

Beyond Welcome discussion summary July 16

Leading Equitable Multicultural Communities: What patterns of behavior should UUC examine in order to draw of circle of community wider? How do we move from welcoming well to practicing authentic inclusion?"

We looked at examining behavior patterns that, we should look at and look at changing in order to practice authentic inclusion which goes beyond the initial welcoming but continuity. And there were some very specific pragmatic things said in different ways by multiple people. When we stand around and coffee and coffee and coffee hour, we tend to stand literally in circles all facing in. Instead we should stand in a v-shape so other people can come in. When you see people who are new don't stand there at coffee hour and gawk at them, but look or even on a Zoom. Look at them. See what their faces get animated by. See what they're interested in. Then approach them during coffee hour and say, Hey, I see that you really got into singing or I see that you are really intent on this part of the sermon or the speaker or whatever. Or you really don't the kids thing, the story for all ages. What interests you here? For one thing, they will be flattered that you observe them. You know, catch them doing something they like and then introduce them to someone who is already active in that. So they have a connection. And then after that, if you get their name and like write it down, maybe follow up with them ask if the membership person if they sold out a card with contact information and you contact them. Not just somebody who's in charge of membership like Margie, but you're the one who spoke to them

Hey, I talked with you, how are you doing? Whatever.

Another important thing that was said that I don't want to lose track of it was brought up in relationship. To people with different cultures, particularly black people, that's breaking bread. But having meals with that person with that community is important.

And in my notes all the lines I drew connecting things. Somebody said, have, a number of events, open to the broader community advertised in local publications, like the singles club that existed many years ago. Or Pot Luck Club. Cards, mah-jong, meditation, that people could just come to for free.

Beyond the Both/And: Name some both/and truths and some multi/and truths that you see at UUC.

One person brought up a really good both/and, that since COVID we've been both pixels on Zoom and we've been people in person, which I thought was very astute of him to bring up. Another person brought up something and this is where we got into a big discussion. Although we say at you that we are open to all forms of belief or non-belief, that sometimes in conversation she's observed that that isn't always accepted. We have that in our principles that you follow your own spiritual path. But sometimes there have been remarks that don't support that.

Another person did bring up the point that just because we are open doesn't mean that we don't have certain values that you would need to accept, which is true, but someone else also brought up the fact that the minute we find that out do we just say well here's the door to

someone. She suggested that we get to, probe with that person a bit, find out why they may have a point of view that it's not as it would not align with us right away, but they could later by understanding our approach, you know, they could later. Though we need to give people some space to develop their, to grow, to give them some space to grow. And then obviously if the values don't end up working out then you know that would be it but then it gives some people some time.

She called that radical welcoming, which I thought was a good, really good point because that does make us stretch. We have our principles and our values but maybe we need to let people a little more time to say what they need to say.

Another person brought up something that came up in spiritual potpourri on Friday.

Do we have Republicans in UU. And if we do, how are they accepted? And I said that I think we need to radically welcome them.

And then, another person brought up that most people who come here do have looked at the website have some sense of what we are.

Social Class and Beloved Community: Where do class differences show up at UUC? How can we build on those differences to become stronger and more welcoming?"

So we started out with a kind of a broad look and then narrowed into some specifics.

One of the first things that was mentioned as a strong belief in socialism and strong union support. That maybe something that also coincides with being a UU.

Another broad point was that class may be the root of everything. In terms of racism even in terms of going back to enslaved people and that class impacts all realms of life.

Some that spoke mentioned not feeling a particular overt classism and hadn't experienced anything specific themselves and we're there to learn about others points of view. Others had more specific, experiences. Personal experiences. Intellectualism and class seem to be somewhat related.

Our education at least in class may be that becomes intellectualism or elitism.

A couple of specific mentions were about pledging and membership and even though we say we don't have to have a lot of money to be a member there are exclusionary overt messages or subverted messages perhaps around being able to participate in a certain class if you're not a member or maybe not being able to participate if you haven't purchased the book for this class and perhaps making sure everyone is afforded an opportunity, either with a free book or something in the future for this class.

And volunteerism and just sort of the whole look about you know if you don't pledge a lot maybe you feel you have to volunteer a lot.

And to be mindful of when we have even a potluck that not everybody maybe can afford to put together a full meal and bring it or has the energy too because they're working full time or they don't feel well or it could be an ableism as well.

Overtly, you know, people straddle in that terminology too and hold back sharing about their circumstances, whether they're on the higher end of wealth or on the lower end because you know, we want to be equal minded. But by not even broaching it or being sensitive to it other than just to say I'm blind to it then we can maybe end up using the other term of microaggressions in this context.