

## A PRAYER FOR EL PASO AND DAYTON

By Kia Bordner



May we continue to bend the arc towards justice for historical harms done, for generational trauma inflicted, for current damages being wrought. May we journey toward wholeness and holiness.

May we do more than pray together for those suffering and grieving in Gilroy, in El Paso, in Dayton, all across Turtle Island. May we find out who we are as a People of Faith so we can do the work we are being called to do for all of our relations. Breathe. Listen. Breathe.

Do you hear the lamentation of the people?  
Breathe. Listen. Really listen.  
This is the world we have always lived in.  
Breathe. Listen. Really listen.

My grandfather's people, the Tigua, were displaced from their homeland in what is now New Mexico and relocated to the area which would eventually become El Paso. They resigned themselves to be at home, even where it was not. They adapted, as Indigenous peoples have for time immemorial. Let us pray together.

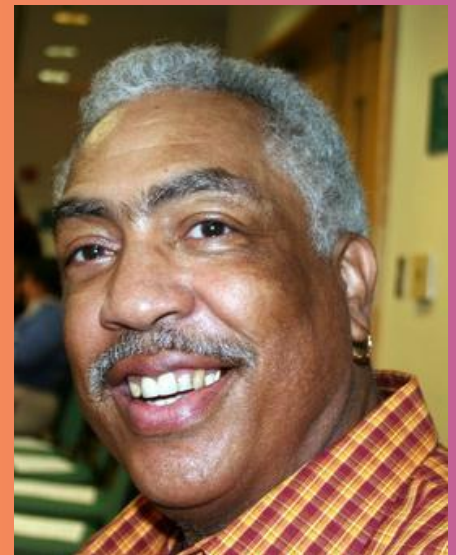
As our communities of Faith have given us so much Love, Hope, & Peace, as we are connected by these, so are the people of Gilroy, El Paso, & Dayton. Let us hold them in that energy, too. In these very troubling times, may our Faith be a beacon of Light to those Motherless Children, to those grieving.

May we tend the home fires.  
Breathe. Listen. Breathe.  
Do you hear, do you feel the comfort we offer?  
Breathe. Listen. Really listen.  
'How very good and pleasant it is when knidred live together in unity!'  
This is the world we are creating.

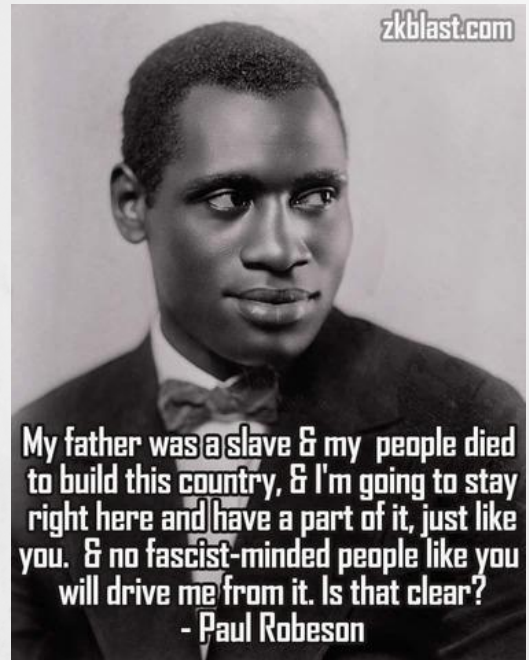
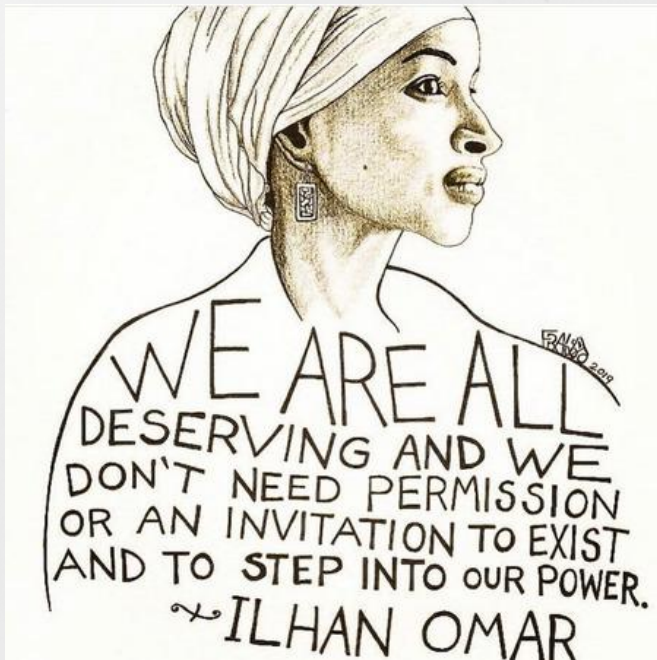
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### #TBT



*Rev. Chester McCall, long-time DRUUMM Chaplain, parish and community minister. At the UU Ministers of Color Retreat in 2007. Currently based in the SF Bay Area.*



## STEP INTO OUR POWER

In response to the rampant xenophobia and racism in the public square, many DRUUMM members are responding with art and words of resistance and dignity. These are some of the pieces shared on social media recently. Illan Omar art by Words by Fausto.

