

# **Congregational Discernment & Engagement Program**

*Co-Creating Relational, Strategic, and Faithful Social Justice Ministries Across California*

The mission of CDEP is to support the members and leaders of UU congregations in **assessing the quality** of their social justice ministries, **developing a vision** for their social justice ministries based on their values and context, and **designing a plan** to achieve that vision faithfully, accountably, and effectively.

This **three-part process** includes space for education, imagination, discernment, skill building, and strategic planning. Participants leave with tools to cultivate healthy, integrated social justice ministries in their congregation. Congregational leaders leave with a faith-rooted vision for social transformation, a clear direction, a supportive and engaged congregation, and a structure to build and implement a plan.

This program is **fully customizable** and can be focused to address the particularities of any congregation. The cost of this program is \$1,500. Covenanting congregations receive a \$100 discount. Please contact Rev. Ranwa Hammamy at 916.441.0018 x111 or [ranwa@uujmca.org](mailto:ranwa@uujmca.org) for more information or to discuss this opportunity and how it may support your congregation.



## **Program Objectives**

While each congregation's needs and context differ, the following components are typically assessed, with our goal being a **collaboratively built foundation for an engaged congregation** that appreciates the importance of a **healthy, accountable social justice ministry** as an **integral part of congregational life** and the beginnings of a **plan to embody that vision**. The main components of the program are:

- Imagine, reflect, and design how to support your social justice ministry into becoming one that is spiritually grounded in Unitarian Universalist values.
- Develop a vision of your congregation's potential to be an accountable partner for justice in your broader context and community.
- Discuss and assess the current status of your congregation's social justice ministry(ies).
- Explore the various possible components of strategic, faith-rooted social justice.
- Discover and plan how to integrate social justice into the larger life of your congregation including worship, religious education, pastoral care, and adult programming.
- Investigate how your congregation can be most effective in social justice ministry.
- Increase the number of people involved in the congregation's social justice ministry.
- Celebrate your congregation's history working for social justice and transformation.

## **Program Overview**

CDEP is designed as **three ninety-minute to two-hour sessions** that are spaced one to two months apart to allow for engagement and feedback time in between sessions. It is strongly recommended that the first session be held immediately following a worship service to promote greater participation.

For more information, or to discuss the possibility of bringing this program to your congregation, please contact Rev. Ranwa Hammamy at 916.441.0018 x111 or email [ranwa@uujmca.org](mailto:ranwa@uujmca.org).

**CDEP is an interactive, intentional program.** Much of our work is in small groups led by ministers, DREs, board members, and/or social justice lay leaders. The first session includes a recognition of the congregation's social justice history, allowing time to honor successes and identify areas to improve. We explore UU values, UU justice history, and models of engagement as we deepen our understanding of what it means to be an effective justice partner in right relationship. **During this first session, we will:**

- Define systemic change and why UUs engage in efforts to create transformative social justice
- Examine the congregation's justice identity, and celebrate its historical engagement in social justice
- Look at components that make a balanced social justice ministry
- Investigate how social justice will integrate into a healthy congregational life
- Learn components of a grounded justice ministry – values-based, accountable, and in right relationship with our broader context and community
- Imagine social justice as a congregation-wide mission and ministry
- Explore social justice integration into congregational life with a primer on the Gilbert model
- Begin imagining the congregation's future in social justice

In our second session, participants consider critical issues for their congregation which, if properly addressed, will lead to a more effective social justice ministry. CDEP facilitators will use a variety of methods to help members discuss these issues. We observe democratic methods for choosing issues to form task groups around. At the end of this session, participants collectively develop an action plan for implementing the recommendations that come out of this process. **During the second session, we will:**

- Explore focus issues previously identified in session one
- Discuss the core values of the congregation's social justice ministry
- Collectively develop a draft social justice mission and vision
- Brainstorm congregational resources/assets, potential community partners, and justice opportunities
- Design and implement means of getting congregational feedback and launch survey
- Collectively design and determine our democratic process for selecting issues to build on

The third session brings it home by having the leadership team present the results of the congregational feedback process and evaluations for possible engagements. Leaders make recommendations and set up the process for issue selection and justice ministry planning. **This third session builds the foundation for planning and implementing a model of relational, strategic, and faithful justice ministry as we:**

- Present and engage with congregational feedback results
- Report on top focus issues along with potential engagement opportunities for each
- Begin the process of issue selection based on findings and context
- Define next steps for implementing into congregational life (Governance, Social Justice Team, Congregational Life Integration, Planning Social Justice as a Congregation-wide Ministry)
- Defining next steps for social justice integration, using the Gilbert model primer for Engagement, Defining of Partners for Each Issue, a Right Relationship Policy, and Timeline for Evaluation.

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