



FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego



UU CROWDFUNDING HAS ARRIVED

BY PETER WOODBURY

Can you guess what these worthwhile projects have in common?

- Unitarian Universalist (UU) youth from Hartland, Vermont, go to work for a week on local housing, community development, and social service projects in New Haven, CT.
- An interdenominational sanctuary program in Metro Denver provides shelter and financial support to immigrants in distress.
- The Spiritual Activist Leadership Training (SALT) program engages UU young adults in social change projects in their own community.
- All Souls Unitarian Church of Washington, DC, will create a series of short videos of congregants of all ages sharing personal statements of faith. The program is modeled after NPR's "This I Believe" series.

They were all initiated by spirited, innovative UUs and were all funded in less than 60 days by Faithify, a "crowdfunding" site (www.faithify.org/).

Faithify was launched by the UUA at General Assembly 2014 in Providence, Rhode Island. Crowdfunding is a process in which large numbers of individuals donate small sums to fund a project. Imagine that you could take your idea for a project or a service to a national audience, rather than raising funds for your project just within our own congregation. Post it to Faithify and you can reach UUs across the country.

This is how Faithify works: Anyone with a connection to a UU congregation can create and post a project. Postings can include pictures and videos in addition to project descriptions. Postings can typically be approved in a day or two. Funding is restricted to startup budgets and one time projects of modest scope and budget, not

for ongoing operating funds. Projects are tagged with one or more of 15 categories to make it easier for donors to choose projects to support. Projects can gather pledges for 15-60 days. Faithify uses the "All or Nothing" model of funding. No money is disbursed to a project unless it raises 100% of its goal. Faithify's founders emphasize that the success of a project's funding depends on the proponents informing a large number of people about their need via personal contacts and online social networking.

Anyone can be a donor by registering on Faithify and creating a Wepay account (similar to Paypal). Donations are by credit card. Your card is not charged unless the project meets its goal in its allotted time.

I personally helped fund the first two projects in the list above and am anxiously waiting to see if a third project, an effort to Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Selma Voting Rights Campaign, is successful.

If you want to post a project on Faithify, all the tools you need are available right on the site. There is a written document as well as an instructional video. The founders emphasize that developing your contact network is key to success, so be sure you include some social media savvy folks in on your team.

Faithify is in its infancy, but it's off to a great start. Since its debut at the end of June, over \$130,000 has been pledged and 34 projects have been fully funded.

FAITHIFY SUCCESS

34 Projects **\$139,442** Pledged

FAITHIFY

I encourage you to take a moment to visit www.faithify.org/ and appreciate the diversity of projects that UUs across the country are supporting.

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The New Year at First Church

BY REV. KATHLEEN OWENS, LEAD MINISTER

Here we are in a New Year—with all the promise and hope that it can hold. I am especially excited for this month as we join together to participate in a long-held tradition—the act of Installation. On Sunday, January 11th at 4:00 p.m., this congregation will install me as their 16th Lead Minister. I feel privileged and blessed to be in this line of ministers who have served this congregation so well. This service is an important one, for in it both the congregation and I will make promises to one another about how we will continue in ministry together. It is a time of celebration for the congregation. After the service, there will be a reception in Bard Hall. I hope you will participate in this important event in the life of our congregation.

Along with the special Generosity Offering recipients in January (our own UU Association and its various areas of ministry), our monthly theme of Justice is an important one for us to consider through sermons, Deep Conversations, and Wisdom Circle discussions. Justice has been a foundational ideal in the creation of our country—we speak of it in songs, and the pledge of Allegiance; yet it is elusive for so many in this country. As a people of faith, we need to hold up and continue to proclaim the need for justice for all who are here. I believe true justice is grounded in compassion and mercy with our first principle always in mind.

Justice can be complicated: Who determines what justice is and for whom? Wrestling with these questions and ideas of justice means we must be willing to go deeper into the subject, into the stories that are more than what the nightly news would present. As we work together to live our mission into reality, I hope you will find this community a more meaning-filled experience—one that invites you to connect more deeply as we create community, explore and nurture spiritual growth, and act on our values more boldly to help heal San Diego County. Welcome to this New Year.

