety of ideas for sharing history in their work. Ask for volunteers to do the [opening and closing words](#) for the next session.

Close the session with the poem “Outwitted” by American Universalist poet Edwin Markham who lived from 1852-1940:

*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.*

## Session 2: Reformers

### Session-at-a-Glance

<b>Activity 1: Gathering</b>	5 minutes
<b>Activity 2: Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting</b>	5 minutes
<b>Activity 3: Sharing</b>	20 minutes
<b>Activity 4: Opening Discussion</b>	20 minutes
<b>Activity 5: Break</b>	10 minutes
<b>Activity 6: Lifting Up Voices from the Margins</b>	20 minutes
<b>Activity 7: Going Deeper</b>	30 minutes
<b>Activity 8: Closing</b>	10 minutes

**Total Time: 2 hours**

### PREPARATION FOR SESSION

- Review materials in the Participant Guide and read the designated selections from the readers.
- Review suggested discussion questions and choose which are most appropriate for the group and context.
- Review postings in the discussion forum and make comments as needed.
- Send reminder email to volunteers reading opening and closing words.
- Test the technology you will use for the session and prepare to offer guidance to participants.

- Remember to record the webinar! After the webinar, send the link to be posted online.

### **ACTIVITY 1: Gathering (5 minutes)**

#### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Greet participants as they join the meeting. As appropriate, give a short tour of the features of your chosen platform (such as how to mute and unmute). Have each person do a quick introduction or check-in.

### **ACTIVITY 2: Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting (5 minutes)**

#### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Invite the designated volunteer to read “The Oversoul” by Emerson, Reading 531 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. Invite each participant to light a chalice or candle in their own space or use the Illuminations app on their phone. Review the covenant you created in the first session.

### **ACTIVITY 3: Sharing (20 minutes)**

#### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Invite participants into a conversation about their ideas to share the material from the last session. If any participants implemented their ideas, invite them to report briefly on the results. Invite questions or comments participants about one another’s writings. Affirm everyone’s good work.

### **ACTIVITY 4: Opening Discussion (20 minutes)**

#### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Lead a discussion, asking, “Among the reformers whose work is highlighted in this set of readings, who most inspires you?”

## **ACTIVITY 5: Break (10 minutes)**

## **ACTIVITY 6: Lifting Up Voices from the Margins (20 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Say, “Julia Ward Howe and Francis Ellen Watkins Harper were both very famous in their lifetimes, and yet are only footnotes to the way we tell our Unitarian Universalist history today. Why do you think this is the case? What are some ways to bring their work forward and link it to UUs of today?”

Invite participants to turn their attention to the list of *Singing the Living Tradition* hymns and readings authored by reformers from this period. (This list can be found in the Participant Guide, [Session 2, Reformers – Background and Preparation](#)). Lead a discussion, asking:

- What do you notice about this list? Whose voices are represented? Whose are missing?
- Is the selection of readings and hymns representative of our history, based on your reading?
- If you were to re-create the hymnbook, what changes would you make, if any, to the list? Point out that there has been a great deal of attention paid to Margaret Fuller, for example, in recent years.

## **ACTIVITY 7: Going Deeper (30 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Lead a discussion, asking, “What are the benefits to teaching history through stories of famous UUs? What are drawbacks to this approach?” If you need to prime the conversation pump, here are some suggestions:

- Benefits
  - Stories of individuals are accessible and easy to tell

- Unitarian Universalists can be proud of influential and famous forebears
- This approach fits with our second source, i.e. words and deeds of prophetic women and men
- Drawbacks
  - Stories of individuals can be presented with minimal context or sense of where they fit in the chain of events
  - We sometimes “claim” people whose association with Unitarian Universalism is tentative or questionable
  - This approach minimizes the contributions of those who were not famous, including those whose labor was largely invisible and/or those on the social margins

## **ACTIVITY 8: Closing (10 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Explain that in addition to the assigned reading for next session, participants are to reflect on the readings and discussions from Session 2, Reformers, and think of a way they might share what they learned in their professional work. Explain that they need not actually carry out this plan before the next session, but are asked to share it with the group in written form (roughly 250 words) and post in the discussion forum. At the end of the module, each participant will have a wide variety of ideas for sharing history in their work.

