



# UUJEC Winter Newsletter 2017

## Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community

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**SAVE THE DATE 2017: April 3 - April 5**

### Stand for our Values in Washington DC this Spring



During the recent election, many trends in American culture and politics reemerged with a surprising force, surprising many UUs who were focused on further progress toward a just and compassionate society. This electoral surprise and the initial actions of the incoming administration has dismayed many of us but it has also hardened our resolve. Now our challenge is to defend the progress made over the past 40 years on racial relations, and environmental issues while limiting a further deterioration on wealth and income inequality. This challenge can be met most effectively by standing for the values central to UUs: the inherent worth of every individual, and justice, equity and compassion in human relations. Now more than ever we must stand for what we believe.

UUs for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC) is providing an opportunity for all UUs to stand for their values and show their resolve. UUJEC, with its partner in the capital region UUs for Social Justice (UUSJ), is hosting the **Reversing Inequality Conference** on April 3, 4 and 5 in Washington DC. This conference will focus on the crucial social and economic justice issues that the new administration is threatening.

We will be joined by several of our justice allies, including Sister Simone Campbell and Chuck Collins and spend time on capitol hill talking with decisions makers. On day one, we will learn about these issues. On day two we will learn the skills needed to effectively talk to lawmakers and staff. On the final day, we will go to the hill and meet with decision makers to stand for our beliefs. We will fight against the rising tide of intolerance and inequity.

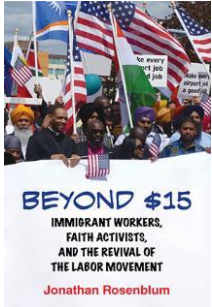
This is an exciting and important time to be in our nation's capital. We urge you to join us in Washington. **Conference details, registration information and local lodging options can be found here:**

<http://uujec.com/ReversingInequality>



Our blog on the UUJEC webpage has a wealth of information, commentary and feature stories for the Activist UU. From articles about overtime pay, the social security maximum, and UU's working on economic justice campaigns to commentary on a "Conversation with a Brooklyn Conservative," you can find delightful and inspiring wisdom here to share with your congregation. Join the conversation on our blog here: <http://uujec.com/blog>. You must be signed in or registered to join in the conversation, which takes 2 seconds to complete. <http://uujec.com/uujecRegistration>

## Book Review **Beyond \$15, The story of the SeaTac living wage battle** by Jonathan Rosenblum



Jonathan Rosenblum, a life-long union organizer, weaves a story about trying to get fair wages for the airport workers. They attempted to organize a union, but there were obstacles, first being that airports are regulated by the Railroad Labor Act, which prevented them from organizing. The SeaTac port authority is a corporate tool, although officials are elected by citizen votes.

It used to be when corporations went bankrupt, leadership was fired. Now leadership is retained, union contracts are void and labor is at the mercy of any challenge in the airline business. Corporate leaders use bankruptcy to keep labor union free and in line.

The underlying problem is that labor has lost all of their traditional power and corporations have amassed power. What the organizers figured out is there's more than one way to get power--so the airport workers took their fight to the voters. Out of over 6000 votes cast, \$15 won by just 77 votes. The power people gave them many battles--including several lawsuits. Working class people didn't fall in line--with largely brown people asking for more. This book reads like a whodunit, except you know that \$15 won.

They won because they included everyone--Muslims, Jews, Christians and non-believers. They won because they included black, white, brown and all shades. They won because they included Mexicans, Arabs, Indians and Europeans. And without all those people, they would have lost--which is what polling experts told them would happen with such thin support--less than 50% to start out.

This is a Beacon Press book, our UU publisher. 170 years ago, Beacon Press started out as our Unitarian missionary effort--educating people for our Unitarian values.

Beyond \$15 release date March 14, 2017

[Terry Lowman, UUJEC Co-Chair]



The Commission on Social Witness has released the first draft of the statement of Conscience on Escalating Inequality. Your congregation can vote to place this statement on the agenda of June's UUA General Assembly by voting to do so in the annual Congregational Poll. This statement will be open to revision both as a result of comments included with this official on-line poll and after debate at General Assembly. Read and reflect on the current statement and make sure your congregation's voice is heard. Members of your church staff should be able to give you more information about the congregational poll. The statement and a timetable for its approval can be found at <http://www.uua.org/economic/escalatinginequality>

[Jane Bannor UUJEC Treasurer]

### [Conference Scholarships, Compliments of UUFDC](#)

A big thank you to UU Fellowship of Door County for building upon our scholarship fund for low income UU's to attend the Reversing Inequality Conference. The congregation's third Sunday collection this month will be dedicated to this cause. Does your congregation want to help? Contact Rachel at [uujec@uujec.com](mailto:uujec@uujec.com) (See below)

### [Wisconsin Congregation Builds Their Outreach with UUJEC Resources](#)

Using the many resources which can be accessed through the Unitarian Universalist for a Just Economic Community's website the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Door County (UUFDC) is presenting a series of discussions and workshops centered on the

