



The UUCC Chronicle

September 2020

Service: 10:00 AM

September 6

To Change or Not to Change,
That is the Question

Karen Langford, Guest Speaker

September 13

Suicide Prevention Month

Deanna Lack, Speaker

September 20

Reproductive Justice and UU

Mark Mohundro, Guest Speaker

September 27

Bi Erasure

Deanna Lack, Speaker

Reflections: 11:00 AM

Every Sunday after Service,
approximately 11:00 AM

Co-facilitated by

Susan Ford and Deanna Lack

Reflections is an informal,
non-judgmental, small-group discussion
of the message topic. Participants share
thoughts and insights or just listen. All
are welcome.

Chalice Circle: 6:00 PM

Facilitated by Gates Craighead

Tuesday, September 1, Grace

Tuesday, September 15, Projects

(details on page 4)

Meditation: 6:00 PM

Facilitated by Deanna Lack

Tuesday, September 8

Meditative Movement (Chair Yoga)

Tuesday, September 22

Back to Basics (Vipassana)

Board Meeting: 12:00 PM

Sunday, September 13, after

Reflections, approximately 12:00 PM

Fair Trade:

Facilitated by Linda Delventhal

By appointment only

(details on page 5)

Racial Injustice and the Thin Blue Line

This article was written by Charles Zuller, in consultation with Tom and Linda Savage, Jeanne Schmitzer, and other brave souls. Any errors in connections and conclusions are my own and the thoughts expressed do not necessarily represent the views of any other person or group.

Lately, massive public demonstrations across the U.S. have appeared, specifically concerning racial injustice. After centuries of rage and frustration, the Black community has said, "Enough!" Each time progress has been made for equal participation for all, the goal posts have been moved, while using police departments to enforce the new restrictions. The general public, having witnessed the actions of an administration unchecked by political or societal norms, have joined the protests. Now is the time for anyone who believes in race, sex, and gender equity to join the struggle. But, how did race relations develop to where they are today? Are these gatherings simply reactions to the far right's movement into leadership positions at the highest levels? What must change? What do we do as citizens and as people of faith and principle?

In summary, Black Americans were held as chattel slaves in 1776. They provided the sweat and blood that built our country. As we matured as a nation, we sought to end slavery. The 13th Amendment (1865) to end slavery simply transferred slavery into the prison system. Anyone outside of prison was controlled by violence, intimidation, and the KKK. The 14th Amendment (1868), granting citizenship to all people born in the United States, was overcome by literacy tests and requiring voters to pay a poll tax. The 15th Amendment (1870), granting the right to vote to all citizens was countered using fear of reprisal for daring to register to vote. Jim Crow laws were used to control Blacks, disenfranchise them, and remove any political and economic gains made during the Reconstruction period.

Examining our nation's history in detail, its founding documents structured White supremacy into our national identity from the beginning. Per the Constitution and the 1790 Immigration Act, only Whites were eligible to become citizens of the United States. The Declaration of Independence refers to Native Americans as "merciless savages" while the Constitution referred to slaves as "three-fifths" of a person. However, this did not mean that slaves held any personhood whatsoever. This was simply to provide Southern states with enough of a population to hold Congressional representation that was roughly equal to states outside of the South. It also ensured all Southern power remained in the hands of White landowners – whether they held slaves or not.

(continued next page)

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Cookeville

31 West First Street, Cookeville TN 38501

Deanna Lack, Pastor

Charles Zuller, Board President



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In 1857 the Supreme Court decision in *Scott v. Sandford* held that African Americans – even if free – were not citizens of the United States and merited no Constitutional protections. Thus, the United States continued to identify as a White nation until 1868 when passage of the 14th Amendment created the first challenge to our national racial identity. The 14th Amendment declared “all persons born or naturalized in the United States” to be citizens. Thereby, African Americans were now included within our national identity, as well as children born to non-White immigrants. It did not, however, include Native Americans who were considered domestic, dependent nations. Two years later the Naturalization Act of 1870 endorsed Constitutional limits on naturalization to Whites and “those of African descent.” This means, non-White immigrants like Chinese could never naturalize, though their children born in the United States were citizens.

