



The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waynesboro

What Does the 8th Principle Mean?

By Heather Banks

"We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions."

That's it! But as with the first Seven, there's a lot to unpack. Indeed, starting in 2013 and since the 2017 General Assembly, the wording has been carefully constructed and revised. As the UUA website notes, it is the ONLY Principle with the word "LOVE" (i.e., "Beloved"). It is full of ACTION verbs—covenant, affirm, promote, journey, work, build, dismantle. We agree to act positively as individuals and institutions.

Racism, whether obvious or covert, is certainly the opposite of a diverse, Beloved Community. No matter our ages, in the decades of our lives, and particularly the past year, we have seen how "No Justice, No Peace" results from institutional racism and oppression. The arrests and even murders of many African American people are simply because of the color of their skin. Asian people of many countries (not only Chinese) are attacked because they are perceived to have "brought COVID-19 to the U.S." Latin-X people are targeted for traffic stops, exploitation, and deportation (even some who are U.S. citizens!). The list goes on.

UU congregations, including ours, tend to be White, affluent, and steeped in European traditions as the norm. As a congregation, we can work harder to be more inclusive of others' cultures, traditions, and justice concerns. UUFW has hosted meetings of groups such as RISE, the Poor People's Campaign, and a community of color faced with installation of a gas pipeline pumping station.

But inside and beyond our doors, as individuals involved throughout our communities, we can be active advocates for Beloved Community. Look around and ask pertinent questions. "Why is this group only White men (or women)? Where are the people of color? Why is there only *one* person of color in this group? Is that person assumed to speak for all people of that race or ethnic group?" An important corollary: Be prepared to suggest

appropriate people to include!

Our "Yard of Remembrance" has been expanded to include the losses to COVID-19 in Staunton and Augusta County, in addition to those in Waynesboro pictured in last week's newsletter.

