

# THE DRUUMM BEAT

DECEMBER 2018



## DRUUMM AT THE BORDERS

As women, children, farmers and workers, uprooted from their villages in Central America due to a legacy of violence and exploitation wrought by US intervention make their way to the Southern border of the USA near San Diego, the cycles and milestones of life continue. In their midst are our own Unitarian Universalist congregants and ministers including former DRUUMM Presidents Rev. Leslie Takahahi, Rev. Marcris Vlassidis and Rev. Ranwa Hammamy.

The people, who have walked, hiked and bussed nearly 2,500 miles from the rural and urban areas of primarily Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, included a number of LGBTQ persons. Eight were married on a Saturday afternoon before Thanksgiving. Two gay couples, three lesbian couples, two pairs of trans women and cis men, and one heterosexual couple in Tijuana, a border city in Baja Norte.

Unexpected yet always prepared, our DRUUMM ministers stepped into the role of officiating the ceremonies at Enclave Caracol, an LGBTQ-friendly community space. To the cheers and flying rice, the couples said “I Do” as the gathered friends, locals and journalists huddled close.

There has been an outpouring of support on DRUUMM social media, with the common refrain of “Love Wins” and “Believe in Love”. The personal testimonials, photos and public witness have been lifting up the real stories of the migrant caravan, rejecting the demonization perpetuated by right-wing forces and humanizing the people who face oppression and threats to their families. #loveknowsnoborders

Read more at [INTO](#).

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*The DRUUMM Beat is an all-volunteer project, edited by Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons under the direction of the DRUUMM Steering Committee. We welcome written and visual submissions. Email [editor@druumm.org](mailto:editor@druumm.org).*



# DRUUMM NOTATIONS

\*DRUUMM guested on the Church of the Larger Fellowship's "VUU" weekly videocast.

\*Lily Rappaport of LREDA and DRUUMM Member has been working to revitalize Multiracial & Families of Color Retreats.

\*Rev. Ranwa Hammamy and outgoing DRUUMM President was named Executive Director of the UU Justice Ministry of California.

\*Dr. Janice Marie Johnson, former DRUUMM President was named Co-Lead of the Ministries and Faith Development UUA Staff Group.

\*You can view the conversations on Faith, Race and Liberation, hosted by the UUA Commission on Institutional Change.

\*The UUMA recently shared that they have over 150 self-identified People of Color members (seminarians and ministers).

\*DRUUMM was awarded a Fund for UU grant to scale up administrative support for the membership.

## WAYS TO CONNECT ONLINE

DRUUMM and adjacent UU People of Color communities have created ways to connect online over the last several years. These are primarily volunteer-led and convened spaces. We encourage you to reach out to connect. This is a partial list, so please if you are aware of other resources, we'd appreciate any corrections and additional resources. Share back with us to [editor@druumm.org](mailto:editor@druumm.org).

**DRUUMM General Email Announcements** - For members reaching over 300 people, FB group and FB "The Gathering Place". Signup at [www.druumm.org](http://www.druumm.org).

**UU Religious Professionals of Color** - Currently 190 members of administrators, religious educators, ministers, seminarians, music directors and church staff. Apply to join private FB group, or contact Michael Crumpler [MCrumpler@uua.org](mailto:MCrumpler@uua.org).

**Native Caucus** - FB group or contact Rev. Clyde Grubbs [cegrubbs@mac.com](mailto:cegrubbs@mac.com).

**Asian/Pacific Islander Caucus** - Join the googlegroup for e-announcements and FB group currently with 122 members.

**UU Youth & Young Adults of Color** - 198 member FB group and you can join the UUA e-list via Sara Green [sgreen@uua.org](mailto:sgreen@uua.org).

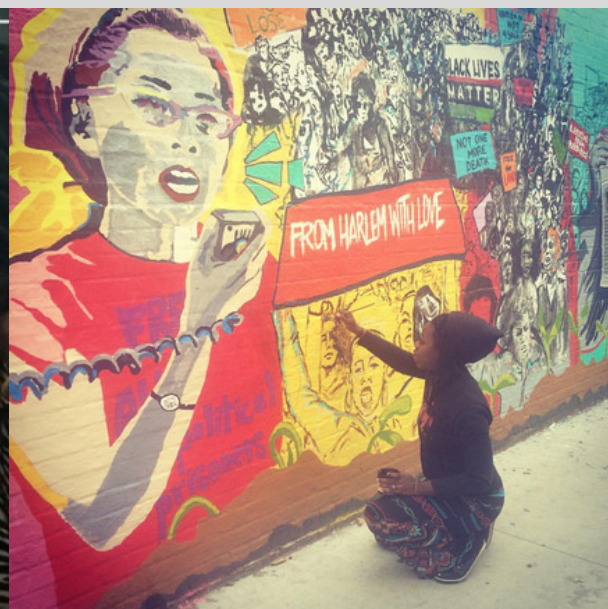
**Latinx UU network** - Connect via Rev. Marta Valentin [revmarta33@yahoo.com](mailto:revmarta33@yahoo.com).

