

**ARCHIVE OF BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY ANOUNCEMENTS
PART 3 - SEPTEMBER 2022 – DECEMBER 2023**

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on behalf of the Racial Justice Team Planning Group



**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Quotation by Quotation, September 1, 2022**

Winchester's New Hope Baptist Church on Cross Street was the center of a vibrant African American community from 1890-1970. **Nancy Schrock**, local archivist and Winchester Unitarian Society member, featured her ongoing research at a lay-led summer service on Sunday, August 14.

Schrock concluded the reflection with a quotation from a member of the New Hope congregation, Dorothy Elizabeth Griffith Tucker. **"This was a space for survival. This was a space where people could find out who they really were, not being defined by other people. And that's what I call a shelter, a place where you can come and learn about you as a person and get the self-respect, your own self-respect if nobody else chooses to give it to you."**

What further actions could we take that would make our own faith community a place of shelter, of sanctuary, of radical welcoming—a space in which we build Beloved Community together.

Let your Racial Justice Team hear from you, and join us with your experiences, perspective, and suggestions.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Book by Book, September 8, 2022**

For a look at a national crisis that many of us may not be aware of, read or listen to the

acclaimed book *Evicted* by Matthew Desmond. Desmond chronicles the desperation of eight families in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 2008 as they struggle to find housing and face eviction and its aftermath. The stories are heartbreaking, especially as the author quotes statistics nationwide.

If you didn't believe in the importance of affordable housing before, this will convince you!

His final words: *Whatever our way out of this mess, one thing is certain. This degree of inequality, this withdrawal of opportunity, this cold denial of basic needs, this endorsement of pointless suffering—by no American value is this situation justified. No moral code or ethical principle, no piece of scripture or holy teaching, can be summoned to defend what we have allowed our country to become.*

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Quotation by Quotation, September 22, 2022**

The lessons we learned over the past half century need constant reiteration, examination, and determination to break through barriers to understanding and change.

From “Sankofa—Go Back and Get It” by Jan Carpenter Tucker in the booklet BLUU Notes: An Anthology of Love, Justice, and Liberation. BLUU stands for Black Lives Unitarian Universalism, and the booklet, published in 2021, includes poems and essays from a wide range of perspectives.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Culture by Culture, September 29, 2022**

Thursday, September 15th, marked the beginning of Hispanic Heritage Month, celebrated every year from September 15th to October 15th.

The 2022 Hispanic Heritage Month national theme is Unidos: Inclusivity for a Stronger Nation. The theme encourages the representation and welcome of all voices to support building stronger communities and a stronger nation.

Increasingly our Hispanic neighbors are native-born, as well as immigrants. In 2020 the Hispanic population numbered 62.1 million (18.7%).

The national observation began in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period starting September 15th. Please see: <http://hispanicheritagemonth.gov/> Unidos!

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Book by Book, October 6, 2022**

One way to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month is to educate ourselves about some of the many important figures who have had a positive impact on our world. My Beloved World by Sonia Sotomayor, the first Hispanic justice on the United States Supreme Court, is an absorbing and inspiring read. Her memoir recounts a challenging childhood, complicated by the diagnosis of juvenile diabetes, and her subsequent life up to 1992 as she coped with prejudices about women and Puerto Ricans. A lifelong learner, Sotomayor's mentors, family, and friends sustained, motivated, and encouraged her. It's a good read!

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Action by Action, October 13, 2022**

Join in expanding Beloved Community by supporting an event connecting us to a local organization, **Mystic Valley NAACP**, that benefits persons of color.

For more than 100 years, the NAACP has been at the forefront in defending civil rights and promoting racial justice across the nation. In these critical times, the Mystic Valley Area branch of the NAACP continues this work in our local communities of Arlington, Everett, Malden, Medford, Winchester and Woburn, as well as neighboring cities and towns. In support of this important work we will once again be hosting our Annual Wine Tasting Gala! This is a chance for you to support the NAACP and have a great time doing so! After a long hiatus during COVID, we are looking forward to enjoying one another's company and celebrating the increasingly critical work of the branch. The event will include wine tasting, hors d'oeuvres, live music, dancing, and prizes! We hope you will join us.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Acts of Courage, October 20, 2022**

The theme for October has been Courage, which can take many forms. For many of us, it takes courage to confront racism in ourselves, to even gently confront a friend who has inadvertently made a stereotypical remark about Asians, or to put our names to a letter to the editor about a controversial subject such as immigration. Every brave act makes a difference!

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
By Exploring the Wisdom of other Organizations, November 3, 2022**

YBoston is an organization "dedicated to eliminating racism and empowering women." Check out their website at **www.yboston.org** to learn more about their work. The excerpt below is from a recent newsletter which is full of wisdom and insights into why this work of anti-racism

can stir up uncomfortable feelings.

*People often experience discomfort when engaging in social justice work because it challenges long-held beliefs and we realize we have benefited from the harm done to others, even when we were not directly responsible. To understand why diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts can feel unfair, even when they are not, we must first understand **oppressive systems, intersectionality**, the difference between equality and equity, and the origins of **inequitable systems**, including how they manifest today. Let's dive deeper...*

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
By knowing Indigenous People's History, November 10, 2022**

We humans organize, find patterns, and create categories to frame a complex world. Grouping trees as deciduous has autumn relevance, yet labeling humans has negative consequences—discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping. We unconsciously hold a generalization (implicit bias), one wrongly embedded in our psyches even decades ago.

Check out a 1493 papal decree and the “Doctrine of Discovery.” One lingering result: In 1823 our United States Supreme Court, under Chief Justice Marshall, stated “...the tribes of Indians inhabiting this country were fierce savages, whose occupation was war, and whose subsistence was drawn chiefly from the forest. To leave them in possession of their country was to leave the country a wilderness.” Sound like a Hollywood script? The ruling has not been revisited or overturned.

