

## LIVE, WORK, LOVE, CREATE

*Are you ready to Live, Work, Love, Create?*

Beloveds, we invite you to our DRUUMM Fall Gathering 2020 the weekend of October 9-11, 2020. We'll jumpstart that weekend of organizing and justice making with Identity Caucus meetings happening on October 8, 2020. It is with great pleasure we announce our Keynote Speaker, Leslie Mac, current Vice-Moderator of the UUA Board of Trustees and the Digital Organizer of Black Womxn For, a project focused on creating intentional spaces for Progressive Black women and gender non-conforming community leaders and activists to flex their collective political power.

This year's theme is Live, Work, Love, Create. This inspiring theme came from a group of about twenty BIPOC who wanted us to Live in a place where we don't have to do all of the fighting all of the time because we are tired of having boots on our necks. Work to find ways to get our communities of color out to organize, mobilize, and vote locally, at the state level, and nationally. Love so that we can love one another and help sustain ourselves during these trying times. Create, so that we can create the world in a vision of what we want to see.

Beloveds, are you ready to do that work? Are you ready to live and thrive? Are you ready to love and create a new way forward? Let's do this work together! Please visit the DRUUMM Gathering Place to register. If you are not a current member of The DRUUMM Gathering Place please send an email to [druummacmc@gmail.com](mailto:druummacmc@gmail.com) and we will get you the registration form.

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**KEYNOTE LESLIE MAC**

# ABOUT DECOLONIZATION

BY MIKE ADAMS

I want to talk a little about my experience with working to decolonize my own thinking, so that some of you may better understand the nuance I'm driving at in many of my comments.

I am Native American. My mom was stolen from her parents and put into foster care to be assimilated (into white culture). I have reunited with my tribe as an adult.

Most of my mom's generation were also stolen and almost all of my aunts and uncles have been abused by the white people who were supposed to care for them in foster care or residential schools that were aimed at eradicating my tribes culture.

I grew up in white culture and I used to complain about Native Americans being late to

things or being a no show on days of religious importance in their individual culture. I felt like they were making it hard for other (good) natives (like me), who weren't late or who showed up despite religious days.

What I was not aware of is that my whole context was set in the presumption that colonized (white western) values were more valid than native values.

I had the unexamined supposition that natives should conform themselves to what white society expects of them, regardless of their cultural values and religion.

It is true that missing work is a problem for employers, and it is true that cultural expectations and rituals require participation.

So my mistake was placing greater value on what white society expects on having a condescending attitude toward the expectation of the native community.



Art by JESPER WADERSTEN

# ABOUT DECOLONIZATION

BY MIKE ADAMS

I diminished indigenous values and elevated colonized values without even knowing I was doing that. And, as some are reading this, I guarantee that a few are agreeing with my attitude from a few years ago.

It can be difficult to see that this value is subjective and it is a value imposed on native peoples for the profit benefit of white employers.

This is not to say that I don't show up to work on time, or that I don't call in, if I need to miss, but I no longer judge other natives harshly for having different values, based on their cultural identity, and if I lived near my tribe, I would request time off for cultural practices, and if denied, I might just miss work anyway to participate in my culture.

Decolonization is hard work, it puts us at odds with White society, and it is important!



*Michael Adams is from the Lil'wat tribe in BC Canada. He is a member of the Unitarian Church of Los Alamos and a member of the Los Alamos Racial Justice Action Advisory Council.*

# DRUUMM REGIONAL CAUCUSES

BIPOC only



***South - Sept 12th 10am to 1pm ET***

***Midwest - Sept 12th 9am to 12pm CT***

***New England - Sept 19th 10am to 1pm ET***

***Pacific NW - Sept 19th 9am to Noon PT***

***California - Sept 26th 10am to 1pm PT***

***Central East - September 26th 10am to 1pm ET***

***Southwest/Mountain - Sept 27th 630pm to  
830pm MT***



**Register at: [bit.ly/DRUUMMCaucus](https://bit.ly/DRUUMMCaucus)**

# OUR COMMUNITY OF CARE



In late August, 60 DRUUMM members and friends came together to form a circle of support and care for Althea Bernstein. She shared her personal story and truths about her experience being physically assaulted and racially harassed in Wisconsin. It was an incredibly vulnerable and courageous testimonial, one that left many of us in tears.

