

Community Connections 6.19..20 Jean N. Bowen, Social Justice Team

In the past few weeks while demonstrations and protests have taken place all over the country, our local small towns have also joined in protesting and calling for justice for George Floyd and the many other black men and women who have been killed at the hands of police. Most of the protests here have been organized by high school students and have had large turn-outs.

Rev. DL Helfer and the Social Justice Team have come together on zoom to share our grief, anger and hope. We have met three times and a planning group is in place to organize next steps. A consensus was reached that our congregation and friends will participate in direct actions and have interpersonal conversations on white privilege, meet online in small groups to share our own bias, white fragility and confront the fear of discussing race. At this writing 44 individuals are participating. This is meant to be inclusive. You are invited to participate in these discussions. We are sharing readings, essays, YouTube videos and books for adults and children. Soon an evolving list will appear on our website.

The first small group discussions will take place on this coming Monday, June 22 at 7:00p.m. It is important to sign up for this so that Rev. DL can efficiently assign members to the small groups before hand. Sign up here by Saturday, June 20th.

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZErfuyrrDIqGtbduwCD9q6qOXvNpF1XnoDs>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information on how to sign in..

These discussions will continue so don't worry if you miss this one; email Rev. DL at uucscminister@gmail.com or to myself jeannbowen@gmail.com to inquire about all of the conversations and how you can participate.

We will also participate in a direct action tomorrow, June 20th in South Kingstown as we drive in a car rally to encourage defunding the police department budget. This is a complicated conversation which includes how to defund and/or how to reform police departments. Divesting police budgets and investing in community initiatives, to reallocate non-police solutions to social problems requires a deeper understanding of the budgets, operations and comprehensive policy changes.

You may be interested in watching the videos below, these have been shared with participants for discussion.

<http://www.8cantwait.org/>

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/watch-live-what-is-the-defund-the-police-movement-answering-your-questions>