**History of the Anti-Racism Audit Team**

Originally named the Diversity/Inclusivity Task Force, the Taskforce for Dismantling White Institutional Dominance and Habits of White Supremacy was established by the UU Church of Akron’s Board of Trustees on May 23, 2018 and is charged with “examining the ministries, policies, procedures, and organizational structure of the church through the lens of race and white privilege. The ultimate goal of the Task Force is to enable the church to live its mission of being a welcoming and loving sanctuary for all.”  Members of the Taskforce were appointed by the Board of Trustees.

The Taskforce recognizes that within our Unitarian Universalist denomination, as within our wider society, structures and practices that center and privilege white folks are the norm. Such structures and practices have benefited white folks at the expense of Black, Brown, and Indigenous lives. Our aim is to dismantle those harmful and exclusionary ways and to instead be intentional about centering the voices and experiences of those who have been marginalized and oppressed. It is by listening to and empowering those at the margins that we can build a more just and equitable congregation and society.

Since June 2018, the Taskforce has examined several areas of church life and has made recommendations to the Board of Trustees at critical decision points, for example during the church’s budget approval process in fall 2018. Recommendations were also made during our congregation’s recent search for an acting Director of Religious Education and during our current search for an acting Music Director.

During this time, one member of the Taskforce has led several book studies, open to the wider congregation, in order to inform and educate, promote inner reflection and dialogue, and nudge us to challenge our assumptions and habits which often unintentionally support white institutional dominance. Our current book guides us “from I to We” thinking and informs us about multicultural perspectives and approaches to move our leadership and interaction style in healthier, more inclusive directions.

In addition to other areas of focus, the Taskforce is embarking on a new effort to obtain feedback from the wider congregation regarding individual experiences, concerns, and suggestions which could further our work. One question we will also begin asking is: What do you envision that would move us toward creating beloved community at the UU Church of Akron?”