Through the Civil War, the White South lost its labor force as well as its political and economic control. But the 1865 Thirteenth Amendment included structures that allowed slavery to continue reinstitute itself with new practices of convict labor. The amendment allowed the bondage of “duly convicted criminals.” In this manner, White Southern legislators began passing hundreds of Black Codes that criminalized nearly every part of black life including employment, business ownership, property, income, and parental rights. Not only did the White South regain its cheap labor force, but the old slave patrols – employing powerless Whites – reinstated themselves as early law enforcement with the power to arrest and detain African Americans. White citizens, sheriffs, and judges received monetary inducements to arrest and convict. Counties maintained their coffers by leasing convicts to large property owners and corporations. Enormous profits resulted from abusive labor practices often resulting in illness, maiming, and death of black convicts. White communities ensured their local supremacy by lynching African Americans via public torture and killing which intimidated entire black communities into total submission. Then, in 1896, Jim Crow laws strengthened White supremacy even more by segregating every aspect of Southern society. Segregation laws further structured unwritten Southern cultural practices built on myths and assumptions toward African Americans. Myriads of additional practices ensured African Americans could never gain political, economic, or social equity. African Americans could not build heritable equity to pass on to their descendants.

Evidence of this history remains. Even today, the Pew Research Center studies indicate that Blacks are at least twice as likely as Whites to live at or below the poverty level or to be unemployed. Black households headed by a Black person earn little more than half of what the average White households earn. Using median net worth, White households are about 13 times as wealthy as Black households – a gap that has grown even wider since the Great Recession (2008). Robert’s Supreme Court has ruled political gerrymandering and selective closing of polling locations is legal (*Rucho v. Common Cause*, 2019)

Living while Black can lead to police confrontations, often with fatal consequences:

- Operating a lemonade store
- Golfing too slowly
- Waiting for a friend at Starbucks
- Barbecuing at a park
- Working out at a gym
- Campaigning door to door
- Moving into an apartment
- Mowing the wrong lawn
- Shopping for prom clothes
- Napping in a university common room
- Asking for directions
- Not waving while leaving an Airbnb*
- Redeeming a coupon
- Selling bottled water on a sidewalk
- Eating lunch on a college campus
- Riding in a car with a White grandmother
- Babysitting two White children
- Wearing a backpack that brushed against a woman
- Working as a home inspector
- Working as a firefighter
- Helping a homeless man
- Delivering newspapers
- Swimming in a pool
- Shopping while pregnant
- Driving with leaves on a car
- Trying to cash a paycheck
- Playing with a toy gun at a park

As of today, the school-to-prison pipeline, diverting minority students toward slave labor, is in full operation. A new Stanford University study indicates a Black student will likely be punished more harshly than any student of any other race. Instead of overt racism, the harsher treatment may be due to unconscious bias (or implicit bias), prejudices or unsupported judgments that favor or oppose people of one group as compared to another person or group. The bias might be just as likely to come from a Black teacher as a White one. A student who is suspended or expelled is much less likely to graduate or go to college. That person is much more likely to get arrested, go to jail, or even die in the hands of police.

Currently, a Black male in the United States has greater than a 1 in 4 chance of going to prison during his lifetime, compared to a White male with a 1 in 23 chance of serving time. The school-to-prison pipeline means some children (primarily minority children)



are all but guaranteed to end up in prison, as opposed to graduating from school. Meanwhile, their White peers are often allowed second chances, regardless of zero tolerance policies at the schools.

Numerous studies indicate that unconscious bias exists in the criminal justice system, affecting the police, attorneys, judges, and associated support staff. Even perception of racial progress varies greatly between the public and the police and between Blacks and Whites within each group. When police and the public are asked if the country has made the changes needed to give Blacks equal rights with Whites, 80% of police officers (92% of White officers but only 29% of Black officers) think the necessary changes have already been made. In contrast, less than half (48%) of the public, (57% of Whites but only 12% of Blacks), think the changes needed for Blacks to have equal rights with Whites have occurred.

Unconscious bias training for the police over the last 10 years has become one of the primary methods for law enforcement agencies to attempt change in their culture. However, recent research has failed to show the training has any lasting effect on racial bias or altering the behavior of police officers. A study of nine different methods for reducing bias, conducted in 2016, indicated no method changed behavior after a period of a few days.

In addition, police officers are often hemmed in by departmental policies, rules, and peer pressure. Bad situations make bad laws, meaning officers are not prohibited from using force on a person in crisis. Police officers do not have a legal obligation to use de-escalation tactics (*Roell v. Hamilton*). In Buffalo, New York, a Black female police officer claimed she broke up a choke hold placed on a civilian by a fellow officer. He claimed she attacked him while he was subduing a suspect. When no one backed her story, she was fired. Another police officer in Weirton, West Virginia de-escalated a situation with someone holding a knife. He was fired for violating departmental policy and not shooting the suspect. With some police departments unable to change their culture and unable to control their officers' behavior, citizens are calling for defunding the departments.

