



# A Collaborative Journey: FROM PROMISE TO IMPACT



UNITARIAN  
UNIVERSALIST  
ASSOCIATION

## To Our Promise and Practice of Our Faith Campaign Constituents,

We did it! Since the launch of the Promise and Practice of Our Faith Campaign at the closing of the 2017 New Orleans General Assembly, we have seen UUs show up and answer our call to support Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism in many ways. Close to 400 congregations held a BLUU Sunday worship service and contributed to our campaign, more than 400 of you gave individual gifts, and dozens of UU organizations found in-kind ways to support BLUU.

Nearly seven years ago, in Cleveland, OH, a group of Black Unitarian Universalists met in person for the first time. Something beautiful and historic was created that fall, a new movement that united our Unitarian Universalist theology with justice work that centers and uplifts Black lives. Since then, major achievements for BLUU include: hiring Lena K. Gardner, Reverend Mykal Slack, Paige Ingram, and Marchaé Grair as key staff members; attending the Women's March in 2016; answering the call for International Day of Prayer at Standing Rock and donating to Water Protectors; establishing Babies and Bailout resources for many UU congregations to assist in national efforts to end money bail; organizing the 2017 BLUU Convening in New Orleans; organizing the 2018 BLUU Revival in Kansas City; organizing the historic 2019 Harper-Jordan Memorial Symposium; offering regular online worship and pastoral care services led by our Black UU ministerial network; and maintaining other ongoing support to more than 300 Black UUs and UU-adjacent folks. We also continue to be a voice for liberation through publishing public statements and lifting up resources that connect Black and collective liberation with UUism.

For UUs, regardless of race or ethnicity, the time to support the work of Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism is now.

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Lena K. Gardner, Co-Founder and Executive Director of the BLUU Organizing Collective Board at the Fall 2019 Harper-Jordan Memorial Symposium. ©#byCHuBBZ photo courtesy of BLUU

As outlined in BLUU's goals and strategic plan, we will continue to co-create, support and build Black Unitarian Universalism as well as create stronger connections and ways to support the Movement for Black Lives. BLUU is committed to Black and collective liberation; we know that by supporting and building the power of Black UUs and working toward justice-making and liberation through our faith, we create a stronger, more just UUism.

Since the birth of BLUU, we have focused heavily on pastoral support and care for Black UUs. We simultaneously continue our ongoing organizing work to help end money bail and to help create new paths toward Black liberation. Our organizing programs will continue to expand and evolve as the time calls for new and creative responses to the challenges brought about by our current world.



For Black UUs and Black UU-adjacent folks, having BLUU is not enough. Black UUs and religious professionals still face racism and white supremacy that is emotionally and spiritually violent. Additionally, they struggle with a lack of power within our faith and yearn for a sense of community, support and pastoral care that not only welcomes them, but also invites them into the space to lead our spiritual development and justice work. We know that there is more work to be done in addressing these issues and supporting BLUU is vitally important to continue addressing these issues within our faith.

As indicated in this report, our strategic plan is ambitious. As you read this report, I hope that our efforts to remain relevant, strong and successful are evident. We will continue to explore the direction and meaning of the partnership between BLUU and the UUA, expand our giving models, create relevant programming for all UUs and Black UUs specifically, and increase engagement opportunities. In doing so, BLUU will sustain its position as a collaborative UU organization and source for support, resources, and justice-making and liberation through our faith for years to come.

Love and Blessings,  
Lena K. Gardner  
Executive Director of Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism

## My dear Unitarian Universalists,

Thank you for your incredible generosity to the Promise and Practice of Our Faith campaign! The investment Unitarian Universalists like you have made in the leadership of Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU) is undoubtedly one of the most innovative investments we have made, as this report will detail.

I also want to acknowledge the dedicated work and leadership of the UUA Stewardship and Development team. I am especially grateful to former Director of Stewardship and Development Rev. Mary Katherine Morn, current Director Rev. Lauren Smith, and Major Gifts Officer Cheri Taylor, for their countless hours and devotion to this campaign.

This campaign reflects our movement's commitment to building a more equitable and diverse community, a community in which Black UU leadership and ministry can thrive. Your ongoing support of BLUU is an important way we can continue to foster the culture change that is needed in Unitarian Universalism.

Supported by your gifts, Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism has been able to provide unprecedented leadership support, enriching programs and spiritual care for Black UUs. In years marked by both the pandemic of COVID-19 and the epidemic of police and white nationalist violence disproportionately impacting Black communities, BLUU's ministry has been life-saving for so many.

I hope you are inspired by this report and will join me in continuing to generously support BLUU in both your congregation and as individuals.

