



Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing

One Hundred Years of Faith, Hope, Love and Action, 1916 to 2016

Churchwide Racial Justice Project—November 2015

This is Month 2 of our Racial Justice Project and the congregation's participation has been very positive. It's never too late to participate in any way that moves you, whether it is a reflection group, volunteer activities, reading books or coming to the movie night. It is hoped that participants will make two commitments a month; one is to ENGAGE in one of the various action offerings and the second is to REFLECT on racial inequality in a small group setting.

November Worship Theme: What Does It Mean To Be A People of Ancestry?

UUCWC participates in the Our Soul Matters Sharing Circle, a group of over 130 UU congregations who follow the same monthly worship themes and share small group material, as well as sermons, music and children's religious education resources. Sharing resources helps avoid duplicative work and frees us for other ministry. However, the greatest gift is deeper connection. Despite great distances between us, we are spiritually connected by the themes, traveling each month on the same journey. Like a favorite reading from our hymnal says, "alone our vision is too narrow to see all that must be seen, and our strength too limited to do all that must be done. Together, our vision widens and our strength is renewed." (uua.org)

"Some people are your relatives but others are your ancestors, and you choose the ones you want to have as ancestors. You create yourself out of those values."

Ralph Ellison, American writer

Opportunities for Participation in UUCWC's Racial Justice Project

"Spirit in Practice" Reflection Groups

Gather in the monthly Racial Justice Reflection Groups. What they are:

A place to connect with yourself and with others in your group, in the experience and conversation of race.

A place to explore your own challenges, capacities and place.

A place to see more clearly where you stand, and in knowing this, to honor it, and perhaps to let go and move on.

November reflection groups will consider how our identity is formed and how the stories from our ancestry shape our identity. Part of being a culturally competent person is to understand one's own cultural identity and to learn how to appreciate the cultural identity of others. With practice, we learn not to assume that our experience is "normal" for everyone.

Groups are currently scheduled as follows:

First Sunday of the month: 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

Second Thursday of the month: 10:00 to 12:00 p.m.

Fourth Monday of the month: 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Fourth Wednesday of the month: 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

TO REGISTER, PLEASE EMAIL ARE@UUCWC.ORG LISTING THREE (3) CHOICES IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE.

HomeFront Volunteer Opportunities

(Facilitator: Ronnie Dobrowolski)

Volunteers are needed for HomeFront's Art & Collectables Sale, Saturday, November 7, 9 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

HomeFront is hosting an *Art and Collectables Sale on November 7* to benefit HomeFront Families. It will feature inexpensive artwork and collectables, some made by HomeFront residents. UUCWC will be providing volunteers to help in a number of ways. *Won't you be one of them?*

6 to 8 volunteers are needed to:

Serve as clerks for the sale tables – Hours 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. or choose a time that suits you.
Help with cleanup

In addition you can:

Donate Art and/or Collectable items to the sale.
Attend and Shop at the sale!

Please send an email to Ronnie Dobrowolski (ronniermd@gmail.com) and let her know how you can help.

Ice Cream Social:

This was originally scheduled for November 7th but has been postponed due to the Arts and Collectables Sale and will be rescheduled, probably for a date in December. This event is for UUCWC families and children to meet and socialize with families at The HomeFront Family Campus. The group will be making sundaes and having some games and/or a craft project. If you are interested in participating, please email racialjustice@uucwc.org.

HomeFront Thanksgiving Meals:

Each year HomeFront provides a Thanksgiving Dinner to vulnerable families in our community. You can help in a number of ways:

Action:

- Volunteer to help in sorting and organizing donated food for families.
- Check the UUCWC web site for details closer to Thanksgiving.

