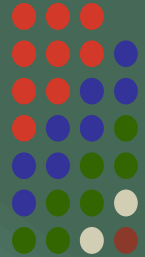




# Organizing for Change:

## Addressing Classism in Your Faith Community



**Champlain Valley UU Society**

**Sat., October 1, 2016**

Rev. Lee Paczulla  
Denise Moorehead

**#uuclassstories**

Funded in part by the Unitarian Universalism Funding Program

**UU Class Conversations**

**More at [www.uuclassconversations.org](http://www.uuclassconversations.org)**



# Workshop Purpose



To provide today's participants with the opportunity to explore the implications of class and classism, connect classism to growing inequality, and begin the organizing process to help our faith communities become less classist and more class inclusive.



# UU Principle



## Third Principle

Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations



# Covenant



- Speak with “I” statements. Raise issues that come up for you.
- Share airtime and listen carefully and respectfully to each other. Assume good intentions.
- All questions are welcome. It is okay to disagree with each other respectfully.
- Set your own limits. You have the right to pass on any question.
- Confidentiality: Sharing information and ideas after the workshop is encouraged, but keep personal statements and experiences confidential.
- ***Others?***



# UU Principle



## First Principle

The inherent worth and dignity of every person



# Early Memories



**Directions:** Please pair up with the person sitting next to you and discuss these questions to begin exploring class.

- When did you first notice that someone had more ***or*** less class advantages than your family?
  - What made you think so? How did that make you feel? (2 min each person)



# Class Indicators



**Directions:** Based on your observations, we will generate a list of class indicators.

Please share the “indicators” that helped you come to the Early Memories realizations.

# Definition of Class



- Class is the relative social rank in terms of **income, wealth, education, occupation, status and/or power.**
- Class is comprised of:
  - **Economic Capital** – The command over economic resources (cash, assets).
  - **Cultural Capital** – The forms of knowledge, skill, education, and any advantages a person has which give her or him a higher status in society.
  - **Social Capital** – Resources based on group membership, relationships, networks of influence and support.
- Class affects people not only on an economic level, but also on an emotional level.

From our partner, Class Action [www.classism.org](http://www.classism.org)





# UU Principle



## Second Principle

Justice, equity and compassion in human relations



# Class Backgrounds, Pt1



## Finding Your Class Background

**Directions:** Please stand in front of the class indicators that best represent your life as a preteen, ages 10-12. If you feel like you grew up between any of the 4 primary areas which are pointed out, place yourself midway between them.

There is information on the wall in different parts of the room about elements of your life:

- Parents' or guardians' education
- Family income
- Housing



# Class Backgrounds, Pt2



## Class Groups

**Directions:** Please move to the place in the room where you stood most often, and form a group with others there. Choose a **scribe**, **timekeeper** and **reporter**, and discuss the questions below.

Be prepared to share two insights from questions 1 to 3 below, and share your group's class background and name.

1. What strengths did you gain from your class background?
2. What limitations?
3. What role did race/ethnicity play in class identity?

*Give your group a descriptive name.*



# Cross-Class Dialogue



**Directions:** Please reflect on what you have learned, and ask questions of those in different class groups.

- What do you want to know about other groups?
- What do you want other groups to know about your group?
- What insights and observations have you gained from the process of identifying your class background?



# Current Class Groups



**Directions:** As we review class indicators, please move to the section of the room that best fits your current class. We will discuss the following:

- For all: What was the experience of class mobility (or not) for you? What factors were involved? How do race and other identities intersect with your class experience?
- Those who changed class: What have you gained and/or lost? How do you feel about moving to your new class?
- Those who have not: What are your views; gains/losses?



# UU Principle



## Sixth Principle

The goal of world community  
with peace, liberty, and justice  
for all



# Classism Defined



The institutional, cultural, and individual practices and beliefs that assign differential value to people according to their socioeconomic class; ***and*** an economic system that creates excessive inequality and causes basic human needs to go unmet.



# Role of Classism in Inequality



**Directions:** We will now consider the role of classism in escalating inequality.

- What sorts of assumptions/stereotypes about different classes are used to justify unfair policies and practices?
- What role does classism play in escalating economic inequality?
- How do racism and ethnic bias amplify the stereotypes and, therefore, compound classism?



