



THE DRUUMM BEAT

DIVERSE & REVOLUTIONARY UU MULTICULTURAL MINISTRIES

JUNE 2020

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 11

IN HONOR AND PRAISE TO BLACK RAGE

Deep in the shadow of night, down near the crossroads and cemetery gates, with bitter liquor and cigar smoke wafting, I greet you. Clad in white, upon the floor before shrines, following the names of the Ancestors being uttered, I greet you.

You are the sacred and righteous rage of my people. Echoing throughout time from the Lands of our Elders, from depths of the oceans, I hear you now. You call out to us in the swirling winds, in the clamoring of lightning, in the crashing of waves, in the flow of rivers, in the rustling of forests, in clouds that move across the heavens, in the drum beat of the earth.

You are present in the cries of “Black Lives Matter” and “No Justice, No Peace.” You shimmer brightly in the flames of buildings crumbling to the ground as they are consumed in flame. In the calls for protests and direct action. In the stirring of pots, the laughter of children, in the tears and prayers of guardians. You are Black Rage.

Holy, and sacred. Unbound and unapologetic. You swell in the hips and breasts, in the of curves cheek bones and nostrils, the beats of hearts and pulsating thoughts. In exhaustion. In frustration. In numbness. In mobilization. In life. A you name yourself as good.

Holy, and sacred, Black Rage. Be ever present in our struggle for liberation, in our work to be, to love, to exist. Guide our movements, in all there forms, as we strive to be Good Ancestors, ensuring that our descendants might look upon our memory with favor. For you, for them, invite us to live without fear.

Dear Holy, and sacred, Black Rage. Give life to this valley of dry bones. Move like fire upon our spirits. Stir within us. Now and forever more.

Ase.

In This Issue

- In Honor and Praise to Black Rage
- DRUUMM Statement of Solidarity
- No More Vigils
- Strength in the Valley Theology
- If You Check In With Me
- We are Worthy



Tyler Coles (they/he) is a Southern-raised native of Roanoke, VA.

Inspired by the good news of Unitarian Universalism, Tyler is a candidate for the ministry with more than 5 years of experience focusing on the intersections of young adult spirituality and collective liberation.

Tyler also serves as the communications co-chair of Diverse & Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM).

DRUUMM STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY

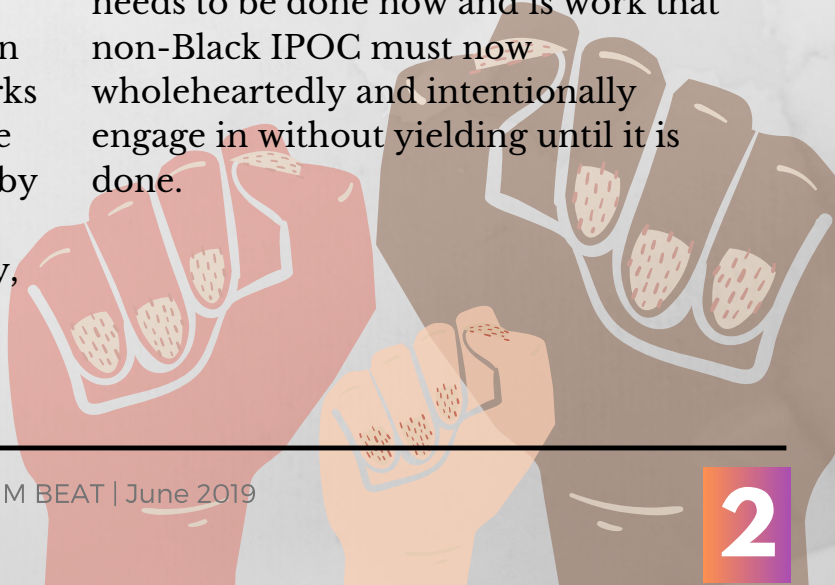
**A pastoral note for our Black siblings who may need to speak to a chaplain, we invite you to reach out to our DRUUMM Chaplain, Hope Johnson at YoursHOPE@aol.com. Another pastoral resource is BLUUMin Pastoral Care.*

In the midst of a grievous and exhausting time in our nation for our Black siblings, DRUUMM Leadership writes in solidarity and with anger at the continuing injustices impacting our Black siblings including coronavirus disproportionately impacting Black communities in the USA, witnessing the continued killing and mistreatment of Black people such as, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd — as well as the harassment of Black people by white people, such as Christian Cooper, a Black man who a white liberal woman called the police on. We write to call to action our non-Black IPOC community members, as “being present” and “holding thoughts and prayers” is not good enough. Our siblings are being systematically and institutionally murdered, harassed, and brutalized and it is a time for us to truly fight and work for these atrocities to END NOW!

