

First Universalist Church Board of Trustees

August 18, 2016

Board Packet

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First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

Board of Trustees Meeting

August 18, 2016

6:30 p.m. Cummins Room

Agenda

I. Call to Order (6:30).

- Lighting of the Chalice

May this flame that burns before us light our way, informed by the wisdom of leaders gone before, and inspired by the trust that we have been given as stewards of this Church. May we have vision, compassion, and courage as we serve this congregation now and for the generations to come.

- Reading (see SM report)
- Spiritual reflection question (see SM report)

II. Consent Agenda (6:50)

- Approval of minutes from July 21, 2016 meeting.
- Monitoring: Acceptance of attendance and membership numbers
- Monitoring: Acceptance of staff and significant volunteer changes
- Senior Minister Report: Draft Annual work plan
- Senior Minister Report: Ministerial Team and staff work.

III. Finance Report (Jen Crow) (6:55 – 7:10)

Reverend Crow will present a preliminary report on fiscal year-end 2016.

IV. Comprehensive Stewardship Campaign Update (7:10 – 7:25)

Reverend Schroeder will provide an update on the Stewardship campaign.

V. Rainbow Research Report (7:25 – 7:50)

Beki Saito and Razeena Shrestha of Rainbow Research will present the results of their work. The entire Rainbow Research Report is part of the Board packet.

BREAK 7:50 – 8:00

VI. Racial Justice Visioning / Change team (8:00 - 9:00)

A. Let's Get Moving: Implementing a Change Team (8:00 – 8:20)

Richard Spratt and Karin Wille will introduce the concept of implementing a change-team and the reasons why a change team would be useful for our racial justice work. An excerpt of

Including structure of team, reporting and staffing, Board oversight.

B. Where Are We Going? Mapping Out Visioning and Strategy (8:20 – 8:40)

Discussion of a possible plan for Board work on Racial Justice. As an example to start the discussion, the elements of a plan of Board discussions is set out below. For each of these, we may need to think about where strategic, Board-level discussions are necessary and where work should be allocated to staff.

- Sept: Visioning - what does racial justice in our church look like in five years?
- Oct: What in the current state of the church helps us or holds us back from working on our vision? How might this fit with the work of a change team?
- Nov: Leveraging Strengths and Opportunities
- Dec: Resolving Weaknesses and Threats (including caring for diverse viewpoints).
- Jan: Action plan, Part I
- Feb: Action plan, Part II

C. Choosing a Path (8:40 to 9:00)

Discussion of whether we must choose A or B, whether we prefer one method over the other, or whether one should flow from the other.

VII. Adjournment (9:00)

First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

Board of Trustees Meeting

Minutes

July 21, 2016

I. Attendance

Trustees Present: Dave Bach, Eric Cooperstein, Cindy Marsh, Dick Niemic, Karin Wille, Caitlin Rodgers, Christa Anders, Lillie Pang

Trustee Absent: Richard Spratt

Staff Present: Staff have the month off

The meeting convened at 6:30 with the call to order and chalice lighting.

II. Introductions and Communications

A “thank you” and other fun “get to know you” exercises were attempted. This was followed by traditional introductions!

III. Consent Agenda – moved and approved.

Motion was made, seconded and approved to adopt the consent agenda with a few changes: add to the annual meeting notes that Cindy Marsh and Dick Niemic were elected to their second terms on the Board of Trustees; add comments about the untimely death of Pam Vincent and that the position for Chair of the Nominating Committee went unfilled and a few typos.

Eric Cooperstein will take care of working with church staff to make the corrections.

IV. Orientations

Existing Board members provided a high-level orientation for new board members in six subject areas.

1. Board Meetings – Dick Niemic
2. Operating with a Racial Justice Lens – Dave Bach
3. Policy Governance and Fiduciary Duty – Karen Wille

Karen Wille will send board members the slides she used.

Three Books to Consider Reading:

- Policy Governance by John Carver

- Inside the Large Congregation by Susan Beaumont, https://www.amazon.com/Inside-Large-Congregation-Susan-Beaumont/dp/1566994195/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1469299546&sr=1-1&keywords=inside+the+large+congregation
- Governance and Ministry, https://www.amazon.com/Governance-Ministry-Rethinking-Board-Leadership/dp/1566997399/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1469299672&sr=1-1&keywords=governance+and+ministry (NOTE: This is a new edition published in January 2016.)

And a video to watch:

- 2016 Berry Street lecture that was given to the UUA Ministers this year. http://original.livestream.com/uuma/video?clipId=pla_96990e44-c8be-42bb-8df9-09032c6f1eda
4. Finance – Eric Cooperstein
 5. Capital Campaign – Cindy Marsh

V. Items from the President

Eric Cooperstein would like to focus more on our racial justice plan at the August meeting. He asked to be copied on emails when people are communicating with ministers or staff. We agreed that we would like to see a plan and timeline from Reverend Schroeder in August regarding the Capital Campaign work.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

**First Universalist Church
June 2016 Statistical Report
July 21, 2016**

MEMORIAL SERVICES: 0

MARRIAGES/SERVICES OF COMMITMENT: 0

MEMBERS FOR APPROVAL: 0

MEMBERS REINSTATED: 0

MEMBERS FOR REMOVAL: 2

Kathy Wiess and Emily Cudd – moved, changed to friend status

CHILDREN DEDICATED: 0

	To Date	End of Year Totals		
MEMBERS	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
(Fiscal Year)	54	58	46	110
TOTAL MEMBERS:	934	920	921	1030

TOTAL MEMBERS AS OF THE LAST MEETING: 936

To be added: 0

To be removed : 2

TOTAL MEMBERS: 934

**First Universalist Church
 July 2016 Statistical Report
 August 18, 2016**

MEMORIAL SERVICES: 0

MARRIAGES/SERVICES OF COMMITMENT: 0

MEMBERS FOR APPROVAL: 0

MEMBERS REINSTATED: 0

MEMBERS FOR REMOVAL: 1
 Sararosa Davies – going off to college

CHILDREN DEDICATED: 0

	To Date	End of Year Totals			
MEMBERS (Fiscal Year)	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
		54	58	46	110
TOTAL MEMBERS:	934	934	920	921	1030

TOTAL MEMBERS AS OF THE LAST MEETING: 934

To be added: 0

To be removed :

TOTAL MEMBERS:

June Attendance				
		2016		2015
Adults	10:00		10:00	
1st week		421		385
2nd week		220		258
3rd week		235		232
4th week		194		227
5th week				208
Monthly Total		1070		1310
Average for June		267.5		262
RE				
1st week				
2nd week				
3rd week				
4th week				
5th week				
Monthly Total				
Average for June				
Combined Average		267.5		262

July Attendance				
		2016		2015
Adults	10:00		10:00	
1st week		197		169
2nd week		460		330
3rd week		275		252
4th week		255		282
5th week		282		
Monthly Total		1469		1033
Average for July		293.8		258.25
RE				
1st week				
2nd week				
3rd week				
4th week				
5th week				

Monthly Total				
Average for July				
Combined Average	293.8		258.25	

Sr. Minister Report for August 18, 2016 Board Meeting

I. Opening Reflection (from a check in that Rev. Jen Crow shared at our recent Program Team Retreat)

Sometimes hope comes from memory - looking back and seeing the journey to same-sex marriage, participating in and watching civil rights unfold, positive changes in our families. As you look back over last year or over your time at church, what do you see in our recent past that gives you hope, where you feel hopeful or surprised in a good way about the direction we are going, decisions that have been made, turns individuals have been able to make? What gives you hope for our faith community as you look back over the years?

II. Monitoring Items:

A. Staff and Volunteer Changes:

Staff: Andrea Love, our staff Finance Specialist, has been hired to serve as the 8th Grade OWL (Our Whole Lives) Program Assistant for 2016-2017. Her RE hours will take place almost exclusively on Sundays and at RE overnights, so when she's in the office during the week she will be wearing her Finance Specialist hat.

Here's the introduction Andrea shared with the OWL volunteer team:

“Andrea currently serves as the finance specialist at First Universalist and is excited to expand her role to include assisting the 8th grade OWL program. Andrea is very passionate about sexual and reproductive health education. During her time as an undergraduate at the University of Arkansas, Andrea co-founded Students for Gender Equality, the first feminist student organization at the U of A since the 1970s. As president of SGE, Andrea organized three annual week-long events focused on sexual and reproductive health education for students at the U of A, the majority of whom came from states with abstinence-only sex education. In 2013, Andrea was selected as a Fellow with the Sierra Club's Global Population and the Environment program, and conducted workshops and educational events for middle, high school, and college students about toxicity and reproductive health. Andrea is thrilled to be joining the OWL team at First U.”

Volunteers: The **Comprehensive Stewardship Campaign Pre-Design Team**, comprised of church members Peter Styx, Shawn Gaither, David Showalter, Ken Stone, Kristen Mengelkoch, Bette Demars, Bill McTeer, Paul Kloth, Lynne Stanley, Christy

Devens, Stewart Haugen (as well as Justin, Jen, Tracy, Bree, Elaine, and Lauren), has been hard at work since June, preparing conceptual plans and costs for the Comprehensive Campaign. We'll use this material during our October focus group time, as we test the feasibility of the case for the campaign. A working sub-group of this Pre-design Team had a conference call with Jim Klote to ensure we had the right materials to successfully launch our focus groups. A huge thank you to this group of dedicated church members!

Stu Hanson has joined the **Planned Giving Team**. He joins Velma Wagner, Chair, as well as Joan Niemiec, Lisa Sinclair, Peg Meiers, and Pat Gottschalk.

The **Pledge Team** will be chaired by Zack Stevens this year. He is joined by Jeanne Peppel. We're actively recruiting a third member of the Pledge Team.

Note: Annual Giving, Capital/Stewardship Giving, and Legacy Giving are the three legs of the stool that help the church thrive (pledge=healthy operating budget, capital=facilities that support our ministry) and survive (planned giving/endowment/legacy fund=move into the unknown future with a sound financial footing). This is a message we'll continue to share as we highlight the various ways we can support this faith community, and how they are all important.

The Faith Action Council has a number of new members. Current Council Members are:

Rev. Justin Schroeder
Joan Naymark
Karen Kingsley
Taylor Putz
Cindy Marsh
Emma Paskewitz
Charmagne Campbell Patton
Sarah Sheehan
Deb Soulen/White
Joy Throm
Marjorie Herdes
Matt Kresl
Meg Reid
Sharon Ramirez
Hal Schroer
Ben Jaeger

Margot Isman
Elisabeth Groebel
(Note: Several members are still pending.)

B. DRAFT Staff Work Plan:

DRAFT DRAFT Staff Work Plan - 2016-2017 DRAFT DRAFT

We are entering the fifth year of our five year strategic plan. During much of the past two years, we have been in a season of “consolidation,” creating systems and structures that support the day to day functioning of the church and its ministry. Now, with a new tenant (and a three year agreement) as well as a seasoned and committed staff, we are well positioned - financially, programmatically, and administratively - to achieve much that has been outlined in our strategic plan, particularly as we move toward a comprehensive stewardship campaign.

While the Campaign is a huge piece of our ministry this year, we don't want to lose sight of other pieces of ministry that are in motion.

Our new Faithful Action Ministry model - working with a racial justice lens and through community partners - is taking root. Our public witness and presence is stronger than ever before. Our adult ministry continues to expand and offer meaningful opportunities to connect, as we give, receive, and grow with others. Our budget is truly a moral document, highlighting our commitment to children and families as all Religious Education Fees and donations have been eliminated; we've also committed to paying all adult staff members a living wage of at least \$15/hr.

While we are building on a very successful 2015-2016, and expanding on some of our ministry opportunities, the overarching goal for 2016-2017, as mentioned, is to have a successful Comprehensive Stewardship Campaign. A successful campaign will be the catalyst for every other aspects of our ministry thriving as we move forward.

Below, in each of the five highlighted area, we've identified high-level goals, tied to key elements of the Strategic Plan, for 2016-2017. We've also noted areas and objectives that are no longer a priority.

1. Worship

Worship will continue to be the heartbeat of the church in 2016-2017, and we will continue to lift up a variety of voices and experiences in the worship service. We will create a diverse group of Worship Associates - youth, elders, people of color, long term and short members, and more - to share their stories and spiritual leadership with the congregation. New this year, these worship associates will work more closely with the preaching minister. We will continue to deepen our relationship with artists and musicians of color, and invite them to collaborate with us in the creation of worship. Once again, we will invite the People of Color Circle to help lead a worship service. With the elimination of the Children's Choir, we will begin meeting with lay musician leaders and helping them figure out how to teach and conduct music, not only in children's chapel (with effectiveness and fun!), but also potentially lead some music during worship.

Finally, in addition to reaching out to musicians both internally and externally to share their music in worship, we will assemble a group of high caliber musicians, who will perform on 3 or 4 Sundays and help us really take worship to a new level.

We anticipate the Comprehensive Campaign helping us to move forward with livestream and video capture.

2. Faith Formation

We will continue to offer classes, Circles, retreats, Daytime Connections, faith formation opportunities and more, to congregants of all ages.

We will do a soft launch of the "Soul Matters" curriculum (for Small Groups).

Our Religious Education Program has moved into a place of being on the leading edge in UU circles, with its focus on racial justice education. This year we will formalize racial justice training as a requirement for RE teachers and we will continue to develop our RJ curriculum and share it with our sibling churches.

This year, we will make the Youth Boston Trip more of a Pilgrimage and not a "trip."

3. Supportive Community

We will work with lay leaders to better utilize ACS as a tool to support our members and their ministry (we'll build out the "Groups" function first, using Wellspring Circles as a pilot project starting point.)

We will continue to fine tune our communication efforts, leveraging social media, the website, and the weekly Liberal to highlight our ministry and mission.

Once again, adding a formal “leadership development” track is not a goal for this coming year, leadership development continues to happen in Religious Education, Pastoral Care, Faithful Action Leadership, Circles, Wellspring, and countless other areas of church life.

For example, in our Religious Education program and Adult Ministry areas, both Lauren Wyeth and Elaine Aron Tenbrink are actively deepening lay leadership, handing leadership over to others, and intentionally cultivating, coaching, and empowering lay leadership.

The Pastoral Care Team is expanding its ministry this year, adding Mental Health and Marital First Responders efforts.