Finally, the Supreme Court (1982) has made it virtually impossible to successfully sue a police office because of qualified immunity. All government officials are granted immunity for violating constitutional and civil rights unless the victims of those violations can show that the rights were "clearly established" in the same jurisdiction. Without an exact same case, the official is immune, even if the official's actions were unconstitutional, intentional or malicious.

Looking at Tennessee, CoreCivic is the second largest private prison firm in the country. Its facilities house about 10,000 of the state's roughly 30,000 inmates, despite being named in a 2020 audit with failure to properly classify inmate deaths and mishandling of sexual abuse claims. It has also been charged with apparent attempts to save money by hiring inadequate staff, conducting extensive lobbying efforts, and demonstrating the lack of proper cooperation with legal entities to avoid repercussions. The State of Tennessee both contracts with AND invests in CoreCivic, holding about \$1.5 million in stock as of 2019. The private prison profits from running at full capacity, encouraging legislators to pass laws that require police to keep the prison full. Policies such as racial profiling, strict drug laws, and over-criminalization of minor infractions are extremely effective tools in finding new prisoners. Bottom line: the American judicial system does not favor people of lower socio-economic status. Our justice system is dependent upon what you can afford to pay. Anyone unable to afford good legal counsel loses, regardless of guilt or innocence.

What can we do? First, confront the politicians who benefit from the current system, raking in millions of dollars from lobbying by the private prisons. Next, we need to increase the number of social workers and other mental health professionals and provide increased compensation for their time and skills. Why not focus on prevention rather than punishment? We might be able to save money and benefit society at the same time. Next, how about reducing classroom size? A teacher dealing with 30-40 students is overwhelmed, and teaching is more about survival than anything else. Finally, some first-world countries are using something called restorative justice, an opportunity to pay back the wronged party rather than just sitting in prison, accomplishing nothing.

Get involved with social justice! Make your stand. Society is about to be fractured by people feeling they have nothing left to lose. Marginalized people will insist upon recognition of their needs and force changes peacefully or otherwise. Are you ready to make a difference?

We are a justice-seeking people
And we are singing, singing for our lives.*

** Editor's Notes: (1) In case anyone else is as clueless as I am, an Airbnb is like a BNB (Bed and Breakfast), only less regulated. Like the other items on the list, this one describes an incident that actually occurred where seemingly innocent behavior elicited unwarranted reaction. (2) Holly Near's song "Singing For Our Lives" appears in *Singing the Living Tradition*, the official hymnal of the Unitarian Universalist Association, under the title "We are a Gentle, Angry People," page 170.*



Guest Speaker

Rev. Dr. Karen Langford

Unitarian Universalist Church of Cookeville
Cookeville, TN

September 6, 2020
10:00 a.m. Central

Via Virtual Service (Zoom)
Go to uucookeville.org to log on.



Topic: 'To Change or Not to Change... That is the Question'

Our country, our world, and our lives are going through a lot of changes lately, especially in the year 2020. What have been some of the changes since the beginning of time and what are some ways that we can navigate, accept, and embrace all the changes in our lives?

Karen is an Ordained Interfaith Minister, has a Bachelors and Masters as a Minister of Metaphysics, and has achieved her Doctorate in Holistic Ministries. She's a speaker, writer, and entertainer, and has been a long time member of the Cookeville Toastmasters.

Guest Speaker

Mark Mohundro

Unitarian Universalist Congregation
of Cookeville, TN

September 20, 2020
10:00 a.m. Central

Via Virtual Service (Zoom)
Go to uucookeville.org to log on.

Topic: Reproductive Justice and UU

What are reproductive rights? What is reproductive justice? How do they play into our UU principles?

Mark first became an advocate for reproductive justice in 1987 and has been a UU since 2003. He is most proud of his time spent working for Planned Parenthood of Middle and East Tennessee as a Grassroots Organizer and a Front Desk Coordinator. He is also involved with the Buddhist community at Lotus Light Contemplative Community Center.



What is a Chalice Circle?

A Chalice Circle is a small group of up to 10 people who commit to meet regularly on an ongoing basis for mutual support and to encourage each other's growth and development.

What is the purpose of Chalice Circle?

Chalice Circle provides a safe, confidential place to discuss feelings and values. Chalice Circle provides an opportunity to explore and develop thoughts and beliefs on a variety of topics. Chalice Circle provides an opportunity to get to know people in your fellowship on a deeper level. Chalice Circle provides an opportunity to perform a service project for the congregation and/or larger community.

What will happen during a Chalice Circle meeting?

