

# UUJEC Economic Justice Spotlight

## Mountain Vista UU Congregation. Tucson, Arizona

The Mountain Vista Unitarian Universalist Congregation (MVUU) has a vision. Since its founding in 1989 with fifty-five charter members, MVUU has dedicated its energies to outreach in northwest Tucson. The members then and now provide pantry supplies, meals-on-wheels, rides to doctors' appointment, home handymen for the elderly, and financial support to those in need.



When the congregation's minister, the Reverend Ron Phares, arrived in 2013, action and advocacy around economic justice exploded. Rev. Ron came up with an idea: a Justice Coordinating Committee (JCC), made up of a few members and himself that would focus on justice work through a "lens." The first several years, that lens was "Economic Disparity" in Tucson and the United States.

*Rev. Ron Phares, photo provided by MVUU*

The JCC then formed the Committee of the Whole, comprising thirty-five members of the congregation. With this expansion, a comprehensive, successful Life-Span Faith Development program entitled "Living Inequality" was offered in February and April 2016. Those who attended viewed Robert Reich's documentary "Inequality for All," formed discussion groups, and wrote covenants called "Money Memoirs." Much was learned about income disparity, poverty in America, and the controversial education issues in Arizona.



*MVUU Living Wage Demonstration. Photo Provided by MVUU*



MVUU's mission is "To Welcome, Care For, and Inspire those within and beyond our walls." As Mountain Vista's economic justice activities turn more and more to action and advocacy, the members strive to make economic justice a sustainable part of congregational life. The momentum caused by increased justice involvement by MVUU members has resulted in a palpable rise in energy, enthusiasm, and concern for the well-being of others.

*UUJAZ and MVUU Lobby Day. Photo Provided by MVUU*

These changes of heart have also coalesced and strengthened the church community. Mountain Vista has established a three-pronged focus—Fellowship, Justice Outreach, and Spiritual Path—for its congregants and visitors alike to know what matters most to the folks attending MVUU.

The congregation of Mountain Vista Unitarian Universalist is truly an inspiration for others. The activities and commitment to economic justice issues demonstrate how a vision can become a reality. Then the reality provides momentum to energize more commitment and action expanding what is being done. The members credit their minister, Ron Phares, with being the catalyst for much of the momentum.



*Public Banking Forum at MVUU.  
Photo Provided by MVUU*



*Rep. Leach office LD11 Representative  
Vince Leach with MVUU members Betty  
Meikle, Richard Kopp, Mary Nell Hoover,  
Cynthia Chaffee. Photo provided by MVUU.*

Article developed in collaboration between UUJEC board member Jim Black and Mountain Vista UU member Elizabeth Reed. To reach out to MVUU, please contact Elizabeth at [reedeliz@gmail.com](mailto:reedeliz@gmail.com)

### **Additional Resources:**

MVUU website: <http://www.mvuu.org/>

MVUU Beyond Our Walls Initiatives: <http://www.mvuu.org/beyond-our-walls>

MVUU YouTube Channel” <https://www.youtube.com/user/MVUUCongregation>

MVUU Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Mountain.Vista.Unitarian.Universalist/>

Unitarian Universalist Justice Arizona Network: <http://www.uujaz.org/>

Rev. Phares sermon, Redeeming Our Future:

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/51c749c2e4b01f34284eaa4c/t/573f4bca45bf21ef89c1868d/1463765963230/2016\\_05\\_15+RedeemingOurFuture+Phares.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/51c749c2e4b01f34284eaa4c/t/573f4bca45bf21ef89c1868d/1463765963230/2016_05_15+RedeemingOurFuture+Phares.pdf)