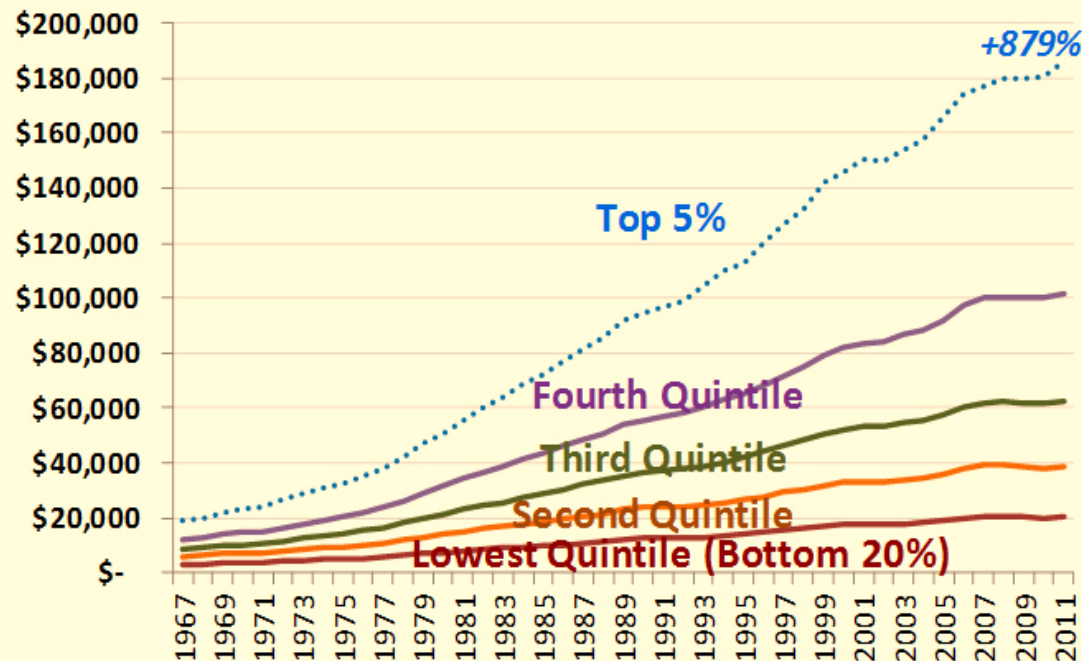
# Escalating Inequality



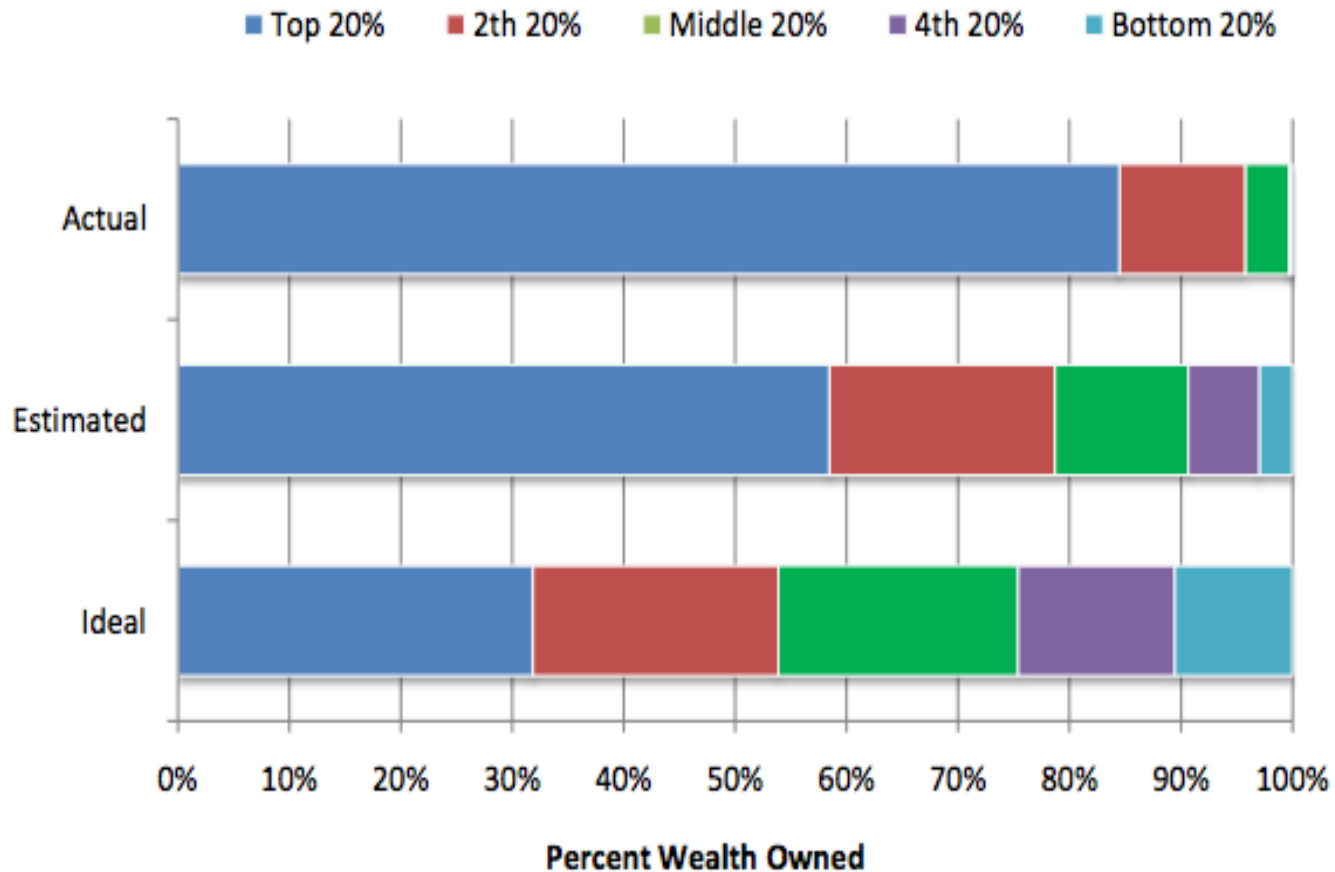
## Historical US Income Inequality

Source: US Census Bureau, Income Limits for  
Each Fifth and Top 5 Percent of Households

(Current Dollars)



# Escalating Inequality





# Circles of Classism



Classism shows up in many different forms in our lives. We might think of the ways classism affects us as expanding circles.

- **Individual**
  - Internalized Classism
  - Class Privilege
- **Interpersonal**
- **Cultural**
- **Organizational**
- **Systemic**



# UU Principle



## Third Principle

Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations



# Organizational Classism



Classism is embedded in many of the policies and practices of our organizations, including faith communities. Organizational classism can be changed by the growing awareness of congregations and commitment to justice and equity.

- **Class Barriers**
- **Unspoken Class-Based Rules**
- **Classist Policies and Practices**
- **Class-based Rewards and Acknowledgements**



# Identifying Classism Walk-Around



**Directions:** Note pages posted on the walls for each of six elements of congregational life where classism might arise. Go to the area which interests you most. Talk with others; write your observations on the appropriate page. (Think in general terms, not necessarily your own group.) 3 minutes/3 topics.

- Congregational culture
- Worship
- Finances
- Decision-making
- Religious education
- Social justice work

# UU Principles



## 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> Principles

- 4<sup>th</sup>: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
- 5<sup>th</sup>: The right of conscience and the use of democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
- 7<sup>th</sup>: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part