Many blessings,  
Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray  
UUA President



Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, UUA President, and Rev. Mary Katherine Morn, UUSC President, march in the "Love Knows No Borders Action" alongside interfaith protestors in December 2018.

“ I have never had more challenging, fulfilling, and joy-filled work. It is one of the greatest privileges of my career and my life as a UU to be part of the BLUU Promise and Practice campaign, as a fundraiser and as a donor. Working with BLUU leaders and watching BLUU grow and thrive and serve our faith has been a joy. Truly, BLUU's promise is the promise of our faith. And BLUU's practice of our faith has already transformed it.”

– Rev. Mary Katherine Morn, Former Director of Stewardship and Development at the UUA.

## Our Faith Needs BLUU

By Carey McDonald



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Carey McDonald, Executive Vice President of the UUA.

**B**lack Lives of Unitarian Universalism is anchored by its deep roots. It is rooted in powerful organizing in Ferguson, Baltimore, and across the country in response to the murders of young Black people by police officers. It is rooted in the generations of struggle by Black UUs to claim space within our chosen faith. It is rooted in the specific fight in the late 1960's that led the UUA to break its promises to support the Black Affairs Council. And it is rooted in the experience of Black UUs who came together in 2015 at the Movement for Black Lives convening in Cleveland, and dreamed a new faith community into being.

The UUA Board made a bold choice in 2016 to support BLUU's ministry with a \$5.3 million fundraising commitment. This commitment reflected the fact that BLUU and the UUA have always been tied through people and purpose, and affirmed the ways BLUU has pressed our faith forward toward reckoning with our past and reclaiming our theological legacy for liberation.

The Promise and Practice Campaign was created to fulfill the fundraising commitment in collaboration with BLUU leaders, individual donors, congregations and other UU entities. It expressed the system's trust in the direction of BLUU's leaders, even when we have not known where that leadership would take us. When we celebrated the campaign's completion at General Assembly 2019, we made history. We entered a new story, a changed narrative about the place in our faith for those of us who are Black, Indigenous and People of Color. Thousands of people made that happen.

It has always been clear to me how much our faith needs BLUU, even beyond the direct and life-giving ministry BLUU offers for Black UUs. From its early Seven Principles of Black Lives of UU project to its innovative membership structure of BLUU Beloveds, BLUU has been a groundbreaking UU community. I witnessed this at BLUU's 2019 Harper-Jordan Memorial Symposium. Unitarian Universalism's strength lies in its theological pluralism and our embodied approach to living our principles; but historically, both have existed almost exclusively in a context of whiteness. At the symposium, we engaged theological depth and breadth in a different imagination, in a setting that made *and is making* space for people who did not know they could find a home in our midst.

BLUU has deep roots, and yet its work is so much about the future. This is the promise and the practice of our faith, to demonstrate that we can be compelled to live up to its calling. The liberating community BLUU has created blesses our faith.



## The Inception of BLUU

by Leslie Mac

**B**lack Lives of Unitarian Universalism held its annual Homecoming worship service in September 2020. As we gathered, I looked around the Zoom room and saw the faces of over 100 Black people. Tears welled up in my eyes. It feels like we, the co-founders of BLUU—Elandria Williams, the Rev. Carlton E. Smith, Kenny Wiley, Lena K. Gardener, Royce James, and I—dreamed up a space like this. To be able to experience it in such a full way at this service reminded me of why we were pushed to start this incredible organization.

BLUU was born out of the urgent needs of Black UUs as we took to the streets in our respective cities building the foundations of what would become the Movement for Black Lives. In July 2015, over 1,500 Black organizers gathered in Cleveland for the first Movement for Black Lives Convening. The gathering included a large number of Black Unitarian Universalists who formed an idea over a series of meals together. An unapologetically Black and definitively Unitarian Universalist space to support the growing pastoral care and spiritual sustenance needs we saw being unmet around the country. We began by looking at our beloved seven UU Principles and applying a Black liberation lens to these critical tenets of our lives. On September 14, 2015 we spent a week revealing the co-created Seven Principles of Black Lives. We intended to make clear that it was our Unitarian Universalist faith that called us to serve in the Movement for Black Lives AND that we believed this calling extended to all those who call themselves Unitarian Universalists. We wanted to make a declarative statement that we believe deeply in justice-making THROUGH our faith and that justice work was holy, sacred work we were inviting our fellow Unitarian Universalists to step into.

After launching we set to the work of building community with other Black UUs. We worked with the UUA to bring a BLUU session track to General Assembly 2016 and held our first BLUU Convening in spring of 2017. At the 2017 Convening in New Orleans, our organization's agenda began to take shape. This



© Sean Alexander

Chalice from the 2018 BLUU Revival

incredible gathering featured Black-centered worship and a series of discussions about the needs of Black UUs to help us understand what direction our work needed to go.