Faithfully yours,

January Sermon Messages

Celebration Times:

Hillcrest Campus: Sunday, 9:30a and 11:30a
(ASL Interpretation)

South Bay Campus: Sunday, 9:30a
(Intergenerational, Bi-lingual [Spanish, English])

The January Transformational Theme is Justice

Sunday, January 4:

Hillcrest Services—

"She Calls for Justice,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.

South Bay Service—

"Just Us?" Adam Dyer, Intern.

Sunday, January 11:

Hillcrest Services—

"Ordinary Prophets,"

Rev Jennifer Channin, Assistant Minister.

South Bay Service—

"She Calls for Justice,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.

Sunday, January 11: Hillcrest, 4p
Installation of Rev Kathleen Owens

Sunday, January 18:

Hillcrest Services—

"Martin Luther King, Jr.,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.

South Bay Intergenerational Service—

"Martin Luther King, Jr.,"

Adam Dyer, Intern.

Sunday, January 25:

Hillcrest Services—

"Exploring the Koran,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.

South Bay Service—

"Ordinary Prophets,"

Rev Jennifer Channin, Assistant Minister.



WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

BY DR. MELISSA JAMES, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRY

I've been with the congregation for about five months now and am grateful for all the great conversations I have had through these few months.

The conversations that have been the most fun for me recently are those that start out with a verbal or non-verbal "What are we going to do?" You may know that question. The one often preceded or immediately followed with a sigh betraying the depth of both the commitment from whom the question comes, as well as the bewilderment from a lack of possible answers. When these conversations are about children and families, I'm starting to see a shift in how they play out. They may begin with "What are we going to do?" but, more and more, they're ending with "I'm so excited!"

This shift is coming from something that applies to most of life: we get the answers we need when we figure out the right questions to ask.

My time here has been a time of getting to know each other and figuring out what questions we need to be asking together about children and families. We're still fine-tuning those questions and will continue to do so. I'm seeing conversations ending with excitement because we're beginning to ask questions like "How do we take children seriously as a community?" and "How can we create programs and opportunities for community that meet the needs of today's families?"

Excitement is contagious and, so, I'd like to share with you some of the worship and program shifts that will come to life this winter, as a result of the discernment and creation that have come from these conversations.

We'll live into even more bold and engaging worship in a diverse, intergenerational and multicultural community. At South Bay, we have a

team that is working hard to find quality stories for the services and to develop RE experiences rich in spiritual practices, like meditation and gratitude, for our multi-aged class.

In Hillcrest, we'll:

- add more Stories for All Ages to engage all of our imaginations
- enrich the ritual of the Children's Affirmation by including the affirmation in Spanish. (Families with children have already begun practicing the affirmation in both languages and will be invited to a special chapel service on January 11th to learn all about why we are making this change and to practice the affirmation.)
- continue to offer caring, story-based curriculum for our 2 and 3 year olds and preK-1st grade classes during our 9:30 classes.
- begin an active-based curriculum to better meet the needs of our older elementary-aged children. They'll be invited to jump right into activities when they enter the classroom, participate in games and sports and then close their time with a Council Circle, where they'll connect their experiences with UU principles and sources.
- Offer a multi-age, chapel-based class during the 11:30 service, as a way for children from Kindergarten through 6th grade to engage in a story and work cooperatively to explore our UU principles. Our team of storytellers and activity center leaders will act as guides as the children become both teachers and learners.



I've found this place to be one of strong foundations, loving and capable hearts, and great vision. I have faith the excitement behind these changes are a mark of asking the questions that will help us create community, nurture spiritual growth, and act on our values to help heal the world.

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To view sermon video casts, click on these YouTube or Vimeo buttons:



Giving: <http://www.firstuusaniego.org/giving-overview>

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