Contrary to stereotypical assumptions, 64% of 4.1 million people in the U.S. who identify as American Indian and/or Alaskan Native live in urban settings. Only about 37% live on reservations.

Courage to each of us in acknowledging our shared history and confronting systemic injustices that have grown from colonization, violence, forced assimilation, and broken treaties.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
By Exploring Resources, November 17, 2022**

During this month of celebrating Native American heritage, Veterans' Day, and exploring the theme of change in our faith community, take just a few minutes to visit the website of the Museum of the American Indian (americanindian.si.edu). Click on “**Native Words, Native Warriors**” to learn about the Code Talkers who used their language to become military heroes during World War I and World War II. Learning changes us!

The museum's mission: *We are committed to equity and social justice for the Native peoples of the Western Hemisphere through education, inspiration, and empowerment.*

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Through Gratitude, December 1, 2022**

The November 22 issue of *The Emancipator** featured an essay by Mia Henry, a *social justice educator and founder of Freedom Lifted*. In this season it seems particularly appropriate to stop, in the midst of the hustle and bustle of December, and reflect on this excerpt:

Cultivating a culture of gratitude is critical to movement-building and a clear antidote to White supremacy. We often think of giving thanks as easy and trite, but there is no true freedom without connection. There are few better ways to connect than by rooting ourselves in gratitude.

Working for liberation through a social justice lens means we divorce from oppression and understand power as abundant. We strive for a world where everyone, regardless of identity or circumstance, is affirmed for who they are and has access to the resources they need. This practice requires recognizing everyone's unique contributions to our collective struggle and seeing ourselves and others as inherently valuable, appreciating the fact that we simply exist.

**The Emancipator* is an online newsletter with the tagline: *Reframing the conversation on racial justice and equity*. It is a collaboration with the Boston Globe and Boston University's Center for Antiracist Research.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Living Our Principles, December 8, 2022**

On Thursday past, our Winchester Unitarian Society's Black Lives Matter banner again was stolen, this time brazenly at 11 a.m. by a man who parked his gray pickup truck in our circular driveway.

Our Rev. Heather Janules posted on the Winchester Residents' Facebook page: "...I recall the words of the Rev. Carlton Eliot Smith, a Black minister, who observed about another act of vandalism, 'If people are having that kind of reactivity around a sign in front of a church, what do you think it is like for those of us who are walking around day to day in Black skin?' We will eventually hang another Black Lives Matter flag. It is my hope that when this new flag is dedicated, this ceremony will include people from beyond the members and friends of the Winchester Unitarian Society. Over time, I have learned that our BLM flag has meaning for many. As one person wrote to me, 'As a person-of-color coming into a predominantly white

community, seeing those flags made me feel welcomed...”

At our May annual meeting we endorsed the Eighth Principle, “journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.” Our BLM banner display is a spiritual commitment to Building Beloved Community. So, also, are our individual actions every day.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Article by Article, December 15, 2022**

A quick perusal of some of the resources that popped up when I googled “anti-racism at the holiday season” convinced me that there is no better time to renew our commitment to the work. An article titled “How to practice racial justice during the holidays” by Dr. Monea Abdul-Majeed, the YWCA of York’s Racial Justice Coordinator, includes these thoughts and suggestions:

- *Not everyone celebrates Christmas, but the spirit of the holiday season encompasses core racial justice values such as giving, unity, and kindness.*
- *Nonprofits need your financial support to serve those who have been affected by racism and discrimination. Some organizations lead training and community events to eliminate racism and could use your support to keep those programs going*
- *During the holiday season, I challenge you to stand up for racial justice in two ways.*
 - o *First, gather with people who do not look like you... I envision a world in which we can all gather around the same table, but I know the truth is that most of us gather with people who look like us. The holidays are the perfect time to change this.*
 - o *Secondly, when you are around your friends and family, I invite you to be an anti-racist ally. An anti-racist ally is someone whose personal commitment to dismantling racism is reflected in a willingness to educate oneself about racism and racial justice, challenge one’s own racial prejudice, learn and practice the skills of anti-racism, interrupt racist statements, behaviors, policies and institutional structures. These few tips don’t do justice to the article.*

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Poem by Poem, December 22, 2022**

Maya Angelou, “Amazing Peace,” written in 2005 for the White House Tree Lighting ceremony:

*...We clap hands and welcome the Peace of Christmas.
We beckon this good season to wait a while with us.
We, Baptist and Buddhist, Methodist and Muslim, say come.*

Peace.

Come and fill us and our world with your majesty.

We, the Jew and the Jainist, the Catholic and the Confucian,

Implore you, to stay a while with us.

So we may learn by your shimmering light

How to look beyond complexion and see community.

It is Christmas time, a halting of hate time.

On this platform of peace, we can create a language

To translate ourselves to ourselves and to each other...

