

THE DRUUMM BEAT

MAY 2019



We are Glorious

by Rev. Carol Thomas Cissel

We are glorious:

Please say it with me...We. Are. Glorious.

Ebony, cinnamon, sienna, ochre, umber, ivory, tawny, black, brown, ginger, tan ... a rich cup of coffee with too much cream. Infinitely more variations than any box of 64 colors can possibly hold.

We are people of color.

We are people of ancestry and magic.

We are people of wisdom, love and laughter.

We are people of power and destiny, fiercely manifesting a future that specifically calls our names out loud.

As you rise and step out to meet the world...say it with me.

We are glorious.

Photo Credit: The Underground

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DRUUMM SURVEY

DRUUMM is conducting a brief survey of members and friends who identify as UU People of Color to learn more about our community needs. We are seeking to better understand the gap between "what is" and "what should be". We expect this survey will take about 15 minutes. All information shared is utilized only for DRUUMM purposes and will not be shared without permission. The survey provides context for DRUUMM's current Mission and Values, asks about who you are, and then has three questions. Your input is greatly appreciated and will help inform the next phase of our organizing and base building work. The survey will be open through June 30, 2019.

Visit www.druumm.org for the online link, or email jsantoslyons@uuma.org for a copy.





GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 2019

**DIVERSE & REVOLUTIONARY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
MULTICULTURAL MINISTRIES (DRUUMM)**

SPOKANE GA PROGRAMS

Wednesday, June 19

Navigating GA as People of Color (2pm – 3pm)
 “Theology of Survivorship” - Teach-In with J Mase III (5pm – 6:30pm)
 Ingathering Worship with J Mase III (8:30pm – 9:30pm)

Thursday, June 20

Re-Imagining DRUUMM (Workshop 1: 1:30pm-2:30pm)
 UU People of Color Chronicles (Workshop 2: 3pm – 4pm)
 Intergenerational Circle Conversations (Workshop 3: 4:30pm – 5:30pm)
 DRUUMM Annual Meeting (5:30pm – 6:30pm)
 Vespers (8:30pm - 9pm)
 DRUUMM Steering Committee Meeting (9:30pm – 11pm)

Friday, June 21

Pre Ware Lecture Reception (6pm – 7:15pm)
 Alternate Option to the GA Dance (9pm - 11 pm)

Saturday, June 22

Youth of Color Led Worship & Coffee Hour (Workshop 4+: 1:30pm – 3:30pm)
 DRUUMM Closing Worship “The Power of We” (6pm – 7pm)

For the full program visit the DRUUMM Blog at www.druumm.org.

STEERING COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

DRUUMM will be holding elections for new Steering Committee members at the Annual Meeting held on Thursday, June 20th, 2019 during UUA General Assembly in Spokane. Nominated candidates will be announced in June. Positions to be elected include:

- *Vice-President (President Elect)
- *Secretary
- *Membership & Outreach Co-Coordinator
- *General Assembly (GA) Co-Coordinator

NOTATIONS

*88 ministers and seminarians of color signed up for the new UU Ministers Association (UUMA) Chapter for People of Color.

* The Board of Trustees unanimously voted to appoint Elias Ortega-Aponte as the next President of Meadville Lombard Theological School.

* Black Lives of UU (BLUU) announced the Harper-Jordan Memorial Symposium on Proclaiming a Black UU Theology to be held Oct 30-Nov 2 in Minneapolis MN.

* Dawn Robinson has been appointed by the DRUUMM Steering Committee to serve as Administrator. This is a part-time limited duration position.

* The DRUUMM Organizing Project has tracked down 21 active UU People of Color ministries in local congregations to-date.



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- June 1 DRUUMM Convening, New York City NY
- June 10 DRUUMM Convening, Boston MA
- June 11 DRUUMM Convening, Hartford CT
- June 13 DRUUMM Convening, Oakland CA
- June 19-23 General Assembly, Spokane WA
- July 17-21 Thrive Youth, Minneapolis MN
- July 24-27 The Well, Saco, ME
- Fall TBD DRUUMM Annual Gathering

Have other key dates? Share with editor@druumm.org

NEIGHBORHOOD PEOPLE OF COLOR: AN INTERVIEW WITH REV. CHRISTINA SHU

Rev. Christina Shu is the affiliate community minister with our Neighborhood Church of Pasadena CA (~700 members, 2 services) and a leader of the Asian/Pacific Islander Caucus of DRUUMM. She has been co-convening the Neighborhood People of Color (NPOC) group for several years. NPOC is one of the oldest and continuously active local UU People of Color ministries in the UUA. As part of DRUUMM's Organizing Project, we're interviewing local facilitators of POC groups.

Why did your group start?

