



Working Well Together:

Strategies & Practices for Resilience & Renewal

Session 1: Locating Ourselves in a Changing Culture *(pg. 2)*

We'll begin by identifying global and local themes that impact our congregations and communities. Focussing on right relations and covenantal practices, this conversation will identify concerns and possible responses. Resources for proactive options will be shared.

Session 2: Building Relationships Toward a Common Good *(pg. 6)*

Sometimes we feel like we are alone in our justice efforts. In this session we'll think about partnerships to build mutual support, safety, and intentionality into our work. Resources for safety and preparedness will be shared.

Session 3: Practices for Resilience & Renewal *(pg. 9)*

We're doing big and important and difficult work together. This session will share practices, resources, and tools for sustaining our collective well-being, including a shared ritual for all who are gathered.

National Service: Reemerging, Reimagining, & Renewal *(pg. 13)*

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Session # 1 - LOCATING OURSELVES IN A CHANGING CULTURE

IMPACTS OF CULTURAL CONCERNS WITHIN OUR CONGREGATIONS

Big Themes: impacts of cultural concerns, manifesting in our congregations & groups

- **Disagreement ... Polarization**
- **Anxiety & Fear ... Anger** (self or others / around issues & instability)
- **Over Responsibility ... Codependence**
- **Grief & Loss ... Despair** (ie: climate grief)
- **Loss & Isolation ... Leaving** (ie: congregational experiences like feeling undervalued / feeling harmed / loss of familiar congregational life)

★ *Added by workshop participants:*

*Loss of Hope, Loss of Love, Loss of Passion, Avoidance, Questioning Our Relevance,
Different levels of experience & skill - not necessarily talking about the same things*

COVENANT & AGREEMENTS

What Holds Us Together: What is our central message, our stability? Why we mend things ...

- **Covenants, Commitments & Agreements with One Another** (not beliefs, which are creedal)
- **Mission & Purpose**

★ *Added by workshop participants:*

Principles, we are “a place where unicorns can meet”, UU communities, UU values, relationships, moral & ethical compass, acceptance for who you are, saving lives, pluralistic, being with others who have similar values, extended family, supporting an all ages community

TOOLS & PRACTICES

“SLOW IT DOWN” Heat & speed are dangerous to our relationships. When things start to heat up, when we push to get through something and go too fast, this is when agreements get set aside. In these moments, there are high risks of breaking our covenants with each other and injuring our relationships.

NOTE: The tools and practices in our personal and communal tool kits can also be used as weapons. In this case - ‘slow it down’ could be used to deadlock or exhaust an issue, preventing repair or reparation, and frustrating the parties to the disagreement. Or we use it against ourselves - leading to procrastination or avoidance - rather than doing ‘the difficult thing’.

★ *This led to a conversation about sealioning. Participants shared these links:*

[Sealioning - Wikipedia](#) [#1062; The Terrible Sea Lion – Wondermark](#)



TOOLS & PRACTICES *continued*

Are our Covenants & Agreements working?

Many congregations have **Covenants of Right Relations** and **Disruptive Persons Policies**, but if people are unaware of their existence, or leadership is unable or unwilling to enact them, they become harmful to our communities. They hang there as both unfulfilled promise and threat - harming our credibility.

It can help to ask:

- Why *won't* we use this covenant? (*what's wrong ... or too hard ... or intimidating?*)
- Is there something we *would* be willing to do?
- Does the covenant need adapting? (*replace it with something we will use ... that we feel better about ... that doesn't drive conflict underground ... ?*)
- If we still have confidence in it - is there a way to *enliven* our participation?

SUSTAINING PRACTICES

How do we access, hold, or return to our centered self?

How do we help one another, in community, to find connection, balance, & peace?