Chaplain Danielle DiBona opened the virtual forum with an invocation, and Chaplain Hope Johnson held space for affirmations. Melanie DeMore offered her musical gifts for which we give thanks. Reflections from Elnora Williams and her daughter Elandria Williams grounded us in the deeper context, and reminded us of the lineage of struggle and survival BIPOC folks have gone through.

We are grateful for our DRUUMM community and ability to be responsive to our members and the power of our community to create healing spaces.

*If you'd like to send Althea a personal note, please contact our consulting minister  
Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons [jsantoslyons@uuma.org](mailto:jsantoslyons@uuma.org).*

# BLACK IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE

DR. TRACY CORLEY

This week, First Parish of Cambridge shared Jacqui James' prayer "Dark and Light, Light and Dark". This prayer really spoke to me as a Black woman who has been examining "black" in a rather unusual context.

My experience might deliver a real-world example of this prayer's call to claim our power and agency through language. I recently researched Germany's skilled trades and crafts sector, digging into how illegal work regulations had changed since the country reunified in 1990. German law categorizes this group of administrative and criminal violations as "Schwarzarbeit". I caught quite a bit of flack for my literal translation of the phenomenon, using the term "Blackwork" in papers and presentations.

Despite all the bristling at this colorful description of behavior that violates labor and production market laws and regulations, I deliberately chose and continue to use Blackwork.

This linguistic choice is essential to help the English-speaking community understand how German elites used language to introduce emotions into policy reform processes. Although global scholars regularly expound upon the terms "black market", "Black Monday", and other nefarious concepts that start with "black", even Black scholars scowled at Blackwork.

I was often asked how I could be so insensitive—as if only Black people work off-the-books. My research found that ethnic (i.e., white) Germans were just as likely to be violators of illegal work laws as ethnic minorities: however, white Germans were less likely to be charged with a criminal offense. Sound familiar? I've experienced similar hypocrisy in many gaslighting and microaggressive (heck, even macroaggressive) practices across Western institutions. Many of us live them every day.

# BLACK IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE

DR. TRACY CORLEY

Despite the wickedness, evil, gloom, and terror that often accompanies "black" across the linguistic diaspora, I want to show other ways in which Black is often beautiful and soothing. In the labor markets of neoliberal capitalist countries like Germany and the United States, its darkness also "brings relief from the blinding sun, from scorching heat, from exhausting labor" that Jacqui James describes.

Some who work in the shadows, in the dark, under the table can do so to carry out villainous deeds and skirt the law. But for most, Blackwork provides much-needed relief from the relentless grind of a production- and growth-obsessed society that commoditizes people, whose value declines as their skin darkens. Others have very little access to resources for remedying the exclusion, marginalization, and trauma in their lives.

For them, the shadows deliver access to job opportunities and livelihoods despite mainstream employers who won't even review the applications of

those with "Black-sounding" or non-Western names. Underground places provide shelter for those priced or redlined out of the mainstream housing market.

Informal transportation networks help bridge neighborhoods divided by ill-conceived highway projects and other land-use fiascos that divide "decent" people from those with darker skin and ethnic lineages. Some can find a glimmer of hope by disregarding laws made by those who "legally" designate communities of color as "slums". With quiet defiance, they can only watch as planners and developers raze their neighborhoods, shovel their families into towering tenements, then construct monuments and luxury lifestyle developments on the soil where their children used to play. Getting ceaselessly shuffled back and forth between the overseer's gaze and glare and hotboxes of neglect and disrepair makes working in the dark a source of respite, ease, and stability.

# BLACK IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE

DR. TRACY CORLEY

So, when you see the word "Blackwork" or "black" used to describe the actions of those who depend on the shadows for decent lives and livelihoods, do not be afraid. This November, if our country chooses to maintain our racist, sexist, ableist society and institutions, remain hell-bent on homogenization, and preserve privilege for those who meet "Old World" ideals, Blackness will always be deviant, abnormal, and negative.

But people construct their emotions, which shapes how they respond to the new, the novel, and the different. Each of us has the power to stop vilifying all things Black. Instead of formalizing the informal, normalizing the abnormal, standardizing the nonstandard, let us celebrate and make space for variance and diversity, including the comforting, beautiful, nurturing shades of Black.



