

## ARCHIVE OF BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

PART 2 - NOVEMBER 2021 – AUGUST 2022

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on behalf of the Racial Justice Team Planning Group



### **BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY RESOURCE BY RESOURCE, November 11, 2021**

Join in honoring and celebrating Native Americans during November's **Native American Heritage Month**, designated by President George H. W. Bush in 1990. Plan some time to explore with family and friends indigenous art, history and culture as told through the historians, artists, students, and scientists in this featured resource collection:

From PBA LearningMedia – Native American Heritage Collection

<https://mass.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/nativeamericanheritage/>

### **BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY, CULTURE BY CULTURE – NOVEMBER 18, 2021**

Here are the closing lines from the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address. You might find these words a spirit-lifting, inclusive ritual at your own family Thanksgiving table. Please go to the link below for the full expression of gratitude.

The Creator

Now we turn our thoughts to the Creator, or Great Spirit, and send greetings and thanks for all the gifts of Creation. Everything we need to live a good life is here on this Mother Earth. For all the love that is still around us, we gather our minds together as one and send our choicest words of greetings and thanks to the Creator.

**Now our minds are one.**

[https://americanindian.si.edu/environment/pdf/01\\_02\\_Thanksgiving\\_Address.pdf](https://americanindian.si.edu/environment/pdf/01_02_Thanksgiving_Address.pdf)

May our minds be one in gratitude and love.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,  
BOOK BY BOOK – DECEMBER 2, 2021**

Historian and author, Kate Clifford Larson, is a Winchester neighbor. You may have heard her speak at the Winchester Public Library about three earlier books—*Bound for the Promised Land, Harriet Tubman; The Assassin's Accomplice, Mary Suratt;* and *Rosemary, the Hidden Kennedy Daughter*.

Her latest book, *Walk with Me*, is an inspiring portrayal of Fannie Lou Hamer. Hamer was the last of 20 children born into a Mississippi sharecropping family. She left school at age 12 to pick cotton. Larson had access to recently declassified files—including unredacted FBI and DOJ files, DNC archives.

This under-educated woman raised her voice in speech and song—in resistance to white supremacy and in empathy with her people. Hamer became a community leader, women's rights activist, and co-founder of the Mississippi Freedom Party. She endured police brutality, white intimidation, and the derision of more privileged Black and white movement leaders. All Fannie Lou initially wanted was to register to vote.

Her moment of nationally televised fame came at the 1964 Democratic National Convention in Atlanta in challenging Mississippi's all-white delegation. After telling her harrowing life story, she ended with "All of this on account of we want to register, to become first-class citizens. And if the Freedom Democratic Party is not seated now, I question America. Is this America, the land of the free and home of the brave, where we have to sleep with our telephones off the hooks because our lives be threatened daily, because we want to live as decent human beings, in America? "

The audience erupted into a standing ovation. Now let us walk with Fannie Lou Hamer.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,  
BOOK BY BOOK – DECEMBER 9, 2021**

Last week we featured Kate Clifford Larsen's *Walk With Me*, a biography of Fannie Lou Hamer. Keisha Blain, an Associate Professor of History at the University of Pittsburg, has also just published *Until I Am Free: Fannie Lou Hamer's Enduring Message to America*. The book toggles between episodes in Hamer's life and present day examples of brutality against Blacks, reminding us of the relevance of Hamer's work. Blain describes being introduced to Hamer in a college course during her senior year. "She emboldened me," Blain says in a discussion at the New York Historical Society. "I realized there was something I could contribute to society as a Black woman." If you don't have time to read the book, be sure to check out the YouTube video of this 45-minute program!

<https://www.nyhistory.org/programs/until-i-am-free-conversation-fannie-lou-hamers-legacy>) You'll be inspired by both the author and her subject!

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,  
SONG BY SONG – DECEMBER 16, 2021**

We who attended or live-streamed Music Sunday on December 12 found ourselves moved by John Kramer and the choir members' inspiring combination of poetry and music.

Building on that theme of music, we continue to introduce civil rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer. Hamer was a powerful singer, and two songs in particular sustained her personally and lifted the audiences who gathered to hear her speak.