- **Remembering our agreements** with one another
- **Relationships** - if we can remain connected to them (not always the case ... not always safe or appropriate ...)
- **Boundary Setting** (identifying, setting, & holding them ... individually & collectively)
- **Assessing what can actually do** (rather than 'all the things we'd like to do')
- **Priority Setting** (focussing on *what is important*, not only urgent or emergency items)
- **Feeling valued & Connected** (coregulation ... helping one another to stay focussed on what matters)
- **Integrity & Agreements** that sit well
- **Modeling calming, supportive, covenantal practices**
- **What we focus on GROWS** (asking: is this something we want to grow? ... maybe we need to lean in another direction ...)



RESOURCES: Session 1

MUSIC

Better Together, Jack Johnson [Jack Johnson - Better Together](#)

★ *Added by workshop participants:*

Sacred Web Singers [Sacred Web Singers \(SWS\)](#)

Resilient, Rising Appalachia [Rising Appalachia - Resilient \(Official Music Video\)](#)

BOOKS & OTHER MEDIA

"Our Covenant (The 2000-01 Minns Lectures), **The Lay & Liberal Doctrine of the Church: The Spirit & the Promise of Our Covenant**", Alice Blair Wesley, 2002.

[2000 Lecture Series by Alice Blair Wesley](#) (free download)

"Feeling Seen: Reconnecting in a Disconnected World", Jody Carrington, PhD, Collins: 2023.

[Feeling Seen - Dr. Jody Carrington](#) (includes a free book club guide) **Canadian - Alberta author*

"The hard part comes when we are called on to reconnect, to repair or re-engage, especially after we've been wronged, alienated, or hurt. We all desperately want to get it right, but this requires another step, which is the magic each of us so often misses: the act of seeing. As simple as it is complex, it all comes down to this truth: when we feel seen, we will rise."

"Set Boundaries, Find Peace: a guide to reclaiming yourself", Nedra Glover Tawwab,

TarcherPerrigee, 2021. [Set Boundaries, Find Peace — Nedra Tawwab](#)

"You Need To Hear This" podcast, [Podcasts & Publications — Nedra Tawwab](#)

"The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: powerful lessons in personal change", Stephen R.

Covey, 1988. [The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People | FranklinCovey](#) (overview)

"Putting first things first means organizing and executing around your most important priorities. It is living and being driven by the principles you value most, not by the agendas and forces surrounding you."



UUA RESOURCES

A Comprehensive Guide to Congregational Covenants [A Comprehensive Guide to Congregational Covenants | LeaderLab | UUA.org](#)

UUA Studies about Theology and Belonging

- [Engaging Our Theological Diversity](#)
- [Belonging: The Meaning of Membership](#)

The Practices of Spiritual Leadership [Spiritual Leadership | New England Region | UUA.org](#)

Spiritual Leadership for Culture Change: A Community of Practice [Spiritual Leadership for Culture Change: A Community of Practice \(SL4CC\) | New England Region | UUA.org](#)

Conflict Transformation Skills for Leadership Development

[Conflict Transformation Skills for Leadership Development | LeaderLab | UUA.org](#)

Right Relations Teams: The Tenders of Covenant [Right Relationship Teams | LeaderLab | UUA.org](#)



Session # 2 - Building Relationships Toward a Common Good

MUSIC

- **Hope**, by Ysaye Barnwell, performed by Univox Choir, Toronto, and directed by Dallas Bergen [Ysaye Barnwell - Hope](#)

WHY THIS WORK MATTERS

The Religious Right and extreme political conservative forces are organizing in new ways

This impacts our UU communities as they are often seen as 'the opposition' to these groups.

- [According to the CBC](#), Liberty Coalition Canada, a conservative Christian advocacy group, is trying to raise \$1.3 million to recruit hundreds of Christian politicians and campaign staff to run at all levels of government
- [1 Million March for Children](#) - States their mission, uniting people of diverse backgrounds and faiths, is to advocate for the elimination of the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) curriculum, pronouns, gender ideology and mixed bathrooms in schools.
- [Toronto Police Chief](#) reported a staggering increase in hate crimes - For reports of antisemitic hate crimes, there has been a 192 per cent increase from Oct. 7 to Nov. 20 compared to the same time last year, Demkiw said, an increase from 13 to 38.