(Next Page)

the issue of income inequality. UUFDC is reaching out to other faith communities in its area to jointly present the six-week study guide developed by Shoreline Unitarian Universalist Church. By enlisting other faith communities UUFDC hopes to reach a larger section of the community regarding the issue of income inequality. Last autumn UUFDC presented a four-week viewing of TED Talks on income inequality. The TED Talks were so well attended UUFDC plans on another another four-week presentation of TED Talks and videos on income inequality open to the public. The many resources found at [www.UUJEC.com](http://www.UUJEC.com) are easy to implement and very informative, <http://uujec.com/csaiCurriculum.org>

[Jim Black, UUFDC, UUJEC Board Member]

### [UUJEC Recipient of UUFP Funds!](#)

#### Unitarian Universalist Funding Program

Our work at UUJEC wouldn't be possible without our members and generous grant makers like the Unitarian Universalist Funding Program (UUFP). We are very excited to report that our upcoming "Reversing Inequality" Conference in Washington DC will receive the financial support of UUFP. Through their spirit of giving, we will have an engaging and informative conference that would not have been financially feasible otherwise.

Please take some time to learn how instrumental UUFP is to advocacy work in our congregation.

From their website: <http://www.uufunding.org/>

The Unitarian Universalist Funding Program (UUFP) is a denominational grantmaking program of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Inspired by the richness and diversity of our liberal religious tradition, the mission of the UUFP is to promote the influence of Unitarian Universalist principles through grantmaking.

With funds generously provided by the Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock, the UUFP awards grants to Unitarian Universalist (UU)

and non-UU projects and organizations. Grants are made that:

- Support the work of Social Justice
- Strengthen Unitarian Universalist Institutions
- Transform gratitude of being into generosity of living
- Make Unitarian Universalism more visible in the world

### **Economic Justice Spotlight: Best Practices for our Economic Justice Work**

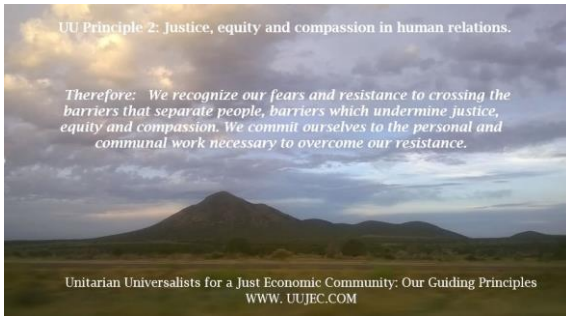


We've enjoyed seeing best practices from so many UU congregations and social justice committees in our Economic Justice Spotlight Campaign. As we develop the articles to inspire and inform you, we post them on our website. To date, you can see the progressive and collaborative campaigns from Madison, WI; Detroit MI, and Shoreline, WA.

Please visit our page and share the work of UU's standing up for Justice. <http://uujec.com/ejs>

### [A Time to Engage: A Message from your Board of Trustees.](#)

The Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC) has fought for over 25 years against the dominant root causes of inequality. Our core work is centered on the intersection of economic inequality and our 7 UU Principles. We observe that the escalation of economic inequality over the last 30 years has created widespread insecurity and a fertile breeding ground for racism, sexism and religious/ethnic intolerance.



## Justice - Not Social, Racial or Economic but Justice

This current distress leads to a nostalgic yearning for an imagined time in history when things were "better." However, current and many proposed policies result in better only for the already privileged, not for the disenfranchised. The conscience of our nation continues to be compromised and our political process exacerbates the dilemma.

### **What can our progressive religious community do to help heal the soul of America?**

For the UUJEC, now more than ever we need to come together and organize against those elements of our society that encourage intolerance and inequality to grow. We need to continue building the foundation of an open, multicultural, multiracial and equitable society. Moving towards a kind and compassionate environment in times of stress is difficult to achieve but even more necessary to strive for. Tough times create abundant opportunities: opportunities to broaden coalitions, to listen and share with a full and open heart, and to envision and work toward a just community.

Become a member of UUJEC and join a community that stands for love and justice.

<http://uujec.com/membership>

If we believe what our friends Wilkinson and Pickett suggest, in the "Spirit Level," which is that economic inequality promotes social dysfunction, then much of the social dysfunction is an effect not a cause. In order to deal with these effects, we need to deal with the cause (economic inequality). But if in American society economic inequality is anchored by the historical dehumanization of the African personality in the European imagination which relegates people of African descent to the bottom of the political economy, we have structural economic inequality that serves as rationale for maintaining inequality and legitimization of its ongoing role and continued existence.

To address economic inequality, we have to address the social justification for it. Fundamentally the rationalization for the dehumanization of the African personality in the European imagination is the conceptualization of the human family in categories called "race" that reflect group characteristics that are genetic and biological. So, economic inequality is based in inherent genetic strengths and weaknesses that relegate some to one "class" or the other, one role, function or level in the economy or the other.

In this view, it is not fiscal policy it is genetic destiny. This is implied and implemented through the concept and social construct called "race." We comply with and buy into this idea and arrangement when we deny the truth that there is only one 'race,' the human race and assert that we are 'white' or 'black.'

[Woullard Lett, UUJEC Board Member]

**What we do:** UUJEC strives to create a world of justice, equity, and compassion where the inherent worth and dignity of every person is recognized and affirmed as set forth in our Unitarian Universalist Principles.