

Racial Justice Task Force Minutes – 18 January 2018

In Attendance:

Generose Lambert, Jud Lawrie, Zoe Hart, Monica Sargent, Gabriel Ely, Martha Molpus, Linda Cooper

Agenda

- Opening Words (Jud) →
- Racial justice struggles and highlights
- Approved December minutes
- We have made a standing decision to use the circle method of dealing with heated discussion the next time one arises.
- Update on BLM banner hanging
 - The banner dedication will not happen on February 25, but in April when Mara is available.
 - We are going to begin meeting weekly to do what needs to be done to have the banner hung ASAP.
 - This week we meet with Xina Fulton, next week with Mara. Anyone is welcome to join that working group.
- Update on the gathering for FUUSB POC
 - We do want to include folks from outside the FUUSB.
 - We will schedule based on members of the FUUSB community, then invite youth, put on e-news blast and ask folks attending to bring guests.
 - We'll ask folks bringing guests to provide an estimate number of guests to help us plan how much food to provide.
- Service Planning group (name TBD) update
 - The service planning group has been building momentum and would like to become a less task-specific and more permanent group.
 - The SP group wants to coordinate with the broader task force on how it fits into the plan for subcommittees laid out by the discernment process.

Words from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"First, I must confess that over the last few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council-er or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I can't agree with your methods of direct action;" who paternalistically feels he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by the myth of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait until a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of goodwill is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection."

-- Letter from Birmingham Jail, April 1963

"Whites, it must frankly be said, are not putting in a similar mass effort to reeducate themselves out of their racial ignorance. It is an aspect of their sense of superiority that the white people of America believe they have so little to learn. The reality of substantial investment to assist Negroes into the twentieth century, adjusting to Negro neighbors and genuine school integration, is still a nightmare for all too many white Americans. These are the deepest causes for contemporary abrasions between the races. Loose and easy language about equality, resonant resolutions about brotherhood fall pleasantly on the ear, but for the Negro there is a credibility gap he cannot overlook. He remembers that with each modest advance the white population promptly raises the argument that the Negro has come far enough. Each step forward accents an ever-present tendency to backlash."

-- "Where do we go from here?" August 1967

- The SP group needs to do some more work to figure out its direction and focus as a permanent group and get back to the larger task force as a next step.
- Our involvement in the Church Street mural
 - We had limited time to discuss this topic and were far from a consensus on the question of whether or not the RJTF should publicly support the call to remove the mural.
 - This is a timely issue and discussion will continue over email.
- Black Lives UU (BLUU) requests
 - [There are two matching grants available to BLUU](#). One from a donation, the other from the Northern New England District. (They are not compounded.)
 - To access either, our congregation must raise \$10/pledging member by June 30 of this year.
 - The service on 2/25 will be collecting money for BLUU
 - BLUU is also asking the UUA and member congregations to adopt an [8th principle](#), which states: “journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”
 - Normally, at GA, delegates from the FUUSB simply vote based on their own views.
 - We could try to get the congregation to back adopting the 8th principal and ask all delegates from the FUUSB to vote to adopt it.
- Next meeting:
 - Date: February 15
 - Time: 5:00 – 6:30
 - Opening Words: Martha

Racial Justice Task Force Mission and Goals 2017-2018

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.