**Grappling with Individual and Systemic Racism**

October 11, 2020

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The program this Sunday introduces the second theme for our programs this year. This statement outlines the elements of the theme. At the end are 3 short videos that provide additional information about this theme. We look forward to seeing you on Zoom on Sunday.

*Racism is a marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produce and normalize racial inequities. Ibram X. Kendi*

*It is clear that the way to heal society of its violence…and the place of love is to replace the period of domination with the circle of equality and respect. Manitonquat*

*It is never too late to give up your prejudices. Henry David Thoreau*

UU’s affirm and promote:

• Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations (Principle 2)

• The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all (Principle 6)

• Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part (Principle 7)

Recent tragic events have energized the important *Black Lives Matter* movement, leading some of us to more closely examine the complex ways racism impacts our lives, both individually and systemically. As Unitarian Universalists we affirm that we are all connected to each other. Consequently, we should work for a peaceful world which supports everyone through compassion and justice. To do so, the first task before us is to understand our own racist biases and attitudes – especially those which are unconscious – and how these influence our views of the world and our actions in it. Individual beliefs and actions that perpetuate racial inequities uphold racism. Racist policies, structures, and practices that privilege white people over people of color normalize racism. Consequently, racism has both individual and systemic characteristics.

Beyond our own personal attitudes, we need to explore the extent to which racism is embedded throughout the social, economic, political, and cultural systems within which we all live. Systemic or structural racism is a consequence of a long history of racist ideas including the now discredited notion that white people are biologically superior to people of color. Consequently, public policy, laws, institutional practices, and cultural representations have reinforced racial inequities. These are so insidious that people believe that schools with a high percentage of minority students are inherently poor or that neighborhoods with black residents are crime ridden.

The purpose of this theme is to facilitate our exploration of the sources and effects of systemic/structural racism in order to develop our understanding of its pervasive character, and to build awareness of strategies for its dismantling. Through readings and reflection, careful listening and respectful discussion, we will deepen our understanding of racism and explore pathways toward anti-racist attitudes and behavior.

***Kendi Ibram: Race and America:***(6 minutes, CAP Ideas Conference) This is a very clear and well presented talk which distinguishes between beliefs about the inferiority of groups of people (racism) and policies which sustain inequity between groups (anti-racist). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PfxXhDXW_7E>

***Racism is Real:*** Next time someone says racism isn’t real, show them this 3-minute video. By Germain Lopez, Brave Films. Split screen demonstration about racial inequities in the US. Excellent – so brief, but makes the point very powerfully. References at the end to support claims. <https://www.vox.com/2015/4/30/8520305/systemic-racism-video>

***Racial Stereotyping: You See a Black Guy, White Guy, Pretty Girl Committing a Crime. What Do You Do?*** (What Would You Do?, ABC, 12:13 minutes) White guy stealing a bike, observers asked if it was his bike, but do nothing. Different response with black guy. Observers call the police. A white girl tries to steal the bike, she gets help from an observer. Demonstrates bias and the importance of appearance. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ABRlWybBqM>