We hold up the long and arduous history of anti-Black violence and also hold the ways that anti-Blackness is manifesting in Black, Indigenous, POC spaces. This works to dehumanize and oppress Black people within spaces that are made collectively by and for all of us, to benefit non-Black people and to maintain white supremacy, as the Black Liberation Collective states,

“Anti-Blackness then is the depreciation of Black humanity, denial of Black pain, and the obstruction of Black agency, in a perpetual process of dehumanization. Anti-Black racism isn’t merely ideology or overt prejudice and discrimination, but consists of mechanisms and practices that reproduce white [and light skin] advantage and Black disadvantages.”

As DRUUMM leadership, we continue to commit to dismantling the ways anti-Blackness is showing up in our space and UU Black, Indigenous POC spaces. As a faith-based organization of Black, Indigenous, People of Color, our moral responsibility as Unitarian Universalists’ mandates that we co-create liberation. Nothing can be created without work. In the words of Rev. Kaji Douša “faith without works is deadly.” The work of liberation is all of our work. It is dependent on accountable relationships defined by honesty and healing and requires that we not only acknowledge the ways that non-Black IPOC participate in anti-Blackness, but we actively tear down those habits and institutionalised actions. The work that must be done needs to be done now and is work that non-Black IPOC must now wholeheartedly and intentionally engage in without yielding until it is done.



DRUUMM STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY

We call on our non-Black IPOC members to take action and learn about the ways we can dismantle internalized racism and anti-Blackness because we can't be free until we're all free. Once you learn of the ways in which you can work to defend, uplift, and celebrate Blackness, we implore you to act each day and each moment because lives depend on it.

How to start this work for non-Black IPOC:

- **Now is the time to listen** to our Black siblings and their expertise. People are sharing on social media and in the news their needs.
- **Learn about anti-Blackness.** Don't depend on Black folks to educate you about anti-Blackness or what is going on. See the resources below as a starting point.
- **Intentional reflection:** Prepare the self-care resources you may need to begin this work, especially resources to manage your own healing and trauma. If this work of exploring how you may be participating in anti-Blackness and white supremacy feels uncomfortable, sit with that. Start with what feelings are coming up for you, call a friend who is IPOC to talk it over, but also sit with the question of where there is more learning and healing needed for our liberation. Our healing as BIPOC is dependent on having difficult conversations and taking radical accountability for our actions, especially where/when we have caused harm.
- **Speak to a Chaplain:** DRUUMM Chaplain Danielle di Bona is available to connect along with Hope Johnson mentioned earlier for all of our DRUUMM membership: danielle7248@gmail.com.

Call to Action for non-Black IPOC: Action: Call & Text Mayor Frey by the Black Visions [from Justice for #GeorgeFloyd resources created by Alyssa Lee]

- **Action: Call District Attorney Mike Freeman** by Alyssa Lee
- **Solidarity Support: Donate to Black Visions:** a group in Minneapolis on the ground helping keep people in the streets, shaping local demands and building a long-haul political home for Black people in Minnesota. [from Justice for #GeorgeFloyd resources created by Alyssa Lee]
- **Education/Action: "Beyond Policing" Webinar on Friday 5/29 @6pm** [from Justice for #GeorgeFloyd resources created by Alyssa Lee]
- **Support BLUU Babies and Bailouts and Donate to BLUU**
- **Organize to End Incarceration by Michelle Alexander**
- **Don't Be a Bystander: 6 Tips for Responding to Violent Attacks**
- **Alternatives to Calling the Police—Introduction**

Self-Education Resources for Non-Black IPOC:

- **Learn about Black Lives of Unitarian Universalist (BLUU)**
- **Learn about the 8th Principle Project**
- **Learn about Internalized Racism by Racial Equity Tools**
- **Resources for non-Black Asians on Anti-Blackness**
- **7 Ways Non-Black People of Color Perpetuate Anti-Blackness**
- **Anti-Blackness in the POC Community**
- **When POC is not Enough: Anti-Blackness in the LGBTQ+ Community**
- **Black/POC mixed race folks can reverse the anti-Blackness of mixed race narratives**
- **What is and isn't transformative justice by Adrienne Maree Brown**

NO MORE VIGILS

By Rev. Adam Lawrence Dyer

No more vigils.
No more performing faith for white liberals.
No more soulful singing or resounding sermons.
Vigils are a response.
Vigils are too late.
Vigils are the privilege of people who have a safe place
to return to afterward.
I am not safe anywhere I go.
I am told to accept and aspire to the privilege of safety
As a symbol of approval.
Approved by whom and at what price?
The price of every other black body that is or has been
Murdered
Lynched
Raped
And forfeited to the priority of white safety.
I cannot live my faith in response to the white gaze.
Instead, I must demand,
That the “vigil” be gathered before we have to die.
That the “prayer” is spoken before we must riot.
That the “moment of silence” is held before the
protests begin.
I demand that my faith is in no way content,
complacent or complicit
But proactive and generative of a bright and righteous
future.
Never passive, impotent or accepting of an ongoing
defeated past
Just to mollify a monied minority.
Today.
Now.
In this moment.
I must insist,
No more fucking vigils.