Donations:

- Donations of a **Thanksgiving Meal**
 - Assemble all the fixin's for a Thanksgiving meal, including a gift card for a turkey.
 - Check the UUCWC web site for details closer to Thanksgiving.
- Donations of **Cash**: Visit www.homefrontnj.org/donate-thanksgiving-2015.cfm or call 609-989-9417, Ext. 107 to make a donation.
 - \$46 buys a Thanksgiving Meal
 - \$136 buys food for the entire Thanksgiving week.

Due to your generosity of time, food or cash, vulnerable families in our community will be able to celebrate a very happy Thanksgiving this year.

Individual Volunteer Opportunities at the Family Campus in Ewing:

There are many volunteer opportunities for individuals 15 years and older which can be found on the UUCWC's RJP website page, on the lobby bulletin board and at <http://www.homefrontnj.org/polVolunteer.cfm> If you are interested, contact HomeFront directly at 609-989-9417 or at getinvolved@homefrontnj.org. **The RJP implementation team would be grateful if you could email them at racialjustice@uucwc.org and let them know what you're doing. Thank you.**

Restorative Justice

"Houses of Healing – A Prisoner's Guide to Inner Power and Freedom"

Congregant Pris Gaver has been facilitating this course for 18 years. It involves a 13-week commitment for two hours per week, beginning in early April. You would be an intern sitting in on the groups that Pris runs, at either Jones Farm Minimum Security Correctional Facility for Men in West Trenton or the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women, in Clinton. Participants at Jones Farm will be required to take a volunteer training course run by the facility. **Three congregants have signed up to sit in on these courses and there's room for one or two more for the spring courses.**

"Houses of Healing" Correspondence Course:

This is a one-on-one correspondence program where you would be set up with an inmate and would help them to do the course by mail. All mail from inmates is sent to the Lionheart Foundation and then forwarded to facilitators and vice versa. Training is provided including 4 hours of video, if wanted. Time requirement is 45-60 minutes per session (13 sessions), and is designed to be completed within 6 to 8 months. Cost outlay is \$50 which pays for the book, training manual, and matching fee which covers all the material sent to inmates, as well as postage and handling used in the forwarding process. **Several congregants have already registered to do this course with inmates and others are encouraged to consider doing this as well.**

" New Life in the Beloved Community"

This is an opportunity to help mentor an inmate being released from the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women in Clinton. The organizers are trying to build a statewide network of Community Mentor Teams (2-3 people per location) who would work with the women for at least 10 months as they transition back with their families and communities. Training and certification are provided.

Pris Gaver is the facilitator for the above opportunities and will gladly provide more information about each area. However, please do not contact Pris directly but rather send an email to racialjustice@uucwc.org and the project implementation team will ensure that it is sent to Pris.

UU Church of the Larger Fellowship Letter Writing Ministry:

Participants will engage in a letter correspondence with incarcerated people. **One of UUCWC's congregants has been doing this for many years and six more congregants are now participating and CLF is always in need of more participants.** Most CLF prisoner-members are brand-new to Unitarian Universalism. With no access to the web or UU Sunday services, they can only learn about Unitarian Universalism from the mailings sent by CLF and the letters they exchange with CLF staff and other UUs.

Prisoner-members are matched with non-incarcerated UUs for an exchange of friendly letters on topics of mutual interest. All letter-writers (prisoners and "free-world") agree to the same guidelines, which emphasize that the program is not intended for romantic, legal-aid or financial/gift interactions. All mail to and from prisoners will be via snail-mail to CLF to be forwarded (un-opened) to the person they've been paired with (prisoners are told only the first name of their correspondent and are given no other contact information). They hope participants will exchange letters for at least six months, although many matches last longer. The CLF staff remains available to all letter-writers for advice and support.

Michelle Hunt is the coordinator for this program and can provide more information. However, please do not contact Michelle directly but rather send an email to racialjustice@uucwc.org and the project implementation team will ensure that it is sent to Michelle.

