**UUA Common Read 2023-24: *On Repentance and Repair* by Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg**

**Workshop 2: Repentance and Repair in Our Covenanted Communities**

**SCENARIO B**

Congregation B is housed in an old building that lacks interior ramps. For years, congregational leaders have faced difficult choices between accessibility projects and many other needs, from necessary roof, heat, and plumbing repairs to the cost of fair labor practices including funds to keep the building maintenance person employed. Because the only staircases go up to a choir loft and down to the basement, the leadership repeatedly selected projects other than ramps. The fact that there is a single step from the sanctuary floor to the pulpit never came up.

The minister, about to take a sabbatical, invited a guest worship leader to cover several Sunday services. The person they chose is someone who uses a wheelchair—a fact that the minister failed to communicate to the building staff or the worship committee.

On the Sunday of their worship engagement, the guest was able to enter the building via a ramp alongside the front steps. They proceeded into the sanctuary, where they had been asked to meet a worship committee member. However, they were surprised at the front of the sanctuary to find the pulpit and chalice were one step up from the ground. The worship committee member apologized profusely while the building maintenance person went scrambling to find a music stand and a microphone for the guest to use on the floor level.

**Discussion**

Step One: Who were harm-doers? How might they name the harm they did? Did the harm escalate out of a conflict? Conflict is to be expected. How did it cross over into harm?

Step Two: What changes could harm-doers start to make, in order to demonstrate repentance?

Step Three: What restitution and consequences did or could the harm-doer(s) do? What could that look like, without doing further harm?

Step Four: Who could offer a meaningful apology to whom?

Step Five: Who is responsible for making different choices, going forward, to prevent their causing similar harm in the future?

How is the congregation a harm-doer? What changes, what repairs, what different future choices can the community make, for a transformative repentance?