We hope you also will be sustained and touched by these Hamer recordings of "Walk with Me" and "This Little Light of Mine." Please link to <https://youtu.be/tSu1jLBqhb8> (3.06 minutes) and to [https://youtu.be/QWI\\_aN3XNJk](https://youtu.be/QWI_aN3XNJk) (1.42 minutes).

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,  
BOOK BY BOOK, January 6, 2022**

We will soon be honoring the January birthday of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the great civil rights activist. We will again read and hear well-known, comforting phrases from his splendid oratory—which echoes are *you* hearing right now?

In a short, evidence-based book, Misremembering Dr. King, Dr. Jennifer Yanco, who is currently a Visiting Researcher at Boston University's African Studies Center, takes us beyond this narrow version. Yanco writes, "My objective is to highlight the important aspects of Dr. King's work which all but disappeared from popular memory, so that more of us can really 'see' King."

King campaigned against what he called "the giant triplets" of militarism, materialism, and racism; he insisted that the first two equally damage our country's moral and spiritual health. Yanco makes the wholeness of King's legacy relevant for 2022.

We continue to learn, together and individually, about dismantling racism, gaining spiritual wholeness, and building beloved community. Read on!

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,  
QUOTATION BY QUOTATION, January 13, 2022**

As we look ahead to celebrating the holiday honoring Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., this quotation from his 13-year-old granddaughter is relevant and carries an important message!

“... people have been asking me why I march for voting rights. As a 13-year-old without a vote, without any way to pass laws, what’s my role in all of this? Here’s what I tell them: My generation can’t vote, but we can demand that our leaders do their jobs. We know that what people want is not just words on paper, but real action for an inclusive and just country. Marching and activism are the tools we have and we need to use them.”

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,  
QUOTATION BY QUOTATION, January 20, 2022**

As the annual celebration of The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. closes, we share his **intention** never to "adjust" to the intertwined "giant triplets" of militarism, materialism, and racism: "There are some things in our social system to which I am proud to be maladjusted and which I suggest that you, too, be maladjusted. I never intend to adjust myself to the viciousness of mob rule. I never intend to adjust myself to the evils of segregation and the crippling effects of discrimination. I never intend to adjust myself to the tragic inequalities of an economic system which takes necessities from the masses to give luxuries to the classes. I never intend to become adjusted to the madness of militarism and the self defeating method of physical violence."

(From "A Look to the Future," September 1957.)

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,  
QUOTATION BY QUOTATION, January 27, 2022**

The Unitarian Universalist Association is considering adding an Eighth Principle to the Association’s by-laws. As we begin to learn about this proposed addition, some history is in order. Paula Cole Jones, Director of Racial and Social Justice of the Mid-Atlantic/Central East Regional group, came to the realization after 15 years of working on these issues, "**that a person can believe they are being a ‘good UU’ and following the 7 Principles without thinking about or dealing with racism and other oppressions at the systemic level.**"

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,  
QUOTATION BY QUOTATION, February 4, 2022**

Today we share the reflections of Susan Frederick-Gray, current President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the first woman to hold this post:

“Over these last two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the existential reality of our interdependence undeniable...This means that we have a responsibility to each other, and when we allow racism, greed, exploitation, or neglect to define and defile our relationships, suffering thrives...

As the Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison-Reed says, ‘The central task of the religious community is to unveil the bonds that bind each to all. There is a connectedness, a relationship discovered

amid the particulars of our own lives and the lives of others. Once felt, it inspires us to act for justice.’

...What I so appreciate about Morris-Reed’s words is the clarity that our theology—our understanding that *there is a connectedness*— comes first. Our work for justice and equity—our work to dismantle white supremacy culture, racism, and oppression in ourselves and in our world—is the faithful response to our theology of interdependence. To do the work of culture change, to live into anti-racist, anti-oppressive, multicultural practices of the Beloved Community, we need abiding compassion, grace, and practices of solidarity and mutuality. These are antidotes to the perfectionism and paternalism that continually reinforce barriers and separation that pull us farther from Beloved Community...that the liberation we all need starts with centering the leadership and experiences of those most directly impacted by systemic racism and oppression.

In these times, it is more important than ever to realize that we belong to each other, and we share a responsibility for the conditions and qualities that define our relationships of interdependence across the globe and with our planet.”

### **BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY, WORDS INTO ACTIONS, February 10, 2022**

As we further explore what the UUA’s proposed 8th Principle could mean for our own congregation, we focus on its phrases: “working to build,” “dismantle racism and other oppressions,” and “by our actions.”