*When she's not scribbling verses or essays, urbanist Tracy Corley Ph.D. drives social change and justice through policy research, advocacy, and education.*

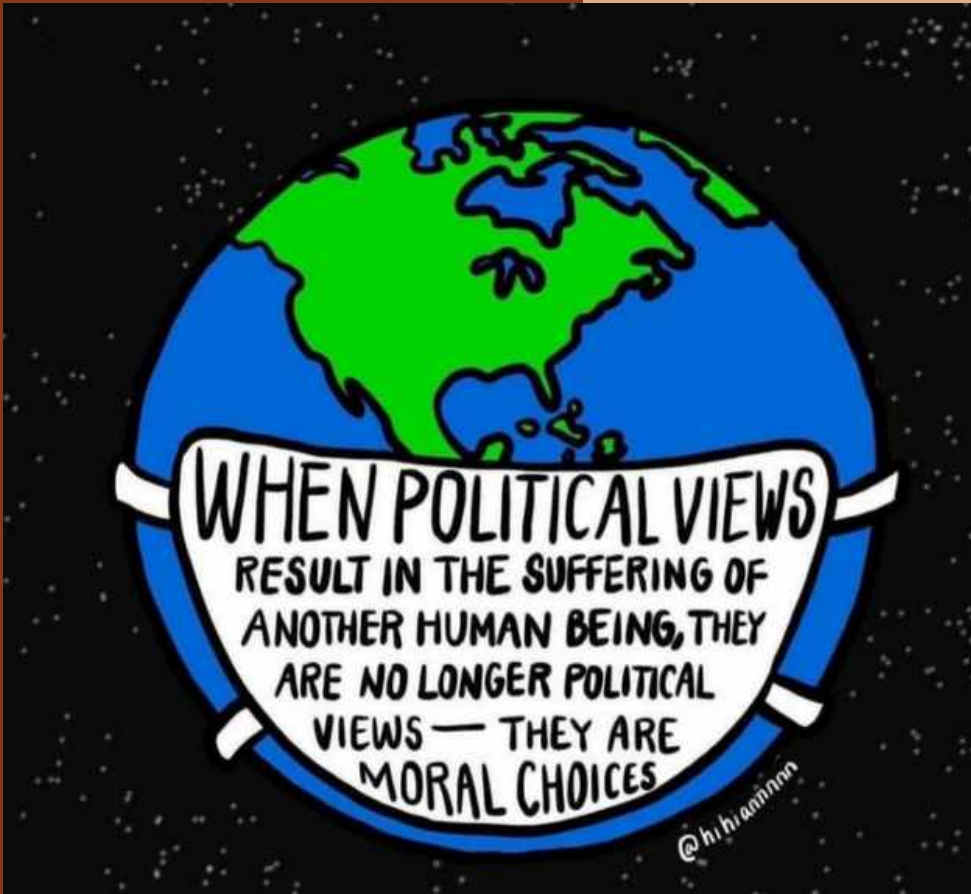


***"Shame is never the goal of anti-racism work - and it is a frequent byproduct because of conditioning in a 'mastery' culture that one is supposed to be 'learned,' not 'learning.'***

*- UUA Commission on Institutional Change, Widening the Circle of Concern*



Art by LINDA VACHON



# CONFIDENCE IN PROGRESSIVE IDEAS

**BY SCOT NAKAGAWA**

I've run into some resistance to Biden among people on the left. I was surprised by it because I figured we all shared the sense that Trump must be defeated or his reelection would serve as a vote for kleptocratic authoritarianism.

With the gap between Biden and Trump closing, this never-Biden sentiment worries me. So, to all of you beloveds who are still thinking that you just can't give your vote to Biden, here's a dose of reality to push down the bitter pill. Biden isn't the solution. Trump isn't the main problem.

Trump is more a symptom than the disease, though when one dies of a disease, the symptoms are what killed them. The main problem, as I see it, is that the American state is failing and has been for a long time. It's easy to claim that the main catalyst of this process was neoliberalism, but the U.S. was showing signs of failure before Reagan and Thatcher and Milton Friedman, et al, moved the center of U.S. politics in the direction of unregulated capitalism and public divestment.

For me, my anxiety over this began with the remarkable success of the Southern Strategy and the extreme polarization that followed it. Racism is a powerful antidemocratic ideology. When such an ideology can seize power so easily, effectively shifting the center of American politics from North to South, Democratic to Republican, and from racial reconciliation, however hobbled and awkward, to racial revanchism, and all while the racial demography of the nation is obviously going to shift against the white majority, you know the state is in trouble.

And then, of course, one of our two major parties drove this process, but the other quickly accommodated it, causing a loss of faith in we the people and divestment from our shared welfare state, once it was shared under the law, anyway. And both major parties have done so while dodging their responsibilities to address the future.