Study Group

(Facilitator: Rich DiGeorgio)

This group is exploring areas of direct action that we might be able to pursue for Year Two of the project. The group meets monthly on the first Tuesday of the month, the next meeting being on November 3rd at 7:00 p.m. in Room 201. Rich DiGeorgio is leading the group. If you are interested in participating, please email racialjustice@uucwc.org.

NOVEMBER'S BANQUET TABLE OFFERINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

This is a selection of offerings, none of which require a long term commitment, and which hopefully will encourage exploration and reflection on racial inequity and racial justice.

Movie Screening

(Facilitators: Jim Bicksler & Rich DiGeorgio)

“Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible” (Postponed from October date)

Friday, November 13 at 7:00 p.m.

The movie is 50 minutes long and will be followed by a discussion. **Pizza and beverages will be provided.** Please sign up for the movie on the sheet on the bulletin board in the lobby or send an email to racialjustice@uucwc.org.

“A brilliant documentary, this video is a must-see for all interested in justice, spiritual growth and community making. It features the experiences of white women and men who have worked to gain insight into what it means to challenge the notions of racism and white supremacy in the United States. The stories in the film reveal what is often required to move through the stages of denial, defensiveness, guilt, fear, and shame into making a solid commitment to ending racial injustice. This film catalyzes powerful dialogue to support the learning, change and healing of all people who want to undo race-based oppression.”

Book Suggestions

(Facilitator: Bernice Husk)

The book we suggested in October was “Waking Up White, and Finding Myself in the Story of Race” by Debbie Irving. “In *Waking Up White*, Irving tells her often cringe-worthy story with such openness that readers will turn every page rooting for her—and ultimately for all of us.” **Bernice Husk will lead two discussion groups about the book, as follows:**

Monday, November 16th from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Room 201

Friday, November 20th from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Room 201

Please sign up for one of the discussion groups on the sheet on the bulletin board in the lobby or send an email to racialjustice@uucwc.org.

We are suggesting two books for November and December. There will be no discussion groups in December but there will be some in January, dates to be determined. Both of these books are quite extraordinary and well worth your time to read! They are:

Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates

“In a profound work that pivots from the biggest questions about American history and ideals to the most intimate concerns of a father for his son, Ta-Nehisi Coates offers a powerful new framework for understanding our nation’s history and current crisis. Americans have built an empire on the idea of “race,” a falsehood that damages us all but falls most heavily on the bodies of black women and men—bodies exploited through slavery and segregation, and, today, threatened, locked up, and murdered out of all proportion. What is it like to inhabit a black body and find a way to live within it? And how can we all honestly reckon with this fraught history and free ourselves from its burden?”

On the Run: Fugitive Life in An American City by Alice Goffman

“Forty years in, the War on Drugs has done almost nothing to prevent drugs from being sold or used, but it has nonetheless created a little-known surveillance state in America’s most disadvantaged neighborhoods. Arrest quotas and high-tech surveillance techniques criminalize entire blocks, and transform the very associations that should stabilize young lives—family, relationships, jobs—into liabilities, as the police use such relationships to track down suspects, demand information, and threaten consequences.

Alice Goffman spent six years living in one such neighborhood in Philadelphia, and her close observations and often harrowing stories reveal the pernicious effects of this pervasive policing. Goffman introduces us to an unforgettable cast of young African American men who are caught up in this web of warrants and surveillance—some of them small-time drug dealers, others just ordinary guys dealing with limited choices. All find the web of presumed criminality, built as it is on the very associations and friendships that make up a life, nearly impossible to escape.”

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

(Facilitator: Barbara Jensen)

Be sure to investigate the library of children’s books in the Crossings Room on Sundays for parents to check out for a period of time. In the back of each book there will be paper with some starter questions to discuss with your child. There will also be room for the reader to share their experience of a book with the future readers. The selection will continue to expand as Barbara identifies more books.

Suggested Articles for November

(Facilitators: Mary Lou Dahms and Mary McKillip)

Links to the articles will be on the Racial Justice Project webpage, www.uucwc.org/faith-in-action/churchwide-racial-justice-project.