Peace, My Brother. Peace, My Sister. Peace, My Soul.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Quotation by Quotation, January 5, 2023**

As George Saunders, Syracuse University professor and prize-winning author, explains in his discussion of Nikolai Gogol's short story, "The Nose":

"Everywhere we go, people are mostly kind and earnest and seem to believe in approximately the same things we do: responsibility, truth, neighborliness. And yet every night, on the news...Personally, I've never met a person who was evil in the classic Hollywood mode, who throws down happily on the side of evil while cackling, the sworn enemy of all that is good because of some early disillusionment. Most of the evil I've seen in the world—most of the nastiness I've been on the receiving end of (and, for that matter the nastiness I myself have inflicted on others)—was done by people **who intended good, who thought they were doing good, by reasonable people, staying polite, making accommodations, laboring under slight misperceptions, who haven't had the inclination or taken the time to think things through, who've been sheltered from or blind to the negative consequences of the belief system of which they were a part, bowing to expedience and/or "commonsense" notions that have come to them via their culture and that they have failed to interrogate. In other words, they're like the people in Gogol.**"

—George Saunders, *A Swim in the Pond in the Rain in which Four Russians Give a Master Class on Writing, Reading, and Life*, pages 294-295

As we awaken to a new year, could one resolution be, as a congregation and individuals, to question and challenge our inherited belief systems, noting where built-in systemic benefits lie.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Starting a New Year, January 12, 2023**

The new year provides opportunities galore to explore ways to expand our understanding of beloved community. As we approach the weekend honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., consider the Unitarian Universalist definition of what that is: *Beloved Community happens when people of diverse racial, ethnic, educational, class, gender, abilities, sexual orientation backgrounds/identities come together in an interdependent relationship of love, mutual respect, and care that seeks to realize justice within the community and in the broader world.*

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Moment by Moment, January 19, 2023**

On Friday, January 13, a 22 foot bronze monument “The Embrace”—honoring the lives, love, and legacy of Coretta Scott King and Martin Luther King, Jr.— opened in Boston.

The creator, Hank Willis Thomas, noted its metaphor for society: *We are called as a community to embrace our neighbors; we are invited to engage; we are called to come into action; we create, by interlocking our arms and bodies, safety for each other.*

As visitors stand within the embracing arms, they look up into the pure sky. Beneath their feet is a paved “quilt” with 65 names of Boston civil rights heroes. One name is Unitarian minister The Rev. James Reeb.

Listen to the nine minute interview of artist Thomas by NPR’s Robin Young here: <https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2023/01/12/hank-willis-thomas-the-embrace>. Next, a field trip to Boston Common?

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Moment by Moment, January 26, 2023**

The President of Simmons University, Lynn Wooten, wrote to alumnae reflecting on the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the unveiling of the sculpture, “The Embrace,” memorializing the love between King and his wife Coretta Scott King. Her message has meaning for all of us. Here are excerpts: As I reflect upon the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, I am reminded of the potential and power each of us has to influence and shape this long and sometimes arduous journey for social justice and equity.

She describes the sculpture and notes that the surrounding memorial plaza features the names of other, lesser-known individuals who have fought for civil rights over the past several decades. These are just a few of the everyday leaders who utilized their unique talents and strengths to make the world better... Wooten concludes her message by saying, I encourage you to not only to take time to celebrate The Embrace, but to consider how you can continue to utilize your learning, scholarship, work, and service to make the world a more just place.

Sandy Thompson for the Racial Justice Planning Group

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Welcome by Welcome, February 2, 2023**

A phrase we hear as we move into living the Eighth Principle is an aspiration of our being a radically welcoming community: “There is a pressing need within our faith for ‘radical welcome’ and ongoing cultural change for it to be relevant to future generations.”

At Winchester Unitarian Society we strive to welcome with love not only the presence but the voices, traditions, cultures, and the power of all. Especially we aspire to extend an embrace to those defined as The Other, those who have been systemically and historically silenced, marginalized, brutalized, and oppressed.

As Rev. Heather noted in last Sunday’s reflection, we may find ourselves momentarily in a “crucible of discomfort” as we move into sharing not only a greeting at the door and a cup of coffee after the service but also the deep generosity of truly listening, seeing fully another person, and incorporating perspectives that reinvigorate our traditions.

Black “liberatory storyteller” Saphia Suarez uses video narratives to shift culture in ways that we viewers may not even recognize as happening within us. In her “Generosity Fuels Innovation and Evolution” she captures the heart of what persons of color want in shared spaces—generosity across status, of care, of time, and of affect. Please watch her four-minute video at <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=45514578329661> (Source: The Nonprofit Quarterly)

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Concept by Concept, February 9, 2023**

The recent news of a young Black man being murdered by Black policemen in Memphis, Tennessee might lead someone to assume that racial bias was not involved. But many involved in the world of anti-racism and social justice might see it differently—as an example of internalized oppression.

Most of us are familiar with the concept of oppression—when groups of people are treated as “less than” or inferior. While the oppression comes from outside the group, people within often internalize those messages of inferiority. According to an online article in *Learning for Justice*, “Internalized oppression is the belief among historically oppressed people that negative stereotypes about themselves and positive stereotypes about a dominant group are, in fact, true.”

Internalized oppression can occur in any oppressed group—women, members of the LGBT community—any group that has been treated as “less than” over time. As a white woman, it is not my place to diagnose the Black policemen involved in the Memphis murder as acting out of their internalized oppression. I only want to introduce the concept as another way to grasp the harm that institutionalized racism causes.

To learn more, you only need google “internalized racism” or “internalized oppression.” You may want to start with articles by Donna Bivens of the Women’s Theological Center.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Book by Book, February 16, 2023**

Stories bring us directly into experiences we might otherwise never know. In this brilliant debut *Friday Black*, author Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah, of Ghanaian heritage, lets readers into the “lives of ordinary people in extraordinary situations of violence, injustice, and painful absurdities,” says the book jacket. Yes, and written with a disarming, harrowing amplification that includes the surreal, the satirical, and the humorous.

The title comes from a story midway in the collection featuring a renowned salesclerk. “The Ice King” works Black Fridays, managing the consumerism-frenzied hordes trampling over each other for bargain brand-label ski jackets.

An interviewer asked Adjei-Brenyah how he arranged the stories’ order. He said he might have only one chance to engage his readers so he placed multilayered “The Finkelstein Five” first. And then he followed it with “Things My Mother Said,” a simple, touching tribute.