This is the water in which we are swimming. Some of our congregations have been vandalized. Others have seen protesters. There was an arson attempt at another. Other liberal congregations have experienced vandalism too.

We know that those who oppose our values of inclusion, & radically welcoming communities are increasingly emboldened.

Our congregations are frequently found in opposition to these extremist and conservative groups. We urge that before determining their community Social Justice or Action priorities that congregations first reflect on the priorities for action and voice that are seem like the most logical extension of their mission or purpose and that build on past expertise and the need as it is expressed in the local community.



WHAT ARE WE DEALING WITH

We can't predict all the possible situations that we may encounter, but we'd like to start thinking about possibilities and creating responses that will help us.

This workshop is about beginning the thinking and planning to help prepare you for situations that you may encounter. We can't know all the possibilities, but congregations are encouraged to assess the larger communities in which they operate and to assess the threats there. Developing safety plans and fostering relationships with other allied groups will be important. Some possibilities include:

- Disruption in worship service with/without threat of violence
- Protesters out front
- Graffiti/property damage
- Threats

The UUA has begun developing resources and is, because of the heightened climate in the USA, already got [some material of use to us](#).

It will be useful for leaders to consider some of the ways in which their congregation may experience threats and begin to develop plans that include:

- review relevant material from this and other sources
- identify community partners
- identify risk policies etc. from other allied groups and determine if any can be used as a starting point/reference.
- identify the gap between your existing policies and what may be needed.
- consider the lived reality of members of your community who have negative experiences with law enforcement as action plans for emergency responses are developed.

Leaders will need to talk about [Risk Discernment](#) in congregations.

FACILITY SAFETY RESOURCES

- UUA's 'Side with Love' webinar in June of 2023 titled Responding to Far Right/White Christian Nationalist Threats. [This page on their website](#) has a recording of that webinar and links to a number of resources that congregations can use.
- Develop a [community safety plan](#).



TRAINING AND VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION RESOURCES

Whether the members of your community are hosting events that may draw negative attention, participating in protests or community celebrations, they may encounter significant resistance. There are steps that can help protect people while attending community events.

[This resource](#) from the Ontario Federation of Labour has some basic information:

- follow the lead and instruction of the community group and local organizers at the event. Please heed all security recommendations and stay safe.
- Reminder: The safety of participants is the utmost priority.
- Do not engage with counter demonstrators.
- De-escalate when confronted.
- Do not take photos of allies.

Read this guide from the Anti-Hate Network to learn [more](#).

COMMUNITY MAPPING AND WORKING WITH ALLIES

Knowing other groups in the community with similar interests is important. No group needs to do this work alone.

- Not in Our Town, Responding to Hate: Building Safe, Inclusive Communities: [A community resiliency guide and action toolkit](#)
- Community Mapping template-
<https://visiblenetworklabs.com/ecosystem-map-template-for-community-collaboration/>



Session # 3 - PRACTICES FOR RESILIENCE & RENEWAL

SUSTAINING PRACTICES

How do we access, hold onto, or return to our centered self?

How do we help one another, in community, to find connection, balance, & peace?

- **Remembering our agreements** with one another
- **Relationships** - if we can remain connected to them (not always the case ... not always safe or appropriate ...)
- **Boundary Setting** (identifying, setting, & holding them ... individually & collectively)
- **Assessing what can actually do** (rather than 'all the things we'd like to do')
- **Priority Setting** (focussing on *what is important*, not only urgent or emergency items)
- **Feeling valued & Connected** (coregulation ... helping one another to stay focussed on what matters)
- **Integrity & Agreements** that sit well
- **Modeling calming, supportive, covenantal practices**
- **What we focus on GROWS** (asking: is this something we want to grow? ... maybe we need to lean in another direction ...)

How do you equip yourself for challenging situations?

What are the practices you use to find, remain, &/or return to your more centered self?