As I looked around during the 2020 Homecoming service, I saw the fruition of so many of those hopes we had in the early days of BLUU—a spiritual space centered on Black people with our UU faith at its core, a place for lament, a place for joy, a place for us to just... BE. A multi-generational space where our elders are able to share themselves and be cared for. A family-friendly space where parents can have their children in their laps and babies' cries are received as joyful noise. An open space where Black freedom fighters who may not be declaratively UU can find peace and support.

Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism changed our lives. The collective dreams we had for this work in 2015 came alive during the homecoming service—proof that spirit is moving and, as always, we need each other to survive.

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Leslie Mac is an organizer and consultant. She was a member of BLUU's Organizing Collective and is a former UUA Board member.

## Combahee Taught Us

BLUU honors the legacy of movements that center Black, queer women and femmes

By Marchaé Grair

In 1974, a radical group of Black women gathered with the hopes of creating a community and political home that honored who they were holistically. They were Black and mostly queer women who needed a place where all of the oppressions they experienced were acknowledged and all of their needs, rooted in various parts of their identities, were considered equally valid.

This group called themselves “The Combahee River Collective,” paying homage to Harriet Tubman’s raid on the Combahee River that freed 750 enslaved people.

In 1977, the Combahee River Collective released a statement that still defines the politics of many Black feminists and radicals decades later.

Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU) is not first in its commitment to follow the lead of and center the needs of Black and queer women and femmes, but we take that commitment seriously. Our elders who were activists, organizers, and healers before us knew that putting Black, queer and trans folks at the center would fundamentally make movements more inclusive, compassionate, and politically effective.

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**Combahee taught us that putting Black, queer women, femmes, and trans people in leadership at our organization fundamentally changes the DNA of our organization’s justice work.** They coined the term “identity politics” to name the power in pursuing liberation from the place of your own experiences. Like them, we are people who are not living single-issue lives, so we can’t build single-issue movements.

**Combahee taught us that we** don’t have to replicate systems of hierarchy and extraction in order to have a thriving organization. Our collective leadership structure challenges traditional structures of power. We start at the assumption that there will be enough time and resources for the work we are meant to do, and we don’t treat anyone working with us as disposable. We love each other deeply and know that love sometimes means loving through disagreement, harm, and accountability for that harm.

**Combahee taught us how Black, queer women and femmes create and sustain life-saving, life-giving communities.** The needs of Black people, specifically those of Black UUs, are our first priority. We honor the Combahee legacy every time we claim our right to celebrate joy and play as foundational ways of being together. We embody their modeling of collective care, whether that means encouraging each other to rest or respecting the needs that come from the diversity of our family structures. We embrace the energy and innovation of young people and the wisdom and power of our elders.

The Combahee River Collective Statement says, “If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression.”

That’s why we are committed to creating a Unitarian Universalism where Black, queer women and femmes are loved and empowered. When that Unitarian Universalism exists, Unitarian Universalism will actually be a faith for all.

Marchaé Grair is a spiritual director, facilitator, and BLUU’s Communications Director.

## Living the Vision

**BLUU's vision statement:** BLUU harnesses love's power to combat oppression and foster healing as a spiritual and political imperative. We know the power of love to be life changing, inclusive, relational, uncomfortable, unconditional and without end.

About eight years ago, I found myself at a crossroads. I faced aspects of myself that, in my conservative religious family and community, were either ignored, not fully accepted, or outright vilified. I was queer (though I had not fully accepted this about myself), I was female (and an outspoken feminist), and resolutely but quietly multifaith. At the fourth intersection was the only aspect of myself that was fully acknowledged, embraced and celebrated in my community—my beautiful blackness. However, this was not enough.

I visited a Unitarian Universalist church, but I did not see myself. Relinquishing spiritual sustenance of my Blackness in order to have acceptance of my queerness, feminism, and multifaith beliefs was not a sacrifice I was willing to make. I pulled out of the driveway of that UU church, never expecting to return again.

One year later, a new friend invited me to attend a BLUU service. This friend was queer, transmasculine, beautifully Black with skin adorned with tattoos, and an outspoken social activist. When I found out that Unitarian Universalism was connected to BLUU, I was intrigued. Had the faith community in which I had placed such hope years before expanded into a community in which I could now see myself and be seen? After attending this BLUU service, I could see that the answer was now, yes! I opened myself to engaging with the greater UU community and found that, with BLUU as a complement, Unitarian Universalism was everything that my spirit had been seeking. I became a member of the UU church that, seven years before, I had walked away from. I am grateful to BLUU for bringing me to Unitarian Universalism and keeping me sustained and nourished. Unitarian Universalism is the house of my faith; BLUU is the doorway through which I enter and the room where I find sanctuary.

