

## Words of Inspiration

### TOWARD THE BELOVED COMMUNITY UPDATES FROM THE INTERIM CO-PRESIDENTS, MAY 4, 2017

The Unitarian Universalist Association's (UUA) Interim Co-Presidents, the Revs. Sofia Betancourt and William Sinkford and Dr. Leon Spencer, shared this message following their recent time together in Boston:

Last Thursday and Friday we three Interim Co-Presidents had the opportunity to sit down together face to face for the first time since our appointment by the UUA Board of Trustees. This allowed for deep reflection on our portfolios and the work ahead for the coming weeks. We were joined in this time by Interim Chief Operating Officer the Rev. Sarah Lammert and our UUA Moderator, Jim Key. This Quintet, as we affectionately think of ourselves, dove into the work of interim tasks, constituent outreach and support, the pastoral and structural needs of the UUA staff, and early thoughts for planning the Commission called for by the UUA Board. We shared with one another the collective wisdom that is starting to coalesce from our conversations with many leaders and constituents in our movement.

Your Interim Co-Presidents have been doing a lot of listening in these early weeks, listening to staff, leaders of affiliate and affinity groups, board members, UUs who identify as people of color and/or indigenous, and more. Voice after voice is telling us of the richness, depth, and complexity of their commitment to Unitarian Universalism. That commitment is needed now more than ever in our movement. It comes with hope and relief for some who for decades have been doing the work of dismantling racism and the impact of white supremacy on our movement. Hope comes from the now more than 600 congregations participating in the white supremacy teach-ins that arose from the grassroots of Unitarian Universalism. The hands, minds, and hearts of our leaders are shepherding this work. More voices than ever are questioning, wrestling, and hoping together.

We also know that our shared commitment to Unitarian Universalism underlies some of the fears that we are hearing. For many who longed for the spiritual home they finally found in our congregations, the fear that we might lose one another in these times is devastating. Some have already lived the experience of losing their home in UUism over the realities of racial injustice, and they fear losing this community of hope and love once again. Whether the language of white supremacy seems unimaginable in connection with Unitarian Universalism, or raising questions of racial injustice in our hiring practices is far out of keeping with our perception of this faith that we love, realizing that we too can be disconnected from our central values is deeply troubling to many.

What keeps us hopeful is the profound commitment that we are hearing across the rich diversity of perspectives and experiences that so many of you are sharing with us. Time and again conversations return to the importance of Unitarian Universalism, and how very much is at stake. We hear you that you long for us not only to move toward the Beloved Community, but to model that transformation in the world. We know that the journey forward centers on our moving together. Truth and reconciliation will require all of us to face our fears, embrace our hope, and remain engaged together.

[http://www.uua.org/pressroom/press-releases/toward-beloved-community-updates-interim-co-presidents-may-4-2017?utm\\_medium=uua.org&utm\\_source=story6&utm\\_campaign=homepag](http://www.uua.org/pressroom/press-releases/toward-beloved-community-updates-interim-co-presidents-may-4-2017?utm_medium=uua.org&utm_source=story6&utm_campaign=homepag)