We will continue to re-examine our definition of membership and our membership practices, including the ways we invite members into deeper engagement and leadership in the congregation. Beginning this year, we will make the membership process adaptable to different populations within the church (ie, stay at home mom, homebound elders, etc).

Finally, this year, we will have several ingathering events on Sundays after church, as we build intergenerational community. We will also add church wide family dinners that will have a racial justice focus.

4. Faithful Action

In the fall of 2016, through Sept, Oct, and Nov, we will highlight our new faithful action paradigm (doing our faithful action work with a racial justice lens and through partnerships), as well as highlight our 7 formal partners. We will invite people to live out their faith values by joining one of these partnerships.

We will continue our partnership with the Native Community, linking Environmental Justice and Racial Justice in the ongoing conversation about water, Bde/Mde Maka Ska, and sustainable living.

In partnership with the Board and the Racial Justice Leadership Team, we will work to clarify the leadership structures and lines of accountability between the Board, the Racial Justice Leadership Team, and the Racial Justice Change Team.

We continue our public ministry, as it relates to living our faith “out loud” and in the public square.

5. Resources and Infrastructure

We will oversee the installation of a new and green parking lot.

We will begin to operationalize our new vendor policy.

We will ensure that the transition to having a larger full time tenant is successful, and doesn't negatively impact our Religious Education program.

We will run a successful Comprehensive Stewardship Campaign, working in partnership with the Board, our Consultant, staff, and congregants.

III. Information Items

A. MidAmerica Mosaic Makers Conference: The team of First Universalist attendees has been invited to present a workshop at the Mosaic Makers Conference at Unity Church Unitarian. The conference is August 26, 27, and 28, and is designed for churches working on becoming multi-cultural, racially just institutions. The Team attending is Richard Spratt, Lillie Pang, Justin Schroeder, Jen Crow, Lauren Wyeth, and Caitlin Rogers.

B. Update on the Sacred Solidarity Program: First Universalist has been invited to participated in a one year “Sacred Solidarity” program for churches living into a racial justice identity. This program is sponsored by MARCH (Multi-faith Anti-Racism, Change and Healing), a local coalition of faith leaders committed to supporting mostly white faith communities in their racial justice work, as well as MUUSJA, the Kaleo Center for Justice, and Outfront Minnesota. In this one year program, the First Universalist Team (of 5-6 people) would engage monthly with the teams from other churches, staying accountable to a racial justice agenda, and working on the institutional change so critical to this work. This program will kick off with a half day retreat on Sept 11, from 1-7pm. So far, the Sacred Solidarity team is Karin Wille, Kayci Rush, Richard, Spratt, Lark Weller, and Justin Schroeder.

C. Campaign Update: The Pre-design team is hard at work preparing conceptual material for the October focus groups. The October focus groups will run through the entire month of October. Members of the Pre-design team will help with these presentations, as will other church members. After the Feasibility/Readiness

assessment, we'll work with our onsite Consultant to assemble the Campaign Team, as well as the various other teams needed to ensure a successful Campaign. In November and early December, we'll begin to make asks, and then we'll launch the campaign in the new year, at the end of February. We've tentatively set Saturday, February 25, as the offsite party/launch day, and then Sunday, Feb 26th, as the follow up worship launch of the Campaign. Currently, because of the in-house talent and expertise we've using, we have not accessed any of the Legacy Fund Loan for architects or any pre-design costs.

As far as expectations for Board members participation in the Campaign: I would expect Board members to attend focus group sessions, support the Campaign and the Vision for the Campaign, and to make a generous gift to the Campaign (generous in the context of one's own financial circumstances). I suspect it is very important that Board members be early givers in the Campaign.

I have shared the Vendor Policy with the Pre-design Team and that document will be used as we move forward, engaging architects, general contractors, vendors, etc. Using this document helps us live more fully into the "Choice Points" model.

FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF MINNEAPOLIS

Evaluation of Racial Justice Work

FINAL REPORT

Prepared for First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

Submitted by Rainbow Research, Inc. August 2016

Razeena Shrestha, MPP
Beki Saito, MA

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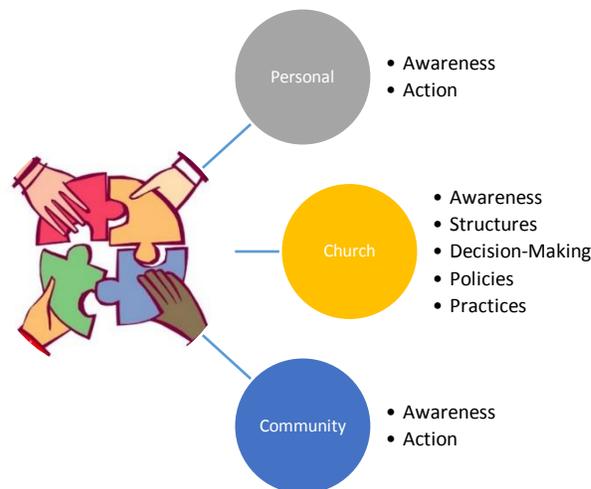
INTRODUCTION

Over the past several years First Universalist Church of Minneapolis has deepened its commitment to racial justice through focused education and training of members of the congregation, introducing new ways of decision-making based on an equity framework, integrating new practices into their worship services, and working in partnership with community action groups. With the goal to bolster and sustain its racial justice work, the Church's Board of Trustees contracted Rainbow Research, Inc. to collect firsthand information from its congregants through a series of focus groups, listening sessions, and a survey to learn:

- The extent to which and in what ways the Church's racial justice work has re-aligned and changed the internal and external ministry of the Church to date; and
- The ways in which the Church can deepen and strengthen the congregation's commitment and action to racial justice.
- Assist the Board of Trustees in determining whether to revise any of First Universalist's four visionary goals.

The framework for thinking about initial personal, interpersonal, and structural changes that might be impacted by the racial justice work of the church is described below.

Figure 1: Multiple levels of change



This report documents the process of change as described by participants in the study, highlights the outcomes of the Church's racial justice journey and presents an analysis of its strengths and opportunities for further action.

Rainbow Research is a 501(C) (3) nonprofit organization founded in 1974. Its mission is to improve the effectiveness of socially concerned organizations through capacity building, applied research, and evaluation. Rainbow is known for its participatory focus and has earned a reputation for working with diverse communities and organizations using culturally appropriate research methodologies.

METHODOLOGY

Recruitment & Participant Characteristics

Rainbow Research conducted four focus groups, two listening sessions, and administered a racial justice online survey in May 2016. The focus groups were conducted with sub-groups of the congregation: newer members of the congregation, long-term members of the congregation, the People of Color circle group, and staff members. The Board of Trustees helped identify and recruit participants for the focus groups. The listening sessions and the survey were open to all members of the congregation.

Table 1: Data Collection Method & Participant Characteristics

Data Collection Method	Participant Characteristics	Number of Participants
Racial Justice Online Survey	All members of the congregation	117 responses
Listening Sessions	All members of the congregation	15
Focus Groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Members (Generally less than 5 years)2. Members (Generally more than 5 years)3. Members of People of Color circle4. Staff members	31

117 members of the congregation participated in the racial justice online survey, of whom 29 participants noted they were members of the Church for “less than five years,” 44 participants “between 5 to 15 years,” and another 44 participants “more than 15 years” with the Church, indicating that most survey participants were not new members.

When asked about their involvement in “social justice projects,” about half of the survey participants (55%) said they participated either “only now and then” or “some of the time.” However, there were some difference across the three groups of members based on their duration of membership. Over half of the members who have been members of the Church for “less than 5 years” indicated they attended social justice events “never or rarely” compared to the 41% of the “5 to 15 years” group and 25% of the “more than 15 years” group who reported the same. In general, there were no significant differences between how newer and longer-term members responded to the survey questions.

Protocol Development

The Board of Trustees provided feedback on the protocols that guided the discussions in both the focus groups and the listening sessions and were involved in the development of the survey questionnaire.

The focus group protocol included questions that explored the different ways in which the Church’s racial justice work affected participants, the Church, and the larger community; whether participants believed the Church addressed racial justice adequately through its work; what tensions or shortcomings had been experienced or observed; and in what ways the Church could strengthen its racial justice work. The benefit of using a focus group to collect data is that it provides an opportunity for people to provide rich responses to questions as well as to have ideas augmented in conversation with other participants.

The listening session protocol was largely aimed at getting participants' feedback on the Church's visionary goals and soliciting ideas for improving the goals and objectives to better reflect the Church's racial justice work. Attempts were made to facilitate the listening sessions in a World Café¹ discussion style, which would allow participants to break into smaller focused discussion groups and move from one discussion topic to another and then finally return to the larger group to share back important stories, observations, and recommendations. However, due to a low participant turnout for both listening sessions, a single group was formed to discuss together all of the topics at hand. While the facilitation goals were not met, the conversations were nevertheless fruitful and met the overall goals of the data collection method.

Finally, the survey focused on gathering information about participants' perceptions, attitudes, and behavior related to the Church's racial justice work. The protocols and questionnaire are included in the appendix.

Data Analysis & Interpretation

To enhance the relevance and usefulness of the study, Rainbow Research worked in close partnership with representatives of the Board of Trustees throughout the research process, including reviewing the preliminary findings for the report. A mixed method approach of qualitative (focus groups and listening sessions) and quantitative (online survey) techniques of collecting data helped to explore the breadth and depth of pertinent issues and topic areas. Both focus groups and listening sessions allowed members of the congregation to openly express their experiences, observations, and recommendations on the Church's ongoing racial justice work. While the discussions were partially structured using a semi-structured focus group protocol, participants were able to dive directly into issues that resonated strongly with their experience with the Church. Doing so also allowed new but relevant issues to surface that were important to the participants but not originally addressed in the protocol. The online survey enabled the questioning of a broader range of related topics to a larger cross section of the congregation that was not feasible in qualitative methods.

In this study, all focus group conversations were recorded digitally and transcribed. Transcripts from focus groups and the open-ended responses from the survey were coded in NVivo software for data analysis. Qualitative responses from these two sources were compared and contrasted and relationships established between different codes using various Nvivo query techniques. Detailed handwritten notes were taken during the listening sessions, which were then used to extract important themes, ideas, and quotations and compared against the findings in the focus group sessions. All other quantitative responses from the survey were analyzed using a statistical analysis software, SPSS.

¹ <http://www.theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/world-cafe-method/>

KEY FINDINGS

Racial Justice Work

The current racial justice work at the First Universalist Church of Minneapolis includes a combination of racial justice focused trainings and activities organized by the Church, the formation of the racial justice leadership team, and the application of the racial justice lens in every aspect of the Church’s work. The Church has formally recognized their commitment to racial justice by adopting a Racial Justice Resolution² in May 2015.

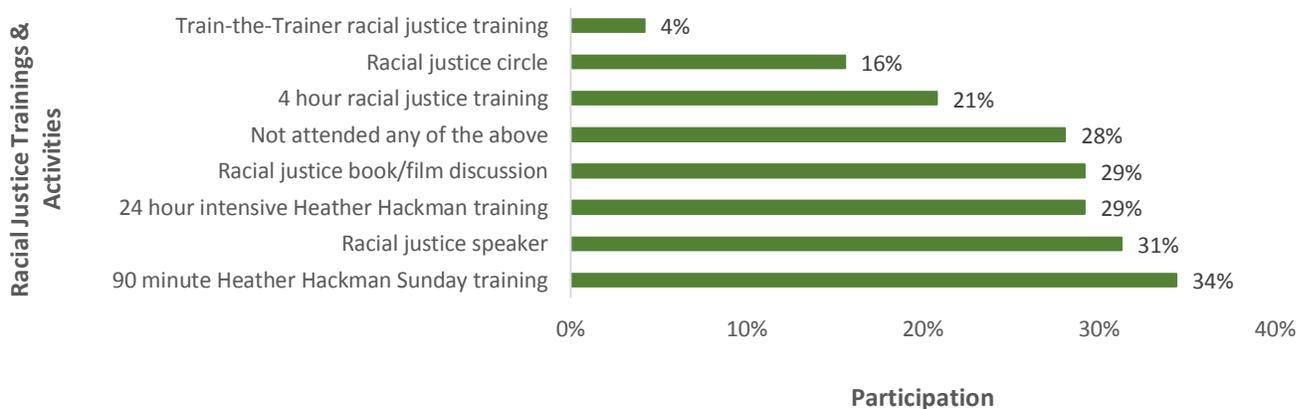
As part of the racial justice work, the Church has incorporated a series of intentional trainings and activities to increase the education and awareness related to racial justice for its congregation on the historical and current impacts of systemic racism and white privilege on society. The seven main activities include:

Table 2: Racial Justice Trainings & Activities

1. 90 minute Heather Hackman Sunday training	2. 4 hour racial justice training
3. 24 hour intensive Heather Hackman training	4. Train-the-Trainer racial justice training
5. Racial justice speaker	6. Racial justice book/film discussion
7. Racial justice circle	

As indicated in figure 2, according to the racial justice online survey, over 70% of the 96 respondents had attended at least one of the seven racial justice focused trainings and activities provided by the Church. A few members who participated in a focus group noted that approximately 250 of the 950 (26%) congregants had undergone at least one of the racial justice trainings at the Church, suggesting that perhaps survey participants were more likely to have been involved in the racial justice work of the church than the general church member.