**Go back to where you came from:** a classic racial insult. When I was a boy and didn't know anything about anything, my reaction was simple: I didn't belong, I was not wanted, I was hated, there was nothing for me here, simply because of the color of my skin, the shape of my eyes. Now that I'm an adult, if I hear it, I want to ask the speaker: do you mean the country I was born in, which was both complicit in, and prey to, cold war manipulation by superpowers, including the United States? What does it mean when you say "go back to where you came from" to people who were either brought here against their will, or fleeing from economic and/or militaristic devastation brought on by imperial superpowers including but not limited to the United States? How far back are you going - do you mean all of us, who aren't indigenous to this country, go back to where we come from (because that would include all you hateful fuckers too)? And what about kids like my child, who has parents born elsewhere but who has only known this country, this language, even as her skin color and her eye shape mark her as perpetually other, perpetually foreign, never belonging, hated and never wanted on her own terms, subject to the same taunts that were inflicted on her parents decades ago? - Bao Phi

*Bao Phi was born in Vietnam and raised in the Phillips neighborhood of South Minneapolis. He is an author, a poet, a community organizer, and a father.*

# WHO, WHAT & WHY: UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

The UUA has been experiencing yet another awakening at the intersections of race and racism, there is an increased visibility and new opportunities for UU Communities of Color as we continue to live and grow our faith. There is also a lot of confusion and doubt about the mere existence of People of Color.

As the USA becomes majority People of Color, and racism and xenophobia continues to be the dominant White social and political response, I find a lot of hope in our UU values in transforming our society. Yet I am also troubled. I have been wondering whether we will ever be a place for all people, or only a supermajority of White folks?

In the mission of DRUUMM and pages of the DRUUMM Beat, you'll see many reasons for why we come together. To refresh briefly, we build communities and ministries to heal from the harms of racism and oppression. From time to time we seek sacred space to hold gently the suffering and guide one another towards dignity and wholeness.

I'm continually surprised that we are one of the few faiths where there is serious backlash against People of Color coming together. White neo-liberal thinking is still so uncomfortable with People of Color in leadership that there is a steady stream of negative reactions that has historically invisibilized and marginalized UU People of Color.



Rev. Gordon Bailey, Rev. Walter LeFlora, Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons, former DRUUMM Steering Committee Members at GA 2019

We are one of the only faith traditions that does not enumerate People of Color in our congregations. We have only a vague idea of our census numbers. Even after the UUA Racism Audit of 1981, the 1997 Journey Towards Wholeness GA Business Resolution, and countless public statements in support of racial justice and affirmative action, we can barely articulate who we are.

Yet we are still organizing. Hundreds of UUs of Color are networking, gathering, convening and building ministries together. We will persist to exist. Let us lift up the efforts of UU Communities of Color in all their forms and shapes.

## NOTATIONS

- Over 50 folks attended "The Well" a gathering of multiracial families at Ferry Beach in Maine last month.
- The UU Church of the Philippines is hosting an Asia-Pacific Regional UU Conference in October 2019.
- The DRUUMM Organizing Project is looking into North Carolina, Texas and Washington State for future local gatherings.
- A new curriculum focused on lay UU People of Color leadership development is being envisioned.
- Rev. Marta Valentin has been appointed to the new UUA Professional Development Director
- The UUA is updating their directory and contact information for UU Religious Professionals of Color. Contact Rev. Michael Crumpler to make sure you're included. [mcrumpler@uua.org](mailto:mcrumpler@uua.org)

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Nashville TN Gathering	Aug 14
Chicago IL Gathering	Aug 19
Los Angeles Gathering	Aug 20
Thrive Young Adult, New Orleans LA	Aug 31-Sep 2
Harper-Jordan Memorial Symposium, Minneapolis MN	Oct 30-Nov 2

# Here is an Old Painting

By JooYoung Choi

Here's an old painting, from 12 years ago, right before I found my birthfather. It's funny how things change, and how art can be a reflection of what life once felt like. Lately I've been thinking a lot about what love means to me. Here is something for those who have adopted children.

Here are some of my thoughts about learning about love from my adoptive family... Growing up, my adoptive mother stressed that "love is trust and trust is love". She talked often about how real Love is a type of trust that means someone will be there for you when things get hard.

I realized yesterday, that this is NOT a very good thing to tell an adoptee whose birth parents weren't able to be there for them when things got hard.

Statements like this I think made me feel like... maybe I am not lovable enough for my original parents to have stuck around during the hard times. Maybe I'm not worth it. Maybe I'm not worth loving when things get hard.

I learned on a subconscious level from my adoptive mom, that love is like a contract, and if you break it, you must not really love me. If you aren't there for me, you must not love me. And if I make a mistake and I'm not there for you, you must not love you enough.

