

TJMC-UU Racial Justice Committee Meeting  
July 1, 2018

Today's chair: Kate Fraleigh  
Minutes: Ann Forno

In attendance: Bob Gross, Elaine Chapman, Kate Fraleigh, Gerry Seedyke, Ann Forno, Steve Platt, Chris Platt, Linda Dukes, Edith Good, Frank Dukes, Sallie Kate Park, Marc Goldberg

**1. New chair of this committee:**

- Warren has resigned as the chair of the RJC, and he has withdrawn his membership from the church; he has indicated he will be doing racial justice work with another group.
- Kate Fraleigh has agreed to chair this meeting today but is not interested in being chair again.
- We took some time to process this, sharing our thoughts:

he will be missed; he does the work of 3 people!; he contributes to so many activities here;

someone is wondering how many people have departed our committee because of dissatisfaction and why; some folks are spending their time on other efforts and groups; we might want to have a reflection at some point, as a committee, on why some folks have enthusiasm for a while and then stop coming (do we have a plan? are we a cohesive group?);

also, some are wondering about folks leaving the church; we gave an overview of what some of the issues are that are/may be driving these things; some feel that what's happening in our church reflects what's happening in the world; might our community benefit from reading the principles that we profess to adhere to, regularly, so that we can take them to heart and as an antidote to everything being stirred up?;

some folks seem not to be disagreeing respectfully in our church; some of the anger coming out now in our church, has been felt for a while;

maybe we need to focus more on values than on beliefs (drawing from Steve's experience with another church); our survey will speak to that;

can TJMC-UU be a spiritual home for people of a range of beliefs?

(BTW-- it's hard for folks with no internet to stay on top of all that's going on!!!!)

nobody is saying that you can't talk about other issues; if you want to talk about environmentalism, patriarchy, etc, talk about it;

can't the committee just keep doing what it's been doing?

we need to look at emotion that triggered the note; we need to keep in mind a historical perspective of racism in the US;

Committee on the Ministry and the board are not the only ways to solve problems in our church; calling what some folks have been doing (with respect to Wlk), "undermining," does not appeal to some folks; those folks are following procedures, they are not trying to undermine anything; organizing another way to protest what is going on in the church is valid; it's not realistic to think that people aren't going to talk to each other; some folks who have left the

church, have never been happy, not just since Wik came; can we separate our racial justice work, from the process of acting on people being unhappy with Wik?

## 2. Should the RJC take a position on supporting Rev Wik or not?

- Last month, we decided not to take a position/issue a statement.
- Sara has proposed that we take a position in support of Wik and draft a statement.
- Do we need to clarify whether we are supporting Wik in general, or supporting his stance on racial justice? Do we support Wik's stance on racial justice, or do we support the process of working this out, using the church structures?
- This isn't about supporting Wik or not; it's about the committee coming together and deciding what message we want to bring to the congregation about racial justice; we need to work to bring people together; there are people who want to be more "on the edge" of this racial justice work in our congregation (eg, folks who have taken one or more of Wik's classes), but we need to approach these things in a way that brings people in
- We need to focus more on our principles and on trusting the board and committees to do what they were created to do; a lot of their work has been undermined; we need to help our fellow congregants refocus on why those structures exist and on the work they have to do.
- After the murders in Charleston, Wik spoke at a gathering in Cville and said, he will never stop working on racial justice, and that may have been a line in the sand for some folks in our congregation; if we get smaller and we cut things to make our budget work, some can live with that; let's just continue to do the work that Erik has called us to do; we do respect the inherent worth and dignity of folks, but when peoples' perspectives collide with our covenant, that's a problem
- From a newcomer's perspective, there seem to be many political issues around Erik.
- **Proposal:** keep doing racial justice work at beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels throughout our work
- We may not like the way things played out in this incident (note to Christina), but we like Wik's values and want him to continue to do racial justice work.
- all of the reactions of white people, along the whole spectrum, are textbook reactions; at the same time, we are all individuals
- From an email from Sara: Wik handled the note appropriately; it is the congregation that is not "woke;" Wik supports a message in his sermons in favor of diversity; he is supportive of our committee.
- We reviewed a **proposed** statement from the committee (see below).
- Efforts to get rid of Wik have felt like a "campaign;" if we were to put out a statement, we would also be engaging in a "campaign;" the board and COM have the job of evaluating the staff;

**proposed** content for statement from this committee:

The RJC reaffirms the content of the Public witness Statement and we still encourage the congregation and the staff to go towards valuing black lives, etc etc.

**proposal:**

start a “pipeline” committee to work on a statement from the RJC (a statement on -- ????)

**question:**

Can we act to use the structures of the church to support Wik?

**3. Proposal:**

- Have a rolling chair for now (choose a chair for the next meeting, at each meeting, until we're able to choose a permanent chair). - ACCEPTED
- Continue to talk, meet on our own before next meeting, etc about a possible statement; not make a statement for now. – ACCEPTED

Next meeting: Sunday, July 5, 2018, 11:30 am

Chair: Frank Dukes

Opening/closing: Ann Forno