

Soulful Songs and Stories



With a song and your stories, we co-create a soft place for hard conversations and a brave space for personal and spiritual growth. Then Magic Happens.

#17: A Beloved Community Has Spiritual Roots

Hi Soulful Song Lovers and Story Tellers,

You've Really Got a Hold on Me, Smokey Robinson / Smokey Robinson and Sheryl Crow (2011) <https://youtu.be/LiRkOlaqCqw?t=17> 3:36

The single most important bond is that of community. We have to beware of the extent to which liberal individualism has actually been an assault on community. The notion that “real freedom” is about being independent, when the genuine stuff of life is our interdependency, is our capacity to feel both with and for ourselves and other people. —**bell hooks**

The Beloved Community: A Conversation between bell hooks and George Brosi, 2012
<https://www.boundlessloveproject.org/news/2021/12/28/rest-in-power-bell-hooks>

We belong to a mutually beneficial web of connection, well-being, and love. At the root of this connection is empathy; the result is kindness, compassion, respect, and understanding. When religion doesn't center on this mutuality, it can become one of the toxic narratives that, in the end, dismantles self-love.

—**Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis**

<https://cac.org/love-of-others-begins-with-love-of-self-2022-04-12>

I would like to be alive to the people around me. I would like to maintain the ability to get through a day feeling mostly solid, mostly of this earth, mostly whole. When I start to panic now—about being a failure, about craving success, about the passage of time, about a ravenous desire to be someone else, someone better and smarter and beautiful—I retreat by nestling not into isolation and a narcotic numbing, but gratitude and community. It's corny! It's also so achingly beautiful and nourishing, and it is saving my life minute by minute.

—**Danielle Tcholakian, Jezebel, Jan 19, 2022** <https://jezebel.com/1848380935>

Ain't Nothing like the Real Thing, Nickolas Ashford & Valerie Simpson / Dara Maclean and Jason Eskridge (2012) <https://youtu.be/ukqizQdGvi8?t=6> 2:55

We aspire to be a loving, religious community where we can grow spiritually and build a more just and joyful world. —**UUCSR vision statement**

Members have already named Spirituality, Community, and Being of Service as three of the most important aspects of Congregational life at Shelter Rock. —**The Ministerial Search Committee**, Apr 12, 2022

People have been talking about “spirituality” for as long as I’ve been at UUCSR—more than a decade and a half—usually in small groups in the lobby, or when breaking bread in the UU Café and elsewhere. It often comes up in focus groups, seldom in committees, and because of business and busyness, almost never in meetings of the Board of Trustees or the Congregation. Some think the first step in growing the beloved community is providing substance and a reason for roots and returning, while others want to start with “putting more bodies in seats.” If people really mean it when they say they want (more) spirituality, why is it so elusive? Is it inertia, passive neglect, or active resistance? We take very good care of our building, property, and wealth—but when it comes to our spiritual needs and our hunger for the holy, not so much. Maybe the fact that you’re reading this is a hopeful sign. —**Steve Marston**

Hungry Heart, Bruce Springsteen (2012) <https://youtu.be/LNsrRseQG8o?t=21> 3:11

Held Together by a Will to Hypocrisy

Religion and nationalism promised a timeless stability but were actually subversive forces. They were subversive because, despite the rhetoric of confidence, they were anxiously unstable, held together by a will to hypocrisy; when the deficits of this hypocrisy overwhelmed the benefits, the will began to wane. Take contraception. The pill, though illegal in Ireland, had been imported into the country since 1963, officially as a “cycle regulator.” As long as no one spoke the word “contraceptive,” doctors could conspire with their female patients in this medical fiction. The Church connived at this solution, too. “Catholic schools and hospitals would have ceased to function if teachers and nurses were not having awful trouble with their periods;” pregnant teachers and nurses would have been sacked, Fintan O’Toole winkingly comments in his new book, *We Don’t Know Ourselves: A Personal History of Modern Ireland*.