These phrases move our personal and congregation’s “spiritual journey toward wholeness” beyond our individual words and actions into a combined energy directed toward tearing down systems and structures of embedded discrimination against, and marginalization of, others.

We strive to hold ourselves accountable to each other and respectfully call each other in to this life-changing work for humanity and a future Beloved Community.

Here is the full text of the proposed UUA 8th Principle: “We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: 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.”

### **BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY, BOOK BY BOOK, February 17, 2022**

*Nice Racism* is Robin Diangelo’s new book, following her bestselling *White Fragility*. Both books are targeted for a white audience and are not easy reading for those of us who believe ourselves to be actively anti-racist. That said, I recommend the book as a “must read” –a

critical path to understanding how even our best intentions-- our "niceness"-- can perpetuate racism. "How can we raise an uncomfortable and often contentious issue such as racism when niceness has been established as the procedural norm?" she asks and goes on to say that "niceness makes it difficult to address the strong emotions anti-racist work often brings up, such as grief, pain, and anger." Diangelo is quick to distinguish "niceness" from kindness, however. Read the book to find out more.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,  
QUOTATION BY QUOTATION, February 24, 2022**

"In order to work toward policy change, we need to have critical awareness, continually educate ourselves, build cross-racial skills, develop the ability to respond constructively, and repair racial harm; these are also forms of anti-racism."

Robin Diangelo from her latest book, *Nice Racism: How Progressive White People Perpetuate Racial Harm*.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,  
QUOTATION BY QUOTATION, March 3, 2022**

We could begin to move from our heads and connect to our feelings by asking ourselves why our hearts are not breaking every day. How have we managed not to see? How many videos did we have to watch before we believed? Why did George Floyd's brutalization have to be so clear before we granted that he did not "do something" to bring on his own murder? What inconvenience are we willing to endure in order to build humanizing relationships across race?

~Robin Diangelo in her new book *Nice Racism*

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,  
ACTION BY ACTION, March 10, 2022**

March is Women's History Month. Women constitute 51% of the USA population. When you hear the word "genius," what name comes to mind? Albert Einstein ...yes, and Mary Sherman Morgan? When you hear the word "financier," what name comes to mind? Warren Buffet... and Hetty Green? When you hear the word "jazz," who comes to mind? Miles Davis ... and Mary Lou Williams? When you hear "voting rights advocate," who comes to mind? Martin Luther King, Jr...and Fannie Lou Hamer? First, please make time to acquaint yourself with these women. Second, do send an encouraging, appreciative note to a woman who has had an impact on the direction your life has taken. You will know who she is!

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,  
ACTION BY ACTION, March 17, 2022**

As we continue to honor women this month, we recognize the toll, physical and emotional, that war imposes on women and children. The higher rate of mortality falls on their men, and the trauma of those left behind endures for generations.

The number fleeing Ukraine, already in the millions within a compressed time span, is unprecedented. The pressure of providing humanitarian services mounts and falls on its neighbors.

And, as we daily witness the heart-breaking terror and trauma there, we well know that suffering does not confine itself to one Euro-centric area.

**Thank you to those who have already contributed so generously to this wider beloved community. What more can we do?**

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,  
ACTION BY ACTION, March 24, 2022**

Did you know that UUA's proposed 8th Principle is a contemporary culmination of, not a replacement for, the 7 Principles of UU shared values? Did you know that these 7 were formally adopted by the UUA in 1985 and last modified in 1995? The 8th Principle brings us up to date—to 2022—and was developed by an inclusive, diverse representation within our faith community.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,  
QUOTATION BY QUOTATION, April 7, 2022**

The Reverend Eugene Sparrow, "The God Within," 1921-1978, Black Unitarian minister; from *Been in the Storm So Long*, a meditation manual edited by Mark Morrison-Reed and Jacqui James.

"The past years have deepened my belief that God is within, working in mysterious ways. I therefore believe profound introspection is a synonym for prayer. But it is not just an arid exercising of the intellect, a scientific analysis of one's inner nature. Genuine emotion also plays a role in the religious experience. The world and its people, despite differences in definition of objectives, have begun to reach toward the spirit of love.