Figure 2: Participation in Racial Justice Trainings & Activities [N=96]



² <http://firstuniversalistchurch.org/racial-justice/>

Visionary Goals’ Fit with the Church

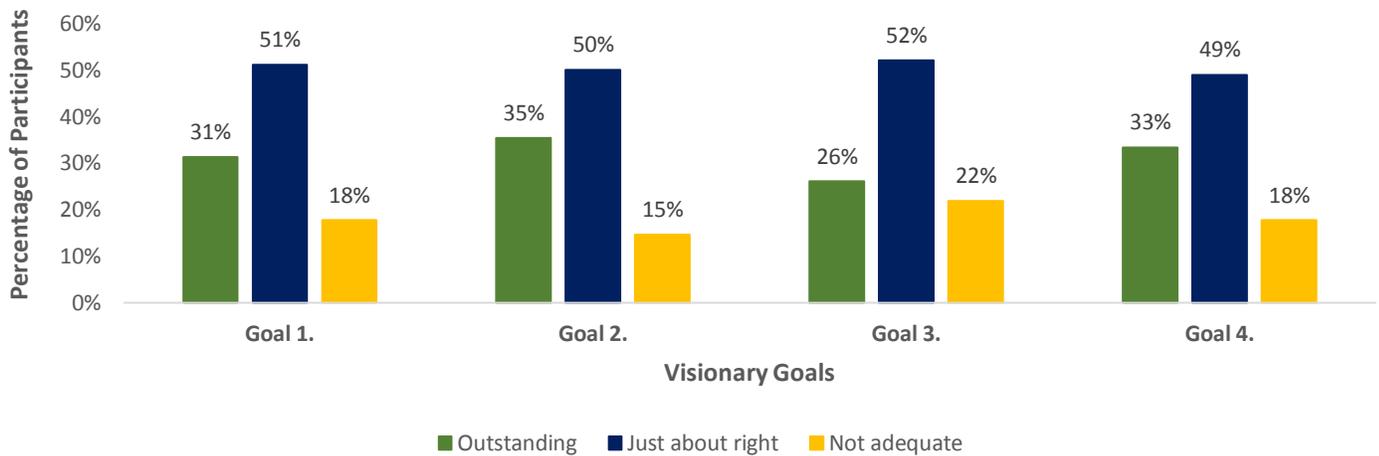
The online survey asked members of the congregation if the Church was adequately addressing racial justice in each of its four visionary goals.³ Listed below are the stated visionary goals.

Table 3. Visionary Goals

GOAL 1.	<i>“We, the people of First Universalist Church, grow in our UU faith: we are equipped to live out our values and experience worship, spiritual practices, and rituals that challenge, comfort, celebrate, and heal.”</i>
GOAL 2.	<i>“First Universalist Church is a home for ageless wisdom. People of all ages find opportunities to engage in an intellectual and spiritual search for deeper meaning and understanding in the UU tradition, both as individuals and in community.”</i>
GOAL 3.	<i>“First Universalist Church is an intergenerational community of mutual caring and support. We build this community by actively welcoming all and encouraging each to discover, develop and share their gifts.”</i>
GOAL 4.	<i>“The people of First Universalist Church work to build a just, loving and sustainable world. We are a visible, influential voice, and we act to shape the larger community into a more just and equitable society.”</i>

As can be seen in the graph below, on average, about half of the participants believed the Church was addressing racial justice “just about right” in the four visionary goals. Survey participants felt Goal 3 was the least adequate in terms of capturing racial justice themes.

Figure 3. How adequately do you believe the Church is addressing racial justice in its 4 visionary goals? [N=96]



When a similar question was asked during focus group discussions, however, many participants expressed that the visionary goals did not adequately address racial justice. They shared that the goals did not truly reflect the important racial justice work that was currently undertaken within and by the Church. According to participants, the Church’s racial justice work was both “internally” and “externally” focused, but the intention and achievements had not been captured in the four visionary goals or objectives. Some listening session participants argued that the racial justice work needed to be explicitly articulated in the visionary goals.

³ First Universalist Church 2012-2017. Board Handbook. Visionary Goals and Strategic Plan.

“This doesn’t reflect the ways in which it has really started to blossom around here.” – Focus group participant

“So I think, not only is it [racial justice] not explicitly named, but I think the – what we’re up to is not – the direction isn’t even in here.” – Focus group participant

“And something I think is really noteworthy about our racial justice work is that’s it’s really internally focused right now. We’re doing an internal examination of our own processes, of our church system, of ourselves, of our community. And it seems like [Goal] number four here is really externally focused on things that happen outside of this community. And I feel like our racial justice work is very embedded in actually making auditing and examining and strengthening and correcting our own community.” – Focus group participant

“But that was, like, a sustained year of focusing on the equal rights for same-sex couples. But, yeah, so to me, it feels like actually, by having the internal focus, we’ve actually been more able to do visible work.” – Focus group participant

More specific feedback from members of the congregation on how to better capture the racial justice work in the four visionary goals are noted under the Participant Recommendation section.

Benefits and Positive Impacts

Participants across the four focus group discussions commented on how the racial justice work was introduced to the congregation. Many attributed the racial justice focus of the Church to senior minister, Rev. Justin Schroeder, whom they viewed as a change agent –setting new priorities, dismantling traditional ways of operating, and inspiring congregant members to come together in a single unified effort towards greater racial (and social) justice.

“I think it [introduction of the racial justice work] was done well. But that it came from Justin. And then the staff was trained in. And then eventually the board took ownership. And then more and more people and lay leaders in the congregation got trained in. So my experience of the story is that it started – that it unfolded in a different way.” – Focus group participant

“So he’s gotten a lot of flak and has been a lightning rod ever since he got here for driving some change in and driving some change out. And kind of turning the balance by injecting systems that have displaced, misplaced, and disrupted, the power structure within the church. And so he’s always been associated with that, really, since he arrived. That’s been my observation.” – Focus group participant

Congregant members viewed the Church’s racial justice work as “courageous” and “impressive.”

“And Justin has listened to the pushback. And then a few months ago, he talked about that pushback. He said, ‘I just need to tell you all that, explicitly, but not exclusively, we’re going to be talking about racial justice.’ And I felt very impressed with his statement.” – Focus group participant

“I appreciate the Church’s leadership in racial justice work, not just have it be a temporary project. It is important to invite continued input broadly from church members and friends, particularly from those who are not so comfortable with this area of justice. Continued focus on “whiteness” is key.” – Online survey participant

“I greatly appreciate the boldness of conversations and actions we have committed to as a church community around racial justice. What I have been able to explore, learn, discuss and reflect upon related to my white racial identity has been life-changing and humbling. I am especially proud to be a member here during this time of racial struggle in our larger community and in our faith community. The opportunities to deeply explore racial justice/injustice issues in a supportive and spiritual context in my faith community have been so much more critical to my personal and spiritual growth than I ever could have imagined. Thank you to all.” – Online survey participant

Many participants in focus groups, listening sessions, and surveys appreciated the racial justice lens –which they viewed as the Church wanting to ensure that the racial justice lens was also included when looking across a broad number of social justice issues.

“And the way that I had heard it, or the way that I internalized it –was that we needed to make sure that a racial justice lens was included in everything we do. That it wasn’t the only way through to anything. It was strong, I’ll admit. But I felt that it was to suggest, the example of the solar garden – community garden. It’s, like, yeah, that is a great thing. Is there anything that we can add to that effort that would – that would also do some things along racial justice lines? Is there anything that we can do, even as we’re figuring out what books to put in this little free library out here – something as small as that? If we throw a little racial justice lens in there, just to check.” – Focus group participant

Focus group participants mentioned that the trainings enabled them to assess where whiteness was present throughout the Church system and helped to identify ways to make necessary changes. It also helped them become familiarized with appropriate language that could aide them in their own journey towards greater racial justice.

“I felt like I needed to take the 24-hour training because I wanted to learn the language I needed to have in order to show my racial justice lens focus. It’s always been there, but there’s key words and coding that happens around this right now that I was able to learn by taking the 24-hour training...” – Focus group participant

Other than trainings, members of the congregation were also directly involved in protests or demonstration as part of the Black Lives Matter movement or indirectly participated in different ways to increase awareness and change behaviors in their personal, Church or community life. For example, they appreciated that the values of racial justice permeated through programs and activities related to Religious Education (RE) at the Church as it introduced the language and issues to younger generation, from an early age.

“And the youth and their statements of faith or belief, they’re permeating with being aware of color. Being aware of the racial inequities. I mean, I didn’t hear that before when I was, you know, visiting back in the ‘90s ...And I think if my son – if that had been going on when my son was here, oh, I would have loved it. He would have loved it. He might have actually stayed.” – Focus group participant

In the racial justice online survey, members of the congregation were asked to rate on a four-point scale how strongly they agreed that racial justice based work was *important* to their personal life, their Church, and their community. In general, racial justice was perceived as important across the respondents’ personal, community, and Church life. Among these three areas, more participants strongly agreed that the racial justice work was important to their Church (65%), compared to their community (53%) or in their personal life (44%). When asked further if the Church had a positive *impact* on their personal, Church, and community life, participants who

either “strongly agreed” or “somewhat agreed” that the Church’s racial justice work had the greatest positive impact on the community (83%), then on the Church (75%), and in their own personal life (65%).

Figure 4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? [N= 96]



Through the focus groups and listening sessions we were able to ascertain a deeper understanding of the impact of the Church’s racial justice work across all three levels of impact: personal, church, and community. These are shared below.

Personal Impact

Participants in both focus groups and surveys shared instances of how the Church’s racial justice work has had a positive impact in their personal life.

Awareness, Learning, and Unlearning

Participants noted several examples of learning about different issues, particularly becoming more aware about their own whiteness and noticing and/or addressing systematic racism in different parts of their life. They shared that acknowledging their privilege had not been an easy or comfortable task, yet they saw it as a crucial first step in working towards affecting change. While having challenging conversations related to race, systematic oppression, and privilege were viewed as important, they added that they felt the Church’s approach went past shaming and inducing guilt among its congregants. Instead, some participants observed that the Church brought people together through humility, and that led to a greater potential for collective action. Participants noted that using language and rhetoric that was “kind” allowed to “open [difficult] conversations,” engaging in dialogue rather than shunning people’s varied perspectives, knowledge, and experiences. Participants also reported that they had been working hard at “unlearning,” eliminating, or correcting specific types of unfair personal behavior and reactions based on their own prejudices and privileges. However, they believed that lasting change required constant, ongoing work both at a micro (personal) level as well as a macro (church/community) level.

“My understanding of the goal of the church right now is to have all of us wake up without shame to our white privilege.” – Focus group participant

“We wanted that before we do a lot of action. Because we want to be coming from a place of humility and awareness versus white guy helping the helpless.” – Focus group participant

“And I haven’t always made it to the movies, but I’ve watched some DVDs at home. I mean, the impetus has been there to do this work on your own or in groups or with your friends or your family to have conversations...So I think pretty much everybody – I can’t imagine if a congregant has been around for a while that haven’t been touched by this and been working on learning. Yet, at the same time, I’ve been made very consciously aware of the fact that we’re talking about a blind spot that we have in our – where we’ve sort of, society and systemically, we’ve been sort of snowed over and are not aware of a lot of the things that we should be aware. So when you’re going through this experience of dawning awareness with trying to figure out how to unlearn certain things that you’ve learned or taken for granted, that’s not easy.” – Focus group participant

“But I agree...that the discomfort thing is a good thing...In the last couple of years since the training here...is that I pay much more attention to white privilege. I’ve used that image that Heather said – you’re riding around the lake, and you’re, like, oh man, I’m really strong. And you don’t realize that – until you get to the other side of the lake that the wind was at your back. And that that’s kind of what white privilege feels like. It doesn’t feel like you’re getting a boost. Because you’re working hard too. But you are, and you don’t have to pay attention to... [the wind].” – Focus group participant

“I have personal experience with friends of color calling me out on things that I’ve said as hurtful to them. And those moments were very uncomfortable for me. And very painful, and I think, maybe it’s just a human thing to want to be comfortable. I feel this urge to close my eyes and run away from the discomfort. But I have these experiences where we actually worked through that into a place of deeper connection with one another...what led me to personal transformation and into deeper relationships.” – Focus group participant

“I have many instances in my life where that was the time I learned something was when it – when I get hit over the head with it. And so to have a lot of information suddenly about racial justice and whiteness, and it was – people were getting prickly, and stuff was – it was, like, oh, okay. Well, maybe it’s time not to be comfortable anymore....Personally, I don’t mind that that’s our lens now. It’s the only way that it’s getting into my head on a regular basis.” – Focus group participant

“So, like, one thing that it reminded me of is when I came out, I read this book by this lesbian woman who said, the first thing you need to do is go stand in front of a mirror and say the word “lesbian” over and over again. [Laughter] Because it’s, like, lesbian, lesbian, lesbian, lesbian, lesbian. Like, that word feeling uncomfortable to use, right? [laughter] So you, like, have to get used to using the language because there’s all these attached feelings to it, right? And I feel like, on some level, that similar process happened for me here around race – around talking about race.” – Focus group participant

“I feel like this is the only time within my particular faith tradition where I have been engaged in racial justice work that feels like it has the capacity to really transform people. Because we are coming at it from a place that feels aligned with our values, which includes a compassion value and somehow – however we’ve managed to work around that white shame piece that makes us shut each other down and shut ourselves down. I’ve just been so impressed by – and I feel like, instead of shame, we are actually accessing a much more appropriate human emotion, which is humility. So I’m really grateful for that.” – Focus group participant

“Actually, this place has helped me figure out how to be kind. How to be kind and talk about this. To not just have it come out in these – this kind of very abrasive way, but just ways in which maybe other people can hear it. Instead of shutting down conversation, opening conversation.” – Focus group participant

Participants at the People of Color focus group also mentioned that being part of the Church’s racial justice work and attending trainings and other activities have taught them to speak up and to confidently call out racism when it occurred.

“And so, in my life, I would just sort of accept, well, that’s the way it is. You know, it’s mostly white people, and things kind of go their way. And, you know, things happen, but what can you really do about it? You know, what can you do? It’s the system. It’s not going to change. But now I speak up more when I – for example, at the [name] Arts Center where I was on the visual arts committee for five years, and you know, now I – if I’m at a meeting there, and they’re talking about, how are they going to get this or that done. And I say, well, you know, we’ve got a large Somali population here in Hopkins. We have a lot of Hispanic. I don’t see their art in the Arts Center.” – Focus group participant

“It’s no longer just letting people of color talk about that problem kind of thing. But you’re part of the problem too... you know, step up and open your eyes kind of thing. And doing that is what I found new and refreshing after doing so many years of diversity work.” – Focus group participant

Support & Camaraderie

Participants in focus group discussions also shared their experiences of increased sense of support and camaraderie that developed as a result of the Church’s racial justice work. Participants reported that regardless of their own race, they felt that they were together in the struggle against racism. The combined effort and connection among people of different races, no matter where they were in their own journey towards racial justice, was viewed as necessary to drive their work forward.