O’Toole bundles these hypocrisies under the delicious term “Connie dodging.” Cornelius (hence “Connie”) Lucey, the Bishop of Cork, had demanded a particularly strict version of Lenten fasting, in which parishioners were restricted to one meal a day, along with two “collations,” which were understood to be something like a biscuit, to be had with one’s tea. A resourceful local baker then invented a gigantic biscuit for Lent, known as a Connie dodger. “The law of God was not defied,” O’Toole observes. “It was dodged. And so it was with the Pill.” —**James Wood**, “How Ireland Took on the Church and Freed its Soul,” *New Yorker*, Apr 4, 2022 www.j.mp/aWillToHypocrisy

Do we live into beloved community, or do we dodge its spiritual roots, turning the term into a pseudo-religious cliché and pompous platitude to hide behind while we do what we always did to get what we always got?

The Girl with the Flaxen Hair, Claude Debussy/Mary Elizabeth Bowden, tpt <https://youtu.be/loUBPdjb140> 2:17 Marnie Laird, piano <https://youtu.be/E5kZnoP-gOU> 3:05

When people come to you for help, do not turn them off with pious words, saying, “Have faith and take your troubles to God.” Act instead as though there were no God, as though there were only one person in the world who could help—only yourself. —**Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sasov** (d. 1807), told by Martin Buber in *Tales of the Hasidim*

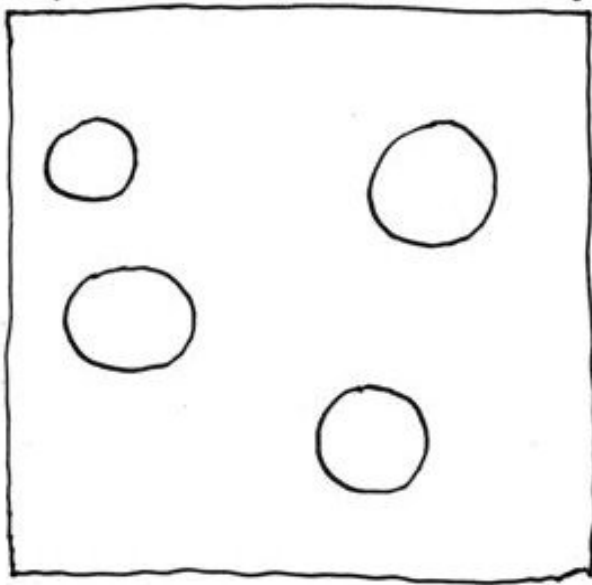
Oligarchy: A small group of people having control of a country, organization, or institution. —**Oxford English Dictionary**

Is your spiritual home a community or an organization?

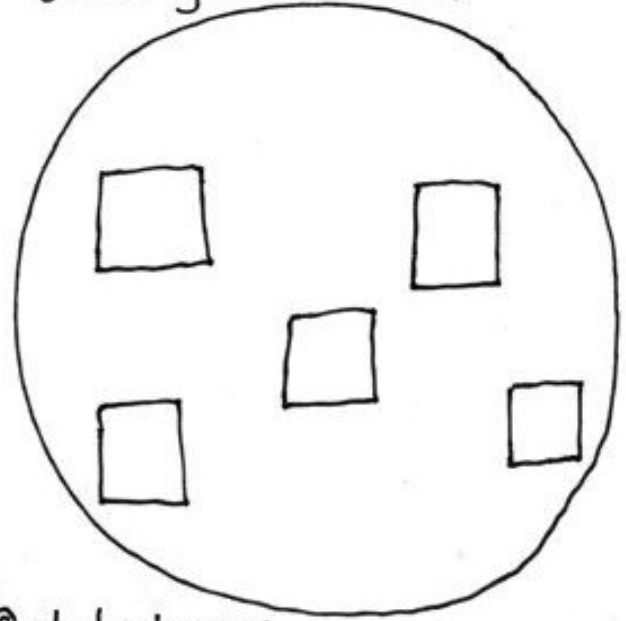
David Hayward, aka “**The Naked Pastor**,” was in church ministry for 30 years. Read his views on community vis-à-vis organization here:

<https://nakedpastor.com/en-gb/blogs/news/do-you-want-a-community-or-an-organization>

Organization with pockets of community.



Community with pockets of organization.



