

Widening the Circle NOTES 6.1.22

Attending: Andrea Barsevick, Lisa Dutton, Treva Burger, Kent Matthies, Linda Bernstein, Lois Murphy, Eric Foster, Shobhi Kanal, Dev Howerton, Margaret Thompson

How are we feeling about WtC since last meeting?

It's good how much we've done, but just a beginning, really. We're positioned to do more with new Staff. Good that we did more than just a one or two meeting approach to this complicated work. We took the time and the depth to make WtC a transformative activity throughout all our church's activities. With the Trans inclusion meetings, too, we continued and expanded the work. We might have too many ideas to implement them all effectively, but even if we do a subset, it's progress. It's a good roadmap for the future.

There is some concern about WtC participants in these discussions being so small. How will we engage more of the congregation? Leaders need to spread the word. Key stakeholders need to pick things on the list of recommendations/actions and make the compelling case statement to the wider community to participate. Make it clear why it matters to everyone. Implementation means taking the learning we've done and making change with it – for the people who want it and also those who don't.

We reviewed some accountability goals and a recommendation. Action A1.1 brought up the issue of how bylaws are changed. The Board has to approve changes, but we also need education, sustained effort to accomplish such changes. Compelling cases have to be made to the congregation. Probably we should lay the groundwork around the church before moving to the Bylaws level (i.e., a bottom up rather than a top down effort).

Re: Action A1.2, we asked what is "monitoring" and who is supposed to do it? A structure is required: implementation is something for the whole congregation, but a smaller group needs to review and track things to see that WtC is actually taking place. This group must ask, for instance, "are we moving forward in every area or are we stuck"? It's responsible for expectations, bringing the actions and recommendations to chairs/meetings to mobilize, communicate, sell, what have you. Also, we need to keep the WtC group refreshed with new members or attrition will cause it to disappear.

C1.7 Action is modified to include a music committee for regular support and advising in WtC matters. Similar for Worship Arts (addressed earlier, see T1.1). The point is that both music and WA are accountable to WtC ideas and goals, too.

We reviewed a summary of many edits made in March. Generally these were OK with everyone. Staff should be made to understand that part of their job description is to support and monitor WtC Recommendations. SGM topics tend to be more spiritual than justice oriented, but perhaps we can offer anti-oppression guides for July-Aug, when Soul Matters does not provide guides.

Next steps:

An "accountability" group (which could instead be called an implementation or education group) will engage congregants with WtC goals, actions, and progress of all that's been discussed AND protect what is already going well. This can also be modeled and communicated in Worship.

Reparations group would investigate what others are doing.

A leadership group/council could have representatives from committees, and meet quarterly on zoom to hear about the work of the Implementation and Reparations groups and share what is going on in their committee, this would help leaders to know what is going on in other areas of the church.

Stay flexible, be open to interim minister's ideas. How will we communicate our WtC work with the new Interim Minister? We should warmly invite her to participate with our WtC work.

Discussion guides, goals and recommendations, and our notes are on the website. They may ultimately take a more user-friendly form for the website so everyone can see a full list of the work laid out, the WtC road map.

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Wrapping up:

We will not meet in July or August, but WtC leaders will be doing some planning for how we will continue this work in the Fall and welcome others to join them.

We'll invite congregants to read one book (there's a suggested list, but any book is OK, this is not a One-Book-One-Congregation sort of thing) with the intention to convene and discuss readings in the Fall.

Starr King wants USG to pilot an anti-oppression class next year.

One of us is willing to read a book or two over the summer and investigate reparations.

Another is willing to work with WA and music.

Another will encourage whatever the Board needs to do for this work.

Another is prepping for the ERC 20th anniversary with "The Darkness Divine."

Marietta Tanner and Betty Hankins will come to Fran's memorial, 6.18.22, 11a.m. All are strongly encouraged to attend.

As a gesture of respect (and self-education), we suggest reading Rev. Cheryl's chapter in "Centering" about leading a UU congregation as a person of color.

Ryan shared in writing that: as he hands the keys over to Latifah as interim DSD, included will be a template for tracking multiple voices of inclusion in CSD curriculum as well as SFAA in worship. And ASD can use this template. ASD committee has already committed in our last couple of meetings to centering this work.

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Meeting adjourned.