

Religious Leaders Caucus Meeting (Zoom)
February 17, 2021
Noon



Minutes

In attendance: Dr. Tabassam Javed, Pres., The Islamic Center of Rochester, Rev. Valerie Austin, minister, Mt. Rise UCC, Fairport, Rev. Jacqueline Nelson, Minister for Outreach, Asbury Methodist, Rev. Doug Collum, Rt. Rev. Prince Singh, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese, Rochester, Karen Costello, liaison, Peace of Christ, Barry Swan, leader, Rochester Society of Humanistic Jews, Rev. Hans Irmer, ret., assisting at Messiah Lutheran, Greece, Rev. Shari Haliday Quan, 1st Unitarian settled minister, Asim Johnson, RocACTS Poverty Jobs Task Force Co-chair, Deacon Duncan Harris, Pastoral Associate, St Jos. Penfield, Rev. Peter Peters, retired Episcopalian priest working with REACH for/with housing deprived persons, Rev. Brae Abrams, Rev. Conley Zomerman, interim pastor 3rd Presbyterian, Rabbi Peter Stein, leader Temple B'rith Kodish, Sr. Phyllis Tierney, Sisters of St Joseph, and deni mack

Introductions: Each attendee spoke of responses to persons in trauma, i.e. being a gentle, supportive, assuring, listening, respectful presence. Several spoke of expectations of public safety officials responding to persons in trauma and the need for mental health professionals to be on call 24/7, for better communication, for accuracy in all dispatcher's calls. Demilitarized police need enriched and regular updated training in de-escalation and culture and trauma informed response. Mental health professionals are a necessary part of the process of redesigning police protocols. When a police officer senses a mental health crisis the officer needs to call a Crisis Intervention team as soon as possible.

Reflection: Rev Marilyn Cunningham led us in prayer

Cultural and Trauma Informed Response presentation by Melanie Funchess, mental health professional, founder, Black Healers Group and CEO, Ibuntu Village Works LLC. The central theme in Melanie Funchess' work is that behavior is learned and can be unlearned. We can unlearn the distrust and hateful behaviors that keep us apart and replace that with learning care, compassion and community. Ms. Funchess' example, her neighbor, Mr. Stein was one of many neighbors who modeled care, compassion and community to her as a child. As we and members of our congregations demonstrate care to people of all ages we are becoming the Beloved Community. Melanie assured us the community is responding in support of the family of Mr. Prude as well as to the nine year old girl and her family.

One on Ones: Deni spoke of the communities of care we cultivate as we engage in One-on-Ones with our congregational leaders and one another and as we empower people in our congregations to have One on Ones with one another.

Updates from RocACTS Poverty, Jobs, Housing Task Force with Asim Johnson. Asim comes to us from Buffalo. He works for Healthcare Education project 1199SEIU/GNYHA. He has worked with VOICE Buffalo and NOAH in WNY. Soon he will give us a survey for our input on police accountability and living wage.