Hayward
©nakedpastor.com

Dad's Clarinet, Harry Skoler (2009) <https://youtu.be/8gKzrWye9D4> 4:21

It seems to me that we ought to carry on a lovers' quarrel with the church. It behooves us—those of us who love the church—to do what we can to eliminate the ridiculous, the superficial, and the trivial. It doesn't help much for the church to play it like it is perfect. These things will not go away for all our pretending.

—**Charles Merrill Smith**, *How To Become a Bishop Without Being Religious*, 1965

At least 15 women of color have left the BBC in the last year saying they are “exhausted” from fighting a system that “is not systemically built to support anyone who is different,” a *Variety* investigation has uncovered. “There has been an exodus,” says Simone Byrne, a Black Scottish journalist who spent 16 years at the BBC, first in news and then in diversity and inclusion (D&I), a unit that recruits diverse talent and ensures compliance with in-house D&I policies. Byrne left in November 2021 after being told by her managers that she needed to be “sensitive about how I speak about race to white people.” —**K.J. Yossman, Manori Ravindran**, *Variety*, Apr 6, 2022
<https://variety.com/2022/tv/global/bbc-women-leaving-impartiality-1235221317>

A dysfunctional family is any family with more than one person in it.
—**Mary Karr**, *The Liars' Club*, 1995

It's inevitable, even in the best of families, workplaces, and houses of worship that someone will harm, bully, disrupt, threaten, or just can't seem to work and play well with others. That's why businesses have a human resources department, and religious institutions have a committee or a process that serves a similar function. Shelter Rock's version was the Committee on Ministry. Because the Committee's charge was both too vague *and* too specific, and the Committee was often weaponized, an *Ad Hoc Committee on Right Relations* was formed with a charge from the Board of Trustees to redefine the Committee's primary focus to one of assisting members in resolving conflicts. On June 3, 2021, after three months of due diligence, the Ad Hoc Committee sent its proposed *Bylaws Revision and Respectful Relationships Policy (at the end of this PDF)* to the Board. The proposals wound up in a black hole, the original committee is defunct, and now UUCSR has no mechanism for conflict resolution. A truly beloved community has a means to expeditiously resolve conflict, check bad behavior, and halt abuse. —**Steve Marston**

There is a Balm in Gilead, traditional /

Nina Simone (1978) https://youtu.be/H1_nQh-ohBs 2:26

Jeanne Lee and Archie Shepp (1969) <https://youtu.be/9s-EvKrXoyM> 6:01

Do not depend on the hope of results. In the end, it is the reality of the personal relationship that saves everything. —**Thomas Merton**

I learned my favorite definition of love from one of my seminary professors, the late Dr. James E. Loder. He defined love as a “**non-possessive delight in the particularity of the other.**” All these years later, I am still so moved by this sentiment. Non-possessive delight sounds like devotion to me. Rather than trying to change, manipulate, or devour the object of our affection, fierce love delights in the particularities of who they are. So, when you love yourself, you take delight in the unique particularities that add up to you, without judgment. —**Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis**

<https://cac.org/love-of-others-begins-with-love-of-self-2022-04-12>

It Is Well with My Soul, **Horatio G. Spafford, Philip Paul Bliss** /
Life Destiny Television <https://youtu.be/VyYpCGQ9-u4> 4:53 (instrumental)

The Process That Brings Us Closer

Dominator culture has tried to keep us all afraid, to make us choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity. Moving through that fear, finding out what connects us, reveling in our differences; this is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community.

—**bell hooks**, *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*, 2003

You Are My Sunshine, Jimmie Davis and Charles Mitchell /

B.B. King and Susan Tedeschi (2011) <https://youtu.be/xXnzqtJMOAo?t=3> 7:03

Amanda Castro Band <https://youtu.be/jNPM8b8D2Fk> 5:04

Jasmine Thompson <https://youtu.be/2cBzMSPYKas> 2:49

To say that “God is personal” is to say that “reality at its very deepest level is personal,” that personality is of ultimate significance in the constitution of the universe, that in personal relationships we touch the final meaning of existence as nowhere else. —**John A.T. Robinson**, *Honest To God*, 1963

To love you is to advocate your rights, your space, your self, and to struggle with you, rather than against you, in your learning to claim your power in the world. To love you is to be pushed by a power/god both terrifying and comforting, to touch and be touched by you. To love you is to sing with you, cry with you, pray with you, and act with you to re-create the world.

