

## Anti-Racism Group annual report for FY 2020-21

This year the Anti-Racism Group has worked to engage the congregation on the topic of anti-racism, providing multiple opportunities for their participation, as well as continuing to read, learn, examine our experiences and share resources within the group.

In July 2020, Jane Mahone authored a short newsletter article about opportunities to join the group's alias so as to receive notice of and links to items that would be discussed in the group. Also at that time, the group announced its new meeting time of 1 pm. Participation has been stronger this year as a result, with most meetings attended by no fewer than a dozen and some approaching 20. Throughout the summer and fall, the group attempted to process George Floyd's murder and the nation's reactions as well as their own experiences with racism. Members shared and discussed articles, videos, opportunities for learning about racism on Zoom offered by the local NAACP, the Montgomery County Dialogue on Race, the UUA, the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Learning Community and others, and how to participate in anti-racism gatherings and activities such as nonpartisan calls to encourage voting.

The group additionally began renewed discussions about the possibility of promoting the congregation's adoption of the 8<sup>th</sup> principle. Jill Kiecolt wrote a short article about the 8<sup>th</sup> principle that appeared in the October newsletter which stated in part, "Our own anti-racism group supports it, and we want our congregation to vote on it." Mention was made that opportunities would be forthcoming from the group to educate congregants and provide opportunities for discussion.

In 2021, in addition to continuing our discussions and sharing, the group began ramping up efforts to convince the congregation to adopt the proposed 8<sup>th</sup> principle. Helen Renqvist, Anna Keppel Benson, Jill Kiecolt, Jane Mahone, David Burr, Annie Zaldivar and Barbara Taylor contributed to the Martin Luther King service in January. We presented information about the development of the 8<sup>th</sup> principle and why we felt the congregation should adopt the principle at the annual meeting. As the newsletter noted under the heading, Preparing to Talk and to Listen about Anti-Racism, part of the service involved breakout rooms in which people shared some of their experiences with racism.

In February, the group held an additional meeting to join Amy Pruden-Bagchi to provide input on the strategic planning process, coming up with many ways to participate in anti-racism as a congregation, including lobbying and joining with more diverse congregations and service groups to engage in service. Isabel Berney, Jill Kiecolt, Sara Dalton, Jamie McReynolds, Barbara Taylor and other members worked on adapting and testing out on Zoom an exercise that had been presented at the Montgomery County Dialogue on Race in January 2020, about racial wealth disparity. While the group had hoped to include some of the youth in this, we were advised that due to attendance at school via Zoom, there was a lack of enthusiasm for more time on Zoom.

Also in February, the group noted in the newsletter that the 8<sup>th</sup> principle addresses building a diverse community, making it relevant to gender identity, class, ability, and age. Thus Anti-Racism encouraged the congregation to participate in the upcoming Transgender Inclusion course.

In March, the group offered to the congregation the opportunity to participate in the exercise addressing why there is such a disparity in wealth between Blacks and whites as a whole. Eighteen people participated and many indicated that the exercise had really enhanced their intellectual and emotional understanding of the structural nature of racism.

In April, the group again offered an exercise to the congregation, addressing how structural racism relates to environmental damage, using pipelines as an example. Approximately a dozen congregants

participated, including several who had not been part of the March exercise. Part of the discussion related to how our 7 existing principles and the proposed 8<sup>th</sup> principle pertained to these issues.

Also in April, Rev. Pam led the Anti-racism Group in a discussion (noted ahead of time in weekly announcements inviting congregants to attend) on adoption of the 8th principle as written and already adopted by many congregations, versus changing the wording or somehow adopting it “in principle”. Most who participated felt that our support for those who have devoted many years to developing and promoting adoption of the principle was far more important than whatever satisfactions might be gained by our congregation rewording it to suit us better.

In May, the group presented a written proposal asking the Board to support adoption of the 8<sup>th</sup> principle. Additionally, some of the group members spoke at the informational meeting explaining why they support adoption of the principle as written. In short, the group wants to participate in anti-racism as a congregation. We feel that our congregation’s support of those who have been working on this issue for many years is vitally important.

Respectfully submitted,  
Barbara Taylor