

Widening the Circle of Concern: Theology

Month 2





8th Principle:

We, the member congregations of the UUA covenant to affirm and promote: Journeying towards 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.

Please note: Widening the Circle report isn't just concerned with racism, but with all marginalized groups.



Recommendation 1:

- 1. Re-engaging with our theological legacy and its use today will both ground our efforts to welcome all who are drawn to our faith and provide resources for resilience for Unitarian Universalists in these difficult times.**

-Action: Center the theological work of Black scholars, Indigenous scholars, and scholars of color, both professional and lay, whose knowledge is resonant for our times.



USG work group ideas:

- Base sermons and music on works from marginalized groups including BIPOC, LGBTQ+, people living in poverty, people living with disabilities, and any other trait
- We recommend that people either watch or rewatch the Side with Love UUA service:



Recommendation 2

Reinterpretation of our theological legacies in these times should be liberatory and articulate our commitment to affirming and welcoming those who have been marginalized in our larger society and within our communities and organizations.

Action: Resource multigenerational efforts within Black/Indigenous/people of color communities to develop rituals of healing and other worship materials to be used in congregations, regions, and national gatherings.



USG Work group ideas:

- We already celebrate Diwali and Kwanzaa in a culturally appropriate way, led by people from those cultures.
- USG has been blessed with many leaders of color including 3 out of 4 intern ministers in the last 10 years have been people of color.
- We also acknowledge the harm that's been done at USG and work on healing.



Recommendation 3:

Acknowledgment of anti-oppression work as a theological mandate is essential. We need to resurrect, research, document, and teach the words of Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, LGBTQ individuals, women, and others who have been largely lost though their presence has been with us throughout history.

Actions: The group thought that the actions listed under this recommendation applied to the UUA and not directly to USG.



What can help you engage more deeply?

- Linda Bernstein - why do we call it theology? - can we call it “what is sacred to us” or “what we’re committed to”?
- Dennis Brunn Inviting guest preachers from nearby congregations
- Barbara Dowdall - Read Howard Thurman
- Nancy Anderson - bring materials from BLUU into our worship services.
- There are research/fact finding activities we can do to bring in writings and materials from people of a variety of marginalized communities
- We can call it theology/spiritual beliefs / sacred principles
- there are things we might want to do more of or include more people in



Further thoughts

- Gerry - Concern about the word “dismantling” - what are we dismantling and can we do it with care - not shaming and blaming, but invitation and compassion
 - Margaret - Incorporate land recognition statement , reach out to the Lenape Nation of PA, perhaps ask them to talk with us?
 - Tonika - ERC is having a guest speaker to discuss current Indigenous and BIPOC issues
 - Andre Stormont - Partner with groups to join in with community projects



Our suggestions for engaging:

Watch the Side with Love Service:

<https://www.uua.org/worship/holidays/side-love-sunday>

Review the Widening the Circle Materials:

<https://usguu.org/committee-on-institutional-change-report/>

Read the Avatar section of the WTC report

<https://usguu.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Avatars.pdf>

Time for discussion.