-Badia Askari

BLUU has positively impacted my life and my ministry by reinforcing for me that I am NOT ALONE. Unitarian Universalism is the faith I CHOSE—I was not raised into the faith or born into the faith. Many people I'm related to or am in community with do not understand what draws me to the faith, though I've tried to explain it. Finding community on a whole 'nother level with BLUU feeds my heart, my spirit, and my soul in a way that MUST be experienced. THIS—BLUU—has given me the space to "get in where I fit in," and I am profoundly grateful.

-Dianne Daniels

This organization has truly been a breath of fresh air. My new minister had told me about a new group forming called BLUU. My life has not been the same. My first GA was my first time experiencing BLUU. Because of the empowerment I felt in BLUU, I found myself moving into positions of leadership in Unitarian Universalism. I became active in GA Planning Committee (GAPC) (early departure), helped with Kansas City team, became president of our congregation, and got more involved in local community happenings. In essence BLUU has been a part of my overall growth. I have felt a greater sense of empowerment. The online community gatherings are life-giving. I also appreciate how BLUU gives honor to our elders. Being able to attend in-person gatherings has also changed my life. Thank you.

-Oshara Meesha

## Meet BLUU's Organizing Collective Board!

Since March 2022

The Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism Organizing Collective Board serves as the Board of Directors for the BLUU. This is a working Board whose collective work is to breathe life into the vision and mission of BLUU and be in relationships with various constituencies to build and grow a Unitarian Universalism that centers Blackness. Many members are also on BLUU's staff. Members of the OC Board have various areas of expertise where they take primary responsibility for related work.

These areas include (but are not limited to): organizing, communications, infrastructure, fundraising, youth and young adult ministry, content development, organizational relationship-building, worship-leading, pastoral care, and event and gathering planning.

### Meet the BLUU OCB



**Dr. Takiyah Nur Amin** is an author, academic and consultant. She has served as BLUU's Content Director and has been active on the organizing collective board since 2016.



**Rev. Mykal O'Neal Slack** is a trainer, worship leader, and congregational life consultant who has been active on the organizing collective board and has served as BLUU's Community Minister for Worship & Spiritual Care since 2017.



**Lena K. Gardner** is a co-founder and the Executive Director of BLUU. She is a proud Mom to her daughter, Winifred, born in November 2019.



**Marchaé Grair** is a writer, editor, spiritual director, facilitator, and lover of caffeine and corny jokes. She is BLUU's Communications Director and joined the staff and Organizing Collective Board in 2020.



**Rev. Kimberly Q. Johnson** serves as minister of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Fork. She has passion and expertise for racial justice work and ministry with youth.



**Natasha Walker** is a program manager and currently serves as the Developmental Board Chair for the Organizing Collective Board. She supports the board's skill development, and serves as the board's primary liaison between BUU and community members and partners.



# 7 Principles of Black Lives

## 1 All Black Lives Matter

Queer Black lives, trans Black lives, formerly incarcerated Black lives, differently-abled Black lives, Black women's lives, immigrant Black lives, Black elderly and children's lives. ALL BLACK LIVES MATTER and are creators of this space. We throw no one under the bus. We rise together.

The Movement for Black Lives calls on the Unitarian Universalist faith — a faith willing to make the bold proclamation that each person inherently matters — to live up to that claim by working toward a future in which Black lives are truly valued in our society. We call on UUs to actively resist notions that Black lives only matter if conformed to white, middle-class norms, and to challenge assumptions of worth centered around clothing, diction, education, or other status. Our value is not conditional.

## 2 Love and Self-Love are Practiced in Every Element of All We Do

Love and Self-Love must be drivers of all our work and indicators of our success. Without this principle and without healing, we will harm each other and undermine our movement.

The Movement for Black Lives seeks to build a society where Black people thrive instead of survive. We seek justice for those we have lost to police violence, we seek equity in housing, education and healthcare, we seek compassion from our fellow UUs for the struggle we are called to be a part of.

## 3 Spiritual Growth is Directly Tied to Our Ability to Embrace Our Whole Selves

A principled struggle must exist in a positive environment. We must be honest with one another by embracing direct, loving communication & acknowledgment of all that we are and all that we hope to be.

The spiritual growth of UUs of Color is directly tied to our ability to stand in the truth that Black Lives Matter, that our lives matter, both in the wider world and just as importantly in our UU congregations. We call on our UU congregations and the UUA to support our work towards wholeness as Black people. We must be honest with one another by embracing direct, loving communication.

## 4 Experimentation and Innovation Must be Built Into Our Work

Embrace the best tools, practices, and tactics, and leave behind those that no longer serve us. Evaluation and assessment must be built into our work. Critical reflection must be part of all our work. We learn from our mistakes and our victories.