Neighborhood POC started in 2005 when our Senior Minister Rev. Jim Nelson asked James Coomes a member and DRUUMM leader if he would like to help with a MLK Service. James, intrigued, also inquired “why did you ask me?” and an effort was made to have a more collective conversation with People of Color, especially those of African-American descent in the church. A service was held that engaged more members, and out of this process with the blessing of the church, Neighborhood POC was founded

Initially White folks also attended, primarily partners/spouses of POC and church staff. However after a short period, the group shifted to a format that provided for a sacred space for POC. The group operates a lot like a small group ministry, or Chalice Circle in Neighborhood Church parlance. It is a group that contributes to life at Neighborhood Church, providing feedback to the larger congregation around worship and racial justice, and being a primarily welcoming place for POC newcomers.

How is the group organized?

At a mission level, we've clarified over the years that we are primarily focused on being a space for spiritual fellowship and support, connected to larger racial justice organizing and partnership of the church. We have a sibling Neighborhood White Anti-Racist Allies Group that meets, and we do regular activities together each year. We last updated our NPOC Covenant in 2017, that is an important touchstone for the purpose of the group.

We meet monthly for a deeper check-in and spiritual reflection. It is generally facilitated by a core group of two lay leaders and myself. We share an opening reading, have a key question or theme for discussion, and a closing reading. 10-15 attend our monthly meetings. We have an email listserve with over 40 people, an active Facebook group, and have a visible presence each Sunday at church in person and via the church bulletin that highlights our activities. In the last few years, a group of Black Women have met through NPOC and started to also meet on their own. This has been really powerful and we're excited to support these efforts. We also have been maintaining a facilitators guide, adapted from our church's small group ministry program (Chalice Circles).

What are your main activities?

Beyond our monthly meetings we have three main priorities each year. After the MLK Service I shared about earlier that launched NPOC, James Coomes worked with another long-time member Salvera Grant to organize an annual BBQ on Juneteenth. Juneteenth is the annual commemoration of the emancipation from slavery that started in Texas in 1865 held on the 19th day of June. This BBQ has evolved into a whole church event that includes the Sunday Service with education about the meaning of Juneteenth historically and currently. We often have guest preaching and a special music program. Our White Allies group has stepped up more in recent years to provide logistical support, and the event has become something significant in the life of the congregation.

NPOC is also active in reflecting and offering support for People of Color in church leadership. Many of our members have taken up roles in the congregation, and NPOC provides a level of mentorship and grounding for leaders who serve on the Board and Committees. Recently we were very active in the Music Director search committee, and felt a high degree of accountability in bringing forth a stronger vision around anti-oppression and multiculturalism in worship and church life. This led to the hiring of Dr. Zanaida Robles who we are really excited to have leading our choirs and music program.



NEIGHBORHOOD PEOPLE OF COLOR CONT...

Lastly NPOC contributes to special worship services in collaboration with our congregational ministerial team. Our members get experience offering readings, suggesting speakers and guest musicians, and giving a homily. Recently we held a service dedicated to Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, and NPOC has also participated in services connected to Black History Month, called Black Futures at Neighborhood.

How have you managed conflict and disagreement?

We have a strong feeling of ownership in our group, and being in relationship and sustaining our fellowship is important to our members. We aim to regularly reflect on our covenant and support one another in abiding by the covenant. We tend to have the most challenges when we have too many aims and fall into confusion around mission and purpose. This is always evolving and as facilitators we do our best to stay conscious and revisit the covenant as a group. NPOC is by no means a requirement or representative of all POC in the church, and we have been really clear about that. We affirm and promote POC who are more interested in other aspects of our church's ministry, while NPOC stays focused on our spiritual fellowship aspect.

Any last thoughts?

I came to Neighborhood as a ministerial intern, and I was really impressed that there was an intentional POC group that was explicit, public and had a critical mass who met regularly together. I experienced first hand how much NPOC valued coming together, to support one another's experiences, be in relationship with one another, plus supporting growth and change in the larger congregation. This was an important relationship and community for me as I became an ordained minister.



MARCUS

Marcus Fogliano
Peoria, Illinois

Goals

I'm here to support the Commission on Institutional Change. We have focus groups and panels we're hosting throughout the week. We're collecting stories and testimonies about the White Supremacy and racism within our institutions.

Gifts

I bring an organizational perspective from different perspective. As a Jehovah Witness, I bring a different organizational structure lens to our denomination.

Witnesses have a completely different polity structure and support structure. The UUA tends to be more reactionary, and regional staff is activated when something bad happens. In Witness structure, the regional staff visit on an annual basis to troubleshoot problems before they arise. That's just one example of the structures. They are more radical in that there are no paid staff on any level with Jehovah Witnesses. They are a socialist theocracy.

These snapshots of UU People of Color are courtesy of the DRUUMM Global Majorities Project and COLOR/FULL portfolio developed by Cameron Whitten. Reprinted with permissions.



The DRUUMM Beat is edited by Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons. We welcome submissions and inquiries to editor@druumm.org.

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