As such, both have been trying to justify public policy by appealing to nostalgia for a long, long time. The polarization in our politics is not just driven by Republican racism.

# CONFIDENCE IN PROGRESSIVE IDEAS

It is the result of people waking up from nostalgia to the cancelation of our futures, a shock that is causing us to reject centrist politics, hoping that extreme problems can be solved with extreme solutions.

But the solutions on the extremes aren't really solutions because we seem to have lost the kind of ideological generosity required to compromise. We no longer believe in pluralism, and without pluralism, democracy cannot work at the scale of the U.S. In this hot mess of a historical crisis, a vote for Biden is a vote against Trumpism, which is accelerating this process at a time when the right is better positioned to claim the future than the left.

And, it is simultaneously a vote for slowing this process down and giving ourselves the time to conjure up alternatives, to move from being merely critics of a failing system to prophets of a post-liberal future that's not dictated by white supremacist authoritarians.

Considered in this way, a vote for Biden is a demonstration of confidence in progressive ideas and the power and creative genius of ordinary people. It is a vote for the idea that, given time, we will rise up to meet the many challenges in front of us, build the alternatives we need, and ultimately win the future.

You may not share my optimism in this possibility. Hell, I'm white knuckling it with the effort of hanging on to it. But if all we have is our righteous rage and indignation, we've already lost and elections mean nothing.



*Scot Nakagawa is a Senior Partner with ChangeLab.*

# DRUUMM ORGANIZER DROP-IN

DRUUMM Monthly Drop-In for Local  
Facilitators of BIPOC UU Groups  
3rd Tuesdays at 8:00 PM ET/5:00 PM PT

Upcoming: September 15th and  
October 20th  
90 minutes via Zoom  
RSVP: [jsantoslyons@uuma.org](mailto:jsantoslyons@uuma.org)

On behalf of DRUUMM, we invite organizers and facilitators of local BIPOC UU groups to attend our monthly drop-in sessions for peer support, resource sharing, and leadership development. These lightly facilitated Zoom sessions are an opportunity to connect with other leaders, have a sounding board for struggles and successes, and gather ideas and practices to sustain you and your ministry.

The sessions run 90 minutes. Bring your whole selves, your questions, and your experiences as we cultivate a meaningful and powerful Unitarian Universalist ministry together.

For more information, contact Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons, [jsantoslyo](mailto:jsantoslyo)