Each Chalice Circle meeting begins with a reading, a chalice lighting, and a check-in that allows people to say briefly what is going on in their lives. We will have a brief meditative/grounding moment. Then, the core of the meeting centers around sharing and deep listening. Each participant is given time to speak their heart about the meeting's topic without interruption. Each meeting closes with a brief check-out and another reading.

For the month of September, we will be exploring the topic of "Grace" on September 1st, and we will continue diving into the work of our covenant and service projects on September 15th. More information on what small group ministry looks like can be found on our website at: <https://uucookeville.org/events/chalice-circle/>.

This is a fabulous time to give Chalice Circle a try, and newcomers are encouraged to join in!



For Sunday Service:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/91681773855>

By phone:

- +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
- +1 646 876 9923 US (New York)
- +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
- +1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose)
- +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)
- +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 916 8177 3855

Reprinted from UUCU website

<https://uucookeville.org/2020/06/10/new-virtual-service-meeting-information/>

Fair Trade Table Curbside Pickup

Fair Trade coffee, tea and chocolate are still available. Contact Linda Delventhal (lindadel48@gmail.com) to place your order and arrange a curbside pickup time at church (31 West First Street). Cash or check is accepted, exact amount only. All proceeds benefit UUCU.

Items and Prices

- Breakfast Blend coffee: \$8.00
- Decaf coffee: \$9.00
- All tea: \$3.50
- Chocolate: \$3.00 (except for Dark Chocolate with Whole Almonds: \$3.50)

Reprinted and modified from the UUCU website

<https://uucookeville.org/2020/05/22/fair-trade-table-curbside-pickup/>



For Chalice Circle:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/93874695777>

Dial by your location:

- +1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)
- +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
- +1 646 876 9923 US (New York)
- +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)
- +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
- +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
- +1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 938 7469 5777

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/aenIVkfK75>

Reprinted from UUCU website

<https://uucookeville.org/2020/08/01/new-chalice-circle-group/>

Notes from Your Board

For UUCU, the Little Congregation that Works (Home of the Golden Swarm)*

Treasurer's Report

July 2020	Jan – Jul 2020
Income: \$2,573	Income: \$16,186
Expenses: \$ 751	Expenses: \$10,785

Since we are saving to pay the Nov 1 rent check, everyone must contribute to the best of their abilities for us to succeed as a congregation. All together now: FORWARD!

Additional Income

Part of the total income for 2020 comes from use of our building by other groups (\$280), the Kroger Community Rewards Program (\$126), the Fair-Trade Project (\$22), and the Amazon Smile Program (\$164). Eighteen families currently support the Kroger Community Rewards Program and twenty-eight customers support the Amazon Smile program. If you have any questions about these programs, please talk to any Board member or consult the posters on display.

Editor's Notes: (1) "Golden Swarm" is a reference to the impression made when congregation members turn out at public events in their yellow T-shirts in support of unity and love. (2) Newsletter publication precedes the monthly board meeting on the second Sunday of the month. This is the latest Treasurer's report, which is based on prior board meeting's prior month's data.



From Your Pastor

What's On My Mind

Summer is slipping away. I really don't mind much; I'm not a huge fan of late summer in Tennessee, except for the produce. The produce is so good. Peaches are so good.

And the hummingbirds. We had a couple of days where it wasn't so suffocatingly humid last week, so I sat on the porch with dappled late-afternoon sun dancing across my journal pages as I wrote, drinking hot tea, and it wasn't uncomfortable. There was a breeze stirring the leaves, making the wind chimes sing, and the late-summer air was filled with the songs of cicadas (okay, another August thing I enjoy) and crickets. A blonde baby cricket crawled across my open pages.

I recently refreshed the hummingbird feeder, after being soundly scolded by the birds. A chattering, wary female kept zipping down to "hit the sauce", checking me out and complaining that I'm in close proximity to "her" feeder. Another, bolder one just came and sipped without comment. Bandit snoozes at my feet, content.

I think of the summer things slipping away, though... trips I won't take this year, adventures I won't have, hugs I'm missing, church services I won't get to attend in person, craft shows, Medieval Faire, and more. Some days I grieve those things and some days I'm just thankful. I try to stay in the thankful space, but the grieving is necessary, too.

The antidote to the sorrow, though, is presence. The sunlight, the hummingbirds, the baby cricket, finding wonder in big things and small, and in the company of friends sometimes virtual, sometimes socially distant but blessedly nearer. I will not ever take a hug for granted again. Some day these forbidden things will come back to us slowly, one by one, and I promise myself here and now that I will relish them at a slow pace and appreciate them as I never have before. A few months ago Russ was sick and we were in quarantine, so that is already happening. Having a friend over for yard-dinner is something that was inaccessible to me a few months ago. So I will find today's delight today, and let the cicadas sing me into autumn, but not too quickly.

