



The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Waynesboro

The 8th Principle—Focus on Actions

By Renee Herrell

The part of the proposed 8th Principle that resonates with me is the focus on *...our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions*. As a nation, we have made progress with our inclusivity and equality. However, in the last few years, there has been increased violence against African Americans, Asian Americans, Jewish people, and Muslims. It is imperative that we take conscious actions to stem this tide. The proponents of the 8th Principle state that what we can do is, "Discuss the 8th Principle with your congregation. Adopt it for your congregation. Live by it. Act!" So, the real test is what will our actions be and how will we hold ourselves accountable?

Over the last few years, I have participated in classes led by Rev. Paul about racial equity, white supremacy, and anti-racism. My prevailing feeling was that there were so many times when we could have taken the path to

recognize *the inherent worth and dignity of every person* which would have made us stronger as we took advantage of each person's strengths and abilities. Instead, the country chose slavery; fought a bloody civil war; abandoned Reconstruction giving way to the despicable Jim Crow laws; and kept African Americans from voting, holding economically strong jobs, and living in good neighborhoods that provide a strong educational system. The list of choices against equality and inclusion is a long one. We continue to see the results of these decisions through economic and social inequity, such as the disparities in the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Although the other seven principles address justice, equity, the democratic process, etc., they do not specifically address racism and other oppressions. As our country has become more divisive with people unable to even discuss issues; and hatred for others who are different from us has become so strong that violence is continuing to rise, now is the time for us to acknowledge that we need to consciously work *to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community*.

How do we dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions? I suggest that we educate ourselves through reading (e.g., "How to Be an Antiracist" by Ibram X. Kendi and "Just Mercy" by Bryan Stevenson), watching documentaries (e.g., "Reconstruction: America after the Civil War"

Alloy

We are made of metals, precious, fine.
Strength and flex and durability
For all occasions great and small have we,
And, on occasion, have we also shine.

Joe Good

and “East Lake Meadows-A Public Housing Story”) and having discussions with those who have suffered these oppressions. How we react when we see a micro-aggression against a person of color or from a particular religion or ethnicity, the economic and social issues we support, how we use our privilege whether that is the color of our skin or our economic status are all indicative of how we begin to *dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions*. The starting point is voting at the Annual Meeting to adopt the 8th Principle for our Fellowship.

Community News

[Remote Area Medical \(RAM\)](#) Volunteer Corps will be holding a free pop-up clinic on April 10 and 11 at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds. These pop-up clinics are free and open to anyone; no ID is required and no qualifying questions are asked. Medical and dental services are offered on a first come-first serve basis. The clinics open at 6:00 a.m but gates are open at midnight. Typically, there are long waits and people are encouraged to arrive early.

If you know anyone unable to access health care, be sure to tell them about this opportunity. There will be COVID-19 screenings and protocols.

Member News

Dave Rudiak is at home receiving Hospice care as his kidneys and heart continue to fail. Barbara Wright appreciates phone calls, visits and notes. The Caring Network has set up meals through Takethemameal.com. Enter the last name Wright and password 1321.



UUA News

In a March 29 press release, the UUA condemned attacks on democracy and recommitted to protecting voting rights. It points out that “under the guise of renewed lies about voter fraud, GOP actions threaten to gut our democracy along the familiar lines of voter suppression and systemic racism.” It offers this reminder to all of us:

“As Unitarian Universalists, our values hold that all people should have a voice and a vote in choosing their leaders and determining what is best for ourselves and our communities. Our principles compel us to protect the broadest use of the democratic process and remind us that the oppression of any community is a moral injury to us all. As we witness the intentional undermining of the electoral process, our faith beckons us to resist these attacks on democracy and protect voting rights everywhere.”

All Unitarian Universalists are urged to take action by working to pass national voting rights legislation, organizing for voting rights locally, and joining with other UUs to learn and organize for democracy together. The [UUA press release](#) includes links to resources to help us get involved.



Spring has come to the Fellowship!