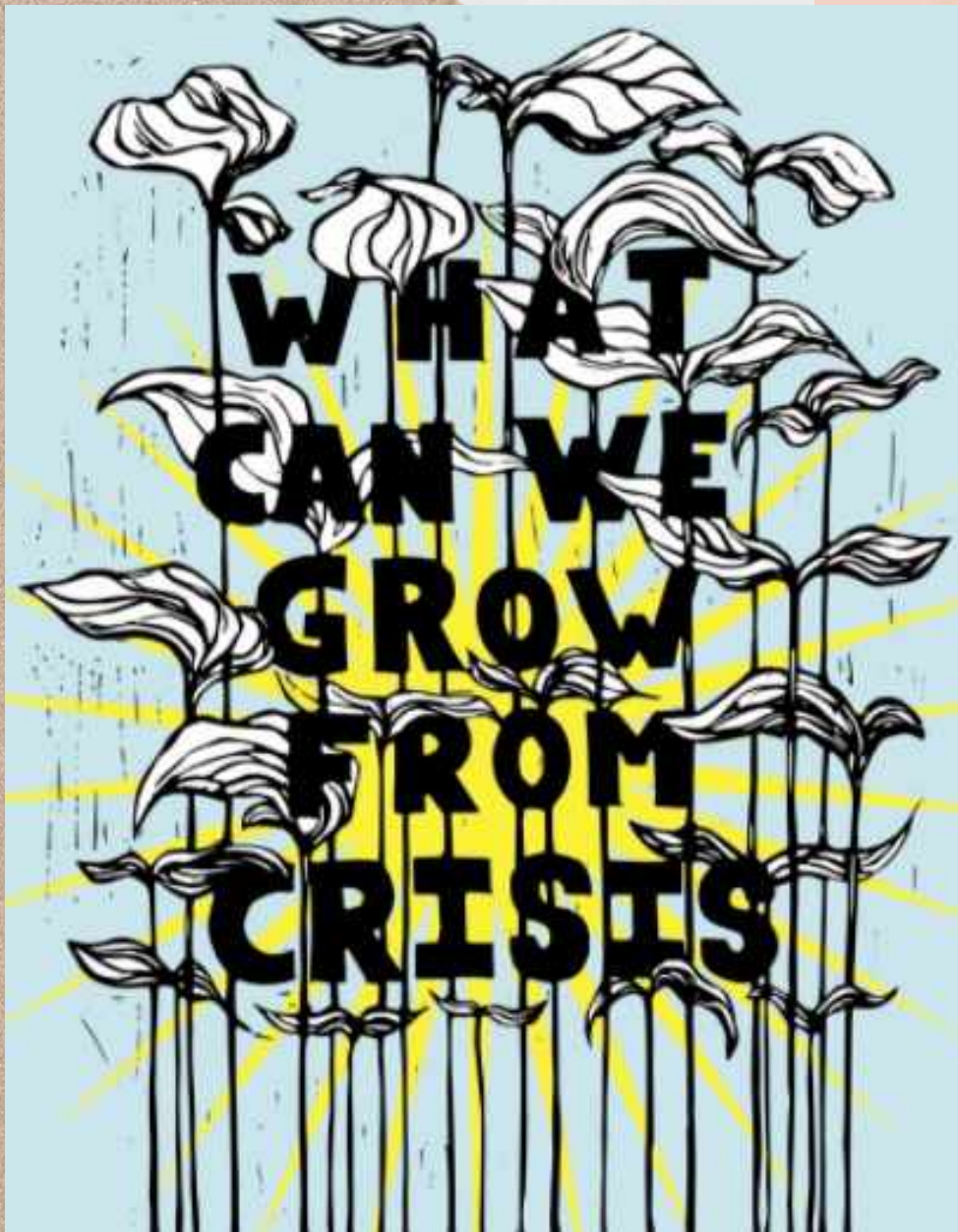
# BELOVED CONVERSATIONS: VIRTUAL

As we pivot in the pandemic, the Fah's Collaborative at Meadville Lombard Theological School has updated their Beloved Conversations program to be virtual. For those who are seeking to engage in social and racial justice, we invite you to learn more and register.

Registration is now open and the program will begin October 1. There will be separate tracks for lay people and Religious Professionals (and both tracks will be done entirely in racial identity caucuses with BIPOC-only spaces). Please check out our website for more information and share this with your friends, congregations, and communities.



*The text of the image reads: Beloved Conversations: Virtual Meditations on Race and Ethnicity  
Registration for Fall 2020 September 1-20, 2020  
For more information, go to [www.meadville.edu/beloved](http://www.meadville.edu/beloved)*



**Photo Credit:**

What Can We Grow From  
by Pete Railand of  
JustSeeds- "Been thinking  
a lot about this during  
the times of COVID 19.  
What can we grow from  
crisis, where will we go  
from here? It's time to re-  
imagine. Nothing is  
inevitable, everything is  
possible."

**DRUUMM STEERING COMMITTEE 2020-2021**

*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](mailto:info@druumm.org).*

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## NOTATIONS

- There are 105 registrations for the DRUUMM regional caucuses happening in September - [bit.ly/DRUUMMCaucus](http://bit.ly/DRUUMMCaucus)
- Aisha Hauser of the Church of the Larger Fellowship preached on The Future In Now: The Hope of Afrofuturism - <https://youtu.be/dNqv28YEx90>
- Frontrange UU BIPOC Speaker Series starts September 6th Sunday evenings Mountain Time organized by the Colorado UU's for Racial Justice featuring Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt and runs through November - <http://bit.ly/UURJRegistration>
- The Asian/Pacific Islander Caucus of DRUUMM is continuing to host virtual coffee hours - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/594319813912844>

## COLOR/FULL KARIN



**KARIN LIN**  
**CAMBRIDGE, MA**

### GOAL

I'm here with my 13 year old daughter. We spent the last three GAs together and that's been nice. I'm here to connect with people, especially the DRUUMM community.

### GIFT

I'm very devoted to congregational life. I spend a lot of time organizing and leading and doing various things for my congregation. I have a powerful story of almost being pushed out of UUism.



### The DRUUMM Beat Issue 14, Volume 2

Editor Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons Newsletter Team: Rochelle Fortier  
Editorial Board: Rhiannon Smith, Nicole Pressley  
For inquiries please email [editor@druumm.org](mailto:editor@druumm.org)

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