

*(This message was shared as the Board Minute in worship on April 26, 2015.)*

Several months ago, our congregation had a large banner printed with the slogan "Black Lives Matter" to take to rallies and demonstrations in the area. Many of you, hopefully all of you, have noticed that this banner has taken up residence in the front window of the building when not being used in this manner elsewhere. A question about this was posed to the Board of Trustees, respectfully and thoughtfully, but questioning whether this was appropriate. So, at our most recent meeting, the Board had a discussion about this.

Our one job as a board is to look out for the best interests of this congregation, to make sure that what happens in this building and outside this building in the congregation's name is appropriate and in line with the goals we have set forth for ourselves, as defined by our eight ends, our bylaws, and other policies. This discussion had two parts to it, the first of which was interpreting the policies to determine exactly where the authority to display the banner would come from. After reviewing the Administrative Limits policies, the Board determined that it is our responsibility to make a decision about displaying the banner. This brought us to the second part of the discussion, did we want to authorize the continued display of the banner.

Social justice is one of the bedrocks of our Unitarian Universalist faith, not just caring about what is happening, but DOING things about what is happening - taking action, living our values in a visible and public way. For many, the denomination's focus on social justice work was what first interested them in a UU church. While there are many worthy causes to which we as a denomination and as individuals give our hearts and our time and our voices and our votes, it is apparent that a defining social justice cause is the fight against systemic racial discrimination particularly in this place and this time.

As a Unitarian Universalist congregation, we believe it is our obligation to take a stand on this issue, to loudly proclaim that egregious, grotesque injustices inflicted on our fellow members of the web of all existence are unacceptable. That we won't sit quietly and hope it goes away, we will work to bring about the change that needs to happen. While displaying that banner in our window won't bring about that change by itself, it does proclaim to all who pass by, it makes the statement loud and clear, that we believe that all black lives matter, every single one of them. That discrimination against one diminishes us all, and we stand in solidarity, shoulder to shoulder, with those who are oppressed. And so the Board is very proud to see the banner continue to be displayed in our window.