“The Finklestein Five” carves into one’s conscience. Emmanuel, who had learned the Black basics as a boy, like smiling when angry, constantly measures his Blackness on a scale of one to ten. Awakening from a nightmare, he answers a call from a job interviewer with Blackness set at 1.5. His dream had replayed the recent news of five Black children murdered by a white man allegedly protecting his children as they left a library. The murderer was acquitted by a jury of his peers. In solidarity with the five children, Emmanuel leaves his house, his parents already off to work, wearing a long-abandoned black hoodie, a 7.6 on his scale. Emmanuel’s day continues, with each incident scaled—entering the mall, being hassled for a receipt, joining a bus stop line, meeting a school friend. Part of his long day will be calling out each name of the murdered children: Naming, a Black tradition. At one point, his scale hits a 10. Another, a 0.0.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Quote by Quote, February 23, 2023**

“Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public.” —Cornel West

In the opening segment of online MasterClass, “BLACK History, Freedom, Love,” West celebrates the power of Black love in the face of chronic systemic hatred, its evil deeds an impediment to Black dignity.

Blacks are Love Warriors at the highest level and have, and will, overcome by over-loving. Emmett Till's mother said she had not a moment to hate, choosing instead to pursue justice. Blacks are Freedom-loving Warriors—freedom for everyone, pushing us all toward a superior level. Black love buttresses its Warriors who carry on, though wounded healers. Most of all, Black Love Warriors are joy spreaders.

Black love is all-embracing, and no one has control over it. It spills over from the chocolate side of town to the vanilla side. West names many immersed-in-love partners—including Harriet Tubman, Frederic Douglass, Louis Armstrong over to John Brown, Elijah Lovejoy, Rabbi Herschel.

Love and justice, freedom and dignity, healing and joy— let them spill over.

BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY, Term by Term, March 2, 2023

Have you been surprised—or maybe a little shocked—to hear the term “white supremacy culture” or “white hegemony” used in conversations about Building Beloved Community? Would it be easier to hear “white dominant culture?” In fact, our society's norms have been shaped by white people and most of us don't realize these norms exist because we have lived with them all our lives. Calling out “white dominant/supremacy culture” is a way of calling attention to certain attitudes, norms, and behaviors—making them visible in service of thinking about how we can make our church culture inclusive. Of course “white culture” is a broad term and refers to general characteristics; not everyone fits a given description. Further, we are using the term, not as a negative but simply to name some of the ways the dominant culture operates.

In coming issues of Highlights different aspects of white supremacy culture will be discussed and we'll delve into other terms as well.

BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY, Term by Term, March 9, 2023

What is “white supremacy culture”? In last week's Highlights we touched on this term which often provokes strong feelings. In *Dismantling Racism: A Workbook for Social Change Groups* by Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun, the authors point out that “Culture is powerful precisely because it is so present and at the same time so very difficult to name or identify.” They and other social justice writers have named what they see as characteristics of the dominant white culture we live in. A few of them are: competition, individualism, fear of open conflict, defensiveness, and perfectionism.

Jones and Okun note that “One of the purposes of listing characteristics of white supremacy culture is to point out how organizations which unconsciously use these characteristics as their norms and standards make it difficult, if not impossible, to open the door to other cultural norms and standards.” As we strive to build beloved community, it is important to be aware of how these characteristics infuse our organizations. It’s not about their being right or wrong, but simply recognizing them and being open to changing our ways of thinking.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Concept by Concept, March 16, 2023**

Have you ever heard someone say, “I do not see color.” Or, maybe, “I am colorblind. I do not see race.”

Kimberle W. Crenshaw, Columbia University civil rights scholar, in her 2022 induction into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences said: “I cannot shake off the worry that the attacks on knowledge, and on our very democracy have reached unimaginable heights in part, because of the unfinished work of grappling with our nation's racial history, and our profound discomfort in talking about it, We are at the point where the **colorblind sweet spot** has created a bitter harvest. Racism has been a route through which anti-democratic politics have become mainstream.”

She continues, “Of course, the resort to being silent about endangering conditions would make little sense in the context of, say, the toxic consequences of substances built into our physical infrastructure, like asbestos or lead...And it makes no more sense to suppress vital knowledge about the toxic dimensions of our history.”

This crucible of discomfort operates on both sides of political partisanship. By those “... who wax nostalgic for the time when freedom was enjoyed by only a privileged few, but it is also shared by all too many who are truly horrified by our past...and who choose to deal with our nation’s ugliness by ignoring it.”

Denying the residual distortions of our racist history on our shared community infrastructure deepens divisions. Colorblindness has never been a “sweet” alternative.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Term by Term, March 23, 2023**

Having a shared understanding of terms used in justice and equity work is important.

Last week we quoted Prof. Kimberle Crenshaw’s comments on colorblindness. Crenshaw is well-known for having developed the concept of intersectionality. In a 1989 paper identifying

multiple factors of advantage and disadvantage she asserted that identity markers do not operate independently and, in their overlapping, may reap benefits as well as enact oppression.

In March, Women's History Month, we can see how intersectionality plays out in women's lives. Being white, speaking English as a first language, and having a college education reap benefits, while being a Black woman may invoke discrimination. Imagine adding other identity markers such as disability or immigrant status.

BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY, Term by Term, March 30, 2023

A March 29, 2017, YW BOSTON BLOG suggests ways to incorporate the concept of **Intersectionality** in our interactions.

Recognize difference: We are socialized not to recognize differences. If you fall into this category, challenge yourself to become more comfortable acknowledging such differences as skin color, disability, gender identity.

