

Religious Leaders Caucus Meeting
January 27, 2021
Noon - Zoom



Minutes

Attendance: Rev. Brae Adams, Rev. Peter Peters, Rev. Valerie Austin, Rev. Dr. William Wilkerson, Barry Swan, Deacon Duncan Harris, Dr. Tiffiney Taylor, Rev. Lori Vale, Rev. Hans Irmer, Dr. Muhammad Shafiq, Rev Conley Zomerman, Rev Greg Osterberg, Rev Shari Haliday Quan, Pastor Wanda Wilson, Rabbi Peter Stein, Dr. Deni Mack and guests: Frank Staropoli, Kathleen FitzPatrick and Dr. Gayle Harrison.

Introductions: Each spoke of both our individual and collective call to be a moral voice.

Reflection: Rev. Valerie Austin on events of the day

BLM Sanctity of Life: Rev. Brae Adams summarized our work with Harry Bronson, Jeremy Cooney, Demond Meeks, Samra Brouk and their aides with religious leaders at our December meeting citing background - policing hails back to slave patrols leading to current over policing and excessive use of force in black and brown neighborhoods. Police have approx. 100 hours training on firearms and only eight (8) on conflict de-escalation; even less on mental health and substance abuse. Our State Assembly members recommend we share the goals laid out in our BLM document widely and to join with others such as Black and Latina caucus, District Attorney's Association, PAB Associates and others with a justice agenda. They urge us to support or denounce various legislations, create a mandate for legislators and repeat, repeat, repeat the message. They challenge us to be aware of legislation that can adversely affect black and brown communities and people living in poverty. They also encourage us to learn who is lobbying against the measures and why so that we can counter their arguments. We are to know the opposition's as well as we know our own talking points. Dr. Gayle Harrison, Pres., RocACTS and author of BLM Sanctity of Life statement encouraged religious leaders throughout the meeting. Dr. Gayle urges us to take action.

UCLM United Christian Leadership Ministries: Pastor Wanda Wilson and Frank Staropoli reported UCLM serves on Mayor Warren's task force formed in response to Governor Cuomo's #203 executive order requiring all NYS police departments to make proposals for police reform. UCLM submitted five proposals:

1. Citizen Public Safety Review Panel to interview and assess police candidates before they are trained.
2. Racial Justice Education Curriculum for both cadets and in-service officers,
3. De-escalation training.
4. Body Worn Cameras,
5. Pre-Arrest diversion. UCLM is also working on Judicial Observation and seeks volunteers to serve as court observers and facilitate sacred conversations with judges. *Let me know if you want further description of these points and Pastor Wanda or I will send them to you.*

RocACTS Justice System Task Force: Chair, Kathleen FitzPatrick reports

1. Building the base with vision for legislative initiatives. i.e. H.A.L.T. Solitary Confinement, Bail Reform, Project Exile, Police Reform,
2. Actions: press conferences, open letters, Albany trips, meetings with legislators,
3. Advocacy (individually and family support) and
4. Education (research and papers).

Recognizing that systemic racism pervades the justice system we seek participants to work with us in dismantling all that leads to mass incarceration. For meeting times and dates email Kathleen at zaynabkathleen@gmail.com