—**Carter Heyward**, *Our Passion for Justice*, 1984

Power and Love

Every morning
I shall concern myself anew about the boundary
Between the love-deed-Yes and the power-deed-No
And pressing forward honor reality. We cannot avoid
Using power,
Cannot escape the compulsion
To afflict the world,
So let us, cautious in diction
And mighty in contradiction,
Love powerfully

—**Martin Buber**, as quoted in *Encounter with Martin Buber* (1972) by Aubrey Hodes

Rejoice, Charnett Moffett (2021) <https://youtu.be/vJxO8b2jJbY> 3:56

Charnett Moffett and his wife, Jana Herzen, put out a rich sound full of spirituality and positive emotion. This is one of the most unashamedly happy sets of music to appear in a long time. —Jerome Wilson, *All About Jazz*, Sep 2, 2021

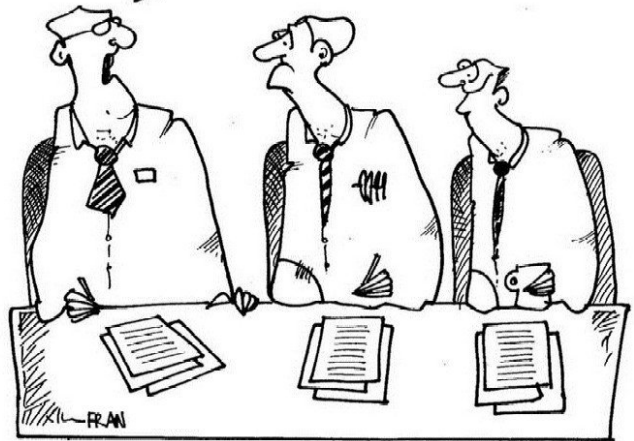
Charnett Moffett, the jazz bassist known for his virtuosity and versatility as both a bandleader and an accompanist, died suddenly of a heart attack on April 11, 2022. He was 54. —JazzFM91

The cartoons on the next two pages are examples of what a beloved community with spiritual roots should *not* look like.



"Basically, we're looking for an innovative pastor with a fresh vision who will inspire our church to remain exactly the same."

WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SETTING UP A POLICY GROUP TO LOOK AT THE OPTION OF A SUB-COMMITTEE TO PREPARE A DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE PROBLEM ...



Are you lonely?

Tired of working on your own?
Do you hate making decisions?

HOLD A MEETING!

You can —

- See people
- Show charts
- Feel important
- Point with a stick
- Eat donuts
- Impress your colleagues

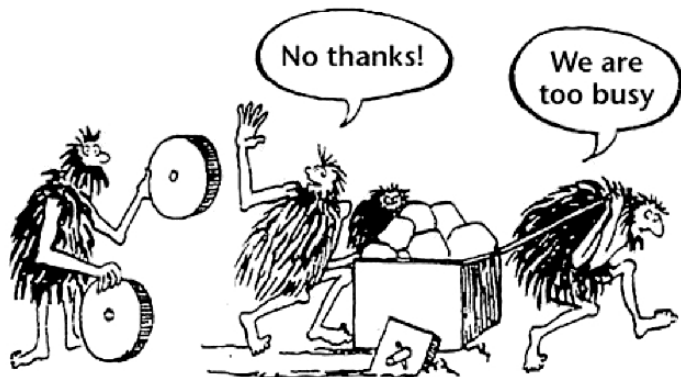
All on company time!



