



The CommUunicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waynesboro

Justice, Justice You Shall Pursue!

The words of this title are biblical, direct from what is ultimate to a people whose identity emerges through a struggle to put the broken pieces of the world together in an emerging wholeness. While not all Unitarian Universalists feel any connection to the Torah or to the Bible, seeking justice has been central to our sense of mission and identity. Our tradition's forebears were among the significant abolitionist leaders and the women activists for equal rights for women, the leaders of the first and second wave of feminism.

Less than four years after the 1961 consolidation of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America, the leaders of our movement answered the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s call to Selma. Two of the four martyrs of the marches from Selma to Montgomery were Unitarian Universalists. They were Viola Liuzzo and the Rev. James Reeb. The other two who were murdered in that Civil Rights action that spanned 18 days in March of 1965 were a Baptist deacon and an Episcopal seminarian: Jimmie Lee Jackson and Jonathan Daniels.

Sometimes it seems like the time for heroes for justice is behind us. But this feels like another time of awakening and opportunity to pursue justice in ways that may have great impact. This month at our adult class on racial equity, we started by simply listing local activities and events that aim to make our individual hopes for justice and equity into the emerging reality.

Growing out of the empowering experience of the January 2017 Women's March, local women organized into what is now Staunton Augusta Waynesboro Citizen Action Network (SAW CAN, often just called SAW), seeking justice through political action.

In Staunton there are monthly gatherings called Building Bridges, which bring people together to hear each other's voices and experiences around race and diversity.

In Waynesboro there are monthly gatherings called Bridging the Gap, with guest speakers ranging from a former white supremacist to someone who was in the Black Panthers in the 1960s, with open and structured conversations on race, with leaders seeking justice in immigration and family issues.

In many places in Charlottesville there are opportunities to join a documentary viewing and workshop called *I'm Not a Racist... Am I?* which centers on experiences of youth around race.

Taking its place alongside the Staunton and Waynesboro branches of the NAACP, there is an emerging organization in Augusta County which is being named RISE. This new group and each branch of the NAACP has its own style and leadership for justice.

Just as the martyrs in Alabama in 1965 were Black and white, Unitarian Universalist, Baptist, and Episcopalian, just as those who marched and organized with Dr. King spanned the racial and religious and secular identities of the country, the opportunities to educate and organize and change hearts and systems for justice today

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depend on us stepping outside our comfort into the world of the potential of diversity.

I encourage you to join our racial equity class here at the Fellowship, to follow the emerging local and national women leaders for justice, to join the discussions and presentations of Building Bridges and Bridging the Gap, and to join RISE and/or a branch of the NAACP. All of these activities are open to and depend on the participation of people of all identities. Justice is something we must pursue together. And we have to be willing to follow the leadership of members of historically oppressed identities.

To help us all locate these and other justice-seeking activities locally, we will be adding a notice of justice events to our social action bulletin board and to our website very soon. We will let you know where to look in the weekly reminders. Please join together in this time of both growing need and growing opportunity to act for justice.

Justice, justice you shall pursue!

Peace and Blessings,
Rev. Paul

Wake Now Our Vision By Sharon Van Name

"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant."

Robert Louis Stevenson

The UU Congregation at Shelter Rock has certainly taken this quote to heart by challenging each of us to plant seeds for the future of Unitarian Universalism. They have offered a \$5 million grant to encourage planned giving through the Wake

Now Our Vision (WNOV) Collaborative Campaign Legacy Challenge.

Legacy gift intentions designating one or more of the WNOV partner institutions, or a congregation such as UUFW, may be eligible for a 10% matching cash gift. Congregations and UU organizations will receive the matching gifts by 2020. Your generosity will have both an immediate and a long term benefit!

Planned gifts can be made through wills, charitable gift annuities and several other methods. You will need to consult your professional advisors to determine what best suits your situation.

On April 1, UUFW will launch its Legacy Giving Campaign. Ed Piper will explain why he and Renee have already made this decision, and Marsha Fuller will tell you a bit more about WNOV. This will be followed by other ways for you to learn more about this exciting opportunity.

I intend to plant a seed for the growth of UUFW and Unitarian Universalism beyond my lifetime. I hope you will consider joining me, and many others. We'll be able to judge that as a very good day.



The Membership Team treated new members last Sunday to breakfast and the opportunity ask questions and meet their caring networkers.