*Rev. Adam Lawrence Dyer was called as the 24th lead minister of First Parish in Cambridge. He is the author of the 2016 *In-Spirit Meditation Manual*, *Love Beyond God* a collection of poetry and reflections that generates from his personal experience of black identity intersecting with liberal religion.*



STRENGTH IN THE VALLEY THEOLOGY



Rev. Natalie Maxwell Fenimore From Centering: Navigating Race, Authenticity, and Power in Ministry. Shared with permission.

I come from a testifying religious tradition, not a confessing tradition. I come from a tradition where you stand, in the midst of the people, and speak your pain out loud. We call the pain into the room and everybody in the room is called to attend to it. That is what unity is. That is what church is. We are called to attend to each other the way that we really are, not our passing selves. “Church” is about building places where we can process pain and struggle as well as love and celebration.

This is “Strength-in-the-Valley” theology. Unitarian Universalism has a “Mountaintop” theology. But you cannot really get to the mountaintop until you’ve been in the valley. You can’t just skip over the struggle. As an institution, Unitarian Universalism does Easter without Good Friday. So Unitarian Universalism struggles with how we, as a religious body, can build a structure for learning how to hold pain, and I think that one way Unitarian Universalism tries to do that quickly is to cheat and “steal” it from other people’s traditions.

The harder and slower route is to be in relationship with communities of color. There are things I’ve learned in the African-American religious community, things I hear from people in the Hispanic Catholic tradition, things I hear from the Muslim traditions, from indigenous people of faith. This knowledge and experience can enrich Unitarian Universalism. When I am invited into Unitarian Universalism, when those from these other traditions are invited in, all they have to offer must be invited in.

IF YOU CHECK IN WITH ME

BY HOP HOPKINS

Seems like the advice going around is for white folks to check-in on the Black people in their lives.

Well, to all my white family, family and friends, if you check-in with me please do not ask me how I'm doing. That shit ought to be obvious. I and other Black folks are trying to survive a deadly pandemic and white supremacy in overdrive. Both of which are killing us at higher rates due to long standing inaction by a world that gas lights us on the daily.

I've forgotten to mention that robs, pillages and destroys Black and Indigenous life) has been going for a long time and y'all have got to stop acting like this is an unboxing. Gnow, that's not how it is right now. Lawd, this shit might be new to you, it ain't to us. Everyday Black, Indigenous and People of Color live like it's the fourth quarter of our lives with seconds left on the clock.

Rather than ask me a question, I want you to answer me a question. Answer for me what side of history you're on and what the fuck it is that you are now doing to stand up and show-up for Black life? See the game against settler colonialism, racial monopoly capitalism, heteropatriarchy and white supremacy (and whatever else systemic oppression



IF YOU CHECK IN WITH ME (CONTINUED)

The bench should have been cleared long ago in support of #BlackLivesMatter. As my brother Maurice astutely observes and then asks, "this will probably be one of the most binary moral moments of your life. Which side are you on?"

Get off the bench, suit up and join in OR cross the field and go be with the other team. You can't be on the bench and say you're with us any longer. If you stay on the bench, you're in the way and making it difficult for us to do what we need to do to be free. In other words, remaining on the bench is doing work for the other team. Period.

Connecting with another human that sees their liberation from white supremacy is bound up with mine is pecan pie ala mode right now. Just a heads-up though, if you call me, text me, or whatever, the first words out your mouth ought to be a clear statement of what side of history you've chosen to be on. Then we can get to the business of being equally vulnerable about how even more fucked-up the world is for Black folx right now and what WE are gonna do about it towards collective liberation so we can all GET FREE!

GO time is now. No more hand wringing. No more tears of confusion and guilt. Help us all out, make a decision and when you do, don't tell us - show us. The world will see you and know how you've decided to show-up, stand-up and show-out for BlackLives. Do not get me wrong, I am not okay and connecting with another human being that cares about me, my family and other Black life is much desired. Connecting with another human that sees their liberation from white supremacy is bound up with mine is pecan pie ala mode right now.



Hop Hopkins is a member of Neighborhood Church POC Group in Pasadena CA and the director of strategic partnerships for the Sierra Club.