“But if you let people take their time and grow, and it may be painful, but you have people standing there waiting for that growth to happen. Whether they’re people of color or white people – allies are the white people – I think, is an important piece. So we can support or say, yeah, it is hard. But isn’t it great you’re in this congregation that there are other white people struggling with this too? You’re not alone.” – Focus group participant

“[O]ne of the things that Heather said early on – is this idea of, like, I’m tethering my boat to your boat. And we’re going to – and we’re stuck together in fixing this – kind of image. And, like, we’re in this together.” – Focus group participant

“I think one of the things – one of the best things that has happened under [senior minister] has been more emphasis on the small groups and the circles and all of these kinds of things. There’s a lot more camaraderie building along with other kinds of events.” – Focus group participant

“And then the other thing is the big banner of Black Lives Matter. So subliminally or not, you’re walking in and no matter how old you are or who you are, you walk by that banner, and you read it while you walk in. So it’s, like, well, then it starts to... ingrain that, either you’re reacting to it with, no, every life matters, or you’re going through it and saying, yeah, this is – this is important. And my daughter brought really good feedback to me about the Black Lives Matter piece because she was like, “you know,

everybody has a house and they all are important but my house is on fire. So you're going to put the fire out...You have to come and help me!" – Focus group participant

Participants in the people of color (POC) focus group mentioned that being the POC circle was particularly helpful because of the strong connection participants felt they had with one another in the group. They mentioned that they did not feel the need to explain their experiences with others because everyone else had also experienced something similar or understood their story. The shared understanding and support for one another, according to them, gave them hope and helped them to focus on solutions.

"[Y]ou could say something, and the group knew exactly what you were talking about. And it's not an easy thing. Because of course, there's always going to be pushback. That's my life. But when you've got people walking with you along the way so that, when somebody says something utterly stupid, you can share that with somebody and everybody shakes their head in the POC group and goes, yeah, I know and I don't have to explain. It cuts right to the chase. And then I go, okay, yeah, that's happening. How do we combat that?" – Focus group participant

"Yeah, the circle that we do. And that's been very, very supportive as well and helpful to stay energized and engaged and involved. And so I really value that." – Focus group participant

Inspirational & Encouraging Action

Participants across all four focus groups also mentioned they found the Church's racial justice focus to be powerful in inspiring and motivating action towards greater racial justice. They shared examples of different opportunities that the Church had created for them to engage in foundational racial justice work as well as newer ways in which the Church had mobilized congregation members in stronger, more impactful collective efforts.

"When we first started all these trainings, you know, the first thing she [Heather Hackman] said was, take time as you read and you study beyond taking her course to reflect on what whiteness is and how it's in everything. And integrate that before you try to go out and apply that in the world." – Focus group participant

"[W]e're hosting two or three homeless families for two weeks so that we can essentially kind of help serve the effort of getting them transitioned in and on their feet. That feels like an example of a systemic contribution and a way in which we can help serve the larger goal of ending homelessness. I was pretty impressed with how comprehensive the program was. And so I can look at that knowing that I probably wasn't as action-oriented as a lot of the folks here, you know, historically – people who want to do stuff. But I can say that all the stuff that I've seen happen the last couple of years with race with Justin at the pulpit, this is one of the first times I was able to kind of see sort of this tangible connection between all of that. And it really made sense, and it sort of motivated and inspired me to want to, you know, throw my hat into the ring." – Focus group participant

"[W]hat I found in the Coming of Age statements, for the first time, is that many of the youth talked about racial justice and its relationship to their faith – their values. I also think it meant that the – although the majority of the youth are white, those who were kids of color felt much more empowered to speak very truthfully about their lives to everyone. And they said it in eloquent – I mean, it brought tears to my eyes what each youth – and almost to a T, all of them were pulling at different threads. And to me, that's a sign that something really transformative is starting to occur. It's not just happening in

our church, of course. Because in the broader – in our broader society, it seems like things are getting stirred up. But certainly within my Coming of Age group, it is not just Black Lives Matter. Because the kids of color who are part of my group are from – have many different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. So it's a very – it's varied and mixed. And it's very hopeful to me.” – Focus group participant

A few participants also noted that they felt a stronger impetus to take action because the Church allowed the people who are most affected by racism to take charge and so they trusted that leadership to guide them in the right direction.

“I’m there because people who I trust, based on past experiences and from knowing that they have a life experience and a wisdom that I can’t have because of who they are, and trusting that they’re my leaders and I’m just going to do what they ask me to do. And that my leaders in that case are often people younger than me, people of color, queer folks – and that, like, this is what – it’s a total shift from this setup where the people in charge are, like, older, hetero, white men, and we’re all vying to look like we have various levels of authority. It’s really an inversion. And so there’s really an experience of trust. And I have no idea what’s going to be asked of me. So that was powerful for me.” – Focus group participant

Impact on Church

Visibility in the Community

Focus group participants also shared that the Church’s racial justice oriented work had increased the visibility of the Church in the community. They reported that senior staff leadership and members of the congregation had participated in protests and demonstrations, and in other avenues to expand the Church’s connection with the larger community.

“They’re all at the rallies. And the ministers went to the Galleria and sang...And then being at the courthouse at Hennepin County court when the mall people were being arraigned. So [senior minister] has made partnerships – the Native American partnership and inner-city – or city ministers and they’re taking the time and making connections and we’ve had articles in the paper, our minister’s been interviewed on the radio. And, you know, so there’s visibility– and the banners are up there where everyone can see.” – Focus group participant

“And I meet ministers from other denominations, or just people, and they’re, like, oh, First Universalists. Black Lives Matter. Just – they don’t even know who I am. So we’re kind of getting a reputation.” – Focus group participant

“I think people look at our website and our programming, I think, and they see what we’re doing. I think it’s our sign.” – Focus group participant

“And now I think there are more people of color coming to the church now. I mean visually, just looking. That’s an evidence of change...Last Saturday, I met another man who was raised Muslim in this church... I couldn’t believe it.” – Focus group participant

“I also think the fact that [senior minister] has been visible in the community focusing on racial justice, to me, is a compliment to the [senior minister] and to the church. You know, so I don’t want to downplay that. I think the larger community always benefits from a minister that’s very proactive and visible in the community.” – Focus group participant

Cultural Shift

In addition to building strong partnerships and increasing visibility in the community, the Church's racial justice work has also led to a cultural shift within the Church, based on focus group participants' feedback. Participants noted that the fact that racial justice was covered in every Sunday services, and other regular practices, was indicative of a change in the Church's culture, where previously the Church was generally focused on issues of social justice but not explicitly focused on racial justice. Congregant members and staff also pointed at the ways in which several new processes of shared internal decision making had come in to effect which emphasized the usage of a racial justice lens. This, according to participants, had enabled the Church to become more inclusive and equitable in its day-to-day practices.

"Yep. It is a shift in culture. And also a shift in expectation. I mean, I do think, for a long time, people were kind of, like, well, when are we going to get over it? And now actually I think that it's getting long enough to tip the scale, right?" – Focus group participant

"[W]e're encouraged in whatever we do to look at it through a racial justice lens. I just did some membership work with one of our ministers. And we did a survey to find out membership things. And after we had done research as to what kind of questions we wanted to ask, then we applied the racial justice lens. And then we took it a step further and ran it by a person of color who is also in social sciences, and we thought he could maybe help us make sure that this survey fulfilled that goal. We were intentional – we did the survey and invited everybody to participate. But then we did some one-on-one interviewing, and we were very conscious there, not only of a cross-section of ages, but we also had people of color included in our one-on-ones." – Focus group participant

"It felt like it shifted the center of power and responsibility from the staff to the board. Or more of a shared responsibility there. Which felt to me more true and helpful and less, like, any particular staff person would be out on a limb alone." – Focus group participant

"What I've seen since we've gotten into the racial justice is the ministers actually talking about faith in action from the pulpit on a regular basis. They've gotten much more organized. You know, they're really doing it. I think a few years back, the ministers mostly ignored faith in action. They sort of tolerated it. It happened kind of unseen and unsung. And now it's right out there. It's getting a lot of attention. It's getting a lot of publicity. It's getting a lot more focused. And I see that as really positive compared to the old days." – Focus group participant

The Church has furthered its commitment to racial justice by creating a Racial Justice Leadership Team to provide guidance for the Church's racial justice work. According to comments from the members of the Board of Trustees and Church's website, the team helps to streamline the Church's priority areas and action steps towards greater racial justice. They use racial justice principles – "worship, Religious Education, partnerships, new member classes, communications, web presence, etc." to inform every aspect of the Church's "faith community."⁴ The most significant example of how racial justice lens is applied at the Church is using "Choice Points to Advance Equity" developed by Terry Keleher, in everyday decision-making to "ensure equity is at the forefront of the planning and implementation process."⁵

⁴ <http://firstuniversalistchurch.org/racial-justice-leadership-team/>

⁵ Terry Keleher, Race Forward: The Center for Racial Justice Innovation.

Impact on Community

Building Relationships & Partnerships

As a result of the Church's focus on racial justice, participants shared that more intentional efforts and policies had been put in place that guided the establishment of the Church's partnerships with the external community. According to participants, the outwardly stated focus on racial justice when building partnerships had helped in deepening the Church's relationships and gaining trust and support from the community. They added that the Church focused on maintaining equal partnerships rather than going out to the community as "saviors" or experts trying to solve others' problems. Since its intentional work on racial justice began, participants reported that the Church had built several trusting relationships with the wider Universalist Unitarian networks, other religious institutions, social service and community based organizations. They said that the Church had also been providing its space to community members and organizations to fulfill their respective goals that advanced racial justice and equity.

"We've moved into a mode where it's conscious partnerships with different organizations. So with Beacon with housing, or Habitat, or Emerge, that we are taking this position of partner rather than leader. And it's affecting also who we choose to be in partnership with in the community. Its part of the application process for becoming a partner with the church is you have to look through, how is racial justice woven through the mission of the organization that we're going to partner with. What are the actual outcomes of the work that they're doing? So there's – it's like a check there to make sure that we're doing that work. And I know that, for a long time now, but more intentionally, it seems like our foundation, which gives grants, is also using what I think of as a racial justice lens to help guide their grant-making, so what impacts they're making in the community, where those dollars are going. And we're putting in place a vendor policy that is requiring us to break old habits of just going to the same people or organizations we've always gone to for services, but to kind of diversify the pool of people we're hiring and contracting with." – Focus group participant

"[Senior leadership] is building partnerships. And we're making it known that our congregation is on – it stands on the side of love. We stand on the side of justice. And that, I don't think, was something that was happening in the past. It's like building a dialogue between the Native community and the issue around Lake Calhoun and the possible name change and stuff. And so it's a real dialogue. So I think its building relationships with the community on an equal basis." – Focus group participant

"A group of Dakota people have met in this space who are interested in restoring the name of Lake Calhoun. That nation, that group of people, was allowed and invited to come in and use the space and not have it be sort of appropriated or taken over, you know, by the white people that own this space and that they were allowed to sort of exist in this space, which is actually right next to, or almost on top of one of their holy sites. So – and the fact that this nation feels comfortable actually coming out and telling their story to us, which is a big, big deal. I mean, I think I used term "coming out" kind of deliberately that way. Because it's a real act of courage and trust. A leap of faith, if you will. And so the fact that we were giving this space, and then simply, I think, letting them sort of have control over the room and control over the space ...They designed the whole thing. And we were participants. We didn't lead it. We didn't tell them how to do it. We worked with them, and [senior minister] worked with them. But it was their traditions that permeated the whole experience. It was – it was just transformative." – Focus group participant

Participants shared that as part of the racial justice work, the Church has an impact in the community by advocating directly on matters of racial justice, involving a largely white staff and congregation politically, to build and expand on the movement against systemic racism and oppression.

“There’s also an advocacy group that’s doing the 15 Now program that goes to the legislature. Besides the 15 Now, we also have advocacy with Beacon against homelessness. And we are trying to have advocacy pieces in all the partnerships. So we’re recognizing that that’s really crucial.” – Focus group participant

“I think it [the community] benefits because it’s not just communities of color or indigenous communities doing the work on their own. So now we see large groves of white folks, through First UU, stepping up and doing what they need to do. So for example, when the cop was not charged for shooting Jamar Clark, there was a group of white allies that did a protest at the Twins stadium. And so that’s the kind of thing that I think is helping this movement. Because I think that there’s some power when people in privilege are trying to, like, dismantle oppression. Because when the marginalized are talking about it – so when women are talking sexism or LGBT folks are talking about homophobia...I’ve even had people say to me, “There they go again.” I think people listen more because they’ve got the power to be heard. I don’t think that’s right, but I think it does.” – Focus group participant

Perceptions of Gaps and Tensions in the Church’s Racial Justice Work

Participants in online surveys, focus groups and listening sessions shared their perceptions of tensions within the Church’s racial justice work. Some had issues with the way the efforts were introduced, the approach in undertaking racial justice activities and trainings, the perceived lack of goals and structure that guided their work, the “monocular” vision of the racial justice lens, communication and differing levels of knowledge and experience with racial justice among Church congregants. They also noted a few unintended consequences of implementing the racial justice work. Finally, survey participants also noted specific barriers that kept them from participating dedicatedly in the Church’s racial justice work.

Approach

Many participants in both focus groups and online surveys noted that they had particular issues with the Church’s approach in introducing and implementing its racial justice work. Participants reported not being able to connect well with what they perceived as a more militant Black Lives Matter movement and their tactics; they believed the approach was top-down, that it was not a “grassroots initiative” that fully represented the congregation’s wishes; and they felt some of the language and activities were polarizing and shared general comments about how they thought the approach was not well-implemented. Some had doubts about whether the Church’s efforts were sustainable and whether they could affect lasting change. Among participants who were people of color, a few mentioned that they did not engage enough with the Church’s racial justice work because they experienced “representation fatigue.”

