

Religious Leaders Caucus Meeting
November 18, 2020
Noon - Zoom



Notes

Introductions: Each named themselves and their congregation and spoke of a way to nurture one of the dreams we shared at our Oct 28 meeting. Those dreams are:

- trauma informed public safety emergency response teams available 24/7,
- racial equity,
- criminal **justice**,
- neighborhoods adopt Charter for Compassion,
- Monroe County School System/Regional education,
- Metropolitan gov't,
- build on Rochester as model interfaith city where all children have high quality, affordable child care and equally funded education,
- parents have jobs that pay living wages,
- air is clean,
- water is pure,
- healthcare is affordable and accessible,
- opportunities to prepare for a variety of jobs and careers in and around Rochester enhance the greater good for the common good.

On Nov 18 we spoke of **ways to nurture one of the dreams:** Work together, hold One on Ones getting to know one another and cultivate spaces for open hearted dialogue and awareness of the presence of God in our conversations. United Way's 21 day Race Challenge prompts us to make the changes necessary so that no longer will 90% of local boards of business and education be white, Race Commission's 200 working groups (mental health, business, jobs, Justice, Poverty, Social Services and more). Start with compassion: **how about we start a 21 day Compassion Challenge with *21 different congregations planning it by taking turns each planning a day's compassion challenge?**

Dr. Muhammad Shafiq gave us a reflection from the Quran and closed with a reminder of the reasons why Native Americans are not celebrating Thanksgiving.

Black Lives Matter/Sanctity of Life law, preamble and Dr. Gayle Harrison's introductory questions: Discussion encouraged us to continue to show Dr. Harrison's draft to lawyers and legislators to give a BLM law legs. Rev Brae Adams will weave our concerns into separating the document into one banning police brutality especially of people of color and another mandating training for police de-escalation in mental health encounters and protests and to be inclusive - to change the word citizen to people or persons.

One on Ones: discussion included holding one on one conversations to build relationships, lessen isolation during pandemic, give people voice, listen to people's concerns, help prioritize focus on current issues, find others with social justice interests and expertise to build our congregation's Local Organizing Committees and RocACTS' task forces. And we wondered how best to generate One on Ones and follow through on them since none of us favor

forms. Participants agreed to forward One on One guidelines to their RocACTS liaison to RocACTS board, and all congregational leaders. Some will encourage One on Ones callers to email reports to congregations' Social Justice Outreach Chair and liaison/representative to RocACTS Board so that issues and persons with social justice interests will be heard, respected and receive support. Good follow through/communication is essential. It is not uncommon that congregations Social Justice Outreach Team is the same as its RocACTS Local Organizing committee. Some congregations are considering **kicking off One on Ones in the new year** by calling it a Listening Campaign or **Culture of Compassion campaign**. Some are considering giving congregational leaders (RocACTS reps, Social Justice folks, Session or Council and committee leaders & members, staff) each a list from their congregational roster to initiate One on Ones. Callers will set up phone calls or Face time or Zoom meetings.

Participants advised us on the National Union of Homeless Memorial and Transgender Day of Remembrance Nov 20 citing alarming statistics of violence against transgender people and rate of suicides.

Next meeting is Noon Wednesday Dec 16. (after the meeting I rec'd an email from Rev Wynne re. her or his conflict at noon each Wed. in case we might consider changing meeting time. I responded that Planners would ask participants if a more agreeable time can be found.)

Future planning: Please give suggestions for caucus to deni.mack412@gmail.com

Blessings,

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Religious Leader's Caucus Planners: Muhammad Shafiq, Rabbi Peter Stein, Rev. Dr. William Wilkerson, Deni Mack, DMin