

Racial Justice and Me (RJAM) group discussion about possible actions, Oct 21, 2020

The following possible actions for EPC were discussed.

Teams formed (**highlighted**) are asked to continue to research their area and report back in future RJAM meetings. Those not on a team are encouraged to reach out to these teams to join or let us know if you want to address other actions on the list with your own team. Remember, we hope to engage in at least some activities that fight systemic racism (the cause), rather than just deal with the effects of systemic racism.

Group actions

1. Land acknowledgement for Edgecombe Presbyterian Church
 - Research original indigenous stewards of the land EPC sits on
 - Write acknowledgement of this stewardship unveil in an event
 - i. Event could include neighborhood gathering at the church and back woods
 - ii. Event could include public outdoor or indoor art exhibit
 - Use acknowledgement as introduction for all events that take place at EPC
 - **Team interested in further education on this topic: Luna, Connie, Leslie**
2. Neighborhood gathering at our church/woods with local food trucks, possibly summer 2021
 - Black-owned, indigenous owned, Latina owned food trucks.
 - Publicize as a neighborhood event
 - Could be combined with 1 above
3. Art display at church grounds
 - Leslie mentioned native women silhouettes that was a traveling art exhibit in the metro area recently. Not sure if it is still available.
 - Art display could be indoor, outdoor, on grounds, in back woods
 - Could collaborate with the school next door.
 - Could tie-in with land acknowledgement above
4. Driver's license or state ID assistance for high school students and/or change in policy to remove barriers to getting licenses or state IDs in high school.
 - Barriers for getting driver's license include cost, access to trained driving instructors (there is limited number), access to car to practice
 - Could include actions to encourage policy changes by schools or legislation to improve access to training at lower or no cost
 - We must learn more about this issue to see if it is being addressed and how significant an issue it is
 - Can we learn more about this issue from families in our congregation?
 - **Liz is continuing to learn more about this. She could use help if others are interested**
5. Address needs of those who are embroiled in the criminal justice system
 - Issues of lack of funds to hire effective legal council
 - Need for a healthy community to embrace released prisoners
 - i. Can our church be such a such a place?
 - Barriers to employment, building financial stability
 - Investigate agencies that are currently addressing these needs. Find out: What is needed?
 - Educational resource: We Are All Criminals: A non-profit organization dedicated to challenging society's perceptions of what it means to be "criminal." <https://www.weareallcriminals.org>

- Find someone who can give us an update on these needs and potential actions at a future RJAM meeting
- Local agency: <http://www.amicususa.org/>
- Team interested in further education on this topic: Leslie, Jay, Phil

Education/Sharing Actions, some of these could be Group Actions as well

6. Letter writing for causes (advocate for policy changes, ...)
 - Line 3 pipeline
 - i. It was pointed out that not all indigenous people are on the same page on this issue
 - Racial justice issues?
 - Could also be calling state and US representatives/senators to advocate for legislation/action
 - Would need to see what organizations are spearheading these actions locally
 - National action network is through 5 Calls: <https://5calls.org/>. This site or smart-phone App provides daily updates of issues where calls can be made to congress or other government agencies. You can pick a category such as “Civil Rights”, or “Police Reform”.
7. How to communicate with children about racial justice or injustice
 - Could be book campaign for schools
 - i. Help provide books that have characters that look like the students
 - ii. DonorsChoose is a national organization that helps requests by teachers (for all types of needs) get funded through corporate and individual monetary donations
8. Investigate / share information about racial justice banking/investing
 - Sunrise bank is considered to be a local bank that focuses on local community needs
 - There are probably others
9. Feedback from members of our congregation with mixed race families.
 - What are issues and challenges they are facing
 - Schedule discussions during RJAM meetings

Individual efforts

10. Mapping prejudice (individual efforts). Review documents online for redlining clauses.
 - <https://www.mappingprejudice.org/>
 - Online review of documents to identify and help remove structural racism
11. Tutoring of local students (find volunteer organization)
 - Contact the school next door directly as a starting point
12. Seek local, black-led agencies/groups to look for volunteer opportunities or how we could support ongoing efforts (for example, Urban League of Minneapolis)
 - Five Twin Cities organizations fighting to overcome racism: <http://daily-work.org/five-twin-cities-organizations-fighting-to-overcome-racism/>
 - The ACLU - www.aclu-mn.org
 - St. Paul NAACP - www.naacp-st.paul.org
 - Urban League of the Twin Cities: <https://ultcmn.org/>
 - Interfaith Action of Greater St. Paul: <https://interfaithaction.org/>
 - Center for Economic Inclusion: <https://www.centerforeconomicinclusion.org/mission>

- Probably many others
- Rich will investigate these to see how their actions may be similar to our interests

13. Do primary shopping in black neighborhoods and/or at black-owned businesses, restaurants, hardware, groceries

- Native owned business directory: <https://www.mniba.org/programs/business-directory.html>
- Local restaurant/coffee shop: Golden Thyme: <https://www.goldenthymeonselby.com/>
- Black-owned bakery: <https://pjmurphybakery.com/>