# Organizing for Change Model



- *Why?* Determine your primary purpose for addressing classism and the top 2 to 3 goals you have for this work.
- *Who?* Determine what groups within the congregation must be involved:
  - Those with institutional responsibility and resources.
  - Accountability to members with fewer class advantages, especially in terms of education and income.
  - Long-time members
  - (Are there outside individuals, groups, institutions [UUA national and/or districts, local partners, etc.] that need to be considered?)





# Organizing for Change Model



- *How?* Form Organizing Team, with one or two lead organizers and members representing different groups in the congregation.
- *When?* Decide when to meet next. Begin to create a timeline.
- *What?* Consider activities and programs to start with as you begin to address classism.

# Creating an Action Plan



**Directions:** As a whole and then in groups, develop your **Action Plan for Change.**



# UU Principles



## Third Principle

Acceptance of one another and  
encouragement to spiritual growth  
in our congregations



# Personal Commitments



**Directions:** Please ...

- Consider what you will do personally to reduce classism in your personal life and/or congregation.
- Write your commitments on a card to take with you to remind you of your intentions.
- Share your commitments with one other person.
- Chose one action to share in the closing circle.



# UU Class Conversations



- Workshops and consultation
- Videos and webinars.
- Facilitator Training Process
- On the web: [www.uuclassconversations.org](http://www.uuclassconversations.org)
  - Share your UU class story
- Like and chat with us on Facebook:  
UU Class Conversations
- Follow us on Twitter: @uuclassstories
  - Hashtag for today: **#uuclassstories**

Our partner Class Action has a **youth curriculum on class, *Created Equal*** – great for RE.



# We carry the flame!



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