Ask for volunteers to do the opening and closing words for the next session.

Invite the designated volunteer to read the words of Theodore Parker, Reading 683, in *Singing the Living Tradition*:

*Be ours a religion which, like  
sunshine, goes everywhere;*

*its temple, all space;*

*its creed, all truth;*

*its ritual, works of love;*

*its profession of faith, divine*

*living.*



## Session 3: Missionaries and Builders

### Session-at-a-Glance

<b>Activity 1: Gathering</b>	5 minutes
<b>Activity 2: Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting</b>	5 minutes
<b>Activity 3: Sharing</b>	20 minutes
<b>Activity 4: Opening Discussion</b>	20 minutes
<b>Activity 5: Break</b>	10 minutes
<b>Activity 6: Going Deeper</b>	30 minutes
<b>Activity 7: Lifting Up Voices from the Margins</b>	20 minutes
<b>Activity 8: Closing</b>	10 minutes

**Total Time: 2 hours**

### PREPARATION FOR SESSION

- Review materials in the Participant Guide and read the designated selections from the readers.
- Review suggested discussion questions and choose which are most appropriate for the group and context.
- Review postings in the [Session 2, Discussion Forum](#) and make comments as needed.
- Send reminder email to volunteers reading opening and closing words.
- Test the technology you will use for the session and prepare to offer guidance to participants.

- Remember to record the webinar! After the webinar, send the link to be posted online.

## **ACTIVITY 1: Gathering (5 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Greet participants as they join the meeting. As appropriate, give a short tour of the features of your chosen platform (such as how to mute and unmute). Have each person do a quick introduction.

## **ACTIVITY 2: Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting (5 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Invite the designated volunteer to share “Stand by this Faith” by Olympia Brown, Reading 569 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. Invite each participant to light a chalice or candle in their own space or use the Illuminations app on their phone. Review the covenant you created in the first session.

## **ACTIVITY 3: Sharing (20 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Invite participants into a conversation about their ideas to share the material from the last session. If any participants implemented their ideas, invite them to report briefly on the results. Invite questions or comments participants about one another’s writings. Affirm everyone’s good work.

## **ACTIVITY 4: Opening Discussion (20 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Lead a discussion, asking, “If you were to write a story for Tapestry of Faith of a person or event you encountered in your reading, whose story would it be?”

## **ACTIVITY 5: Break (10 minutes)**

## **ACTIVITY 6: Going Deeper (30 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Lead a discussion choosing one of these questions as your beginning point, and moving on to others if time permits:

- How did the experiences of Unitarians and Universalists in the South, Mid-west, and West differ? How were they similar? Here are points for discussion:
  - Unitarians and Universalists in the South, Mid-west, and West all had to navigate relationships with power centers in the northeast
  - Money was a serious issue in all three regions
  - There are differences in the kinds of challenges faced- climate, infrastructure, lack of social institutions, hostility to liberal theology
  - Congregations in the south were primarily Universalist; in the West, primarily Unitarian; in the Mid-west, there were both.
- Based on what you know of your own congregation, how does it fit into the larger story?
- How is Unitarian Universalism today shaped by the events and people in this set of readings? Here are suggestions to move the conversation, if needed:
  - The Western Unitarian Conference and Free Religious Association argues for freedom of belief and held that moral actions were more important than belief

- The congregations served by the Iowa Sisterhood, Athalia Irwin, and others addressed the practical needs of the people for community and support, as well as for religious message that addressed the challenges of daily life
- Women played a significant role in the congregations of the Mid-west, West, and South.

