

NOTES FOR COSM, BOARD AND SOCIAL JUSTICE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 1, 2020

WIDENING THE CIRCLE OF CONCERN; PRAIRIE UU RECOMMENDATIONS

WELCOME: Vivian welcomed those present: Timothy Bishop, Kim Murray, Maurice Murray, Fran Lukaszewski, Samara Baird, Allyson Gunn, Brenda Peterson, Carol Foster, Andrew Paschetto, Melissa Bishop (briefly) and Pastor AJ (briefly)

Chalice Lighting: Samara Baird

PRESENTATION: Kim Murray presented the specific recommendations for Prairie UU in the area of Restoration and Reparations. She noted that a small group of church members met on two occasions to develop these recommendations. It took some time fully understanding the concept of Reparations. Also, the use of the term, Restoration is seen as not appropriate since it could mean “returning to the past.” A better term, ----- was suggested, but since the UUA uses Restoration, the group stayed with that term.

DISCUSSION: Vivian asked for questions related to clarification and understanding of the recommendations, then ideas about how the implementation would work for Prairie UU.

Recommendation 1: As an act of reparations, funding and administrative groups that allow BIPOC and other marginalized groups to convene and gain the support necessary to worship and serve in predominantly white communities should be a priority.

The BIPOC group that AJ has started and Prairie UU is supporting (\$ and use of administrative resources) is an example.

Recommendation 2: Seek volunteers to act as Prairie Liaisons with UU identify groups with which they personally identify. DRUMM, BLUU, LUUNA, TRUUsT, and EqtUUal Access; liaisons to report to Prairie and make recommendations.

Maurice is a liaison to the following groups:
to be the liaison to

Mary Ann Slick has agreed

Recommendation 3: Financially support their attendance and participation.

Questions about how Prairie UU would support this with limited financial resources were raised. Ideas suggested were to do fund raising projects with this as a goal, dedicate some of the income from the Prairie UU Auction, directly ask members to donate to this cause, reallocate existing funds for this purpose, and write grants to obtain new money. Vivian noted that the current issue of UU World has a call for grant proposals up to

\$25,000 for Scholarships. Kim volunteered to look into whether this would be a possibility for our purpose. Individuals who have had grant writing experience would be asked to help.

Recommendation 4: Establish a Multi-Racial.MultiCultural Family Group to be combined with or as an extension of existing POC Group.

Questions about what this group would be like were asked. Maurice, Kim and Andrew suggested that one of the areas of focus could be on parenting of children in Multi-Racial families. Most of our POC members are in Multi-Racial, Multicultural Families. Establishing such a group was supported by the Murrays, Andrew, Allyson and Carol. Does this conflict with the BIPOC group AJ has established? Some thought it would compliment such a group.

Recommendation 5: Provide leadership training focused on inclusion for all lay leaders, including Prairie mentor program. This includes conflict reduction training.

What is the Prairie UU Mentor program? A vision of a mentor program for all new leaders on the Board, COSM, committee chairs etc. It was also suggested that job descriptions of all leadership positions, Board officers, committee chairs etc be established to assure understanding of roles and responsibilities which will decrease misunderstandings. It was suggested that content on race and inclusion be included in the Prairie UU educational programs. Janet and Susan who serve on the Lifespan committee will take these ideas to the planning process. It was noted that the new Lifespan Coordinator Jen has a background in racial issues and educational strategies to decrease racism. Brenda will take the ideas to the Membership Committee to support new members.

Other suggestions included Prairie UU becoming certified, credentialed for efforts and successes in programs that enhance inclusion and being a welcoming community. This has happened in the past and would need to be fully explored currently. Andrew suggested that our theology should include a focus on how our white culture influences our theology. Another session will focus on theology.

Members of the COSM presented the goals and process of the Reconciliation and Restorative Process the committee is currently implementing. Samara and Allyson are the leaders of the Right Relations COSM group. The documents can be viewed on the document section of Breeze, under Members, then under COSM. All should carefully review these. As yet a case brought before the COSM has not been completed, but it was noted that committee members and individuals experiencing the process are learning and feeling positive about the outcome.

Questions were raised (Maurice) about there being a spiritual component to the process since we are conducting these sessions in a church. Fran read the process sharing

examples of spiritual practice during the listening process. Samara noted that the goal is to resolve the hurt and pain in a way that allows Prairie UU to move forward and that this situation not happen again to others. Melissa asked how do we let the congregation know that this is available and how it works. After some discussion and sharing of ideas, it was decided that Fran would begin to discuss this in her message in the Wednesday newsletter, information would be available under the tab for COSM in the newsletter, the LifespanCommittee will schedule a Learning Hour discussion on the process with a mock example. Janet suggested that Samara and Allyson who are directly involved should be part of the discussion so that people know who they will work with. It was also suggested that a general summary of the issues addressed be shared at congregational meetings. (Privacy issues need to be honored)

Vivian summarised the meeting, noting that many ideas were shared respectively and the recommendations were viewed as doable and helpful to a more inclusive faith community. Continued discussion about other areas of the UUA report will be discussed in the next months. She thanked the JL for leading the effort to address the recommendations, the COSM for their efforts in implementing a process for keeping Prairie UU in right relationships with all our members and those present for their ideas and support.

Samara closed the meeting with a reading, extinguishing the candle.