Avoid over-simplified language: Avoid assuming our experiences are the same. Don't say, for example, "I know how you feel" when in fact you probably don't know how a person of color feels about an interaction.

Analyze the space you occupy: Notice what differences are not represented in your group or committee and what you sense of perhaps-subtle welcoming or distancing practices.

Seek other points of view: Learn from and listen to those with interlocking and interwoven identities. Yet, do not expect those with differences to be the educator. Go online and study.

Show up: As you hear about issues, listen and defer to those who live with intersectional identities each day. Be an ally in whatever way you can.

And, what if we each wore labels one Sunday that identify our own identity markers? What conversations we could have with each other—in openness, curiosity, and trust.

BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY, Resource by Resource, April 6, 2023

Some wisdom from YW Boston (ywboston.org)

"People often experience discomfort when engaging in social justice work, because it challenges long-held beliefs and we realize we have benefited from the harm done to others, even when we were not directly responsible. To understand why diversity, equity, and

inclusion (DEI) efforts can feel unfair, even when they are not, we must first understand oppressive systems, [intersectionality](#), the difference between equality and equity, and the origins of inequitable systems, including how they manifest today. Let's dive deeper..."

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Resource by Resource, April 13, 2023**

Our families, friends, neighbors, and colleagues in the Jewish community have seen an unconscionable rise in antisemitism incidents of harassment, assault, and vandalism last year. In the USA—our country—the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) reported 3,697 incidents, averaging ten a day. In MA—our state—there were 152 reported incidents against Jewish people in 71 cities and towns.

The ADL encourages everyone to commit to:

- “1. Continue to learn about the Jewish people, as well as the complex, multifaceted, and often subtle nature of antisemitism.
2. Name and publicly condemn acts of antisemitism and other forms of hate whenever encountered.
3. Advocate for policy solutions to combat antisemitism and improve the understanding, prevention of, and response to incidents of antisemitism in schools and other public entities.
4. Urge the federal government to fully fund initiatives to fight antisemitism and make all relevant appointments necessary to combat antisemitism, domestically and globally.”

We know hatred and bigotry in all their overt and covert permutations harm our nation, our society, each and everyone of us.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Quotation by Quotation, April 20, 2023**

Winchester Unitarian Society member Terrill Levering shared this quotation which is displayed in many neighboring Arlington schools:

Diversity is a fact.

Equity is a choice.

Inclusion is an action.

Belonging is an outcome.

–Arthur Chan, DEI strategist, creating equitable cultures

May this be our spiritual practice in all the communities we touch.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Resource by Resource, April 27, 2023**

Carlos Hoyt got our attention when he recently presented a workshop for the local organization NonProfit Net. He is a Costa Rican-born scholar, teacher and leader in the field of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. He approaches the issue of racism by confronting the term race which is, in fact, a social construct. He uses the term racialize or racialization. “When we apply the process of selecting, sorting, attributing, essentializing and acting to how we understand and should treat human beings, we are performing the process of racialization. We are literally creating the social construct of race within which we stay trapped and harmed.”

Just google ***Carlos Hoyt Ted Talk*** for an enlightening perspective on race and racism.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Quotation by Quotation, May 4, 2023**

Last Sunday, Ivan Correia, Worship Associate and Standing Committee member, shared a reflection on resisting pain through drawing from its lessons in order to heal and regain joy.

Extending this important exploration, we offer this quotation from May Sarton (1912-1995) in her 1977 book **The House by the Sea**:

“I am more and more convinced that in the life of civilizations as in the lives of individuals too much matter that cannot be digested, too much experience that has not been imagined and probed and understood, ends in total rejection of everything....The structures break down and there is nothing to ‘hold onto.’ It is understandable that at such times religious fanatics arise and the fundamentalists rise up in fury. Hatred rather than love dominates.

How does one handle it? The greatest danger, as I see it in myself, is the danger of withdrawal into private worlds. We have to keep the channels in ourselves open to pain. At the same time it is essential that true joys be experienced, that the sunrise not leave us unmoved, for civilization depends on the true joys, all those that have nothing to do with money or affluence — nature, the arts, human love.”

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
History by History, May 11, 2023**

May is Asian American Pacific Islander Month, a time to highlight the cultures and histories of the many countries that are covered under that umbrella. It’s also an opportunity to learn

about the racism that has impacted Asians in our country since the eighteen hundreds.

The highly respected organization, Facing History and Ourselves, asserts that “Examining the legacy of the Chinese Exclusion Act is important to understanding both US immigration policy & the roots of anti-Asian sentiment.” The article goes on: “ On May 6, 1882, nearly 141 years ago to the day, the U.S. Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, **a law unlike any other in U.S. history**. The act, which was not repealed until 1943, banned all Chinese laborers from immigrating to the country and declared Chinese ineligible for U.S. citizenship. Nearly overnight the nation went from having what historians refer to as an “open door” policy toward immigrants to excluding an entire group of people on the basis of race and national origin.” Read more of this important article on the Facing History website to understand the Act’s long-term effects.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Quotation by Quotation, May 18, 2023**

"How can diverse Americans become ‘one people’? I believe that one path is for us to pursue the study of the past that includes all of us, making all of us feel connected to one another as ‘we the people,’ working and living in a nation, founded and ‘dedicated’ (to use Lincoln's language) to the ‘proposition’ that ‘all men are created equal.’ " —Ronald Takaki

In honor of Asian American Pacific Islander Month we offer this quotation by noted historian Ronald Takaki, whose book, *Strangers From a Different Shore*, tells the history of Asian Americans. Takaki, who helped coin the term “Asian Americans” opened readers’ eyes to the fact that so many of America’s immigrants— from China, Korea, Japan, The Philippines, and Southeast Asia—came through Angel Island on our West Coast, not just Ellis Island with whose history we are more familiar.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
through Creative Storyboarding, May 25, 2023**

Today, May 25th, marks the three-year anniversary of George Floyd’s murder— a stark reminder of our need to move ourselves and our nation out of racialization, division, hate crimes, and law enforcement violence. As we close this month, whose worship theme has been “Creativity,” perhaps a child, our creative inner child, can lead us in further building our beloved community. David Heredia says, “Instead of asking kids, ‘What do you want to be when you grow up?,’ ask them, ‘What problems do you want to solve in the world?’”

