

## **Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Monmouth County Continues a Long History of Work for Social Justice**

UUCMC Adopts an Eighth Principle, Committing to Dismantle Racism

March 20, 2021 Lincroft, N.J.

When an MIT graduate with a Master's degree in electrical engineering hired by Bell Laboratories couldn't find housing in Monmouth County, the former Tuskegee Airman turned to Reverend Harold Dean for help. Reverend Dean, the first minister of UUCMC, had recently founded Shore Citizens for Better Housing along with the Quakers and the Ethical Culture Society. Members of the newly established congregation, many of whom were also Bell Labs employees, helped the family find a home in Lincroft, fighting local redlining practices. So began a 65-year history of keeping racial and social justice central to the beliefs and actions at UUCMC.

Unitarian Universalism is based on seven Principles and Purposes adopted by the national Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) in 1985. The seven principles affirm and promote: the inherent worth and dignity of every person; justice, equity and compassion in human relations; acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth; a free and responsible search for truth and meaning; the right of conscience and use of the democratic process; the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all; and respect for the interdependent web of all existence. UUCMC adopted an Eighth Principle at its congregational meeting on March 14, committing members to work to dismantle racism. The 8th Principle affirms and promotes "journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions."

Co-minister, Rev. Virginia Jarocha-Ernst reflects, "While Unitarian Universalists have often been in the forefront of working for racial justice and civil rights we have also sometimes failed to live up to our ideals. It is more than time to make this commitment explicit in our shared covenant. Unpacking racism and white supremacy culture is never ending work. But it also creates great joy when the barriers fall between us. We here at UUCMC are blessed with many wonderful partners in this work here in Monmouth County. Together we create a community that is good and just for all."

Over the past five years UUCMC has stepped up its efforts to support racial and immigrant justice activities. In 2016 the congregation created a Racial Justice Task Force, issued a Statement of Conscience on racial justice, and held a Black Lives Matter rally where several hundred members and community residents attended. Over the following years UUCMC has worked to fully engage adults, youth and children in making antiracism part of their spiritual practice through education, community involvement, [advocacy](#), and especially listening to people of color. A current program that will soon be running its fourth installment is *Voices of the Black Experience*, where local People of Color share their personal stories about incidents of racism and discrimination.

UUCMC is located at 1475 West Front Street in Lincroft. For information about UUCMC, visit: <http://www.uucmc.org/uucmc-history/> or call 732-747-0707.