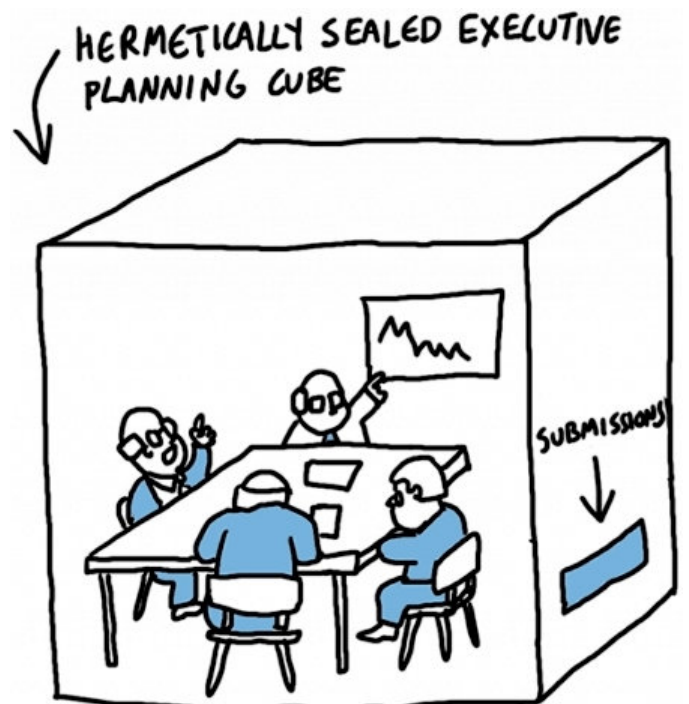
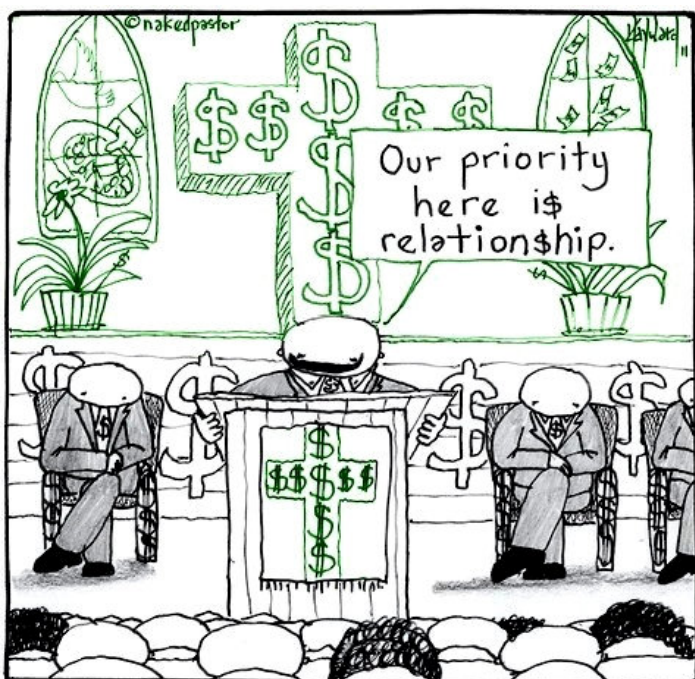
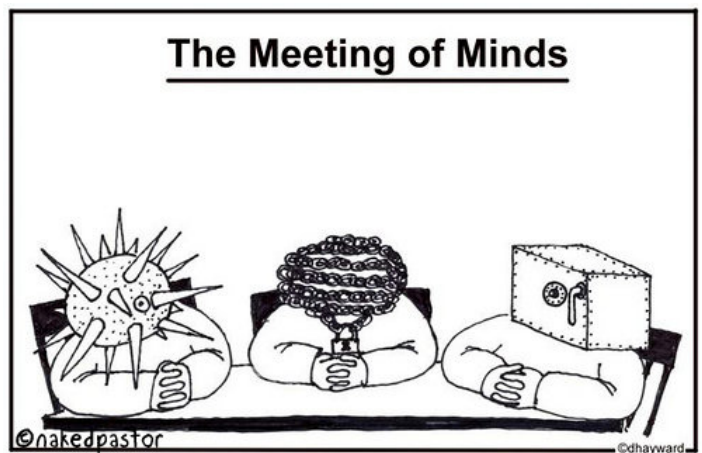
MEETINGS

THE PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE TO WORK





"Our company is going to embrace cutting edge change ... that's why the room is full of old white guys waiting for me to load a motivational video into a VCR."



