

Annual PSD Conference 2011: “It Matters What We Believe”

How many times have we heard someone say, “Oh, UUs can believe whatever we want.” ? Not true! We cannot be racists or disrespect the beliefs of others, and we do a disservice to our faith when we lead people to think we could. What *do* UUs believe in common? What are the ethical guidelines that are always relevant for us, and how can we live our lives in better alignment with what we really believe?

Our conference theme comes from a favorite reading in our hymnal, “It Matters What We Believe” (#657) by a beloved UU religious educator, Sophia Lyon Fahs. It begins, “Some beliefs are like walled gardens. They encourage exclusiveness and the feeling of being especially privileged. *Other beliefs are expansive and lead the way into wider and deeper sympathies.*” What kind of believers are we? We are our best selves when we achieve understanding and empathy. We are at our worst when we can only proclaim what we are against. How do we challenge ourselves to be our best, while avoiding the trap of being exclusive ourselves?

Come and explore this theme with us. How do we articulate our individual beliefs? How do we help our children form their own moral compass? And how do we, as a church, take a public stand on ethical issues? Our conversations together promise to be enriching and rewarding. Please join us in DesMoines!

To support this theme, let us actively seek workshops that respond directly to the title. For instance:

How can we effectively distill our UU Principles and Purposes down to the two-minute “elevator speech” ?

How do we get along with people who believe differently from ourselves? (Even when they are on the same committee as us?)

How do we encourage critical thinking in our religious education?

How do we act on our beliefs to attract new members?

How do we “nurture self-confidence and enrich the feeling of personal worth?”

How do we keep our beliefs “pliable...ever growing with the upward thrust of life?” How do we encourage each other on our own spiritual paths?

Getting everyone on board: taking a public stand on moral issues.