UUCS Penpals

Hello friends! I am still working on Penpals; I've yet to hear from a couple of the Quakers with a definite commitment, but I have most everyone paired up, so if you asked to be part of this program, look for an email soon. I think it's not too late to be part of it (it may never be too late); just let me know you're interested and we will work on finding you a partner.

My intention with the "Penpals" program (which is sort of a misnomer) is to help keep all of us encouraged. It's more of a spiritual buddy system, really. With us meeting remotely, it's harder than ever to keep things personal and keep a sense of community. I thought, if we buddy up, perhaps we could each have someone we know has our back. You and your penpal decide the best ways to keep in touch. Some people prefer email, some prefer letters, some prefer phone contact or text. If you are both comfortable you can even do some socially distanced outside visits. I do recommend that you NOT make Facebook or Facebook messenger your way to communicate. I also recommend that you do occasional physical happy mail. That doesn't have to be any expensive gifts or anything, it could just be a letter or a card or a photo or a trinket. Something that says I'm thinking of you. Everyone loves happy mail.

This idea actually originated with the Quakers, who have a "spiritual friends" program and wanted to expand outside their very small group, so a few of them will be pairing up with UUs, but since there are more of us most of you will get a UU penpal.

I hope to have a (usually) spiritual topic of the month, which I'll send everyone by email. You and your pal can discuss the topic, or talk about whatever you want to talk about, but do be sure to get some chat time or correspondence at least once a month.

Look for an email from me with your buddy very soon, and if you have read this and decided you want to play along, please feel free to message, text or email me!

Deanna
UUCookevilleDL@gmail.com



HIGHLIGHTS OF BOARD MEETING OF AUGUST 9, 2020

By Susie Zuller, Board Secretary

Through donations by members/friends, UUCC now has a Tornado Relief Fund of \$320, according to treasurer's records. The Fund sets aside any specially designated donations to aid individuals affected by tornados that touched down in our area in March. The Board voted unanimously in April to use these funds to provide weather radios to families affected by the tornados who may not be able to afford a weather radio. Tracie and Cassandra spearheaded this endeavor. Deanna reported that she and others from UUCC would soon be meeting for a photo when these funds were to be donated.

Deanna reported that she has been meeting via Zoom with other candidates and her mentor for the UU Commissioned Lay Ministry program. De said she continues to read assigned books, other UU-related books, and to meet with the UUCC CLM Committee.

Because the Vroom grant between UUCC and Save the Children ended earlier this year, Rochelle resigned as Outreach Coordinator. The Board thanks Rochelle for her volunteer service and excellent work to raise children's brain development via literacy in the Upper Cumberland.

Deanna reported she is still working on her project for spiritual pen pals. She should have those groups together soon.

Gates reported that worship coordinating is going well and services are scheduled through September. Because services are now online, Patrick Bakle has returned as a service coordinator.

Jenifer reported that members/friends are still mailing in their pledges and other donations. UUCC is still operating in the black. You may post your checks to 31 W. First St., Cookeville, 38501. You may donate via Paypal at uucookeville.org/stewardship/. Because of social distancing, all fundraisers have been postponed.

De and Cassandra reported they are still moving forward on having a new UUCC brochure. Plans are for the brochure to be displayed in the box outside the front door and to be available for distribution at potential in-person events.

The Board voted unanimously for Susie to order three new membership lapel pins from the UUA InSpirit Bookstore. The Board's policy is for any expenses of \$30 or greater, the Board must vote on the expenditure and a receipt must be given to the treasurer for reimbursement.

Cassandra reported she is still having online contributions for the UUCC directory. If you would like to be included in the directory, please go to <https://uucookeville.org/stewardship/directory-sign-up/>.

Because UUCC is meeting online, the Board discussed and agreed to temporarily suspend the space's internet connection. Once UUCC has again begun in-person services, the connection will be reconnected.

There is still an opening for a member-at-large for the 2020-2021 Board. If you would like to volunteer your insights and ability to discuss and vote on issues concerning UUCC, please contact any current Board member: Charles Zuller, President; Jenifer Crone, Treasurer; Susie Zuller, Secretary; and Janie Finch, Cassandra Gronendyke, and Norma Scarlett, Members-at-Large.

See UUCC website <https://uucookeville.org/about-us/our-elected-leaders/>.

Thanks to everyone who helped produce this Newsletter.
Contributions to the Newsletter in the UU spirit are welcome.
Please submit to skjordan100@gmail.com.