**I believe that love of one's fellow humans is not just a passive intellectual concern for their welfare. Such love should manifest itself as an active effort to improve their lot.**

**The renaissance for human dignity is moving forward, helping not only the oppressed but also the oppressor to find the God within.”**

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,  
QUOTATION BY QUOTATION, April 14, 2022**

From *Been in the Storm So Long*, a meditation manual edited by Mark Morrison-Reed and Jacqui James, a reflection on race from The Hon. Wade H. McCree, Jr. (1920-1987), the first African-American to serve as U.S. Solicitor General and a UUA vice-moderator:

“I just cannot accept the proposition that some people are better or worse than other people because of their race—whatever it may be. I accept my race and the race of everyone simply as a condition of existence, like height, weight, age, sex, or shoe size. **Now this doesn’t mean at all that I am blind to the fact that other people may regard race as the most consequential aspect of their being and my being. I have almost a half century of scars, fortunately most of them on my memory and not on my body, to remind me that I live in a racist society.** However, I refuse to permit anyone to infect me with a virus of racial pride because I know it would turn out to be a cancer that would destroy my spirit, my physical self, and the world in which I live.”

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,  
BOOK BY BOOK, April 21, 2022**

Following her first book, *White Fragility*, author Robin DiAngelo continues to challenge well-intentioned white people on their *Nice Racism*. As a white person herself, she points out numerous examples of how many who see themselves as racially progressive can actually cause harm to people of color. This is worth a read if you really want to be welcoming to people of color. [\*Nice Racism - How Progressive White People Perpetuate Racial Harm\*](#)

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,  
SELF AWARENESS BY SELF AWARENESS, April 28, 2022**

In the context of exploring the 8th Principle for our May annual meeting, please consider the words of respected Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh:

...Our society is based on the dualistic view of self and other, a view which furthers self interest. We aren’t used to thinking of ourselves as a community or perceiving reality in terms of universal harmony and peace. Coming back to ourselves and looking deeply into the situation of our society, we can recognize the factors that have brought disharmony, conflict, and suffering. At the same time, we recognize that there is a path of mindfulness and harmony that can bring about transformation and healing, that will lead to true brotherhood and sisterhood, true connection, and true community.”

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,**



## **MONTH BY MONTH – May 5, 2022**

May is Asian-American Pacific Islander Heritage Month. This month was chosen because May 7, 1843, marks the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants to the United States. And May 10, 1869, or Golden Spike Day, recognizes the completion of the first transcontinental railroad in the U.S., which had significant contributions from Chinese workers. As our awareness and understanding of the history and impact of racism grows, it is important to recognize and address the racism that Asian and Asian-American people have experienced, from early legislation to the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II to the recent increase in hate crimes.

## **BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY, with ALL THE DIMENSIONS OF LOVE, May 12, 2022**

As we approach our Annual Meeting on May 15, we focus on a phrase from the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle, "...journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions."

Black feminist scholar, bell hooks (sic), writes in her book, All about Love: New Visions:

"Commitment to a love ethic transforms our lives by offering us a different set of values to live by...Living by a love ethic we learn to value loyalty and a commitment to sustained bonds...Embracing a love ethic means that we utilize all the dimensions of love—care, commitment, trust, responsibility, respect, and knowledge...We can successfully do this only by cultivating awareness...Domination cannot exist in any social situation where a love ethic prevails... All the great social movements for freedom and justice in our society have promoted a love ethic.Concern for the collective good of our nation, city, or neighbor rooted in the values of love makes us all seek to nurture and protect that good..."

The word "beloved" states a renewed aspect of our relationships, affirming that we as UUs do stand, buttressed by work and action, on the side of love.

## **BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY, QUOTATION BY QUOTATION – May 19, 2022**

From **Matshona Dhiwayo**,

a Zimbabwean-born and Canadian-based author:

“I am injustice,” said tyranny.

“I am lawlessness,” said corruption.

“I am inequality,” said bigotry.

“I am intolerance,” said racism.

“I am destruction,” said immorality.

“I am independence,” said **freedom**.

“I am fairness,” said **justice**.

“I am humanity,” said **compassion**.

“I am tolerance,” said **understanding**.

“I am restoration,” said **goodness**.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,  
QUESTION BY QUESTION - June 2, 2022**

What do you remember being taught (or learning) growing up about the history of Black people? And, today, what amendments and additions do you bring to that earlier learning?

