

RJI October Meeting Minutes

Attending: Denny, Mary, Nathalie, Regina

We discussed the praxis minutes, considering what we do now and recommendations for ways we can grow to identify actions items for the coming months and beyond, focusing on four areas: Internal learning, internal supports, internal change, external actions. We also discussed publicizing RJI work and overcoming logistical obstacles to meeting.

Internal learning:

- Lynne Molnar was leading a book club for this year, but needs to step back from this work.
- Nathalie and Chris are leading a Living the 8th principle ARE offering that had its first meeting. They had to turn people away from enrollment. There is a need for these types of ARE offerings
- The October 13 White Accountability Organizing workshop was successful with 17 attendees. Barbara Jensen organized this workshop as part of RJI work with the support of an Endowment grant, and plans to organize two more workshops with external facilitators — one of which we intend to be focused on church members who are new to these conversations (though we need to think about ways to encourage participation in these groups for members who have not yet been involved in RJI work)

Internal supports:

- We are having a social gathering of past Beloved Conversation participants on November 2. Though this gathering is intended as a social event, not an educational one, we discussed using a little of this time to discuss ways participants have used their learning since the sessions ended, and remind them of their roles as upstanders in the UUCWC community now. We could include conversation (maybe even a written list) of ways they can take action using their learning to help the work of RJI at the church.
- Nathalie suggested a periodic larger RJI meeting to make sure we include others in the congregation who are also invested in racial justice work and want to help and support. This type of meeting could have an educational point each time, and also be a forum to share the work of the steering committee and ask for feedback and support on items we need help with.

Internal change:

- We discussed presenting at the next Council meeting — watching the Ware lecture (<https://www.uua.org/ga/off-site/2018/ware>) with leadership and then processing with the group the ways they see their committees incorporating the 8th principle into their work and how they can view their processes from a racial justice lens. We would also follow up with leadership regarding how the steering committee can help each committee specifically (a few RJI steering committee members join the discussion with their committee about what this would look like on their committee, review written proposals that their committee develops of what this looks like, ...)

- Many of the praxis ideas are not the direct work of RJI, but are projects that fit better under the leadership of the other committees. The idea is to start with the leadership and then have the process move into committees to help them to take some of the praxis ideas and other ideas and make them their own, while also recognizing the racial justice lens that may already be in place in some cases. Once this is moving into committees, we would want to identify steering committee members/praxis group participants and others who are committed to racial justice work to connect themselves with specific committees to help as needed to move this work forward. For example, Denny is Pastoral Care chair, and part of CFA, so he would help those committees, and we could hopefully identify another person or two to help him support these two groups in their work to bring the 8th principle (e.g. accountably dismantling racism) into their committee.
- We discussed also a training that would be required for all new leaders and strongly recommended for current leaders to help them incorporate a racial justice lens into their committee work. Our next meeting will be devoted to drafting what these recommended training steps would be. We would then present this recommendation to the board. (It was suggested that the Ware lecture be one these these recommendations.)

External actions

- We discussed the newly developing Faith Action Ministry and the new email distribution listserv and our desire to support the social justice action work without stepping on each other's toes.

Action Items:

- Nathalie is continuing her facilitation of the living the 8th principle group.
- Mike is going to work on leading a few book/film discussions this year. Sallie offered to help with this.
- Mary and Barbara Jensen will discuss plans that were underway last year for a small group "drop in" support group/reflection ministry that could offer conversations and reflections around current racial justice issues. Barbara and Denny will work on getting a group like this off the ground.
- Mary will work on prepping for the proposed Nov 2 conversation, and will seek feedback/help from the others helping with this event: Bay, Nathalie, Heather Edwards, Sarah Burke
- Mary and Dan will work on planning a RJI meeting in early December
- Mary will discuss with Nathalie regarding whether the Council presentation idea will work for next meeting and will update the group so that we can further develop these plans.
- Regina is going to facilitate our next steering committee meeting to hammer out what we think the proposed leadership training should look like.
- Jasmine and Barbara Jensen will liaison between the Faith Action Ministry and the RJI steering committee, keeping us informed of the ministry work and goals, and also letting us know ways we can support the group's work.

- Mary will make sure to get a cross-currents article out monthly to update the congregation on RJI work, and is going to work on getting the webpage updated.
- Denny is going to work on getting a press release out announcing the 8th principle passage.