The Movement for Black Lives works daily to expose the truth about Black life in this country and in the world. To uncover the layer of white supremacy that exists in this society. To bring to light the Anti-Blackness that is present in our everyday lives. We call on all UUs to root out the Anti-Blackness that exists within our congregations and our faith.

## 5 Most Directly Affected People are Experts at Their Own Lives

Those most directly affected by racial injustice & oppression should be in leadership, at the center of our movement, and telling their stories directly.

We stand in the Movement for Black Lives at a time in which voting rights are being threatened at every turn. Black people are being denied the most basic of rights—the right to vote and have adequate representation in our country. We work towards a society in which Black life is valued, in which Black life is not discarded, in which Black Lives Matter, and in which the work of Black people is seen as equal to their white counterparts. Black voices in our congregations, in our faith, and in the world must be valued.

## 6 Thriving Instead of Surviving

Our vision is based on the world we want, and not the world we are currently in. We seek to transform, not simply to react. We want our people to thrive, not just exist—and to think beyond the possible.

Any work towards peace, liberty and justice must address racial injustice. Black UUs are calling our faith to join us as we work towards justice for ALL Black people and by extension for all people.

## 7 360 Degree Vision

We honor the past struggles and wisdom from our elders. The work we do today builds the foundations of movements of tomorrow. We consider our mark on future generations.

Acknowledging the ways in which a Supremacist society diminishes us ALL is a critical part of the work of the Movement for Black Lives. When the most marginalized of our society is free, then we will ALL truly be free. We call on our faith to affirm the truth that only when Black Lives Matter will All Lives TRULY Matter. As Dr. King said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

## Elandria Taught Us

By Marchaé Grair

Elandria Williams (she/they/E), a powerful organizer, a passionate Unitarian Universalist faith leader, and co-founder of Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism, joined the ancestors on Sept. 23, 2020. We wanted to share some reflections about Elandria to honor who they were to us.

The diverse groups of people from movement spaces and faith communities mourning E is a testament to the tenacity of E's leadership and the depth of their spirit. Many people shared memories of E using the hashtag #ElandriaTaughtUs. This is unsurprising because one couldn't be in a room with Elandria without learning how to be a better human.

One video that folks shared after E's passing shows people gathered around E as they teach a call and response song:

*"Solid as a rock.  
Rooted like a tree.  
I am here.  
Standing strong.  
In my rightful place."*



Elandria Williams at General Assembly 2019, Elandria was a member of the BLUU Organizing Collective, served as a UUA Board member and as UUA co-moderator.

In a world where so many systems and people aim to create disarray and disconnection, it is a deeply spiritual challenge to stay rooted. Yet, that's exactly what Elandria did. They kept their organizing unapologetically rooted in their commitments to Black liberation and disability justice. They brought this same rootedness into their leadership within Unitarian Universalism, always saying hard things in love and never forgetting to center their work in Black freedom and Black joy.

"I worked with Elandria in the very beginning of forming BLUU," said BLUU's Executive Director Lena K. Gardner. She was never afraid to feel her feelings or express them, and was welcoming with a warmth I have rarely experienced in movement spaces. I hope to honor her legacy by continuing to build and strengthen BLUU as an organization — and to always move in love and truth."

The fabric of who Elandria was will remain in BLUU's DNA forever. We are so grateful that Elandria taught us how to take up space and to do so with moral clarity. No one ever had to figure out what E's values were because they spoke them boldly and then lived them fiercely.

"When BLUU was formed in 2015, what I remember Elandria saying over and over again was, 'we have to say it plain,'" said BLUU co-founder and BLUU Advisory Team member Leslie Mac. "Elandria taught me that organizing is a journey and one that requires the application of so many different skills and tactics. E taught me above all else to love our people, speak truth to power, and care for yourself, even when it's hard. In her absence I hear her voice singing to me: 'Solid as a rock. Rooted like a tree. We are here. Standing strong... in our rightful place.'"



Participants at the Harper-Jordan Theological Symposium sponsored by Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism, Fall 2019.

## Organizing Under a Radical Leadership Model

By Lena K. Gardner

From the start BLUU envisioned an organization that was less hierarchical than conventional nonprofits and churches. We wanted to create an organization that was a spiritual home for organizing that was based in relational organizing and aligned values. Early on it became clear we would need a way to navigate conflict on the team.

Modeled on of working agreements from the queer liberation group Southerners on New Ground (SONG), BLUU created our own working agreements. This was the first innovative structure we created to help us in our work. We wanted BLUU to be about working together toward our collective liberation, and worshipping together in an unapologetically Black AND UU way.

