

Trust and Reconciliation Working Group

The spiritual well-being of the All Souls Church Unitarian congregation is in distress. The causes are a loss of trust in the senior minister and, to some extent, one another as the result of the conflict between the senior minister and former associate minister and the circumstances surrounding her departure. While this dis-ease may not characterize all members of the church, there are enough members who are conflicted but still come to church, who no longer attend services or previous members who left the church in anger and hurt to warrant vigorous and continuing efforts to restore trust and reconcile our relations with one another.

The Trust & Reconciliation Workgroup (TRW) was created as a subgroup within the Transformation Team. We, the members of the TRW, believe that restoration of trust and reconciliation with one another can only happen within the frame of structural change that recognizes and works to transform and undo the systems and culture of white supremacy. This means a power analysis that names the way we center whiteness and the disproportionate burden carried by black and brown members of our community who may have experienced the greatest harm.

We recognize that none of us are removed from this work. It is deeply personal and among the members of the TRW, there is considerable pain and hurt. However imperfect our efforts will be, we are planning to reach out to those who may still be suffering as the result of the conflict via phone and perhaps some in-person visits. During these discussions, we will emphasize that they are not alone. We will create space for them to share their hurts, to hear ours, and hopefully, as a result, restore sufficient trust in one another and the process of reconciliation.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Identify those who have lost trust with the minister or others as the result of the conflict with the former Associate Minister.
2. Reach out to them, listen, capture themes and develop reconciliation plan informed by those most impacted. Invite anyone interested to join the work of the Trust & Reconciliation Workgroup.
3. Meet with Senior Minister Rob Hardies, engaging with him to get a sense of where he is on this. What does he imagine he could or would be willing to do to rebuild trust with people who have lost trust in his spiritual leadership?
4. Organize a Public Reconciliation Process for all interested persons, including the leadership. **NOTE:** The Committee on Right Relations (CRR) is working with the DC Peace Team to provide trainings and explore options for reconciliation. The CRR will bring the DC Peace Team back for another training session on December 1. It will most likely be another Nonviolent Communication Training.
5. Organize training for the Board on Nonviolent Communication.
6. Organize training for All Souls staff on Nonviolent Communication.
7. Ask the Quilting Circle and/or other creative group projects to create a healing space where congregants can come together to talk about their hurt and hopefully build new and trusting connections while producing something tangible with their hands.