All of these are excellent. Thank you, Mary Lou and Mary!

If we want racial progress, Ben Affleck’s roots should not be hidden – Dr. Marcie Bianco, mic.com

<http://mic.com/articles/115862/if-we-want-racial-progress-ben-affleck-s-roots-should-not-be-hidden>

35-Minute Audio: Historian Says Don’t Sanitize How Our Government Created Ghettos – NPR, Terry Gross
Interview with Richard Rothstein, Economic Policy Institute

<http://www.npr.org/2015/05/14/406699264/historian-says-dont-sanitize-how-our-government-created-the-ghettos>

5-Minute Video: Slavery to Mass Incarceration – Equal Justice Initiative

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4e_djVSag4

This video is also recommended for older children.

Baseball and Black History – Frank Bruni, New York Times

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/14/opinion/sunday/frank-bruni-baseball-and-black-history.html>

The Case for Reparations - Ta-Nehisi Coates, The Atlantic

<http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/05/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

What is Whiteness? - Nell Irvin Painter, New York Times

<http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/06/21/opinion/sunday/what-is-whiteness.html?referrer=& r=0>

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES AND EVENTS IN NOVEMBER

Saturday, November 7, 9:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m., UUCWC Crossings Room

Workshop – “Emotional Awareness & Emotional Healing: A Guide to Inner Power & Freedom”

This workshop, led by Pris Gaver and sponsored by the Right Relations Committee, is based on the book [Houses of Healing: A Prisoner’s Guide to Inner Power and Healing](#), by Robin Casarjian. Pris is a clinical social worker with a Master’s degree in family mental health, and is credentialed in alcohol and substance abuse counseling. For 18 years Pris has been facilitating the Houses of Healing program inside the New Jersey Department of Corrections.

This powerful program is not just for prisoners – it guides and supports all of us in confronting issues such as childhood wounding, grieving, and managing anger. In this workshop, Pris will lead us through portions of the program looking at forgiveness, exploring our own identity, stress management, and healing the inner child. Please join us for this exciting opportunity!

The workshop will run from 9:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. (please arrive at 9:00 a.m. for coffee and a light breakfast before the workshop).

The fee is \$15.00 to cover costs (includes a catered lunch). Registration forms are available on the Right Relations Committee bulletin board (across from the Crossings Room).

For more information or to get a registration form sent to you, please email RRC@uucwc.org.

Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of New Jersey

State House Rally for Justice, Monday November 16, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Trenton, NJ

UULMJ is a member of the New Jersey Clergy Coalition for Justice which is organizing a rally at the NJ State House in Trenton. They are calling on NJ State Legislators to protect citizens and pass reasonable laws that ensure fairness and equality for Black constituents and all New Jersey residents.

Rev. Craig Hirschberg, the director of UULMNJ, is encouraging as many people as possible to come to Trenton and participate in this rally. This is particularly relevant for Trenton right now in light of the shooting and arrest of 14-year-old Radazz Hearn this summer.

Sallie Dunner (sallzart@comcast.net) will be attending this rally and you can contact her directly if you would like to participate. Let’s Stand on the Side of Love!

Quick Fact:

By 2000, the US prison population swelled to five times what it had been in the early 1970s. An overwhelming majority of men going to prison are poor, and a disproportionate number are Black. Today, 30 percent of Black men without college educations have been to prison by their mid-thirties. One in four Black children born in 1990 had an imprisoned father by the time he or she turned fourteen.

(From “On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City” by Alice Goffman)

The Council for Faith in Action has overall responsibility for UUCWC’s Racial Justice Project. If you have questions or concerns about the project, please contact Sallie Dunner, CFA Chair and project coordinator, or another member of the project implementation team, Nathalie Edmond, Lynne Quinto, Jennifer Rehbein & Dan Tuft.