In his “Heroes of Color” educational program, an animation workshop leads fifth graders to create their social justice story. The steps in his storyboarding are “P” for problem, “S” for

solution, and “B” for benefit. Heredia begins with their highlighting a problem: “What is the problem, a social justice issue that you would like to solve?” Once they highlight that problem, he asks them to think about possible solutions. Finally, how does that benefit our society and all of us?

Whether stick figures or carefully shaded contours, what would your storyboard look like? What problem would you select, what are its possible solutions, what benefits would result in helping us to build beloved community?

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Book by Book, June 1, 2023**

For a slight change of pace we are suggesting an innovative workbook to guide thinking and acting about anti-racism work. *Do The Work: An Antiracist Activity Book* by W. Kamau Bell and Kate Schatz offers both a Black and White perspective on how we can take stock of ourselves and take concrete actions to confront racism in its many forms. It is very accessible for ages high school and up, is packed with illustrations and suggested activities, and covers topics from “What do You Know About Race?” to “Centering Black Women’s Voices” and much more. The authors suggest that you “Choose your own adventure method...but take your time.”

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Article by Article, June 8, 2023**

June Pride Month offers us space each year to recognize and celebrate the beautiful complexity and intricacy of our human gender identities.

In addition to our Winchester Unitarian Universalist rainbow flag which we fly year round, this month our lawn will have a rainbow banner that includes the words “Gender Affirming Care Is Love.”

Mimi Lemay, from nearby Melrose, is a transgender rights spokesperson and author who grew up in an Orthodox Jewish family. She has a master’s degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. Her husband Joe and she have three children. In a poignant and honest personal essay she describes one child’s transition from birth-identified daughter to lovingly affirmed son.

Please read Lemay’s “A Letter to My Son Jacob on His Fifth Birthday.” There is much learning we can do together in support of our 8th

Principle. <https://www.boston.com/culture/parenting/2015/02/26/a-letter-to-my-son->

[jacob-on-his-5th-birthday/](#)

BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY, Holiday by Holiday, June 15, 2023

This coming Monday, June 19th, honors the emancipation of enslaved African Americans in the United States. The name “Juneteenth” is a blend of two words: “June” and “nineteenth.” It’s believed to be the oldest African-American holiday, with annual celebrations in different parts of the country dating back to 1866. In addition to recognizing the end of slavery, many take the day to celebrate African-American culture.

The first Juneteenth flag was flown at Heritage Park in Roxbury, MA, in 2000. The flag intentionally uses the same colors as the United States flag to show that the formerly enslaved and their descendants are free Americans, too. The individual symbols depicted in the flag represent:

- **The Arc:** A new horizon, meaning fresh opportunities and promising futures for Black Americans.
- **The Star:** A nod to the Lone Star State where Juneteenth was first celebrated in 1865, and it also stands for the freedom of every Black American in all 50 states.
- **The Burst:** The outline surrounding the star is meant to reflect a nova— or new star— which represents a new beginning of striving for freedom and equality for all.

We can honor this holiday by patronizing Black-owned businesses and/or by donating to organizations that serve and/or are run by African-Americans.

BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY, Book by Book, June 29, 2023

A summer read on the cultural history of sewage and garbage—what, you ask? Yes!

Our congregation’s values include a focus on environmental responsibility, energetically pursued by our Green Sanctuary leaders. Increasingly apparent is the intersectionality of environmental justice with a history of environmental racism. For example, who has access to clean water or whose homes are located near toxic waste sites.

This book “examines social and cultural constructions of race and hygiene in American life from the age of Thomas Jefferson to the Memphis Public Works strike of 1968.” Carl A. Zimring, Pratt Institute professor of sustainability studies, explains in *Clean and White* how race, class, economics, sanitation/waste, and hygiene became intertwined, how its workers became conflated with ideas of clean and dirty. He writes that “[w]aste is a social process.”

The false idea that Black and brown people are somehow “dirty” remains deeply engrained, buried in our national psyche. It occupies a troubling part of white supremacy thought.

How many of us have heard the phrase “cleanliness is next to godliness?” The trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic showed the importance of essential, frontline workers. Persons of color continue to perform the dirty jobs that maintain modern standards of cleanliness. Yet, “clean and white” still plays a role in shaping environmental inequality and Injustice.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Book by Book, July 13, 2023**

The recent decision by the Supreme Court regarding affirmative action in college admissions called my attention to the book *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth Century America* by Ira Katznelson. Katznelson focuses on key programs passed during the New Deal and Fair Deal eras that deliberately excluded African-Americans while they greatly benefited white Americans. The impact of these policies is keenly felt today. Another book, *The Color of Law* by Richard Rothstein, tells similar stories and expands on the many ways that Black Americans have been disenfranchised by government (local, state, and federal) laws, policies, and practices. These books have led me to a different understanding of the term “affirmative action.”

