

Widening the Circle Annual Report 2023

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Leadership is shared.

Mission

Our mission is well stated by the proposed 8th Principle: “Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse and multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.” Specifically, we are using the Widening the Circle of Concern report from the UUA’s Commission on Institutional Change to identify USG specific anti oppression goals and actions, and develop plans to put them into action and remain accountable to them.

Committee's highlights of this past year (7.1.22-6.30.23)

In the fall, we began engaging with each USG entity that WtC had made a recommendation for. We asked each group to let us know whether and how they would be able to work toward the goal. We held two leadership check in meetings to talk to the different groups about how they were doing and answer questions. We keep a document to track everyone’s updates and progress. We held a congregational meeting to update the broader congregation on WtC’s work. It was well attended and there was much interest in hospitality training. We engaged CB Beal for this year’s WtC worship service. They will return in the fall to deliver a second sermon (9/17) and lead a workshop (9/30) about preemptive radical inclusion in support of the WtC recommendations for Welcoming and ASD, in addition to worship.

A Reparations Committee developed to “look at what others are doing and make recommendations for USG actions toward reparations.” Several USG members attended an intensive course on Reparations offered by the City of Philadelphia Office of Faith-based Initiatives that drew over ninety people from local churches, synagogues, mosques, and meeting houses. After feedback from church and Widening the Circle leadership, the Reparations Committee will be moving forward with activities to engage the whole congregation in thinking about reparations in the context of USG with the goal of discovering what a reparation proposal for USG might look like.

Two book groups were run by WtC leaders. The White Anti-Racist Discussion Group which began in 2022 to process feelings of anger, hurt & confusion about white supremacy culture & to understand what is being asked of white people at this moment, continued using the book, The Darkness Divine by Rev. Kristin Harper, as a basis for discussion. The hope is to resolve these concerns so white people can engage productively to create an anti-racist community at USG.

A group reading and discussing the UUA Common Read, *Mistakes and Miracles* met several times this spring and will complete their time together by talking about what lessons USG could take from the book.

A Young Adult Meet and Greet was organized in May 2023.