

A Constellation of Care for All Genders:

- **Some of us introduce ourselves using our pronouns. Others do not. Discuss what you do in this regard and why it is, or is not, important to you.**
- **In what ways do UUC members assume that every person listening, participating or leading is either a cisgender man or woman? (cisgender: denoting or relating to a person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex registered for them at birth)**

We discussed how some of us don't use our pronouns when we introduce ourselves to people either because we forget or maybe we feel uncomfortable signaling that we are concerned about that in some settings. Or it simply doesn't occur to us because we're so used to not having to do that.

We talked about, should we be doing that? Does it label people? And someone said we don't announce that we're heterosexual or that we're white and things of that nature.

In response, we said, what happens when we share that even though to us it's obvious because all of these things are assumed about us and our identity, is we allow the space for somebody where those things might be assumed incorrectly. To step up and be able to speak what's true for themselves.

We've always used language as a shorthand to kind of tell people who we are. The most obvious example is saying whether you're a miss or a missus when you're introduced to somebody and that would denote whether or not you were married. And this is a different thing that we're talking about, but it still is the same.

It's a shorthand way of saying this is who I am. And the labels can be important because that's how we define ourselves. In our childhood and adolescence, that's how we begin to understand who we are. Being able to share pronouns to say this is who I am is another way that we get to define ourselves.

Somebody brought up and asked how we deal with that at UUC because we do have gendered bathrooms male and female men and women and we also have signs up that say, please use the bathroom that is consistent with your own gender identity.

Even though we say male and female, we don't force people to use one or the other.

There was mention of an article that had been published some years ago stating that you could alter a child's gender, what they believe to be their gender, depending on how you treated them prior to 6 years, which of course was obviously not true even though it was widely published and thought to be truth for many years. And we talked about that.

We heard about a young trans man who had challenged the use of the bathroom and I think it went all the way to the Supreme Court where they won a non-gendered bathroom. It was a major victory and the person who mentioned this said they got to go to a conference and hear him speak and that it was really, inspiring.

Worshipping in Fullness and Truth as Black UUs

- **What in the description of the BLUU worship services resonated with you?**
- **How would congregational sentiment about worship shift if folks loved the experience so much that they could not help but stay for more?**

We started by talking about music. It always comes back to music it seems. Somebody had given a suggestion about how much they like the dancing and the music after service that we now have.

But we felt that, the music needed to be more engaging. Even the music that we had this morning while everyone loved it, it was very white music.

We also looked at the question of what are we worshipping anyway? Are we worshipping the holy. Somebody remarked about some contention between people and we absolutely felt like we needed some more work on intentional healing.

And then from there we started talking a little bit about community and felt like everyone needed community, but that that meant different things to different people. And maybe what we're really talking about is that we've been focusing on what does it mean to be in white community, but how about what would that mean to be an African American community and maybe what we just need to do is have a little bit more diversity in our music and in our worship services so that when other people come in that they feel like we're recognizing or they're recognizing part of what's important to them to be in community.

People liked the idea of interactive services, everyone participating, that the services were fun and exciting.

Somebody spoke about the importance of social hour and making connections during social hour and that being a continuing part of our service.

One thing which was a suggestion that we have an open mic. In addition to or instead of the music at the end or both, so that people could come up and talk about whatever they wanted to talk about at the moment.

No One is Outside the Circle of Love

- **How do you define your own circle of love at UUC? In the wider community?**
- **What ideas in this essay could we try for dealing with conflicts at UUC in order to make ourselves more welcoming?**

First of all, the people answering the question, what is their circle? Many said that the sanctuary setting and that Sunday morning in the sanctuary was the circle. Others that the social justice, the BEER group, the breakfast, the book club, as well as individuals they have in their circle as the way of finding a community there and feeling welcome.

They were those who expressed trepidations about the skills that we may or may not yet have in order to resolve conflict and to live in within a Covenant. And there was also a congratulating or welcoming to all of the people that are still want to meet at UC in spite of the trials and tribulations that we've been through the last couple of years.

We were also discussing how we should really be all inclusive and that also entails not only gender but also restorative justice, including those who have been released from prison and how we recognize those.

And also the people who have some sort of disability, whether hearing or walking. We do have a larger congregation that have a lot of individuals that may need help with that.

And someone resonated with the fact that we have a saying that is seekers funding at home and we all have a definition of home, so we hope that we can create that for them in a way that includes them.

The wonderful metaphor that was introduced by one of our members was that on the essay, which was that we should be like the marsh filtering everything that's bad and that was lovely.