

*A few words from our minister in the interim...*

And I have to ask myself, over and over, why is it so hard to focus on race in our conversations, without dragging into the conversation all the other oppressions faced by so many? It's hard stuff for many of us white people. Maybe most.

As a white woman, predominantly of European ancestry (at least 7 nationalities involved), as a queer white woman, and with a few other "qualifications", I know what it means to suffer oppression but I don't know what it means to be Black in a racist world. I walk in my own shoes, only. For all the workshops I've been in and all that I've led on anti-racism/anti-oppressions, for all the conversations with dear old friends, white friends or Black friends, I'm still too angry about race issues to be comfortable. And I know, too, that's what it takes: being with the discomfort and working through issues, inch by inch, not taking the easier softer way and avoiding them.

The issues I can most readily be angry about are large, global. It's hard to keep them local. We have to make race personal. To grow who and how we are, we have to get personal about race.

It's Black History Month. We have a growing number of Black UUs in our congregations. The Board of the UUA made a commitment to Black Lives UU to raise \$3,000,000 for its important work. Per its website, "Black Lives UU or BLUU as it is known... provides information, resources and support for Black Unitarian Universalists and works to expand the role & visibility of Black Unitarian Universalists within our faith." It is an organization within our UU world that deserves our support. UU congregations around the country are contributing time, energy and money to make a difference.

We've made mistakes as an association of congregations in the past, broken promises to Black leaders among us. Nearly

50 years ago, broken promises caused pain, suffering, and separation. We're done with that.

We're working in our predominantly white denomination in support of Black leadership. As a denomination we are asking of our Black UU friends, "how can we, as an association, support Black lives?" There are a number of ways. One of them is with financial generosity. Our Share the Plate initiative for this month is this Sunday, February 11. Please, write a check for this important work. Member congregations of the UUA have been doing the same over the past couple of months. It's our turn.

Yes, we do need to do much more, and very personal work, more than write checks. But let's write checks this Sunday, and please, be generous, as you always are when we share!

-Rev Benson