Black Lives Matter (BLM)

“I wish that the racial justice issue could be more broadly addressed - as it impacts all races. I certainly understand the unique history in our country with African Americans and slavery - racism has a particularly strong impact on this community. However, I wish there was less emphasis on Black Lives

Matter. I don't agree with a lot of their tactics and in our church that is taboo to say. My extended family is very diverse. Many local African American leaders also don't support many of the tactics of BLM. I don't think their approach is the most effective way to bring about change. I am feeling pushed away by my church based on the approach to racial justice. I am very liberal but I think that some liberals, and some people at our church, can be very judgmental in their approach. This makes me sad as I understand a lot about racial justice and white privilege - and I care deeply about the issues. It is a very strange feeling for me to be part of a community where I feel as though I cannot speak up on this issue, or I will be judged. In every other community I'm involved in, I am seen as an advocate for racial justice. My primary concern is that we have focused for so long on this one issue that other important issues are not getting the attention they need.” – Focus group participant

“And for all the education and publicity that’s happened as a result of the – of the Black Lives Matter work, it’s been largely – it’s been largely focused on police violence. And we’ve done some things with housing. But to – but to really address the inequities that we have, we have to be more broadly connected.” – Focus group participant

“And there’s a disconnect for people who, for decades, have seen themselves as on the fore of racial justice and activism who are saying, like, I have lived this, and you’re not – I feel like my experience and my voice aren’t being heard. But the language is different. We’re in a different time. So, like, the tactics of Black Lives Matter....There’s a whole contingent of folks here for whom that is a dividing point. And I feel like that’s a chasm that there are elements of that divide that can be bridged through how we are in conversation with each other.” – Focus group participant

“I don't like the tactics of some Black Lives Matter activists - they alienate too many people and come across as not strategic. I would rather work on initiatives supported by leaders I trust and respect such as Keith Ellison or Alan Page, but our church is not doing that.” – Online survey participant

Top-Down/non-Democratic

“...the perception is, among this group, is that [senior minister] as a leader has not been inclusive of the perspectives of the organization. The fact that he is losing people. And the perception is that he is dismissing it and it’s okay. It’s – well, that bothers me. You know, if he said –‘my gosh, I hate to lose a person. But it might happen, but I’m going to make all efforts to retain them. And if they decide to go, that’s okay, at some point.’ But the perception is, ‘well, I hate to lose them. They’re just not on the bus.’” – Focus group participant

“It sounds to me more like the governance model has been problematic more than any particular content.” – Focus group participant

“I think that is so core to UU – or Unitarian Universalism. To empower people to do their work, not only at church, but in the world. And also to find your own path within community. And it feels that we have set the path – a Heather Hackman path, that that’s been decided for us rather than our own exploration.” – Focus group participant

“I feel like it's being shoved down my throat.” – Online survey participant

“My experience was kind of a turn off. A little too sanctimonious.” – Online survey participant

“From what I’ve observed with that, I’ve seen people use the top-down excuse a lot when it’s actually

just that they're uncomfortable with the work. Like, they can't face confronting their own privilege. And I've seen them use it as an excuse that this didn't come from the congregation when really that's not the heart of the problem that they've having." – Focus group participant

Polarizing

"I've heard from some people that they have found the church's RJ trainings polarizing in a way that other RJ trainings are not." – Online survey participant

"The efforts are excessive, one dimensional and exclude other races. They also start with placing blame on white society with no regard or acceptance of responsibility for cultural norms that lead to violence, death, or lack of education." – Online survey participant

Superficial

"And then I have to say that I don't like inviting these outside speakers and musicians because it feels like tokenism. But look at the fact that when any person of color speaks or sings or plays music or does – you know, spoken word, we applaud. It's the tokenism... 'we're so happy you're here because we're so white. We're going to applaud you so we feel better.' I'm uncomfortable with tokenism and with clapping when it doesn't feel sincere." – Focus group participant

"But that's [trainings], giving them fish. It's not teaching people to fish. And I have just been very frustrated that we're not invited into action that changes the system." – Focus group participant

"[B]eing that political junkie and thinking that's where all the change comes from is policy, it's difficult. Because we need to educate ourselves, and these issues are not simple. They're very complex. We as Unitarians can sit around and talk about stuff until we're dead. But I just feel like we need to be politically active. We need to be advocating in effective ways." – Focus group participant

Lack of Goal & Structure

Participants in both focus groups and survey responses highlighted the lack of an overarching goals and structure that guided the Church's racial justice work. The comments shared by members of the congregation indicated that they were passionate and that they cared about racial justice, yet they reported feeling that they did not have specific guidelines that were "action-oriented." They participated in several of the Church's trainings, workshops, and other activities, yet they were puzzled how all of them fit together and wondered if there were any concrete actions that may have been missing in the Church's efforts. Many also noted that they wished that the Church would do a better job at explaining how racial justice intersected with other socio-economic-political issues, which in their opinion would ultimately strengthen the Church's overall vision for racial justice. A few staff members also added that much of the Church's efforts around racial justice was fragmented –and they wondered if the fragmentation was really was only a reflection of the Church's overall culture of operating.

"I think this [racial justice work] is great, and we understand that it's not a flavor-of-the-month kind of thing and then we're going to finish, then we're going to do something else. What is the vision for how we keep moving forward. The work will never be completely done, but, you know, the fogginess that people have is, why are we doing this ...And is there a goal and what does it look like? What does it look like when we actually are successful with the vision that we have? That's what's making, I think, people a little confused or ...And we're an outcome-driven congregation. We have perfectionist tendencies. We

like to get crap done. We are action-focused. So there's that part of me that is, what's the action plan? Why isn't there one?" – Focus group participant

"I don't know how much it's infiltrating the whole system. And I think there's individuals, like [trustee] and soon to be [member], and probably some other people on the board, who are thinking about it. But it's not institutionalized. So I wonder if that's what's causing the fragmentation? Because it feels like, well, here's a movie...Here's a da da da, but it's not part of the system." – Focus group participant

"My observation is that, at this time each year, the racial justice leadership team has kind of said, what are we doing, and to whom are we accountable? And I do think that the way that our racial justice leadership and work has grown has been very organic. And we've worked really hard to not get ahead of ourselves, but to kind of grow in an organic way. But I think some of the tendrils are kind of going in different directions, and it doesn't feel – at least to me, trying to kind of navigate our leadership around racial justice, it's not clear where things land and who is responsible for what." – Focus group participant

I think we have some of those goals or outcomes out there. But they're from different sources. So it is confusing to me. I'm, like, okay, so we did this racial justice mapping exercise, like, two years ago now. That said we need to focus on these things. And these are the outcomes we want. But then nobody owned it. In terms of, how is that going to happen, and which goals are we working on first. So the staff actually kind of picked it up and just said, well, we'll just start working on all of these. And started. And we've made some really good progress. But it's not – it's, like, one thing and then there's [the next step]." – Focus group participant

Communication

In both focus groups and open ended survey responses, members of the congregation reported either experiencing or observing communication as one of the biggest barriers to participating in the Church's racial justice work. A few participants noted that communication was an issue because the messaging and framing of the problems around racial inequities was unclear or did not resonate well with them. They also shared that they found very few opportunities at the Church to discuss and share ideas before important decisions were made, or even when they did share their opinions and ideas, they were not well-respected or acknowledged by senior leadership. Additionally, they reported wondering if the Church's work could lead to systemic changes if it did not invest in building relationships based on strong communication, both within and beyond the Church's walls.

"The overlying problems with this church and so many aspects of the church is communication. There's just not enough room for conversation to make understanding about why we're doing what we're doing." – Online survey participant

"If our church were to acknowledge that the black community has some responsibility in addressing some of these issues, then we would more likely participate in the church's racial justice initiatives. Because as of right now, all we know how to do is make excuses for them and point our finger at our fellow white man (and woman)." – Online survey participant

"I didn't feel...that there was a way to be open about connecting with other people who might be frustrated also. And I didn't know where to go with my frustrated and who that is." – Focus group participant

“You know, they’re [not] listening. There’s a lot more resistance to what’s occurring than I think it’s understood.” – Focus group participant

Single Narrow Focus

A few long-term members of the Church who participated in focus groups considered applying the racial justice lens as “too narrow,” “overbearing” and reported concerns with having a “monocular vision.” They said that the racial justice trainings led by Heather Hackman were perceived to have some essential drawbacks that inhibited some participants from fully engaging with the contents of the training. They commented on the narrow focus as well as the facilitation style that did not allow or encourage multiple perspectives to surface. Some participants also compared those sessions with other racial justice/equity trainings they had taken elsewhere and did not believe the one at the Church was as effective.

“Does that mean we can only talk about the environment from the standpoint of black neighborhoods are more polluted than white neighborhoods, so therefore we need to work on local pollution issues, or can we be talking about climate change, which is less – which might have to do with saving species and everybody’s grandchildren and not just – the racial justice lens was limiting ...But to say that the only environmental work that is going to be sanctioned by the church is something that directly relates to racial justice ...very top-down thing.” – Focus group participant

“[O]f course I can’t speak for my whole community, but the first thing I thought of is, like, often Natives are left out of the dialogue. We are a forgotten part. You know, and they’ll say, when we – you know, what does – you know, think of all the black men in jail. And it’s, like, well, our people have the highest rate of incarceration. And the disenfranchisement of the people from their own lands. I think that – although equity is a very worthy goal, I think, Natives approach that somewhat differently. It’s, like, we don’t want to be equal within the system. We want to be equal in our own system. Because this is not our system. It’s not a system we buy into nor want for the people.” – Focus group participant

“I went through the 24-hour thing with Heather Hackman [but] I liked the [...other training program outside the Church] better than the one here. I felt like I got more out of it. ... [E]ven though I think the trainers had the same kinds of goals in mind. Well, first of all, it [other training program outside the Church] was broader. So there were – there were sessions on gender and GLBT and disability and – you know, so all kinds of things. But it also was a more open interactive thing where – we’d be sitting around in tables, and we’d have kind of small group discussions. And the leaders would [address] people if they said something...but they did it in a much less confrontational way than Heather did. People would say this and this and this, and they wouldn’t say, that’s the wrong answer, that’s the right answer. And so the discussion was more free and open. And with Heather, I felt like she had this very tightly woven web of how she thought of everything. Like, the whole concept of the universe of racial justice and how everything fit together. And if you asked a question and just kind of plucked at one of those strings, it got a reaction from her that made you not want to ask any more questions.” – Focus group participant

In both focus groups and online survey responses, participants noted their concerns saying that the Church was too heavily focused on a single issue – racial justice. Many applauded and acknowledged the importance of racial justice; however, they reported wanting to have other avenues at the Church where they could focus on other issues of interest, besides racial justice.

“I’ve always heard, as long as I’ve been Unitarian Universalist, oh, but if we could all get behind one thing, think how much we could accomplish. Well, the thing is, we all have our own pet passions. And we’re not all going to get fully behind one thing. We can be supportive from the edges while we’re out

there cheerleading for our pet justice issue. You I don't like this lock-step focus...monocular vision is limiting. If we're only looking through one lens, we are missing a bigger picture. Binocular vision is much more balanced. And, you know, the spider who has a thousand [chuckles] – you know, has the best vision of all. I'd rather us be living in spidery vision.” – Focus group participant

“Does it have to be 100% of the time? It's just too exclusionary.” – Online survey participant

“I learned a lot at the beginning but now things have gotten repetitive and there are diminishing returns for me when I go to church. I got it, I get it, I am making a difference where I am able. There is much more to do but the church's work is not focused in a way that helps me much in my day to day racial justice efforts. I also am very interested in other issues like the environment and voting rights and these concerns seem to be barely on the church's radar these days.” – Online survey participant

In the online survey, members of the congregation rated various socio-cultural issues on their level of importance on a four-point scale. Most congregants believed all issues to be of some importance. The greatest percentage of participants deemed “economics,” “education,” “environment” and “housing” as “very important” issues. Compared to these issues, about 70 percent of the respondents noted that “race” was a “very important” issue but it still ranked slightly lower. Only a few participants mentioned that “environment” and “housing” were “not very important.” 1 percent of the respondents noted “race” as “not important at all”.

Table 4. How important are each of the following socio-cultural issues? [N = 86]

Issues	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not very Important	Not at all Important
Criminal Justice	66%	30%	3%	0%
Disability	52%	42%	6%	0%
Economics (Poverty, Unemployment)	90%	10%	0%	0%
Education	85%	15%	0%	0%
Environment	79%	17%	3%	0%
Gender	50%	44%	6%	0%
Health	67%	29%	3%	0%
Housing	78%	21%	1%	0%
Racial Justice	70%	26%	3%	1%
Sexual Orientation	52%	48%	1%	0%

Feelings of Alienation and Disrespect

A few members of the congregation also mentioned in focus groups and the online surveys that the Church’s racial justice work and approach did not respect differing levels of knowledge and experience with racial justice among congregants, which in their opinion hindered them from fully engaging in the ongoing efforts. Some

participants displayed resentment arguing that the Church disregarded some older members’ past experiences with the Civil Rights movement.

