

May 31, 2020 Message: Peg Bouska, co-chair UUS Racial Justice Team

Dan called me yesterday as co-chair of the Racial Justice Team to see if we could step in and use this as an opportunity to address some of the issues relating to the events of this week (with the murder of George Floyd and response to it).

My first reaction was NO...not enough time, not enough information, not enough credibility. Then I was reminded that this is not about me, and making mistakes is part of this process of trying to help unravel racism and police brutality.

I also thought, we should ask a person of color, especially a Black person, to see how they're doing in relation to this week's events. And again I was reminded this is our work as white folks. We can't expect people of color to always educate us, especially during times like this.

When I talked to my niece/daughter this week, who is Black, she said 'I wish we could just grieve and let white people carry the weight and the pick up the fight for awhile.'

As a white person, I have the luxury of looking away....I could choose not to view the video of George Floyd's murder; not wanting to be haunted by it, not wanting to feel guilt or the discomfort of knowing this is just one of so many killings, modern day lynchings, that continue in our country without consequences to those responsible.

But she and others with black and brown skin can't do that. They daily need to put on that armor to go out in the world and face the assaults. So draining, so wearing. How does one **not** eventually feel rage? I've learned this week the use of 'uprising' as an appropriate term in response to years of oppression.

By the way, my family in S. Mpls are confirming that much of the vandalism and violence there is being done by outsiders, often white armed men coming into MPLs and using peaceful protesters as cover. When people say "why are they destroying their own neighborhoods", many citizens of Mpls are saying...they're not.

Just another reminder to be aware of media we are taking in and how that may be distorted.

I feel like Johnson County is a pretty great place to live. But when I find myself somewhere and ask myself 'Would this be a place that's comfortable for my loved ones who are Black?' It makes me realize, again, that we have work to do.

The UUS Racial Justice Team has been meeting for about 4 years. We work to educate ourselves about these issues and how we as white folks contribute to this system of injustice. We try to find ways to be allied with people of color and make it known that we are not too fragile for the truth.

Our Racial Justice Team encourages you to open your heart to see the connection to several of our principles:

- the inherent worth and dignity of every person
- justice, equity and compassion in human relations
- the goal of World community with peace, liberty and justice for all.

Thank you for listening. Please Join Us.