

BENDING THE ARC: A SOCIAL JUSTICE QUARTERLY, AUGUST 2016

From the Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis, CA

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Welcome to the first issue of *UUCD's Bending the Arc*, our new social justice quarterly. Through *Bending the Arc* we hope to keep you informed about what is going on and to engage you and your family in the activities of a social justice leadership group or to prompt you to bring ideas for new leadership groups to the Social Justice Coordinating Committee.

You Are Invited: The Social Justice Coordinating Committee invites you to a screening of the riveting documentary, *The People Speak* next month. Join us at one of three screenings: Sunday, September 11, at Glacier Circle in Davis; Sunday, September 18, at the church; or at the end of September at the home of a Woodland congregant. The screenings, which will be in the afternoon, will be followed by discussion about the documentary and a calendar of social justice activities for this church year.



The People Speak, a provocative documentary based on Howard Zinn's book, *A Peoples' History of the United States*, illustrates how change often starts at the bottom and emphasizes that a small group can wield power and drive change. The documentary may inform you of historical facts you did not know.

All - teens, young adults, families and individuals - are very welcome. We hope you will attend; we are confident you will find it a worthwhile afternoon and a fitting call to action in this election season.

Screening times and RSVP details will be published in forthcoming weekly bulletins.



Black Lives Matter Banner Dedication, an Important Day for UUCD

In February 2015, Leslie Mac, founder of Ferguson Response Network and a member of the Organizing Collective of Black Lives UU, urged Unitarian Universalist congregations to make our support visible by displaying Black Lives Matter banners.

On May 29, 2016, we honored the installation of a Black Lives Matter banner at the entrance to our church grounds. Uniting for Racial Justice, our anti-racism leadership group, spearheaded this project. URJ did the necessary research, consultation, organization, and persuasion to make the banner a reality.

Several people spoke at the dedication, including Jennifer Higley-Chapman, Alexandra Lee-Jobe, Lucas Frerichs, and Don Saylor. Rev. Beth Banks offered this prayer:

We bless this Black Lives Matter banner.

*Words are symbols that give meaning
to life's experiences*

These three words symbolize many things.

It stands for what we believe, and it is here for us to see whenever we come to church. It is here for our neighbors, the many people who rent space here, go to school at Redbud, attend recitals. This is what we believe.

This banner is a symbol of our belief in questioning and in dialogue. We bless this banner because it is a bold statement that invites self-reflection and conversation with others.

This banner symbolizes a process – a process of conversations, disagreements, discussions, study that happened among adults, youth and children – the ways we respectfully challenged each other, learned together, and stand here now.

We bless these words because they are a truth that is hard to accept. That, more than any other population in our country, black people have endured oppression - through the practice of slavery, through our government's laws deeming them as being only partially human, laws of segregation, and economic and prison systems that continue to enslave a disproportionate number of black people – especially black men.

Blessings on this banner because it is also a promise to ourselves and to all who see it. It is a symbol of commitment for us to engage with the world in ways that live this message.

The learning we will do has just begun.

The work that we will do with others has just begun.

*The relationships that need to be built
are waiting to be explored more completely -*

*This moment is one step – for every person or every age
in this sacred place.*

We now stand with scores of other UU churches around the country that have hung BLM banners. A duplicate of our installed banner has been used at protests and community events and will continue to carry our message of support into the wider world.

What does our banner inspire you to do?

UUs Attend Anti-Racism Training: On August 15, Whites Uniting for Racial Justice, of Davis, offered a workshop on “Organizing White People Against Racism.” Participants included six people from the Davis UU congregation (Jake Clemens, Barbara Clutter, Robin Datel, Stefan Harvey, Jennifer Higley-Chapman, and Jan Jursnich), as well as two from the UU Society of Sacramento. Leader, Joe Fahey offered participants ways to ask questions about, listen to people talk about, reach agreements about, and take actions to reduce racism.

Email WURJ at WURJinfo@gmail.com for information about future trainings and other activities.

What's Current with UUCD Social Justice?

Today there are several UUCD social justice leadership groups; all groups welcome participation by new individuals. Activities of the leadership groups include:

- Amigos Fieles/Faithful Friends. Visitation with detained immigrants at the Rio Cosumnes Correctional Center in Elk Grove. Stefan Harvey.
- Davis Community Meals. Supporting free community dinners for homeless and low income Davis residents. Kathy Boyajian.

- Dove & Serpent. Supporting Unitarianism in Transylvania, via a church partnership. Peg Swain.
- Green Sanctuary Committee. Providing education and advocacy on environmental issues. Active participation in Cool Davis and the Davis Interfaith Alliance for Climate Action. Robin Datel or Stefan Harvey, if interested.
- Interfaith Rotating Winter Shelter. Hosting the Davis homeless shelter for one week each winter. Lindsay Weston.
- Quilting Bee. Sewing quilts for Progress Ranch, a local home for boys, and other local organizations. Julie Saylor.
- Uniting for Racial Justice (URJ). Providing education and advocacy on issues of race and immigration. Supporting immigrant and refugee justice efforts. Leanne Friedman.

A new social justice brochure which describes each leadership group is available in the social hall. To become involved, call one of the contacts listed above (phone and emails available in church directory).



Another Way to Become a UUCD Social Justice Activist: Step Up and Become a Social Justice Leader

Currently there are several unique leadership opportunities open. They include:

- Chair of Green Sanctuary
- Interfaith Winter Rotating Shelter: transportation coordinator, cooking coordinator, shelter set-up/take down coordinator. Contact Lindsey Weston at lawweston@sbcglobal.net.
- Editor of UUCD's *Bending the Arc*; Contributing writer of UUCD's *Bending the Arc*
- Policy coordinator (develop an advocacy agenda: petition signing, letter writing, public testimony and witness) for the Fall Quarter (mentoring available)
- Two (2) at-large member positions on the Social Justice Coordinating Committee

Interested in finding out about any of these opportunities? Contact Lindsey Weston about the IRWS and Robin Datel (rddd@dcn.davis.ca.us) or Stefan Harvey (stefh2002@yahoo.com) about the others.

And . . . watch for developments on these and other social justice fronts:

- Refugee welcome kits
- Tiny homes in Woodland
- Collaboration with UCD's A. B. 540 and Undocumented Student Center
- Cool Davis events
- Social-justice-driven special collections
- Social-justice-themed items at this year's auction