Conventional governance models completely fail us in matching our desires to build an organization that is about community. We are accountable to each other as an OC and to our BLUU Beloveds and our Guidance Groups. Our Guidance Groups include the 360 Elders Council, the Financial Transparency Group, and the Advisory Team. Each one of these teams has areas of responsibility in the organization. Our membership model is also one desiring to be relational, even though most membership models are transactional.

Our biggest challenges, though, are not about organizational structures. Our biggest challenge is about how expansively we can imagine what is possible for us as Black UUs participating in the Movement for Black Lives. From the beginning we were told to dream smaller. We haven't let that dim our light. We won't start now. We aren't perfect but we'll continue to keep moving guided by our vision of collective liberation and unapologetic Black Unitarian Universalism.



©#byChubbZ photo courtesy of BLUU

Rev. Mykal Slack, BLUU's Community Minister at the BLUU Revival 2018.

## Creating Black Sacred Space is a Radically Loving Act

By Rev. Mykal Slack

It's rare for Black UUs to be in a position to hold space for ourselves and not also have to manage what it means for folks who aren't Black to share space with us. The persistent questions about who and how we're supposed to be in predominantly white spaces can run laps around our psyches and make really remarkable people remarkably tired. Ultimately the questions (and critiques) do the work of wearing us down to the point where we either forget who we are altogether, or we get real good at knowing ourselves while also hiding what is most true about ourselves. In either case, the covenantal relationship that we have with our own Blackness gets muddled and lost.

It's part of our work in BLUU to expand the power and capacity of Black UUs. And part of how we do that deeply spiritual work is to offer opportunities for us to let our shoulders down and be motivated, uplifted, and fortified by the full context of our Blackness. We do this work because it matters, at a soul-deep level, that we be reminded of what it's like and what it means to only be accountable to one another as Black people first and foremost and not encumbered

by what centering whiteness far too often requires of us, from both white folks and from non-Black people of color. We also do this work because white supremacy is specifically grounded in anti-blackness. The insidiousness of anti-blackness in our everyday lives and in American culture more broadly makes explicitly Black spaces a critical point of healing.

To be clear, this has less to do with who we love and are in relationship with and more to do with what it takes to bring us into fully loving all of ourselves. We'd be here all day if we had to tell you all the times we and other Black UUs have said that we just want a space where all the beautiful magic of being Black and UU can be wholly realized and manifested. Folks are hungry for it; so explicitly Black spaces are the spaces we cultivate.

In support of BLUU's work, we invite congregations and communities, individuals and families to do a most uncommon thing: to center Blackness in the spiritual grounded-ness of our Unitarian Universalism. And to get creative doing it! For a congregation, UU or otherwise, that may look like donating to BLUU, sponsoring Black members to attend BLUU convenings, or intentionally scheduling meetings and programming so Black staff and members can attend BLUU events. The sky's the limit!

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Rev. Mykal Slack is the Community Minister for Worship & Spiritual Care for BLUU.



## What Is the Promise?

By Rev. Bill Sinkford

**T**he Promise needs to be many things before it can be the opening of a new chapter in the UU story.

First, the promise of money was made and kept. Money was raised and taken from the UUA's endowment and delivered to BLUU, an organization of Black UU's, with no strings but many hopes attached. This time, the promise was kept.

When money was promised once before and not given, the sense of betrayal drove me and many other Black UU's out of this faith. I wandered in the wilderness, religiously, for years and, to this day, wonder what my life might have been like if I had been able to begin my ministry in 1975, not 1995.

The Promise had to redeem past failures before opening more hopeful futures.

The Promise was also a confession that, despite the embracing theology of Unitarian Universalism, the culture of most UU congregations has been a barrier to a multi-cultural future for this faith. Black, indigenous and people of color, many of us wanted something less exclusively grounded in Enlightenment liberalism and more thoroughly committed to liberation.

It was a confession that, like every institution in this nation, our faith participates in the culture of white supremacy and will only survive by a commitment to shift that culture.

It was an acknowledgement that a single mono-cultural embodiment cannot contain the breadth and depth and diversity possible within and among Unitarian Universalists.

The Promise is a sign, only one sign, but a positive sign of the beginnings of a commitment to live into a more hopeful future.

It is not, however, a guarantee. BLUU is well begun and already enriching the lives of many Black UU's. Perhaps BLUU's ministry will even draw more BIPOC folks into the UU orbit. But the next chapter of Unitarian Universalism's story has not been written. The shared commitment has only begun to be tested.

But the new chapter has been started. That first promise has been fulfilled. There is solid ground on which we can begin to build and that is reason enough to hope.



