

UU Wellspring: Faithful Actions

Revised June 2020



Background

As Unitarian Universalists, we affirm the necessity to align our actions with our values, the importance of living true to our beliefs in the world. We aspire to offer service, and in this program, we expand the meaning of service to include all faithful actions, all the ways in which we live out our faith. The term “faithful actions” includes a multitude of ways of offering service: relational service — the compassionate action of helping family and friends with whom we are in relationship; social service — meeting the needs of others through a more organized structure, such as working at a soup kitchen or food cupboard; and social justice work — working to make changes in society to alleviate suffering, such as lobbying or serving in groups committed to societal change.

As people who have made the commitment to explore and deepen our spiritual lives in the company of others, Faithful Actions attempts to create a space in which to examine the “so what” more deeply, to consider how each of us puts our own faith into action, without guilt, without obligation, with love, and with the spiritual grounding that gives meaning to our lives and energy to the work we do in the world.

Structure

Faithful Actions starts with our own stories and spiritual grounding. What have we learned from UU Wellspring and from spiritual practice that guides how we put our faith into action? What do we understand “faithful actions” to mean?

We will learn about people whom we admire who have used their own lives in the service of the greater good and try to understand the spiritual grounding of their lives. We will look at the multitude of ways in which we can put our faith into action: how we can serve our own lives, our families and most intimate circle, our communities, and the world. We will continue to touch base with what grounds us. We will address questions of burnout, hopelessness, and maintaining our own spiritual health while trying to repair the brokenness of the world.

Important to the Faithful Actions program is intentional service – a faithful action that each member of the group will commit to over the course of the year. This commitment is a central focus of this program, and it is important to stress to participants that they will be asked to stretch, to go out of their comfort zones to commit to a faithful actions project. We will have time for reflections on what that service means to us, how it changes us, and what the challenges might be.

This program offers material for eighteen Faithful Actions sessions, two meetings a month for nine months. Some sessions include suggestions for a number of questions that could be asked, but unless noted otherwise, the expectation is that you will choose to focus on only one or two questions in each session, based on the content and discussion that arise and on the group’s needs and experiences.

UU Wellspring: Faithful Actions Topics



Session 17: Feeling Overwhelmed

Session 18: Reports from the Field

Required books

Not for Ourselves Alone: Theological Essays on Relationship, edited by Burton D. Carley and Laurel Hallman

Optional Books:

Blessing the World: What Can Save Us Now, by Rebecca Ann Parker. Note: All readings are provided and permission by the author from this out-of-print book. It is still available from used bookstores.

Reclaiming Prophetic Witness: Liberal Religion in the Public Square, by Paul Rasor. This supplemental book that isn't used in the curriculum is You may want to read this on your own.

Session 3: Emergent Strategies by adrienne maree brown

Sessions 5 and 6: *After the Good News* by Rev. Nancy MacDonald Ladd.

Session 16: Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

- Session 1: We Come Together in Love
- Session 2: Listening to Our Stories
- Session 3: Serving or Fixing?
- Session 4: Grounding Ourselves in Spiritual Practice
- Session 5: Understanding Our Roots
- Session 6: Recognizing Privilege
- Session 7: Listening to the Needs of Others
- Session 8: Knowing Our Gifts
- Session 9: Caring for Ourselves
- Session 10: Communication as Faithful Action
- Session 11: Relationship as Faithful Action
- Session 12: Finding Common Ground as Faithful Action
- Session 13: Creating Peace as Faithful Action
- Session 14: Bearing Witness as Faithful Action
- Session 15: Social Justice as Faithful Action
- Session 16: Environmental Justice as Faithful Actions