## **ACTIVITY 7: Lifting Up Voices from the Margins (20 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Lead a discussion, asking, “What response do you have to the stories of those who were on the margins of the denomination due to race, gender, social class, and geography? What does this tell us about our heritage- both positive and negative?”

## **ACTIVITY 8: Closing (10 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Explain that in addition to the assigned reading for next session, participants are to reflect on the readings and discussions from [Session 3, Missionaries and Builders – Background and Preparation](#), and think of a way they might share what they learned in their professional work.

Explain that they need not actually carry out this plan before the next session, but are asked to share it with the group in written form (roughly 250 words) and post in the discussion forum. At the end of the module, each participant will have a wide variety of ideas for sharing history in their work.

Ask for volunteers to do the opening and closing words in the next session.

Invite the designated volunteer to close with the words of a well-loved hymn that captures the spirit of the western Unitarians, Hymn 187, “It Sounds Along the Ages” in *Singing the Living*

*Tradition*.

## Session 4: Humanists

### Session-at-a-Glance

<b>Activity 1: Gathering</b>	5 minutes
<b>Activity 2: Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting</b>	5 minutes
<b>Activity 3: Sharing</b>	20 minutes
<b>Activity 4: Opening Discussion</b>	20 minutes
<b>Activity 5: Break</b>	10 minutes
<b>Activity 6: What Might Have Been</b>	20 minutes
<b>Activity 7: Facing a New Age</b>	30 minutes
<b>Activity 8: Closing</b>	10 minutes

**Total Time: 2 hours**

### PREPARATION FOR SESSION

- Review materials in the Participant Guide and read the designated selections from the readers.
- Review suggested discussion questions and choose which are most appropriate for the group and context.
- Review postings in the [Session 3, Discussion Forum](#) and make comments as needed.
- Send reminder email to volunteers reading opening and closing words.
- Test the technology you will use for the session and prepare to offer guidance to participants.

- Remember to record the webinar! After the webinar, send the link to be posted online.

## **ACTIVITY 1: Gathering (5 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Greet participants as they join the meeting. As appropriate, give a short tour of the features of your chosen platform (such as how to mute and unmute). Have each person do a quick introduction.

## **ACTIVITY 2: Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting (5 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Invite the designated volunteer to share “Unto the Church Universal” by John Haynes Holmes, adapted from Keshab Chandra Sen, Reading 474 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. Invite each participant to light a chalice or candle in their own space or use the Illuminations app on their phone. Note: There is further information about this reading in the Participant Guide. Review the covenant you created in the first session.

## **ACTIVITY 3: Sharing (20 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Invite participants into a conversation about their ideas to share the material from the last session. If any participants implemented their ideas, invite them to report briefly on the results. Invite questions or comments participants about one another’s writings. Affirm everyone’s good work.

## **ACTIVITY 4: Opening Discussion (20 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Say, “This period is given little attention in the standard telling of our history, perhaps because the social currents and events of the time were complex, as were the responses of our religious forebears.” Lead a discussion, asking:

- What did you learn from your reading that helped you to better understand this period of time?
- Which events and people did you find inspiring?

## **ACTIVITY 5: Break (10 minutes)**

## **ACTIVITY 6: What Might Have Been? (20 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Lead a discussion, asking:

- What role did voices and perspectives from the denominational margins play in shaping our faith? Specifically, were the voices and concerns of Black people, immigrants, and labor part of our story? How?
- Can you imagine a story for “what might have been” if voices and perspectives from the margins had been more fully heard?

## **ACTIVITY 7: Facing a New Age (30 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Lead a discussion, asking:

- Where does your own faith and/or theological understanding match with the conclusions in Unitarians Face a New Age?
- If we set aside the dated language in the document and focus on the ideas expressed, what still seems current for Unitarian Universalism and what is dated?