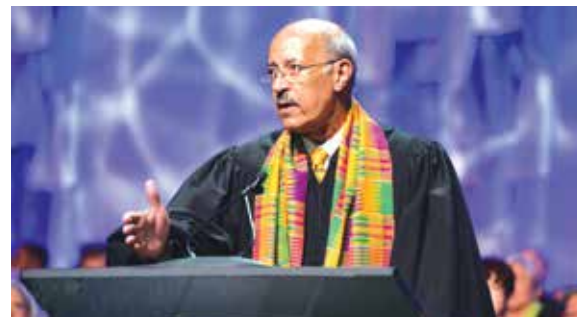
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Leslie Mac and the Rev. Carlton Elliott Smith of Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism requested \$5.3 million from the UUA Board of Trustees for BLUU during the board's October 2016 meeting.



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UUA Interim Co-Presidents Leon Spencer, Rev. Sofia Betancourt, and Rev. Bill Sinkford listen as Acting Moderator Denise Rimes addresses the Board of Trustees in New Orleans on June 20, 2017.



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Rev. Bill Sinkford at General Assembly 2019.

Rev. Bill Sinkford is a former UUA President and also served as Co-President of the UUA in 2017.

## To Our Black Unitarian Universalist Elders and Ancestors with Gratitude

By Cheri Taylor

© #byCHUBBZ photo courtesy of BLUU



Participants at the 2019 Harper-Jordan Theological Symposium sponsored by Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism in Fall 2019. Front Row left to right: Carmelita Carter-Sykes, Carol Carter Walker, Elizabeth Ann Terry  
Back row left to right: Dr. Leon Spencer, Paula Cole Jones, Dr. Mtanguilizi Wazuri.

It is easy to take for granted how far Unitarian Universalists have come. As we celebrate the work of the Promise and Practice Campaign we should remember Rev. Bill Sinkford's words, "The Promise is a sign, only one sign, but a positive sign of the beginnings of a commitment to live into a more hopeful future." We must think about how our next generation of UUs should spend the next several years working towards social justice and Black and brown liberation. Building on your example, we've seen how much can be accomplished, but also how much has been sacrificed for this work.

If we want our future work to be as powerful as our past efforts, there is so much we can learn from you, mainly the evils of complacency. Where would we be if Black UUs were complacent during the 1969 General Assembly in Boston? Had you lost your nerve to push forward and continue perfecting our Association, we might never have seen the momentum that eventually gave birth to Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism in 2015.

The fierce urgency of now, as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. referenced, is a lasting gift that you have left us. Our generation is still writing our chapter of the story, still choosing how we will use the gifts you have given. We are so fortunate to have the path you blazed for us. The future must be about applying those lessons to the problems of today. It must be a period of continued urgency on several of the issues we face as a country and as an association as well as issues that may arise in the future which seek to undermine or roll back the clock on so many hard fought advancements.

We owe you a commitment to press forward, celebrating our successes and knowing we still have work to do to honor your legacy. We should not just celebrate having an evolved-enough Association, willing to support an organization such as BLUU. We should challenge our Association to also deal with the continued inequities from within and societal inequities we experience and witness just as you did when you saw the inequities that still remained despite your successes.

We owe it you to throw caution to the wind. Your experience tells us that, in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds, change can occur if a few courageous souls are willing to speak up and speak out against the ills that plague our Association and our society.

Now we must recommit ourselves to pressing forward on the big issues of our day. We remain grateful to you for your courage in pressing forward. We are inspired by your tenacity in the face of unimaginable adversity. Yours are the shoulders on which today's generation must stand to write our own liberation and social justice making history and shape the next several decades.

We are forever grateful for your leadership, sacrifice, and commitment.

*-Inspired by and adapted from "To Our Ancestors with Gratitude" by Congresswoman Karen Bass*

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Cheri Taylor is a Major Gifts Officer for the UUA.

## A Transformational Gift

By Rev. Connie Simon

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Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, UUA President, with Julia and Brad Bradburd at the President's Council Brunch, June 25, 2017.

The Promise and the Practice campaign called upon each of us as Unitarian Universalists to live into the theology and the principles of our faith and to acknowledge the areas where we've fallen short in our quest for racial justice. Only by committing our hearts, minds, and resources—by being present and doing the work—will we achieve our goal of dismantling white supremacy culture and being a truly inclusive faith movement.

Few have embodied this commitment more than Arnold and Julie Bradburd. UUs for over 60 years, “Brad” and Julie are long-term members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Restoration in Philadelphia. Over the years, they have been active participants in the struggle for social justice in general and racial equity in particular. Brad has served as a trustee of the UU service Committee, the former Joseph Priestly District, the UU Pennsylvania Legislative Action Network, and is a member of the UUA President's Council.