**REFLECTION BY REFLECTION – June 9, 2022**

And I come as someone

Who still believes in democracy, despite its failings

Who continues to carry the dream of an America true to its founding documents,

Defined by freedom, liberty and justice for all.

And I pray that, in the time that remains for me,

That I will live by my convictions with even a fraction

Of the creativity and courage demonstrated by the people of Ukraine

These convictions inspire me towards not only lamentation but affirmation -  
Glory to all those who nurture, protect and defend the gifts of life  
Glory to all those who mend what is rent and plant sunflower seeds  
Consecrating the ground for peace  
Glory to those who work for freedom and the common good  
And make unfathomable sacrifices  
In service to that freedom and goodness.  
Glory to those who embody a mature and grounded masculinity of shared power.  
Glory to those who declare war on racism  
And continue in the struggle, despite swimming against centuries of history  
Glory to those who live through crippling grief with courage and grace,  
Who bear the spiritual scars of trauma, more senseless loss.  
Glory be to those who defend and nurture what is in our collective heart,  
“our hopes, our dreams, our holy shrine” - Glory to the heroes.

From our Rev. Heather Janules, Memorial Day, 2022

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,  
ACTION BY ACTION June 23, 2022**

As our Winchester Unitarian Society delegates participate in the UU General Assembly in Portland, Oregon, this week, they will be joining some 201 UU sister congregations in affirming the 8th Principle, **“working to build a diverse, multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”**  
We wish them safe travels and appreciate their representing us this year!

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY,  
BOOK BY BOOK - August 4, 2022**

Recently, civil rights activist and noted public intellectual W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963) has been in the headlines. The former Clinton AME Church in Great Barrington, MA, may soon revive as a heritage and cultural center that honors both local Black history and its most famous congregant, DuBois. Here is a link to the Boston Globe article: <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2022/07/14/metro/center-plans-give-web-du-bois-other-black-berkshirites-credit-theyre-due/>

And just in case one questions in 2022 the relevance of his work, consider these words: “The future woman must have a life work and economic independence. She must have knowledge. **She must have the right of motherhood at her own discretion.** The present mincing horror at free womanhood must pass if we are ever to be rid of the bestiality of free manhood; not by guarding the weak in weakness do we gain strength, but by making weakness free and strong.” (From *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil*)

This quotation appears on page 335 of American poet Honoree Jeffers’ monumental debut novel, *The Love Songs of W.E.B. DuBois*. And, a quotation from Du Bois precedes each chapter. This book is my August “summer vacation” choice.

At age 16 author Jeffers had moved to Great Barrington as a Du Bois scholar to attend Bard College, Simon Rock. His writings became integral to her earliest intellectual life. A Goodreads review describes the novel as chronicling “the journey of one American family, from the centuries of the colonial slave trade through the Civil War to our own tumultuous era.” The main character, Ailey Pearl, learns her family’s full history--indigenous, Black, and white--while spending summers visiting her mother’s family in a small Georgia town.

Perhaps you will join me in exploring this family’s history and, through its narrative, the human side of our nation’s history.

Had you noticed the descriptor “**monumental**”? The book is 800 pages. And, hear this! It is a **bargain**—a \$20 paperback price! **Any reading companions out there?**

### **BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY, POEM BY POEM - August 18, 2022**

**Kyle Tran Myhre**, known by his stage name **Guante**, is from Minnesota, an educator and spoken word artist, which is a form of performance poetry.

In his poem, “**How to Explain White Supremacy to a White Supremacist**,” he says,

“Remember: white supremacy is not a shark; it is the water. It is how we talk about racism as ‘white hoods’ and ‘confederate flags,’ knowing that you own those things, and we don’t... as if we didn’t own this history too, this system—we tread water.”

He goes on to say: “Because of course, this isn’t really a poem for white supremacists. I don’t know any white supremacists. But I know a lot of people in my neighborhood. I know a lot of people in my family. I know myself.”

Here is a video link to his four-minute performance: <https://youtu.be/RDSEHfxXLhI>.

“Try on” his spoken word. How does it feel? Is the fit right or a little too tight, uncomfortable? Does the fabric feel heavy on your shoulders? Would you consider taking another look in the mirror to see the details of the tailoring?