## **ACTIVITY 8: Closing (10 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Explain that in addition to the assigned reading for next session, participants are to reflect on the readings and discussions from [Session 4, Humanists – Background and Preparation](#), and think of a way they might share what they learned in their professional work. Explain that they need not actually carry out this plan before the next session, but are asked to share it with other members of the group in written form (roughly 250 words) and post in the discussion forum. At the end of the module, each participant will have a wide variety of ideas for sharing history in their work.

Tell participants that they should also be prepared to share the founding story of a Unitarian Universalist congregation they know well at the next session. Also remind them that proposals for final projects should be emailed to leaders before the start of session 5.

Ask for volunteers to do the opening and closing words for the next session.

Invite the designated volunteer to close this session with the words excerpted from a speech by Fannie Barrier Williams, a Black woman and a Unitarian, addressing the World's Parliament of Religions in 1893:

*What can religion further do to advance the condition of the colored people? More religion and less church. . . . Less theology and more of human brotherhood, less declamation and more common sense and love for truth. . . . The tendency of creeds and doctrine to obscure religion, to make complex that which is elemental and simple, to suggest partisanship and doubt in that which is universal and certain, has seriously hindered the moral progress of the colored people of this country...It should be the province of religion, to unite, and not to separate, men and women according to the superficial differences of race lines.*



## Session 5: Making Life Religious

### Session-at-a-Glance

Activity 1: Gathering	5 minutes
Activity 2: Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting	5 minutes
Activity 3: Sharing	10 minutes
Activity 4: Making Life Religious	20 minutes
Activity 5: Origin Stories	20 minutes
Activity 6: Break	10 minutes
Activity 7: Sharing History in Our Work	15 minutes
Activity 8: Continuing Stories	20 minutes
Activity 9: Closing	15 minutes

**Total Time: 2 hours**

### PREPARATION FOR SESSION

- Review materials in the Participant Guide and read the designated selections from the readers.
- Review suggested discussion questions and choose which are most appropriate for the group and context.
- Review postings in the [Session 4, Discussion Forum](#) and make comments as needed.
- Review and respond to the final project proposals submitted.
- Send reminder email to volunteers reading opening and closing words.

- Test the technology you will use for the session and prepare to offer guidance to participants.
- Remember to record the webinar! After the webinar, send the link to be posted online.

## **ACTIVITY 1: Gathering (5 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Greet participants as they join the meeting. As appropriate, give a short tour of the features of your chosen platform (such as how to mute and unmute). Have each person do a quick introduction.

## **ACTIVITY 2: Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting (5 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Invite the designated volunteer to share “It Matters What We Believe,” Reading 658 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. Invite each participant to light a chalice or candle in their own space or use the Illuminations app on their phone. Review the covenant you created in the first session.

## **ACTIVITY 3: Sharing (10 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Invite participants into a conversation about their ideas to share the material from the last session. If any participants implemented their ideas, invite them to report briefly on the results. Invite questions or comments participants about one another’s writings. Affirm everyone’s good work.

## **ACTIVITY 4: Making Life Religious (20 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Say, “The history and development of the institutional expressions of Unitarianism and Universalism – the AUA and the UCA are not the big story here. The development of a

twentieth century liberal theology, and the key role of educators in that process, is the big story.” Lead a discussion using these questions as guides:

- What ideas and practices from mid-twentieth century Unitarianism and Universalism are reflected in our faith today?
- What difference does it make if we put religious education and faith development in the center of the way we tell our Unitarian Universalist story?

## **ACTIVITY 5: Origin Stories (20 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Say, “Both Unitarians and Universalists worked to spread their message, although by very different means. By mid-twentieth century, Universalist missionary efforts had dwindled, while the Unitarians, working through the fellowship movement, were still planting congregations.”

Invite participants to share stories of how the congregation they know best came into being. If there is time, talk about how the different kinds of origin stories are reflected in congregations of today.