Now I see that the version of love I grew up with left little no room for people to be human. People make mistakes, and sometimes people can't be there for one another, but that doesn't mean they don't love each other.



In this world there are all sorts of love.

And trying to wrap up something as big as love into a small memorable phrase, well it seems like it will only bound the truth of it all into a bundle of limitations. I think worst of all, I grew up believing that I must not have been loved as a baby because my birthfamily wasn't there for me (later I found out that my relinquishment was against my birth father's wishes, and if he could've kept me, he would've).

But growing up hearing over and over that love is equal to being there, really hurt, and in a way, it locked me into an unhealthy belief that until I was adopted maybe I wasn't lovable at all.

I've realized over time that real love for me is about acceptance.

Accepting someone as they are, and loving them not for who you wish them to become or who they once were, just as they are today.

In a world filled with expectations, what greater gift could you give to someone than to embrace them as they are. To love them free of judgement and full of room to be human.

I used to think love was about giving 110% all the time, but now I see that love is all about accepting someone when they have days where they only feel like giving 35%, and other days they give 200%. It's about being human, and not about unhealthy expectations.

# The Dying Words of Goethe

By Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

“Light! more light! the shadows deepen,  
And my life is ebbing low,  
Throw the windows widely open:  
Light! more light! before I go.

“Softly let the balmy sunshine  
Play around my dying bed,  
E'er the dimly lighted valley  
I with lonely feet must tread.

“Light! more light! for Death is weaving  
Shadows 'round my waning sight,  
And I fain would gaze upon him  
Through a stream of earthly light.”

Not for greater gifts of genius;  
Not for thoughts more grandly  
bright,  
All the dying poet whispers  
Is a prayer for light, more light.

Heeds he not the gathered laurels,  
Fading slowly from his sight;  
All the poet's aspirations  
Centre in that prayer for light.

Gracious Saviour, when life's day-  
dreams  
Melt and vanish from the sight,  
May our dim and longing vision  
Then be blessed with light, more  
light.



## Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (September 24, 1825-February 22, 1911), was an African-American writer, lecturer, and political activist, who promoted abolition, civil rights, women's rights, and temperance. She helped found or held high office in several national progressive organizations. She is best remembered today for her poetry and fiction, which preached moral uplift and counseled the oppressed how to free themselves from their demoralized condition. Harper first became acquainted with Unitarians before the war, due to their support of abolition and the Underground Railroad. When Harper and her daughter settled in Philadelphia in 1870, she joined the First Unitarian Church.

# The Gathering Place - DRUUMM's People of Color Facebook

As a bisexual biracial atheist, I've felt fundamentally disconnected from identity-based groups like race, religion, and even family. I despaired of ever finding a community that would accept the \*entirety\* of who I am.

So since joining First UU Nashville in 2017, I've loved that mixed-ness, weirdness, complication, and new perspectives are essential, beneficial, & (in my experience) joyfully welcomed. I feel like I can be whole, rather than half-this and bi-that.

I know it wasn't always this way, so I'm very grateful to those of you here, who have worked hard to make things as smooth as they are and are still becoming.

**Lóre Stevens**  
Nashville, TN

I have been strengthened as a UU of color by the openness to my transwomen identity and by my fellowship making me feel home. As a chicanx indigenous woman from the Rio grande valley along the border in Texas I have always been an outsider. One for being autistic and intelligent also Mormon and not Catholic. But I found healing in our tradition finding my spiritual and all myself begin welcomed without question . I am also so blessed to have gone to GA it begin my first and also begin welcomed among poc spaces for all of me. And for the realtives who hold me and continue to love me. I am strengthened by all of that in my identity as a UU indigenous witch pagan.

**Aspen Isaiah Basaldua**  
Weslaco, TX

**“What has helped you in strengthening/deepening your Unitarian Universalist Faith identity as a UU Person of Color?”**

Being connected with my UU POC ancestors through DRUUMM and other spaces has been life-saving for me. Being of mixed race, I was socialized as white. For most of my life, I was disconnected from and hated my body because when I looked in the mirror, I didn't see a white girl and hated what I saw. UU POC have supported me in doing my own identity work, directly helping me to affirm my own dignity and worth. UU POC have demonstrated for me what it means to never give up affirming that for ourselves and our community. I have faith in our interconnectedness because it's what's saved me and helped me to pass it on to others. I carry the flame!

**Anna Bethea**  
Tallahassee, FL

*Periodically we will share selected responses to discussion happening in DRUUMM's People of Color Facebook Group (search for DRUUMM The Gathering Place). These are posted with permission.*

# COLOR/FULL: A DRUUMM GLOBAL MAJORITIES PROJECT



**RHIANNON SMITH**  
SAN DIEGO, CA

## GOAL

To reconnect with my UU family from all over the country. To make new connections.

## GIFT

My passion for Unitarian Universalism. It is a joy for me to meet other folks who share my values, and to see what we can build together.  
A willingness to connect. Outgoingness. My skills are planning and organizing folks.



### The DRUUMM Beat Issue 3, Volume 2

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