

# Racial Justice Task Force Minutes – 16 November 2017

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## In Attendance:

Generose Lambert, Sally Russell, Martha Molpus, Christina Vetter, Jud Lawrie, Zoe Hart, Linda Cooper, Monica Sargent, Gabriel Ely

## Agenda

- Opening Words (Andre in absentia)
  - The words Andre shared came from "Darkening the Doorways." by Mark Morrison-Reed. At the end of the book he describes visiting Selma and experiencing the community so many years after the march there. He writes: "We can't know and do not need to know the consequences of our actions. We are not called to succeed. We are called to try." Andre shared "I've been contemplating this quote and wondering in our social action work when we might be slowing down, focusing too much on being successful instead of simply showing up and trying."
- Racial justice struggles and highlights
- Approved October minutes
- Decided to use consensus to make decisions within the task force
  - Consensus will be made among members who are present physically or virtually
  - We all have to be ok with how we move forward even if we aren't all enthusiastic.
  - We all have to have been heard, especially dissenting voices.
  - We will look into defining membership in the task force so that someone cannot simply attend to block a decision we are making.
- Discussion on how best to share air-time during heated discussion in a meeting.
  - We decided to try giving someone a job of keeping track of raised hands and the order they were raised (while prioritizing people who have not spoken) for this meeting.
  - Next meeting we will try going around the circle to share with a "pass" option to compare.
- Creating a covenant/group norms
  - Move up/Move back. (try to speak up if you normally don't, or listen more if you normally talk)
  - Assume good intentions.
  - Listen actively. (don't be quick to rebut or question)
  - We do not need to repeat when we agree, but can do more to show agreement like snaps, ASL clapping, vocalizing, etc.
  - We will evolve the covenant as we need to.
  - We all keep time together as a group.
- Do we recommend to Mara that we hold a congregational vote on hanging the Black Lives Matter banner, or hang the banner without some form of congregational vote?
  - We decided to separate out any discussion of the statement of conscience or logistics on how to hold a vote until after this decision was made.
  - We ended the meeting with six either slightly or strongly in favor of holding a vote and one strongly against voting.

- This wasn't a simple block or impasse, but a reflection of the fact that we felt a lot of important stakeholders were not in the room and more discussion, especially outside of the seven of us remaining in the meeting was needed.
- Next meeting:
  - Date: December 21
  - Time: 5:00 – 6:30
  - Opening Words: Jud

# Racial Justice Task Force Mission and Goals 2017-2018

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## Mission

The mission of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington (FUUSB) Racial Justice Task Force is to engage Society members and friends in the work of identifying, understanding, and undoing racism within ourselves, our faith community, and our broader society. While racism affects many different groups of people, at this time in our history the task force recognizes the urgency of racism as it affects black people in America.

We seek to understand and address the underlying attitudes and habitual responses to anti-black racism in America in our times, including white privilege and white fragility. We engage in this work through discussion, supporting racial justice work in the larger community, and participating in direct action.

## Goals

1. Deepen the congregation's understanding of and engagement around racial justice issues to ensure that they're well prepared to be active and outspoken advocates for racial justice.
2. Continue the process for engaging the congregation in discerning our Society's work in Racial Justice and identify one or more projects for the FUUSB to pursue.
3. Pass a statement of conscience in support of Black Lives Matter and hang a Black Lives Matter Banner outside of the Meetinghouse.