★ *Added by workshop participants:* **What are your Sustaining Practices?**

Being of service to something larger than myself / writing / walking in nature / yoga / meditation / body scans / music, singing in choir & listening / pausing to enjoy the natural world / a clear night sky / conversations with my kids / listening to classical music / NIA / refugee sponsorship work / journey group / worship services / playing with my daughter's kitten / the UU Hysterical Society - especially the comments / journaling & collaging / clouds, water, trees / lap swimming / sacred web singers / Nourish UU / Eliot Institute (UU camps) / our caring community / covenant groups / love, fun, and appreciate our volunteers / be kind, not critical / develop deep listening skills / gatherings like this ...


CHANGE IN CONGREGATIONS

- **Moving at the speed of change** ... moving at the speed of trust
- *"Not so much that Congregations don't like change -
But they don't like to be SURPRISED by change" Karl Vaters*
(see Resources for the full article)



MUSIC FROM THE RITUAL

Loosen (or Loosen Loosen), by Aly Halpert  [Loosen Loosen](#) (*workshop version*)

 [Loosen - Aly Halpert](#) (*studio version*)

Lyrics:

Loosen, loosen, baby
You don't have to carry
The weight of the world in your muscles and bones
Let go, let go, let go

Holy breathe, and holy name
Will you ease, will you ease this pain
Oh holy breathe, and holy name, will you ease this pain?

I'm Not Alone, by Anat Hochberg & Aly Halpert [I'm Not Alone - Anat Hochberg & Aly Halpert](#)

Lyrics:

I'm not alone, I'm not alone
I'm not alone, I'm not alone
I'm not alone, I'm not alone
I'm not alone, I'm not alone
I'm not alone, I'm not alone
I'm not alone

I forgot, for a minute
Who I belong to
The mama earth
the wind and rain
The beauty and the pain

I'm not alone
For me the world was created
I'm not alone
To dust I will return

More Info: <https://www.alyhalpert.com/music>

Album: <https://alyhalpert.bandcamp.com/album/loosen>

A Project of Hadar's Rising Song Institute: Cultivating Jewish spiritual life through song



QUESTIONS FROM THE RITUAL

Where can you turn
When the weight feels too heavy?

*What are the places
That offer you renewal?*

Who are the beings
That share your commitments?

*What are the resources
That re-energize and strengthen you?*

Where can you turn
When the weight feels too heavy?

*Who are your allies?
Where do you belong?*

BOOKS & ARTICLES

“Emergent Strategy: shaping change, changing worlds”, adrienne maree brown, AK Press, 2017. [Adrienne Maree Brown](#)

“Intentional adaptation is the heart of emergent strategy. How we live and grow and stay purposeful in the face of constant change actually does determine both the quality of our lives, and the impact we can have when we move into action together.”

“Journal of Radical Permission: a daily guide for following your soul’s calling”, adrienne maree brown & Sonya Renee Taylor, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2022.

“Churches Can Handle Change, But They Don’t Like Surprise”, Karl Vaters, online, 2023. karlvaters.com/change

“In most churches the problem is not that they can’t handle change. It’s that they don’t like being surprised by changes. And they shouldn’t have to be. / Wise leaders work very hard to reduce surprises as much as possible. / The more changes are needed, the more critical it is that church leaders and members know what’s happening and why.”