“Many people and the ministers who are involved in the BLM movement make those of us who are not involved feel that we don't understand our white privilege, and that we aren't concerned with racial justice. And that's not true. I care deeply and have worked on these issues for many years.” – Focus group participant

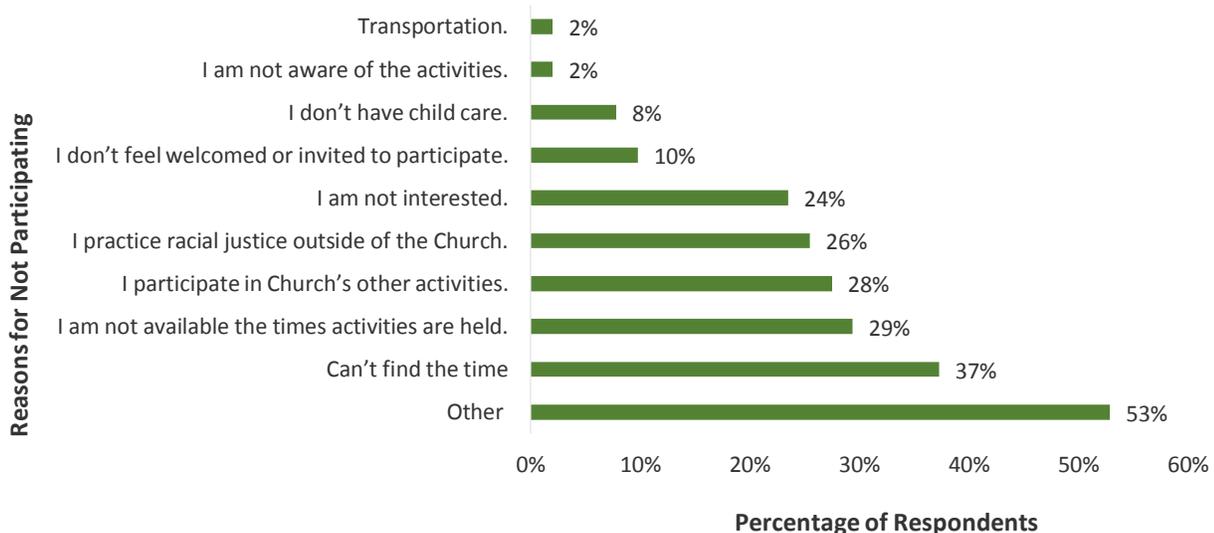
“Sometimes it feels like our Church is myopic in “how” it emphasizes racial justice. There is inadequate respect for how much knowledge and experience many members already bring to these issues. Similarly, respect for other aspects of social justice (informed by one’s personal passions for social change/social justice) is disregarded or at least, not acknowledged. Sometimes “less is more” is a good axiom that should be considered so as not to alienate those of us who have and continue to work for racial equity in our communities and in public policies and practices.” – Online survey participant

“I feel a sense of self-righteousness the church has. I feel it is most concerned about its “image” of a racial justice church, than it is in deepening the member's understanding. We're very vested in being the “good” church.” – Online survey participant

Barriers to Participation in the Church’s Racial Justice Work

In the online survey, participants had the option to pick more than one reason for not participating in the church’s racial justice work. Among the pre-listed reasons, time was the biggest issue (37%) that kept congregants from participating. Among other reasons noted, 28% of the congregants did not participate in racial justice work because they participated in the Church’s other activities; 25% participated in racial justice work outside the Church, and 24% expressed that they were not interested in the Church’s racial justice work. About 53% of the participants who responded to the question stated “other” reasons for not attending the Church’s racial justice work.

Figure 5. What is keeping you from participating in the Church’s racial justice focused work? [N= 51]



An open-ended follow-up question was included where they were asked to elaborate on the “other” reasons for not participating in the Church’s racial justice work which have already been addressed in this section. These issues included: *lack of goal and structure of the racial justice work, inadequate or improper communication, approach of racial justice efforts, and the lack of respect for existing knowledge and experience about racial justice among Church congregants and staff members.*

Unintended Consequence

While many participants shared mostly positive personal experiences with the Church’s racial justice efforts, a few participants noted that the Church’s recent focus on racial justice negatively affected them. Participants in both focus group discussions and through responses to the open-ended questions in the online survey highlighted some examples in which the Church’s racial justice work lowered their connection with the Church.

“I feel like the church is obsessed with racial justice. While it is fine for them to pursue this goal (it is a needed and good thing) it should be recognized that we are a church and not a community organizing organization. I come to church for spiritual enlightenment and a sense of community. I believe our approach to racial justice should be an option for those for whom it is important, but not the overall driver of the church.” – Online survey participant

“Many of us are out doing social justice work all the time. I don’t need to come to Sunday service to be shamed. I don’t need to be told that I have white privilege. I know that. I’ve worked with it. I work with it all the time... I get that if he wants to lay down on 35W, I support this. We wanted a social justice leader. But I don’t need to hear it every single Sunday from the pulpit that he’s doing these things. People aren’t feeling spiritually renewed.” – Focus group participant

Participant Recommendations

Members of the congregation, who participated in focus groups, listening sessions, and the online surveys shared several practical recommendations to help strengthen the Church’s ongoing racial justice efforts. The ideas and suggestions that surfaced addressed some of the key barriers that participants recognized that the Church was facing in implementing racial justice work. Congregation members recommended that the Church needed to solidify its racial justice goals and plan –the approach for implementing and communicating with members about its work. They noted that strengthening relationships with key partners was critical to the Church’s success. Additionally, they highlighted the need to frame racial justice as an issue that cut across all social justice issues –to communicate particularly with members, who are currently dissatisfied or disgruntled with the Church’s racial justice focus, the intersectionality of racial justice with other issues such as housing, environment, economics and poverty, education, criminal justice and so forth. Finally, participants in the listening sessions provided specific recommendations to refine the Church’s four visionary goals to explicitly name racial justice in its goals so as to better reflect the relatively recent racial justice focus and efforts. All these efforts, in the participants’ opinion would help to sustain the current efforts.

Communication & Approach

“I’ve found a lot of value in my racial justice circle - held outside of the usual circle process. I’d like that dialogue-based style to be available to more people.” – Online survey participant

“Need to increase awareness of the opportunities to volunteer and for social action.” – Online survey participant

“I think that one of the challenges of this work is that it can feel very distant - academic, political. But it is personal. Racism hurts all of us, and I don't think that our mostly white congregation connects fully with that idea. Perhaps listening sessions, where people tell their life (or religious) stories from the perspective of their race, or other opportunities to connect with one another on a personal level about how racism has hurt us would be a great way to go. There is also a lot we could do about how our protestant patterns reinforce racism and separate ourselves from one another. Working on ways to break down those barriers would be great.” – Online survey participant

“A lot of the justice work we're doing is long-term. It's not going to be an easy win. We're in it for the long haul. And the people who are fighting that fight need sustenance. And I think maybe that's a piece that's missing is that we need some of that healing and support and some strategies from the pulpit about how to keep from getting discouraged. How to – how to really keep energized and enthused and inspired in doing this work. And I would urge [senior minister] to really make sure that some of that is coming out all the time.” – Focus group participant

Teaching & Learning

“[T]racking and connecting the dots for people – for the ones who are having difficulty seeing how it connects. And so it has to be strong communication. And you have to repeat it over and over. And then give all the examples, about how we're impacting the church or the larger community. But it has to be a lot – consistently doing that over and over. And that spiritual piece a lot of people are asking about – well, I come here to be spiritually [fed]. You got to make that connection about, how is racial justice – has a spiritual component. So I think we have to be more transparent and tell people. If they don't know it – what they don't – they can't see it.” – Focus group participant

“It might help the community to hear from members of the people of color group just how much this work has meant to them.” – Focus group participant

“In this church, I've listened to things that didn't really concern me in this way. We've talked a lot about LGBT things. But I'm not LGBT. But – so I still listen, right? Because they're my community members, and their experience is important to me. And I think we should remind the community, you have to hear lots of different things even if it isn't your [story]. You never know what you're going to learn until you've sat through it...Sometimes you got to take your medicine. It's maybe not what you like, but it heals you.” – Focus group participant

“You know, and it's, like – because racism – prejudice, it was [taught]. So [racial justice] has to be taught too.” – Focus group participant

“Can we find a life to impact? Can we find people who live the discrimination to teach about it? Can we gather those folks and ask them what would help?” – Online survey participant

“Incorporate diverse voices in leadership, worship planning and delivery, youth education.” – Online survey participant

Taking Serious Action

“It's time for audacious action -- not just demonstrating -- but working in the trenches of mentoring young children and teens into jobs and stability and personal confidence.” – Online survey participant

“And I wonder if there is an opportunity to be more intentional about bringing different generational voices into conversation and learning.” – Focus group participant

“I’ve kind of come to this realization that the disconnect that I have is a lot of what happens in the program side of things. And I guess that ultimately comes down to communication. I know we do a lot to communicate. And so part of that’s too some personal ownership as well – reading the publications. Pay attention at staff meetings.” – Focus group participant

Community Partnerships

All of the suggestions about strengthening the Church’s community partnerships came from survey responses:

“People in the church need to build more personal relationships with communities, other Churches, and people of color to really see how this plays out in their lives.”

“May not be direct racial justice action, but it could provide a framework for disaffected POC to explore the UU faith and traditions and (eventually) diversify our region --invite representatives from BLM, Color Of Change, and other activist organizations to continue to visit, speak, teach, etc. --post statements and responses to the most common white (and largely liberal) obstacles to working on racial justice on our website, walls, bulletin: 'are there rules in place that provide for us to do this work,' and 'there is other equally/more important work to be done (climate, environment, financial equity, housing)' --Ask and answer why Racial Justice now, get us to practice applying RJ lenses to all we do (What does joining/supporting a solar garden look like through an RJ lens? What else can we do?)--reinforce that it is not RJ at the exclusion of all else, but infused in all we do (YCE, AUW, SolarGarden, Habitat for Humanity, etc.).”

“Engage more people of color to come to our church. I think that there is a general misunderstanding of what UU is, in itself. I believe that might be a barrier for folks to come visit us, to be involved in our community, and the take part in the change that we are working towards regarding racial disparity.”

“Invite some speakers who offer different perspectives and analyses -- for example, people from local media or universities.”

“I’d like to see more organized political action. I think the church can be a powerful voice to legislators and other political leaders.”

Priority of Issues and Intersectionality

Participants in the online survey were asked to rank several issues in order of priority. “Economics,” “environment,” and “housing” ranked among top ranked issues of priority for the Church. 58% said race had to be a “high priority” for the Church while 8% noted it should be of “low priority”. Based on the results generated, the following table highlights in bold, the ranking for each issue:

Table 6. In your opinion, how much of a priority do you think they should be for the church? [N=86]

Issues	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Criminal Justice	47%	40%	14%
Disability	20%	56%	24%
Economics (Poverty, Unemployment)	77%	23%	0%
Education	56%	34%	10%
Environment	66%	30%	3%
Gender	26%	63%	12%
Health	38%	50%	12%
Housing	66%	31%	2%
Race	58%	34%	8%
Sexual Orientation	34%	59%	7%

While many participants in the online survey were willing to rank issues for the Church based on the level of priority, many others indicated frustration in presenting these issues as independent of one another. They and several participants in focus group sessions highlighted the need to acknowledge the intersectionality of the issues – how all of the issues listed were inter-connected and how race particularly cut across all other issues.

“And so people were strong feminists, feeling like, well, how come we’re not talking about feminism. Oh, well, if you look at, within feminism, like, how does that show up for women of color or for poor women? Or, like, environmental justice, well, who you do you think is getting most of the pollution in their neighborhoods? Oh, well, it turns out its poor folks of color. They’re not seeing the complexity of it. It’s, like, well, here’s race, here’s gender, here’s intersectionality.” – Focus group participant

“If racial justice gets framed up alongside our other social justice partnerships and commitments, it will die. It will succumb to the pressures of the dominant culture. So showing how important it is that racial justice intersects with all other aspects of our social justice work.” – Focus group participant

“Combining the priorities in order to address the larger issues of inequity. While each of the above [social justice issues] are important, they are more effectively addressed when they can be combined where appropriate.” – Online survey participant

Sustainability

Participants in focus groups and surveys were asked how the Church could sustain its racial justice work. They responded in following ways:

“Preaching is repetitive and not inspiring. It names the problem again and again. It is too simplistic. Living into a racially just world is very very complicated - we need help and inspiration for the living - not a repeated statement that the problem exists. Worship is not fulfilling- it feels like being hit in the head with the problem - and the solutions are too theoretical. How do we respond when an African American church member is mistaken for the church janitor when he is volunteering in the kitchen? How do we respond to that hurt and heal it? How do we deal with our children and what they are learning at school? Lauren's hands on work with youth at racial justice camp and during difficult racially charged issues with kids has been the MOST helpful. We need more support like that.” – Online survey participant

“Weaving it into the fabric of the church is what’s going to eventually have people come around. Soon they start practicing it. Well, it just becomes part of the culture of the church, and they go to this church, and it becomes a part of their reality too. But at the same time, we also have to have the element of faith, like eventually if we keep doing the right thing, eventually, things will come around.”

“Be cognizant of the deep pain and work on healing.” – Focus group participant

“And I’ve been putting a lot of time into making sure our internal processes, structures, and policies are consistent with our values.” – Focus group participant

Visionary Goals

Members of the congregation had an opportunity to comment specifically on the Church’s four Visionary Goals during the listening sessions, although a few participants in both focus groups discussions and online surveys also shared some of their ideas related to the visionary goals.

“One question I have, the strategic vision, is there some way that [the Church] can talk to people about, to what extent has this vision been achieved? Or what kinds of things are we doing with social justice to do this? And then people can start naming things? And then from naming things, then, they can see, where do we need to strengthen.” – Focus group participant

The following are the recommendations shared during the listening session:

Changes to Visionary Goal I (changes have been bolded)

“We, the people of First Universalist Church, grow in our UU faith: we **strive** to live out our values and experience worship, spiritual practices, and rituals that challenge, comfort, celebrate, and heal.”