June 3, 2021

Memo to: UUCSR Board of Trustees

From: Ad Hoc Committee on Right Relations

On March 4, 2021, the Ad Hoc Committee on Right Relations received a charge from the Board of Trustees to propose revisions to the Bylaws provision governing the Committee on Ministry. The purpose was to redefine the Committee's primary focus to one of assisting members in resolving conflicts. This request from the Board is consistent with the May 28, 2020, recommendation from the Committee on Ministry.

We offer for the Board's consideration:

- Respectful Relationships Team Bylaws Provision, Section 8.2(A)(2), to replace the current Committee on Ministry Bylaws Provision
- Respectful Relationships Policy

It should be noted that adoption of this new Bylaws Provision would require the reference to the Committee on Ministry in the Congregational Covenant approved on November 22, 2015, to be amended to replace the words "Committee on Ministry" with the words "the Respectful Relationships Team."

We thank the Board of Trustees for entrusting us with this responsibility.

Respectfully submitted,

Ad Hoc Committee on Right Relations

Vince Chimienti (Chair)

Lisa Armband

Janet Bendowitz

Steve Marston

Skye Smith

Rev. Jaye Brooks, Ministerial Liaison

Attachments:

- Proposed Respectful Relationships Team Bylaws Provision
- Proposed Respectful Relationships Policy

Respectful Relationships Team Bylaws Provision
Amendment to Section 8.2(A)(2) (replacing existing (A)(2) with new text)

2. Respectful Relationships Team

- (a) In alignment with our Congregational Covenant and UU Principles, the Respectful Relationships Team shall provide educational programs that promote a congregational environment based on respectful and compassionate communications, and to facilitate conversations among members who seek support in resolving a conflict.
- (b) The Respectful Relationships Team shall report to the Ministerial Team, who will provide ongoing training and support, and at least one minister will meet regularly with the team. The Ministerial Team will report the team's activities and achievements to the Board of Trustees at least once a year. The Respectful Relationships Team shall elect a team leader.
- (c) The Respectful Relationships Team shall be composed of three members of the Congregation, appointed by the Ministerial Team and subject to approval by the Board of Trustees.
- (d) Each member serves a three-year term, renewable once, staggered to provide continuity of membership. Vacancies, if they do occur, will be filled by the Ministerial Team in the same manner as above.
- (e) The President of the Congregation is not an ex-officio member of the Respectful Relationships Team. No member of the Board of Trustees or their immediate family is eligible to serve on this Team. Only one person from an immediate family residing in the same household shall serve on the Team. No employee of the church or a member of a minister's or staff member's immediate family may serve on the Team.

Proposed Respectful Relationships Policy

This policy establishes the process by which members are to resolve a conflict with one another and to allow, to the greatest extent possible, the fair, respectful, and non-judgmental treatment of all parties involved. This policy is consistent with the Congregational Covenant.

Process

- The goal is to resolve a conflict by direct communication.
- Once the process is initiated, resolution should not be pursued without all parties involved, unless the issue involves one person in conflict with a group, in which case the group is to select a representative.
- All parties should avoid triangulation and should seek direct communication with the person with whom they have an issue.
- The process should begin and be completed in a timely fashion.
- Should a party decide not to engage in or to continue with the process, that party agrees to drop the issue and not involve other people (in accordance with the Congregational Covenant).
- Behavior that harms another person or that is disruptive to congregational life falls under the Safety Policy. A person harmed by the behavior may follow the process specified in the Safety Policy.

First Step

The congregants in conflict are encouraged to talk to one another independently to resolve the dispute.

If no resolution is achieved:

Second Step

One or more of the parties in conflict may then ask a minister or a member of the Respectful Relationship Team to facilitate a conversation among the parties. If all the parties agree to be present for a conversation, the team member will facilitate a face-to-face discussion to enable those in conflict reach an understanding. The goal will be to arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution and restore a healthy relationship between the parties in conflict.

If no resolution is reached at this point:

Third Step

A UUA-affiliated mediator, identified by UUA Congregational Life Staff, may be called in to lead the parties in mediation to determine a mutually agreeable resolution.