## **ACTIVITY 6: Break (10 minutes)**

## **ACTIVITY 7: Sharing History in Our Work (15 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Lead a discussion, asking:

- What did you learn from your reading that helped you to better understand a current program, movement, challenge, or event that affects your work as a religious educator?
- How might knowing and sharing this information and perspective help you in your work?

## **ACTIVITY 8: Continuing Stories (20 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Say, “This session includes the beginnings of stories that are still being written and some of the stories point to work that still must be done.”

Ask the following questions:

- Which stories or events make you proud to be a Unitarian Universalist? Which stories are you longing to share (or maybe already have)?
- What are some of your dreams for Unitarian Universalism, especially dreams that continue some of the work begun in the first fifty years?

## **ACTIVITY 9: Closing (15 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Remind participants that they are asked to work alone or with others to create a final project that brings their new historical knowledge into their professional practice. The project can be a short curriculum, a program, a presentation, a play, a video, or some other project of their choosing. This project will be shared with the group at the next session, so it must have some kind of presentation component and should be posted to the shared folder before the start of Session 6. Provide the link to the shared folder (which will also be posted online).

Ask for volunteers to do the opening and closing words for the next session.

Invite the designated volunteer to close the session with Reading 466, “Religion,” by Vincent B. Silliman in *Singing the Living Tradition*.

## Session 6: Final Projects

### Session-at-a-Glance

<b>Activity 1: Gathering</b>	5 minutes
<b>Activity 2: Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting</b>	5 minutes
<b>Activity 3: Final Projects, Part 1</b>	40 minutes
<b>Activity 4: Break</b>	10 minutes
<b>Activity 5: Final Projects, Part 2</b>	40 minutes
<b>Activity 6: Closing</b>	20 minutes

**Total Time: 2 hours**

### PREPARATION FOR SESSION

- Test the technology you will use for the session and prepare to offer guidance to participants. Be prepared to share your screen (or allow participants to do so) during presentation of the projects.
- Remember to record the webinar! After the webinar, send the link to be posted online.

### **ACTIVITY 1: Gathering (5 minutes)**

#### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Greet participants as they join the meeting. As appropriate, give a short tour of the features of your chosen platform (such as how to mute and unmute). Have each person do a quick introduction.

## **ACTIVITY 2: Opening Reading and Chalice Lighting (5 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Invite the designated volunteer to share “Principles and Purposes for All of Us,” Reading 594 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. Invite each participant to light a chalice or candle in their own space or use the Illuminations app on their phone. Review the covenant you created in the first session.

## **ACTIVITY 3: Sharing Final Projects Part 1 (40 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Invite groups or individuals to present their final projects for the group. Affirm the work after each presentation, then guide a short conversation, inviting participants who watched the presentation to comment and ask questions of the presenters.

## **ACTIVITY 4: Break (10 minutes)**

## **ACTIVITY 5: Sharing Final Projects Part 2 (40 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Invite groups or individuals to present their final projects for the group. Affirm the work after each presentation, then guide a short conversation, inviting participants who watched the presentation to comment and ask questions of the presenters.

## **ACTIVITY 6: Closing (20 minutes)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Solicit verbal feedback from participants about the format and content of the module. Explain that in order to receive credit for the module, they must submit the [participant evaluation form](#) within one week. Ask participants to share “closing thoughts” about the module – content, process, or any other aspects – in the [Session 6, Discussion Forum](#).

Invite the designated volunteer to close the session and the module with Reading 459, “This is the mission of our faith,” by William F. Schulz in *Singing the Living Tradition*:

*This is the mission of our faith;*

*To reach the fragile art of*

*hospitality;*

*To revere both the critical mind*

*and the generous heart;*

*To prove that diversity need not*

*mean divisiveness;*

*And to witness to all that we*

*must hold the whole world in*

*our hands.*

Leaders of the module must complete the [leader evaluation form](#) within one week of the end of the module.