WE ARE WORTHY

By Elandria Williams

We are worthy
Not because of what we produce
But because of who we are
We are divine bodies of light and darkness
You are not worthy because of what you offer, not because of what is
in your mind, not for the support you give others, not for what you
give at all
We are worthy and are whole just because
In this great turning, in this great pandemic, in this radical
readjustment and alignment
We are not disposable, we are needed, we are the very people that have
withstood everything that has been thrown at us as a people and as
Maya Angelou would say
Still I Rise
We arise from the pain
We rise from the grief
We arise from the limits people place on us and the limits we place on
ourselves
We rise to be the children and the ancestors
We rise to be our true selves
Our true selves in relationship to our families and communities
Recognizing our liberating and whole selves
Honoring them and others as we strive for abundant communities,
abundant lives, abundant relationships, and abundant values and
cultural manifestations
We are worthiness personified
I, you, and we are worthy and deserve a life where we are not always
fighting for our existence
Imagine what we could create if we were not always in the struggle
Imagine what we could envision if we could just be let to just go there
So tired of always having to resist, to fight, demanding, pushing

WE ARE WORTHY (CONTINUED)

To everyone
that has the courage, the power, the ability to co-create what we want
and need
while rooting in what we can't lose and who we are
You are the visionary
You are the hope
You are our ancestor's dreams
No, you might not ever end up on some list somewhere
But you are on a list in someone's heart and mind
And if it's in how you move in the world so people can see by example
You are the embodiment of what we need
Thanks to all that are the embodiment
The embodiment not of productivity but the embodiment of radical
love, care and sanctuary
It's time
Embodiment time
Embodiment
Living one's values out loud
Let me every day live my values out loud
Let us every day live our values out loud
Embodying our values
Not the productivity quotient
Beyond productivity
Past productivity
True embodiment
Life



Elandria Williams is co-moderator of the Unitarian Universalist Association, and a member of the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church in Knoxville, Tennessee. Elandria is a past DRUUMM Steering Committee member, formerly with the Highlander Center, and currently serves as Executive Director of Peoples Hub.

NOTATIONS

- The DRUUMM Business Meeting will be held on June 25th at 7pm ET with the main agenda being electing new officers.
- DRUUMM is hosting a monthly drop-in session for facilitators and organizers of UU People of Color Groups on the Fourth Tuesday of the Month at 8pm ET.
- The UUA has issued a letter of guidance to congregations to prepare for online programs and worship through May 2021.
- The Asian Pacific Islander caucus hosted several watch parties to view the new PBS Asian Americans documentary released in May.
- BIPOC Religious Professionals are checking in weekly on Wednesdays 7pm ET through June.
- Rev. Dr. Hope Johnson and Paula Cole Jones are hosting a virtual support group for UU Religious Professionals of Color on Fridays at 12:30pm ET.
- Rev. Joan Javier-Duval and Rev. Mykal O. Slack are leading the Sunday Worship at General Assembly including a Community COVID Memorial.
- Rev. Tania Marquez is leading a periodic Spanish language UU Zoom.
- The DRUUMM Annual Meeting will be held October 9-11, 2020 virtually.

COLOR/FULL: A DRUUMM GLOBAL MAJORITIES PROJECT



**JACQUI WILLIAMS
ALBANY, NEW YORK**

GOAL

I'm here to fulfill two obligations. I'm on the presidential search committee and we released a report about our process. Second, I'm here to fulfill an obligation that UUA Co-moderator Elandria Williams requested — my presence for the new safety team.

GIFT

The relationships I have, my knowledge of the different congregations. My gift of networking. People ask about people, places, and things I know about. I can help them get to where they need to go.



The DRUUMM Beat Issue 11, Volume 2

Editor Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons Newsletter Team: Rochelle Fortier
Editorial Board: Rhiannon Smith, Tyler Coles
For inquiries please email editor@druumm.org

The DRUUMM Beat is published under the direction of the DRUUMM Steering Committee and the Communications Portfolio. Join in the conversation with DRUUMM on Twitter and follow us on Facebook for the latest news.

Read online at www.druumm.org



DRUUMM STEERING COMMITTEE 2019-2020

The DRUUMM Steering Committee is made up of members elected to three year terms at our annual meeting. For more information you can reach them at info@druumm.org.

President **Sana Saeed**, Pennsylvania

Vice President **Ayanna Kafi Stringer**, Georgia

Secretary **Janell Hill**, Minnesota

Treasurer **William Lester**, Georgia

Communications Co-Coordinator **Rhiannon Smith**, California

Communications Co-Coordinator **Tyler Coles**, Virginia

GA Co-Coordinator **Kia Bordner**, California

GA Co-Coordinator **Imari S. Nuyen-Kariotis**, California

Outreach Co-Coordinator **Noel Burke**, Missouri

Outreach Co-Coordinator **Kaitlin Dey**, California

UUA Liaison **Michael J Crumpler**, New York