UUA RESOURCES

- **Meeting the Rest of Ourselves: Small Group Ministry Practice** [Meeting the Rest of Ourselves: A Small Group Ministry Series](#)
- **Ten Workshops for Unitarian Universalist Adults** [Ten Workshops for Unitarian Universalist Adults](#) | [Spirit in Practice](#) | [Tapestry of Faith](#) | [UUA.org](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Insight Timer: Free App** (*with options to purchase more - but not necessary / no credit card required to join*) *An excellent resource for meditation, music, journalling, information, and even bedtime stories!*
- ★ *Added by workshop participants:*
 - Sacred Web Singers** [Sacred Web Singers \(SWS\)](#)
 - "Resilient"**, by Rising Appalachia [Rising Appalachia - Resilient \(Official Music Video\)](#)
 - "Real Self Care: a transformative program by redefining wellness"**, Pooja Lakshmin, Penguin Life, 2023. [Real Self-Care — Pooja Lakshmin, MD](#)
"You can't meditate your way out of a 40-hour workweek with no childcare."
 - "Mistakes & Miracles: congregations on the road to multiculturalism"**, Skinner House Books, 2019. [inSpirit: UUA Bookstore and Gift Shop: Mistakes and Miracles](#)
 - Eliot Institute Camps**, UU camps in Seabeck Washington [Eliot Institute](#)
[Winter Eliot 2023: "Changing Our Stories" with Rev. Anne Barker & Liz James](#)
 - Nourish UU**, [liturgy](#)
"Rev. Aisha Ansano and Rev. Emily Conger created Nourish to help Unitarian Universalists feel fed in body and spirit through embodied worship experiences."



National Service: “Reemerging, Reimagining, & Renewal”

Having lived through the last few extraordinary years we find ourselves different than we were before - both as individuals and communities. And all the while the world around us has changed too. Who are we becoming? What will we be like now?

Speakers: **Casey Stainsby** - CUC Youth & Young Adult Program Manager
Anna Isaacs - Director of Spiritual Exploration & Learning for Children & Youth, First Unitarian Church of Victoria
Reverend Peter Boullata - Unitarian Fellowship of Peterborough

*** This service is now publicly accessible on the CUC YouTube channel. ***

There are **two different versions**, each in **two different formats**: (*Orders of Service on pg. 14*)

- a **FULL** (complete service) version and a **SHORT** (central message) version
- **Google video files** for you to download, then play (best quality) and **YouTube links** that you simply click on to play

You are welcome to show or share these files -
in your congregations, communities, and small groups.

Google Drive & YouTube Links:

(be sure to download Google videos to your computer, then play, to prevent buffering issues)

FULL VERSION:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vkF1CeDfLPEDZaLnD0MOISk8NccDgO64/view?usp=drive_link

https://youtu.be/1dNPiB6_sgE

SHORT VERSION:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rwxl_FP2iI5jOfrUV3aISlhBgn6aQUmj/view?usp=drive_link

<https://youtu.be/sTu28d8SyiU>



FULL Version (50:21): This is a complete service – a full ‘plug-and-play’ – all elements included.

Order of Service

Music while people gather (0 – 2:47)

Welcome & Land Acknowledgment *(service begins at 2:48)*

Chalice Lighting *(4:28)*

#188 Come, Come, Whoever You Are (musician: Jennifer McMillan) (4:58)

Joys & Sorrows *(6:13 – 8:37)*

(you could pause before or after Joys & Sorrows, to allow time for sharing)

#361 Enter, Rejoice & Come In, verse 1 (musician: Jennifer McMillan) (8:38)

Reemerging: Casey Stainsby

#361 Enter, Rejoice & Come In, verse 3

Reimagining: Anna Isaacs & members of 1st Victoria

#361 Enter, Rejoice & Come In, verse 4

Renewal: Reverend Peter Boulatta

#361 Enter, Rejoice & Come In, verse 1

Call for the Offering *(38:52) (3:10 total, with 1:20 of music beginning at 40:46)*

(the offering words, & the slide on screen, invite contributions to

“the CUC, your local congregation, and/or an organization of your choice”)

Benediction & Chalice Extinguishing *(42:02)*

Closing Song: We Shall Be Known (UUtheVote choir) (44:49)

Music while people leave (or bio break before conversations) (47:40 – 50:21)

Short / Center Version (30:14): This is the central message of the service only.

Order of Service

#361 Enter, Rejoice & Come In, verse 1

Reemerging: Casey Stainsby

#361 Enter, Rejoice & Come In, verse 3

Reimagining: Anna Isaacs & members of 1st Victoria

#361 Enter, Rejoice & Come In, verse 4

Renewal: Reverend Peter Boulatta

#361 Enter, Rejoice & Come In, verse 1