\*Search FB for respective groups.



## DRUUMM Congratulates Dr. Janice Marie Johnson, appointed Co-Lead for UUA Ministries & Faith Development





## MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTIST LEHNA HUI

Lehna Huie is a third generation artist of Jamaican descent based in Brooklyn New York. “Being an artist mom is really important to me, having Simone (age 4) be a part of everything. She has her own creative energy that she brings, and she helps ground me in her own love of the process and joy of art.”

Lehna, who will be entering graduate school to deepen her artistic work this fall in Baltimore, has found her lifelong calling through art. She recognizes herself as an artist who generates revolution through the sharing of stories, particularly of Women of Color. Utilizing varying styles from representational, portraiture and painting, she strives to uplift their lives, not hiding the tragedy, capturing a range of emotions and honoring people who may not be traditionally recognized for what they have done. Lehna’s work is also expanding into film and murals.



“This is my offering for Ntozake Shange’s altar space in DC. It was a joy to paint her. Grateful to have attended her memorial and celebrate her life and legacy witnessing beautiful tributes among her family, friends and a community of brilliant artists! thank you #ntozakeshange #forcoloredgirls”

In the face of oppression and a world of hurt, art keeps her going. She engages in community through her art, working with young women through workshops she leads, arranging mural projects with communities of color, and engaging the neighborhoods around her in New York City that are facing gentrification. Through her art, she finds a universal language to discover new things.

“I get a lot of personal fulfillment, spiritually and emotionally, from art. It helps me move through life. It is really a passion and I’m grateful to be able to create for a living. Art is like a lifeline. Where I might sit and sulk about how awful the world is, I turn to art as my way of processing the negative news. It is a process of grieving and getting through those difficult moments. Physically it is a meditation in a lot of ways. Especially when I can more loosely create and not have rigid expectations and have space to just unwind with everything. I feel a closeness to the spirit. And this is a practice I am just learning to master.”

Learn more about her work at:

<http://www.lehnaui.com/home.html>

*Photo credit: Glexis Novoa Vian*



Lehna Huie (b.1988 NYC) is a multi-disciplinary artist, arts educator, curator, and cultural worker exercising a belief in the power of multi-vocal art. She is a lifelong Unitarian Universalist, and was active in the formation of DRUUMM Youth & Young Adults of Color ministries in the 1990s and early 2000s.

# CHRISTINA RIVERA, UUA BOARD OF TRUSTEE, RESIGNS IN RESPONSE TO THREATS

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Board of Trustees announced it had received the resignation of trustee Christina Rivera, effective December 31, 2018. Ms. Rivera, elected to the Board in 2014, serves as Director of Administration and Finance at Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church UU in Charlottesville, VA.

Christina and her family have been subject to harassing and menacing over the last year through letters that have threatened her directly and through her children. UUA President Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray and the UUA Board Co-Moderators Elandria Williams and Barb Greve have issued several public and social media statements.

Christina has been increasingly active with DRUUMM including supporting current fundraising efforts. The DRUUMM Steering Committee issued a public statement in response. Reprinted here in full:

## **Statement from DRUUMM (Diverse Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries) Steering Committee regarding the resignation of Christina Rivera from the UUA Board:**

The resignation of Christina Rivera from the UUA board demonstrates the need for movement toward lived justice; we call for a restorative justice process.

Christina Rivera offered the UUA Board her resignation, effective December 31, 2018 in the face of repeated threats, both to herself and to her children. Of course, human reactions like anger and frustration are natural and needed. DRUUMM offers this statement to direct Unitarian Universalism toward the next right actions.

Current threats arise in connection with racial discrimination in hiring that Christina Rivera and other women of color exposed in Spring 2017. While there has been discussion on racial discrimination, speaking of justice in terms of pros and cons, the actions the UUA has taken both to create and demand equity leave room for growth. DRUUMM and Christina Rivera ask openly and specifically for a restorative justice process, with which the UUA Board engages, as the threats to Christina and her family relate to her movement leadership, as a woman of color.

Restorative justice is a process by which the harm caused by injustice is identified and the actions needed to repair the harm are taken. We believe that Unitarian Universalism can do more than feel outrage. We call on UUA leadership to take the lead of Christina Rivera, in establishing justice and taking action to repair the harm and bring healing.

Ms. Rivera has published a series of essays and reflections through social media over the years related to her experience on the UUA Board and beyond. Her analysis and experiences helped expose a culture of marginalization and exclusion at the UUA for People of Color employees. Posts made in the Spring of 2017 by Ms. Rivera and other leaders of color were addressed by UUA President Rev. Peter Morales who then abruptly resigned in response along with other senior staff in the administration. Her blog is <https://uchristinarivera.wordpress.com/>