Related Objectives

1.2. **Encourage** growth in worship and religious education

Changes to Visionary Goal II (changes have been bolded)

Related Objectives

3.2. Engage **all ages** as an integral part of First Universalist faith formation activities

2.3. Embrace work for **racial and social justice** as a central faith formation experience and increase engagement with **diverse** communities outside our walls

Changes to Visionary Goal III (changes have been bolded)

Related Objectives

3.2. Build on and expand **on a variety** of small group experiences

3.4. Deepen our **commitment** for **justice**

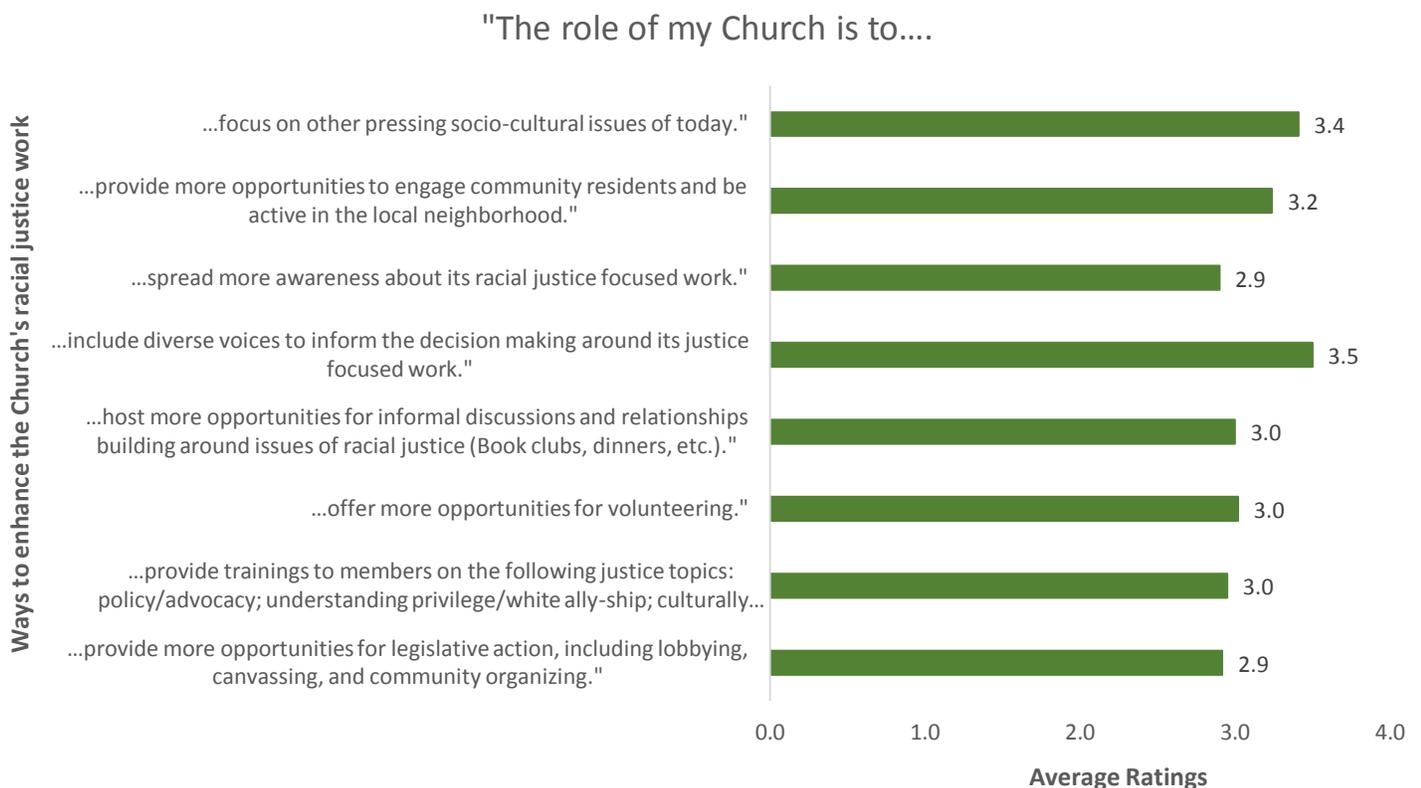
Changes to Visionary Goal IV (changes have been bolded)

Related Objectives

- 4.1. Be an effective, loving force for **Faithful Action** work in our community
- 4.4. Enhance Faithful Action effectiveness through partnerships with **organizations with shared values of justice**
- 4.5. Increase **organizational** support of **Faithful Action** work

Congregation members who completed the survey shared what they viewed as the appropriate role of the Church in strengthening its racial justice work. They reported whether they “strongly agree[d],” “agree[d],” “disagree[d]” or “strongly disagree[d]” with the eight listed statements. The average ratings (on a four point scale) for each statement is presented in the figure below. 64% of the respondents strongly agreed that the Church’s role was to “include diverse voices to inform the decision making around its justice focused work” and only about 5% strongly disagreed with this statement. Among the different ways in which the Church would further strengthen its racial justice work, “provid[ing] more opportunities for legislative action, including lobbying, canvassing, and community organizing” had the lowest rating; however, 29% still strongly agreed and only about 7% disagreed with the statement.

Figure 6. Average ratings (on a four point scale) for the question: Below are a few ways in which the Church could enhance their racial justice focused work. Do you agree or disagree? [N=86]



OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Any major systems change work requires change at a personal or individual level, the policies and practices within the organization, as well as external outreach and impact into the community. The First Universalist Church of Minneapolis has made major strides in their racial justice work across all levels of change as evidenced by the following:

- Over 70% of survey respondents have participated in the church's racial justice training activities; 29% participated in the intensive 24-hour training.
- A Racial Justice Leadership Team has been created.
- Choice Points for Equity have been incorporated into decision-making processes.
- Both religious education and the church services intentionally and regularly address racial justice.
- The Racial Justice Resolution was passed in May, 2015.
- 85% of survey respondents believe the church's racial justice work has benefitted the community, 75% believe it has had a positive impact on the Church, and 65% feel this has benefited them personally.

Further, comments from parishioners indicate substantial shifts and growth, again at all three levels.

Several specific recommendations have been made that will help support this process of change, including:

- Articulate the theory of change, the goals and strategies, and indicators of success.
- Find safe avenues for open, non-judgmental discussion about the racial justice work.
- Desired topics for discussion include the multiple ways people can be involved, the cross-cutting intersectionality of this complex work, and ways to support each other in this journey.
- Provide the infrastructure for effective communication about racial justice related activities and opportunities both within and outside the church.

And, as with any long-term, major systems change work, there will be tension and discomfort during the change process. This was evident in our discussions with church members. On the one hand there were members who celebrated the church's activism and involvement in Black Lives Matter and felt the church should be more politically and socially involved in community affairs. Others felt the racial justice work was too focused on just African Americans at the expense of other racial ethnic groups (e.g., Native American, Hispanic) or other social justice issues. Still others felt judged if their approach to racial justice did not include the Black Lives Matter movement.

The passion of church members toward this issue was very high; focus group and listening session participants demonstrated substantial joy, excitement, anger, sadness, and fear. The tensions between the concerns of members and friends within the church who have differing approaches to racial justice were palpable. Thus, the overarching recommendation that arises from our work with First Universalist Church of Minneapolis is the need for to find common ground to unify the congregation. This might involve deep listening and mutual appreciation, possibly through circles or other spaces where voices and experiences could be heard. We recommend devising a process of deep listening and engagement that is inclusive of the diversity of approaches to this complex work.

APPENDICES

Focus Group Protocol

Welcome and Introductions

FACILITATOR: Hello, everyone! I am Razeena Shrestha/ Katie Fogel and I'm from Rainbow Research. We are a small nonprofit based in Minneapolis and we specialize in applied research and evaluation. We work closely with communities and organizations to improve the effectiveness of socially concerned organizations and hope to promote greater social justice through our work.

We have been contracted by the First Universalist Church's Board of Trustees to listen to what you have to say about the Church's racial justice work that has been implemented for the past few years and also learn about ways to strengthen its efforts. We also want to learn about how these efforts have affected you personally, how it's affected the Church and the larger community. Our goal is to ultimately get your input so the Church can refresh its visionary goals and work strategically to be known as a faith community that incorporates racial justice through every aspect of church life, both internal and external.

We are doing a series of data collection through these targeted focus groups, listening sessions, and surveys. We will be summarizing your comments and suggestions into a report that will be shared with the Board of Trustees. The report will not contain names and will maintain anonymity. Therefore, as you share your opinions today, please be as open and honest as you feel comfortable. It is extremely important to this process that we gain authentic perspectives.

Before we begin, I would like to ask: Does anyone here object to us recording our discussion? Only staff at Rainbow Research working on this project will have access to the recording or my notes.

Our discussion today should take approximately 60 minutes.

Lastly, we encourage you to interact and talk directly to each other and contribute to a free flowing discussion. To that end, feel free to respond to each other's comments. If someone says something of interest, or if you have had a similar or different experience, please chime in but please be respectful of one another. And then, if you have a cell phone, turn it off or set it to vibrate.

Do you have any questions? Let's begin.

Questions

1. ICE BREAKER:
 - a. Share your name and 3 words or phrases that come to mind when you think about racial justice.

Before we move on to the Church's racial justice work, we want to share a working definition of racial justice for today's conversation. It's been pulled from the Center for Assessment and Policy Development. Just to clarify, this is not the official definition of the Church.

Racial justice is defined as the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.

[SOURCE: *Center for Assessment and Policy Development. [Catalytic Change: Lessons Learned from the Racial Justice Grant making Assessment](#) Report, Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Justice and Applied Research Center, 2009.]*

2. Share some examples of racial justice work that you have been involved in or are aware of at the Church or outside the Church. [What has resonated with you in the past and at present (you could have either been directly a part of it or not)?]

[Remind focus group participants of the different ways in which the Church has infused racial justice through its activities and events.]

Many of you may already be aware and familiar with the Church’s efforts to deepen racial justice for the past three years. As a reminder, these are some racial justice oriented activities at the Church:

- ❖ 90 minute Heather Hackman Sunday training
- ❖ 4 hour racial justice training
- ❖ 24 hour intensive Heather Hackman training
- ❖ Train-the-Trainer racial justice training
- ❖ Racial justice circle
- ❖ Racial justice speaker
- ❖ Racial justice book/film discussion

3. How have the Church’s focus on racial justice and its related activities and events affected...
 - a. You?
 - b. The Church?
 - i. To what extent and in what ways has it re-aligned and changed the internal and external ministry of the church to date?
 - ii. Our listening session is where we ask members of the Congregation to specifically critique the visionary goals. But, we could definitely dive in for a bit about whether or not you think the Church’s current racial justice work is reflected in the goal statements and the objectives.

Here are the Church’s visionary goals:

1. “We, the people of First Universalist Church, grow in our UU faith: we are equipped to live out our values and experience worship, spiritual practices, and rituals that challenge, comfort, celebrate, and heal.”
2. “First Universalist Church is a home for ageless wisdom. People of all ages find opportunities to engage in an intellectual and spiritual search for deeper meaning and understanding in the UU tradition, both as individuals and in community. We know our roots, find our wings, and apply our knowledge and wisdom to all our endeavors.”
3. “First Universalist Church is an intergenerational community of mutual caring and support. We build this community by actively welcoming all and encouraging each to discover, develop and share their gifts.”
4. “The people of First Universalist Church work to build a just, loving and sustainable world. We are a visible, influential voice, and we act to shape the larger community into a more just and equitable society.”

- iii. When you look at these statements, do you feel that the racial justice work is reflected in the goals? [Probe: Do they need to be modified in any way? Do they need to be more explicit? Do you have additional suggestions?]
 - c. Your community?
4. Do you believe the Church is adequately addressing racial justice through its work? Why/Why not? Have you noticed any tensions? If so, what are they, please explain further.
5. What can the Church do to address these shortcomings? What are the different ways in which the Church can further strengthen and deepen its commitment and action to racial justice?

6. What could the church do that would get you more personally involved in the racial justice work?
(Probes: specific topics, trainings, formats, all the ideas below)

[Probe/listen for ideas from below.]

- Spread more awareness about its racial justice focused work.
- Include more voices to inform the decision making around its racial justice focused work.
- Focus on pressing socio-cultural issues of today.
- Provide trainings to members on the following racial justice topics: policy/advocacy; understanding privilege/white ally-ship; culturally specific trainings, etc.
- Provide more opportunities to engage community residents and be active in the local neighborhood.
- Offer more opportunities for volunteering.
- Provide more opportunities for legislative action, including lobbying, canvassing, and community organizing.

Host more opportunities for informal discussions and relationships building around issues of racial justice. (Book clubs, dinners, etc.)

7. Are there other issues of social justice that would be more appealing to you than racial justice? If so, what are they and why?

8. Any final thoughts, comments?

Listening Session Protocol

Introduction Script

Hello, everyone! I am Beki Saito and this is my colleague, Razeena Shrestha/Gifty Amarteifio/Chelsea Matson and we're from Rainbow Research. We are a small nonprofit based in Minneapolis and we specialize in applied research and evaluation. We work closely with communities and organizations to improve the effectiveness of socially concerned organizations and hope to promote greater social justice through our work. We have been contracted by the First Universalist Church's Board of Trustees to assess the extent to which the Church's intentional efforts to refresh and infuse racial justice in its strategic visions has had any impact, and if so, what changes have you experienced as well as to strengthen and deepen the Church's racial justice efforts. Thank you for coming to our World Café discussion group today. World Café is a powerful social technique which puts conversations at the core of meaning making. It is a method of engaging people in conversations that matter, of thinking together that help in personal or organizational decision-making, and ultimately affecting social change. Many of you may already be aware and familiar with the Church's Strategic Visionary goals. Today, we will collectively revisit the four visionary goals, and reflect on our personal, Church, and community experiences; we look forward to some very insightful conversations.

As you can see, we have four tables set out, each focused on a Strategic Visionary Goal and we have a few questions to guide our discussion. Each table also includes a table facilitator who will be asking questions and taking notes. Each table can accommodate up to 8 participants. You have a total of 90 minutes to go around each table to share your thoughts. You will spend 15 minutes per table. At the end of 15 minutes, I will announce and you will have to move on to the next table. The order in which you start and circulate around tables does not matter, as long as you go to all five of them. We want to make sure you get a chance to reflect and provide your feedback at each table. We will use the last 15 minutes for a share back at the end.

Do you have any questions? Let's begin.

Strategic Visionary Goals

TABLE 1: Visionary Goal 1

"We, the people of First Universalist Church, grow in our UU faith: we are equipped to live out our values and experience worship, spiritual practices, and rituals that challenge, comfort, celebrate, and heal."

[Facilitator welcomes everyone and reads the Visionary Goal 1. 15 minutes per table.]

Discussion Questions:

1. To what extent do you think the **Visionary Goal and the Objectives around Worship Practices** reflect the Church's current racial justice work? Why or why not? [How does the vision compare to what you think the Church actually does?]

2. In what ways could the Church enhance and strengthen racial justice in its Worship practices? Should the Goal be changed or its language altered in any way to better reflect the Church’s racial justice initiatives? Do you have any new ideas to enhance the Objectives?

[Ask participants to share examples.]

TABLE 2: Visionary Goal 2

“First Universalist Church is a home for ageless wisdom. People of all ages find opportunities to engage in an intellectual and spiritual search for deeper meaning and understanding in the UU tradition, both as individuals and in community. We know our roots, find our wings, and apply our knowledge and wisdom to all our endeavors.”

[Facilitator welcomes everyone and reads the Visionary Goal 2. 15 minutes per table.]

Discussion Questions:

1. To what extent do you think the **Visionary Goal and the Objectives around Faith Formation** reflect the Church’s current racial justice work? Why or why not? [How does the vision compare to what you think the Church actually does?]
2. In what ways could the Church enhance and strengthen racial justice in its Faith Formation practices? Should the Goal be changed or its language altered in any way to better reflect the Church’s racial justice initiatives? Do you have any new ideas to enhance the Objectives?

