

*Statement on Black Lives Matter from the Board of Trustees and Rev. Florence Caplow of the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign*

June, 2020

The Board of Trustees and Rev. Florence Caplow of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana Champaign (UUCUC) are committed to action in solidarity with Black Lives Matter and the Movement for Black Lives.

In May of 2018 the congregation of UUCUC voted to place a Black Lives Matter banner on our building, and affirmed this statement: *"UUCUC will publicly display a Black Lives Matter banner to express our support for the Black Lives Matter Movement and the activist campaign to end violence and systemic racism against Black people."*

We recognize that by having this banner on our church building, we are publicly affirming our commitments, and in doing so we bear responsibility as a congregation to show up for Black Lives, in our community and nationally.

Systemic racism and white supremacy corrupt our society and inflict incalculable damage to Black communities, families and individuals. We see violence and unequal treatment under the law, at every juncture in the criminal justice system, leading to devastating effects in Black communities, including in Champaign-Urbana.

We recognize the need to dismantle systemic racism in the United States and within UUCUC. White supremacy -- both past and present -- has shaped our institutions and we must do the critical anti-racism work necessary to repair the harm done. It is our responsibility to use our power to help abolish systemic racism which is destroying Black lives, Black communities, and the planet.

THEREFORE, as the Board and Reverend of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana Champaign:

- 1. We commit to reflection and action about our individual and collective participation in white supremacy culture and systemic racism, including continued anti-racism education, self-reflection, and change as a Board and an institution.** How? Through actions that include, but are not limited to, regular anti-racism trainings for leaders and members, ongoing evaluation of institutional structures, and involvement with specific local, state and national actions requested by Black organizers.
- 2. We commit to listening to Black voices within and beyond the congregation.** How? Through actions that include, but are not limited to, interaction with Black-led organizations such as the NAACP, Black Lives Matter, and other groups, and through active conversation with Black members of our congregation in the areas of worship, membership, social action, staffing, and ministry.
- 3. We commit to continued direct support of the efforts of Black organizers both financially and through our willingness to speak, act, and bring change to systems that have been a poison in the heart of our country for hundreds of years.** How? Through actions that include, but are not limited to, continuing to share our financial resources with Black-led organizations and the Black community through our mission-based budget process, Sunday shared offering, and other fundraising platforms, and encouragement of congregational participation in direct action, protest, and political action at the

local and national level that dismantles and defunds systems of racism, especially within schools, faith communities, and the police and justice system.

4. We commit to seeking alternatives to calling the police, due to the long history of police violence against the Black community. How? Through actions that include, but are not limited to, education, policy development, and involvement of staff, Minister, and committees, as well as the development and training of an active mediation team. This process would include training and conversation with leaders and members of the congregation around alternatives to calling the police. The Board will develop a policy related to police calls in the 2020/21 church year.

We express these commitments as an opening to dialog and actions that include all church members. We will measure our progress toward fulfilling these commitments at the end of each church year.