

The state of diversity and inclusion in PA

This week I attended the PA Diversity and Inclusion Summit here in Harrisburg. As their title describes, this organization thePADC.org monitors diversity and inclusion in PA.

It was a unique experience. Four panels of 5-8 individuals all African-American professionals from the areas of health, justice & policy, education, and business. I, along with about a dozen other white folk were in the minority. Each of the professionals spoke about diversity & inclusion from their perspective. Rather than a professional panel with a token black individual, we heard African Americans each tell their story and their analysis of racism in PA. And because the panels were all Black and Brown people addressing an audience that was primarily Black and Brown people, I sensed an honesty and shared understanding that I usually don't experience in primarily white summits on any topic.

UU congregations across PA and our UUJusticePA Board have taken the Jubilee Three training. Congregations and State Advocacy Networks across our country are considering adopting the 8th principle. Through books like Isabelle Wilkerson's, "Caste" and Heather McGhee's "The Sum of Us," and a great fiction read, "The Sweetness of Water" by Nathan Harris (only just a few) we are learning about the realities of our country's history and the affects of racism on all of us.

Conversations within our justice teams continually return to how race has affected their issue both historically and currently. In the meantime, while we try to learn and undo the effects of racism, there is another group in our country that continues to live in fear of not being in control.

I still appreciate the UU mantra to "side with love." It still helps me to know when I'm coming from a place of love rather than fear and hate.

Addressing racism is hard work. Addressing the history of our democracy is hard work. Fighting for justice is hard work. Systemic change is hard work. But my faith, our faith, insists it is work that must be done and we are the ones to do it.

Feel like giving up? Have a conversation with a person of color, hear their story, be inspired to continue on your journey, be inspired to build the beloved community we dream of. . .

Holding ground in our faith and moving justice forward in PA,
Rev. Joan