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Small Alteration by Small Alteration, July 27, 2023**

Gary Saul Morson, Northwestern University professor of Russian literature, believes humanities are vitally important as the best way to come at life’s biggest questions. He asks, “Are the most important moments of life the dramatic ones we all notice, or the countless ordinary ones, including the tiniest movements of consciousness that we overlook precisely because they are so ordinary.” He continues by citing Tolstoy, who insisted that life is a matter of “**tiny, tiny alterations**,” that goodness really exists, and is seen most often in the small acts of kindness available at every moment, and that people too often use great theories about life and society as an alibi to avoid taking individual responsibility.

We, too, can begin with **tiny, tiny daily alterations** in our busy lives —pausing to recognize inequity, to focus our awareness, to speak up.

And, simple kindness toward all is *always* available as our individual obligation in building beloved community.

BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY, Book by Book, August 24, 2023

We hope to see you all each Sunday as part of our Winchester Unitarian Society’s beloved community. While there, journey over to the Michelson Room. Turn left and look for our Racial Justice Team’s selections. Over two dozen books are there just waiting for you to explore. A

few short favorites of mine: *Between the World and Me*, Coates; *Citizen*, Rankine; *Reservation Blues*, Alexie; *Waking Up White*, Irving.

Take one home with you, and then return it to the Michelson Room shelf when you are done. You might even want to write a comment/reaction on a notecard and place it in the book to start a conversation with the next reader! There will be a book list available in the office, or just email me for a copy, compiled by Claire McNeill. And, really, any day the building is open, head for the Michelson Room library shelves and select your own book of choice. Good reading!

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
By the Power of a Pause, September 14, 2023**

As we move together into an active season of increased commitments, we would be wise to consider the beautiful words of poet, author, and civil rights activist Maya Angelou:

“Every person needs to take one day away. A day in which one consciously separates the past from the future. Jobs, family, employers, and friends can exist one day without any one of us, and if our egos permit us to confess, they could exist eternally in our absence. Each person deserves a day away in which no problems are confronted, no solutions searched for. Each of us needs to withdraw from the cares which will not withdraw from us.” – Maya Angelou, *Wouldn’t Take Nothing for My Journey Now*.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Term by Term, September 21, 2023**

September 15th to October 15th is National Hispanic Heritage Month, celebrating the roots of American citizens who came from — or whose ancestors came from — Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. There are 33 countries in Latin America included under that one heading.

“Hispanic,” “Latino,” “Latinx,” “Latine.” Which is the right term to use when referring to people with this heritage? It turns out to be complicated! The government decided to use “Hispanic” to title this month-long celebration, but “Hispanic” refers to people who speak Spanish and Brazilians speak Portuguese. “Latino” refers to a person whose heritage is anywhere in Latin America, which leaves out Spain. What about “Latinx” or “Latine,” which were coined to avoid the gendering that is a part of many words in the Spanish language, including “Latino” and “Latina?” “Latinx” and “Latine” are in vogue among many in the younger generation, but they are firmly rejected by others.

It turns out that the deeper you dig into these seemingly simple terms, the more nuanced and many-layered they are. Just try an internet search and you’ll see. It’s fascinating! And don’t forget: you can always respectfully ask an individual what they prefer.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Learning by Learning, September 28, 2023**

Take time during Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 to October 15) to learn something new about the diverse cultures and histories of our fellow Americans. Right here in New England The Blackstone River Valley (National Heritage Corridor) was the site of many textile mills which, in the 1960's, were suffering because of the lack of skilled loom operators. One mill owner began bringing master weavers from Columbia, and immigrants from other parts of South America followed, re-energizing the industry for several more decades. There is much more to this story and there are many other stories of the contributions of Hispanic immigrants.

You might also want to sample the food from Boston-area restaurants that feature the cuisines of our neighbors to the South.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Learning by Learning, October 5, 2023**

During this month (September 15 to October 15) of celebrating the many contributions that Latinx migrants have made to the United States, it's important to note that, according to the MIRA Coalition (Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition):

- Almost two in ten Americans have Latino ancestry.
- 13.1% of Massachusetts residents are of Hispanic origin.
- The second most spoken language in Massachusetts is Spanish, followed by Portuguese.
- If Latinos in the United States were a country, their economic output would be the fifth largest in the world.
- Only two percent of dollars raised by non-profit organizations go to help Latinx immigrants overcome obstacles to getting jobs, housing, and citizenship.

Perhaps these statistics will prompt us to learn more about issues for our neighbors from Latin American countries.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Holiday by Holiday, October 12, 2023**

Having just celebrated an October 9th holiday, what was it for you— Columbus Day or Indigenous Peoples' Day?

In 1937, Congress and President Roosevelt made Columbus Day a national holiday. The Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fraternal organization, had strongly lobbied for a day to honor

Columbus's achievements and to celebrate the rich heritage and contributions of Italian-Americans. As new Immigrants, they had experienced harsh discrimination, including lynching.

Columbus himself, however, has become controversial and his life has come to epitomize the brutal atrocities, genocide, and disease that conquest and colonialism brought to these shores.

In 1990, South Dakota became the first state to rename the holiday “Native Americans’ Day,” a year of reconciliation on the 100th anniversary of the Wounded Knee massacre. At least 14 states currently celebrate Indigenous Peoples’ Day, including Maine and Vermont.

In Massachusetts, Indigenous Legislative Agenda bills—Senate Bill 1976 and House Bill 2989 — would call for Massachusetts to join them in celebrating and honoring our Native American neighbors on whose homeland we live. We encourage you to contact our state legislators and express your support.

Thank you for “being” our UU values.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Term by Term, October 19, 2023**

A new noun has entered the Merriam-Webster dictionary. “Misogynoir,” a blending of two words, misogyny and noir (meaning black in French), names the specific oppression Black women endure at the intersection of both race and gender discrimination.