[Ask participants to share examples.]

TABLE 3: Visionary Goal 3

“First Universalist Church is an intergenerational community of mutual caring and support. We build this community by actively welcoming all and encouraging each to discover, develop and share their gifts.”

[Facilitator welcomes everyone and reads the Visionary Goal 3. 15 minutes per table.]

Discussion Questions:

1. To what extent do you think the **Visionary Goal and the Objectives around building a Supportive Community** reflect the Church’s current racial justice work? Why or why not? [How does the vision compare to what you think the Church actually does?]
2. In what ways could the Church enhance and strengthen racial justice in its practices to build a Supportive Community? Should the Goal be changed or its language altered in any way to better reflect the Church’s racial justice initiatives? Do you have any new ideas to enhance the Objectives?

[Ask participants to share examples.]

TABLE 4: Visionary Goal 4

“The people of First Universalist Church work to build a just, loving and sustainable world. We are a visible, influential voice, and we act to shape the larger community into a more just and equitable society.”

[Facilitator welcomes everyone and reads the Visionary Goal 4. 15 minutes per table.]

Discussion Questions:

1. To what extent do you think the **Visionary Goal and the Objectives around** its practices to build **Faithful Action** reflect the Church’s current racial justice work? Why or why not? [How does the vision compare to what you think the Church actually does?]
2. In what ways could the Church enhance and strengthen racial justice in its practices to build Faithful Action? Should the Goal be changed or its language altered in any way to better reflect the Church’s racial justice initiatives? Do you have any new ideas to enhance the Objectives?

[Ask participants to share examples.]

Online Survey Questionnaire

INTRODUCTION

Please fill out this short survey, which is intended to learn about your experiences engaging with the First Universalist Church’s efforts to enhance and infuse racial justice in its strategic Visionary Goals. Your suggestions and ideas will help strengthen and deepen the Church’s racial justice efforts. This survey is not intended for individuals under the age of 13.

Your responses to this survey are anonymous—we do not need or want your name. Thank you!

INVOLVEMENT IN CHURCH’S GENERAL ACTIVITIES

1. *How long have you been a member or a friend of the congregation?*
 - A. Less than 5 years
 - B. Between 5 to 15 years
 - C. More than 15 years

2. *In general, how often do you attend the events and activities organized by the Church?*

	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>Only now and then</i>	<i>Never or Rarely</i>
Regular Sunday Services				
Religious Education Program (Parent or Child)				
Community Circles				
Church Choir				
Social Justice Projects				
Other Events and Activities				

QUESTIONS ABOUT RACIAL JUSTICE WORK

Please refer to this definition before you answer the questions that follow.

Racial justice is defined as the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.

[SOURCE: *Center for Assessment and Policy Development. [Catalytic Change: Lessons Learned from the Racial Justice Grant making Assessment](#) Report, Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity and Applied Research Center, 2009.]*

The First Universalist Church of Minneapolis has made substantial efforts to enhance and infuse racial justice in its strategic Visionary Goals in the past three years. The following questions are intended to capture your opinions and perceptions on the Church’s racial justice oriented activities.

3. *How adequate do you believe the Church is addressing racial justice in each of its 4 Visionary Goals?*
[Please check one response for each Visionary Goal.]

<i>Visionary Goal</i>	<i>Not adequate</i>	<i>Just about right</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>
1. “We, the people of First Universalist Church, grow in our UU faith: we are equipped to live out our values and experience worship, spiritual practices, and rituals that challenge, comfort, celebrate, and heal.”			
2. “First Universalist Church is a home for ageless wisdom. People of all ages find opportunities to engage in an intellectual and spiritual search for deeper meaning and understanding in the UU tradition, both as individuals and in community. We know our roots, find our wings, and apply our knowledge and wisdom to all our endeavors.”			
3. “First Universalist Church is an intergenerational community of mutual caring and support. We build this community by actively welcoming all and encouraging each to discover, develop and share their gifts.”			
4. “The people of First Universalist Church work to build a just, loving and sustainable world. We are a visible, influential voice, and we act to shape the larger community into a more just and equitable society.”			

4. *To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?*
[Provide response for each statement A and B]
 A) *Racial justice based work is important to....*
 B) *I believe the Church’s racial justice-based work has a positive impact on...*

	<i>A) Importance</i>				<i>B) Positive Impact</i>			
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
...my personal life.								
...my Church [First Universalist of Minneapolis].								
...my community.								

INVOLVEMENT IN CHURCH'S RACIAL JUSTICE FOCUSED ACTIVITIES

5. *Have you attended any of the following trainings and activities organized by the Church? [Check all that apply]*
- A. 90 minute Heather Hackman Sunday training
 - B. 4 hour racial justice training
 - C. 24 hour intensive Heather Hackman training
 - D. Train-the-Trainer racial justice training
 - E. Racial justice circle
 - F. Racial justice speaker
 - G. Racial justice book/film discussion
 - H. Not attended any of the above

CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO INVOLVEMENT IN CHURCH'S RACIAL JUSTICE ACTIVITIES

6. *Is there anything that is keeping you from participating in the Church's racial justice based initiatives?*
- A. Yes
 - B. No

SKIP AUTOMATICALLY ONLINE If "Yes," Go to Question 14, otherwise skip to Question 15.

7. *What is keeping you from participating in the Church's **racial justice focused** initiatives? [Allow multiple responses]*
- A. Can't find the time
 - B. I am not available the times activities are held.
 - C. I don't have child care.
 - D. I don't feel welcomed or invited to participate.
 - E. I am not interested.
 - F. I am not aware of the activities.
 - G. Transportation.
 - H. I participate in Church's other activities.
 - I. I practice racial justice outside of the Church.
 - J. Other: _____

SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

8. *Below are a few ways in which the Church could enhance their racial justice focused work? Do you agree or disagree? [Provide a response for each statement.]*

The role of my Church is to....

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
...spread more awareness about its racial justice focused work.				
...include diverse voices to inform the decision making around its justice focused work.				
...focus on other pressing socio-cultural issues of today.				
...provide trainings to members on the following justice topics: policy/advocacy; understanding privilege/white ally-ship; culturally specific trainings, etc.				
...provide more opportunities to engage community residents and be active in the local neighborhood.				
...offer more opportunities for volunteering.				
...provide more opportunities for legislative action, including lobbying, canvassing, and community organizing.				
...host more opportunities for informal discussions and relationships building around issues of racial justice. (Book clubs, dinners, etc.)				

9. Do you have any suggestion(s) other than those listed above to enhance the Church's racial justice work? [Please write in your own words.] *OPTIONAL*

10. In your opinion, (a) how important are each of the following social-cultural issues and (b) how much of a priority do you think they should be for the church? Please provide responses for each statement, a and b.

	<i>a. Importance</i>	<i>b. Priority</i>
--	----------------------	--------------------

	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>Not very Important</i>	<i>Not at all Important</i>	<i>Low Priority</i>	<i>Medium Priority</i>	<i>High Priority</i>
Disability							
Economics (Poverty, Unemployment)							
Education							
Environment							
Gender							
Health							
Housing							
Criminal Justice							
Race							
Sexual Orientation							

11. Please list other issues that are not listed above that may be of relatively higher importance and priority to you? [Please specify]. *OPTIONAL*

12. Do you have any comments or feedback for the Church regarding the Church's racial justice efforts? *OPTIONAL*

DISMANTLING RACISM: A RESOURCE BOOK



FOR SOCIAL CHANGE GROUPS

WESTERN STATES CENTER, 2003

PO BOX 40305
PORTLAND, OR 97240
503-228-8866

dis-man-tle

1. *to take apart*
2. *to deprive or strip of apparatus, trappings, equipment, etc.*

racism

1. *a system of advantage for white people*
2. *the systematic oppression of people of color*
3. *a belief in the supremacy of white people and the institutional power to enforce that belief*

THE DISMANTLING RACISM PROJECT

The Dismantling Racism Project is part of Western States' RACE (Research and Action for Change and Equity) Program. Through training, strategizing and technical assistance, the Dismantling Racism Project is one strategy intended to increase the breadth and depth of racial justice work in the region through supporting organizations to build a shared analysis of race and racism, to engage in anti-racist organizational development and to move racial justice organizing campaigns. The DR Project strengthens the capacity of individuals and organizations doing racial justice work in the West by developing anti-racist leaders; providing training and support to organizations, and creating resources for use throughout the region.

THE DISMANTLING RACISM RESOURCE BOOK

This resource book is a compilation of materials designed to supplement a Dismantling Racism workshop. These resources originate from a variety of sources and build on the work of many people and organizations, including (but not limited to) Kenneth Jones, Tema Okun, Andrea Ayvazian, Beverly Daniel-Tatum, Joan Olsson, James Williams, Peace Development Fund, The Exchange Project, Grassroots Leadership, Equity Institute, the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, the Lillie Allen Institute, and David Rogers and Moira Bowman of the Western States Center. This resource book is never complete. The pages you see here change regularly based on the feedback and critical thinking or workshop participants and others who use them. Resources developed by Western States Center are also available on our website at www.westernstatescenter.org.

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CHANGE TEAMS

What is a Change Team?

Many organizations have found that anti-racist organizational development is most successful when an organization has a Change Team. A Change Team is a working committee whose overarching goal is to provide leadership and momentum around anti-racist organizational development.

Who should be on the Change Team?

Each organization needs to decide how to build a Change Team that can support meaningful change in your organization. Many Change Teams are comprised of staff and board members working together. In most cases it is important to have participation on the Change Team from your membership or constituency as well.

Job Description for Change Team Members (*Adapted from James Williams: Grassroots Leadership's Barriers and Bridges Workbook.*)

Change team members are people who:

- really want to see positive change in their communities;
- bring enthusiasm and commitment to the process. They are role models and cheerleaders;
- have a certain degree of skill in helping make change happens;
- have some degree of leadership in their organization or community;
- are willing to see themselves as change agents;
- but understand that they can't do it alone. They must build a group or organization of people who will take over leadership of the process and in turn develop new leaders.

Their job is to develop a group of people who will work together to reach their goals. This involves working with others to:

- assess the present situation, define problems, and set goals for solving them;

- identify the values the group or organization brings to this work, i.e. making sure people are clear about how they want be with each other as they work toward these goals;
- develop a strategy to accomplish their goals.
- insure that the strategy is carried out.
- evaluate and make changes in the strategy as needed.
- make sure that all contributions are appreciated and that everyone has a chance to grow change throughout the process.

What is the Job of a Change Team? (Developed by changework, 1705 Wallace Street, Durham NC 27707 .919.490.4448)

1. To lead and organize the process towards becoming an anti-racist social change organization
 - Help move people into actively supporting (or at least avoid resisting) the changes necessary to move the organization towards that vision
 - Help to resolve conflict
 - Avoid becoming 'morality police' by including others in the work of the change team
2. To lead and organize a process to evaluate the organization as it is now
3. To lead a process to help the organization envision what it would look like as an anti-racist social change organization
4. Lead a process to establish specific, clear, and meaningful goals for reaching the vision
5. Build community and move the organization to collective action
 - Help the organization think about how to integrate and/or educate those in the organization who have not been through a DR training
 - Be in open communication with all members of the organization
6. Insure the integration of the work of the change team with program work
7. Think like an organizer in helping the organization move toward its goals
 - work with members of the organization to think strategically about how to reach the goals of the organization

How Can the Change Team Do Its Job? (Adapted by Grassroots Leadership's Barriers and Bridges program from Judy H. Katz, *White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training*)

1. Identify the problem that you want to address.
 - Who else sees this as a problem?
 - Is it widely felt?
2. Identify who has the power in your organization to solve the problem.
 - What is their self-interest?
 - Do you expect them to support you or oppose you?
3. State the specific goal or goals that will move your organization toward solving the problem.
 - These goals need to be tangible. In other words, 'eliminate racism' is not a tangible goal while 'get the board to adopt by-laws specifying percentages based on race, gender, income, sexual identity, etc.' is.
 - Talk about how this goal (or goals) is (are) in line with your organization's values and mission.
4. Identify who needs to be involved in helping to shape these goals.
 - Avoid setting the goals by yourself; involve a larger group whose participation in setting the goals will raise their stake in achieving them.
5. Identify who in the organization shares a desire to reach these goals.
 - How much power do they have to influence decision-makers (answer to number 2) in the organization?
 - What is their self-interest?
6. Identify who in the organization is threatened by or opposed to these goals.
 - How much power do they have to influence decision-makers (answer to number 2) in the organization?
 - What is their self-interest?
7. Identify any additional risks or barriers you face.
8. Identify your strengths and resources.

9. Identify the specific strategy steps the change team will take to meet the goals.
 - How will you involve allies and address challenges from those who are threatened or opposed?
 - How will you include those who might otherwise oppose you?
 - Who should be recruited onto the change team?
 - Who will coordinate the efforts?
 - When and how will people meet to work on these goals?
 - Develop a timeline.

10. Build in evaluation and reflection.
 - At what points will you revise your strategy?
 - How will you build change team morale and relationships?

Change Team Check-Up *(Adapted from Andrea Ayvazian: Dismantling Racism: Workbook for Social Change Groups.)*

Use this checklist about once every two or three months to make sure your change team is staying on track:

1. When did the change team last meet? Do you have plans to meet in the future?
2. Who is leading the change team? Is there someone who takes responsibility for making sure the team is meeting and getting work done? Has this responsibility changed hands, or has one person pretty much been responsible? How is this leadership pattern good or bad for the change team?
3. How would you describe the morale of the change team?
4. What are some of the strengths of the change team?
5. Where is the change team getting stuck?
6. Is the change team meeting resistance from others in the organization or community? If so, why and what can you do about it? When you look at your reasons, are you stuck in blaming others, in other words are you requiring other

people to change before anything can get done? Or are you taking responsibility for addressing the problems that come up?

7. Is the change team finding the kind of support it needs in the organization or community? If not, why not and what can you do about it? Are you truly encouraging new people into the organization or community? Are you making them welcome and giving them a chance to grow?
8. Are you making time in your meetings for personal sharing and reflection? Or are your meetings all business and no fun?
9. Are you accomplishing your goals? If so, are you taking time to pat yourselves on the back and enjoy your success? If not, are you taking time to rethink your strategies?