

Religious Leaders Caucus Meeting (Zoom)  
September 20, 2022  
Noon



**Minutes**

**Land Acknowledgment** led by Virginia Fifield

**Devotional** led Rev. Marilyn Cunningham

Responses from religious leaders from twelve congregations to

**What issues most affect your people?**

- The Ukraine
- Spikes in hate crimes against Jews, Muslims, Indigenous people, Hispanics, Asians & Blacks. Many watched Ken Burns Holocaust and see distinct parallels between what happened pre Holocaust & what is happening now with Putin and others like him
- Committed to anti-racism work.
- Incorporate into all meetings: what is the potential impact of a decision we make on people of color or on any targeted peoples?
- Attentively listen to people closest to the pain of injustice.
- Fewer volunteers
- Divisiveness
- Poverty
- Lack of health care
- Caste system
- Support one another in taking a stance
- Creating a vibrant community
- Public safety/ Violence
- Education
- Voicelessness
- Evictions
- Environment
- Immigration

Rev. Dr. Wm. Wilkinson spoke on the Role of Faith Rooted Community Organizing: As we together build a Culture of Compassion/the Beloved Community, our goal is to affect needed change in the wider community. For instance, a few people from a faith

community in VT mobilized the entire community over a school district's decisions that were destructive to some of the children. They listened and talked with many and needed changes were made.

**To organize to bring about needed societal changes we need to:**

- Hold one-on-one conversations so as to discern needs and ways to address needs
- Individual meetings to see what is important to religious leaders
- Build trust
- Analyze power: who is connected to whom?
- Use tools that will make us more effective
- Take action and evaluate the effectiveness of that action
- Collect and evaluate data
- Get moving and try things out
- Respect. Relationship building is essential

**Small group conversations on:** How is your community impacted by the issues which most affect your people? How do these realities impact you as a faith leader? How have you tried to respond?

**Group 1**

- Work to understand the living faith of other members of RocACTS so that we stand together on common ground
- We are called to show up with one another especially if we are different and form friendships so that we see each other as less "other" and more "each other"
- Be part of local ongoing efforts where our congregation is located
- Called to understand the holocaust and white Christian nationalism
- Called to understand the experience of indigenous peoples as a template for understanding justice
- Study Doctrine of Discovery

**Group 2**

- During our charitable activities LISTEN one on one to those we serve in order to discern needs and build trusting relationships.
- Organize around one of the RASE (Racial and Structural Equity) recommendations.
- Use baseline data for our community of Rochester that already exists to help prioritize efforts.

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- One-on-Ones are foundational to RocACTS organizing. We need to build our harvest of stories of lived experience
- Explore partnering with the Urban League of powerbrokers and targeted initiatives
- Invite those affected to the power broker program meetings
- Invite spokespeople from Urban League, Citizen Action, Gandhi Institute, R.E.A.L (RCSD parent education task force), ROAR (student focused caucus within RCSD teachers union), Pathstone, Metro Act, Chief Equity officers with mayor's office and county legislature re. accountability on RASE recommendations, Ibero American League & ESWA to respond to religious leader's concerns @ our meetings
- Consider transparently incorporating restorative justice principles into the overall arc of the work

**Announcements:**

DATE	TIME	EVENT
Oct 8	1-5 pm	<b>The Underground Railroad Experience @</b> Mt Olivet Church 141 Adams St
Oct 13	6-8 pm	Bail Reform: <b>Change the Narrative with Frederick Douglass Family Initiative</b> 140 E Main St. Coalition with RocACTS Justice System Task Force, Vera Institute, Citizen Action, VOCAL NY
Oct 21 – 23		<b>Interfaith Children's Weekend</b> <u>is highly recommended for all congregations.</u> Please Google <i>Resources for a Multifaith Children's Sabbath Celebration</i> for carefully curated ideas for EACH faith re. child advocacy, preaching and prayer easily adapted for your congregation. <i>(The title multi faith is misleading. The resources are not for a single multi faith service. Rather they are clearly written for specific faiths)</i>
Oct 19	11:30 am - 1pm	<b>RocACTS Religious Leaders</b> meet via zoom with Joe Fleming, Faith in Action's Senior Advisor, Faith Leadership Strategies. Let's each invite 2 religious leaders to join us in Oct 19 zoom meeting

Oct 20	4pm	TIAR new president, Rev. Paul Raushenbush on <b>Christian Nationalism</b> . For zoom link email <a href="mailto:baswan@aol.com">baswan@aol.com</a>
Oct 21	8 am - 1pm	<b>End Hate Conference</b> sponsored by the Levine Center held @ Memorial Art Gallery \$35 incl. lunch. To register: <a href="https://www.endhateroc.org/">https://www.endhateroc.org/</a>
Oct 30	6:30pm	Katherine Stewart re her bk: <b><i>The Power Worshipers: Inside the Dangerous Rise of Religious Nationalism</i></b> via Zoom presented by RocCCU Rochester Clergy and Community United. RocCCU reps dissuaded owner of Armory from hosting & tried to dissuade a pastor near Batavia from hosting Aug 12/13 2022 Christian Nationalism event featuring Alex Jones, Roger Stone, General Flynn & more spreaders of hate, misinfo & doubt against election, FBI, vaccinations, Muslims, separation of church and state, gun control, etc. For blog alerts re this well-funded movement's dangers see <a href="https://jimmyreaders.blog/">https://jimmyreaders.blog/</a> or call 585 315 9241