Coined by Assoc. Prof. Moya Bailey in 2010, the noun gained national attention during the 2022 confirmation of Supreme Court Justice Judge Katanji Brown Jackson. Media outlets used misogynoir to name the specific disrespectful manner in which she was being questioned.

Perhaps we could each notice any reaction the word creates for us, as we move through a contentious world in which being “woke” or “politically correct” are disparaging adjectives. Then take a deep breath, think about Black women and their intrinsic right to respect and care. As Bailey writes, “I’m hopeful for the day when people don’t have to use it.”

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Poem by Poem, October 26, 2023**

Ross Gay is an African American poet and professor at Indiana University. In a PBS interview with Mary Jo Brooks, “How Gardening Makes This Poet More Observant,” Gay said, “There’s something about beautiful moments in sports that alter our experience of time. And I’d say the same thing about poetry and gardening. Gardening slows me down. I want to stop and observe..”

Gardening became part of a poem Gay wrote in memory of Eric Garner (1970-2014), a Black man who died at the hands of New York City police officers:

A Small Needful Fact
Is that Eric Garner worked
for some time for the Parks and Rec.
Horticultural Department, which means,
perhaps, that with his very large hands,
perhaps, in all likelihood,
he put gently into the earth
some plants, which most likely,
some of them, in all likelihood,
continue to grow, continue
to do what such plants do, like house
and feed small and necessary creatures,
like being pleasant to touch and smell,
like converting sunlight
into food, like making it easier
for us to breathe.
—Ross Gay

As Gay says, “I think it’s crucial that we remember the lives of people, not their deaths. Our deaths are not our lives.” Hope growing from a desolate experience—may it be so.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Book by Book, November 2, 2023**

Poverty, By America is a must-read for anyone who cares about the economic inequities in our country today. It may be challenging (if not shocking) to read about the ways those of us who live in relative comfort benefit, but author Matthew Desmond offers ways in which our daily decisions can have a positive influence on change. And, at the conclusion of the book, Desmond urges us all to become “poverty abolitionists,” an invitation that is hard to turn down.

Although he offers plentiful documentation, the book is far from dry, and if you read his earlier *Evicted*, you know you will come away with a new understanding of the subject.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Obligation by Obligation, November 9, 2023**

*2024 will be a critical election year for our nation and provide us each with the privilege of **voting our values**—based on the principles that guide our Winchester Unitarian Society. These principles include a **democratic process, dismantling racism and other forms of oppression, and supporting justice, equity, and pluralism.***

*Richard Hauss, president emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations, argues that the right to vote alone cannot create a healthy democracy. **Obligations**, things that should happen, but that the law cannot require, are the key. His ten obligations are:*

- *Be informed.***
- *Get involved.***
- *Stay open to compromise.***
- *Remain civil.***
- *Reject violence.***
- *Value norms.***
- *Promote the common good.***
- *Respect government service.***
- *Support the teaching of civics.***
- *Put country first.***

These “obligations” we can begin to work on now, right now, using our conscience, values, and personal efforts to better our world through deep participation in democracy.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Quotation by Quotation, November 16, 2023**

This month’s theme is Generosity—so appropriate for this season of giving thanks. It’s also the season of gift giving—gifts to family and friends, and charitable gifts. Darren Walker, President of the Ford Foundation and author of *From Generosity to Justice*, challenges us with these words: *“While philanthropy is good and we should be proud of it, there is so much more we can do to move from the idea of generosity to the aspiration and belief for justice for all.”*

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Book by Book, November 30, 2023**

Our affiliated community minister, the Rev. Cynthia Davidson, encouraged us each to be faithful stewards of our earth—we are the earth—in her October 22 reflection.

A 2021 children’s book, **We Are the Water Protectors**, a response to “the black snake” (the

Dakota Access Pipeline), highlights water not only as essential but also as a sacred element that ties all of us in mutual interdependence — plants, animals, and humans. The lyrical words and flowing watercolors are the creation of two Indigenous women, author Carole Lindstrom, Ojibwe nation, and illustrator Michaela Goade, Tlingit and Haida tribes in Southeast Alaska. For her artistry, Goade won the prestigious Caldecott Award for illustration — the first Native American to do so.

Just in time for family holidays—a super gift for our young friends in primary grades. Bring diversity, inclusion, and beauty to your festive tables.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
Article by Article, December 7, 2023**

Last month's theme was "generosity" and that's stills on our minds in December when we are bombarded by pleas for money for countless good causes. This year might be the time to take a closer look at our charitable giving. In WBUR's November 27 online Cognoscenti essay, Makeeba McCreary, Ed.D., president of the New Commonwealth Racial Equity and Social Justice Fund (NCF) and Bob Giannino, Ansin President and CEO at United Way of Massachusetts Bay, call out striking inequities in non-profit giving.

They assert that a system has been built where "those who are closest to a community find it difficult to navigate the opaque world of philanthropy. It has left us with a profoundly inequitable nonprofit sector, one where Black and Latino nonprofit leaders currently receive only about 4% of philanthropic funding in the U.S., though they make up roughly 10% of nonprofit leadership nationwide, and more than a third of the top 20 racial equity grant recipients are organizations that were launched and driven by white business leaders."

They suggest some guidelines for our own giving—institutional and personal—that will help remedy this situation. Read the article to learn more, and consider giving focused on Black and Latino-led organizations.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,
With a Sense of Belonging, December 14, 2023**

The holiday season is here. How are we experiencing it—connected? isolated?

Reaching out to another—who appears perhaps "other" by race, physical challenges, education, mental challenges, heritage, gender identity, economic status—creates that essential human recognition of precious shared lives, interdependence, a sense of belonging.

“We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.”

—Maya Angelou

May our Winchester UU congregation foster the warm security of belonging for members, friends, and visitors today and throughout all the seasons.