Their financial generosity has supported the UU House, Murray Grove, the Martha and Waitstill Sharp Society of the UUSC and funded two Bradburd Scholarships for Excellence at the Meadville Lombard Theological School. More importantly, they are active in our faith—kind, loving, and always quick to offer a smile and a word of encouragement to all they encounter. As the recipient of one of the Bradburd Scholarships at Meadville, I was blessed with the opportunity to meet and get to know Brad and Julie and am honored to call them both friends. They are 100% the real deal.

In 2017, Brad and Julie once again demonstrated their love for this faith, this time through the Promise and the Practice congregational challenge fund. Congregations were asked to dedicate a Sunday worship service using the curated Promise and the Practice materials created by Black UU religious professionals and to take a special plate collection for BLUU. For those congregations that were able to raise at least \$10 per member, Brad and Julie matched their donation. For example, if a congregation with 300 members raised \$10 each, or \$3,000, the Bradburds doubled that congregation's gift to \$6,000. Brad and Julie's \$1 million contribution provided the extra incentive many congregations needed to reach that \$10 threshold and have their gift to BLUU doubled.

Their long history of service and support of Unitarian Universalism and BLUU are extraordinary. Brad and Julie don't just share their financial resources. They share their wisdom, their time and their fierce commitment to the possibilities and potential of our faith. They truly embody the power of love and the spirit of Unitarian Universalism.

Rev. Connie Simon is minister at First Unitarian Church of Cincinnati in Cincinnati, OH.

## Congregational Support

By Carey McDonald

Unitarian Universalist congregations from all over the country came together to support the formation of Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU) and the reformation of Unitarian Universalism.

Congregations were critical to the UUA's efforts to raise \$5.3 million to help establish BLUU as independent entity. Inspired by BLUU leaders and a matching challenge grant from Brad and Julia Bradburd, congregations of all sizes, in every region, raised more than \$725,000.

Congregations embraced this opportunity to "repair and rejuvenate our faith." The Promise and Practice of Our Faith Campaign called for congregations to give \$10 per member in support of BLUU. The campaign also called on congregations to center the history, the perspectives, the voices and the leadership of Black UUs in worship. We are grateful that you all met the challenge to grow in understanding BLUU's mission and purpose, embodying that understanding through concrete financial support.



**\$729,063.82**

Total giving for UUA congregations



**\$10.26**

Average per member

**38%**

Percentage of UUA congregations participated



**\$13,030.25**

**Largest congregational gift**

The First Unitarian Church of Dallas, avg gift \$12.89, congregation size 1011



**\$526.32**

**Largest gift average per member**

Goodloe Memorial UU Congregation, Bowie, MD total gift \$10,000, congregation size 19 Bowie, MD





# OUR CAMPAIGN SUPPORTERS

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UUA Staff at the General Assembly 2019 from left to right: Rev. Lauren Smith, Rev. Hope Johnson, Elizabeth Ann Terry, Rev. Sunshine Wolfe.



# Our Congregational Supporters

Congregations are listed below by region and grouped by state.

## Central East Region

UU Congregation of Danbury ..... Danbury, CT  
 UUs of Southern Delaware ..... Lewes, DE  
 UU Fellowship of Newark Inc. .... Newark, DE  
 UU Society of Mill Creek (Delaware)\*. .... Newark, DE  
 First Unitarian Church of Wilmington Del.\* ..... Wilmington, DE  
 Paint Branch Unitarian Church\* ..... Adelphi, MD  
 UU Church of Annapolis\* ..... Annapolis, MD  
 Cedar Lane UU Church ..... Bethesda, MD  
 River Road UU Congregation\* ..... Bethesda, MD  
 Goodloe Memorial UU Congregations\* ..... Bowie, MD  
 Davies UU Congregation\* ..... Camp Springs, MD  
 UU Congregation of Columbia. .... Columbia, MD  
 Channing Memorial Church, UU\* ..... Ellicott City, MD  
 UU Congregation of Frederick\* ..... Frederick, MD  
 Towson UU Church ..... Lutherville, MD  
 UU Congregation of Rockville. .... Rockville, MD  
 UU Church of Silver Spring ..... Silver Spring, MD  
 The Unitarian Society A UU Congregation\* ..... East Brunswick, NJ  
 Skylands UU Fellowship ..... Hackettstown, NJ  
 UU Congregation of Monmouth County\* ..... Lincroft, NJ  
 The UU Congregation at Montclair\* ..... Montclair, NJ  
 Morristown Unitarian Fellowship\* ..... Morristown, NJ  
 UU Congregation of the South Jersey Shore. .... Pomona, NJ  
 UU Congregation of Princeton\* ..... Princeton, NJ  
 The Unitarian Society of Ridgewood\* ..... Ridgewood, NJ  
 UU Congregation of Somerset Hills\* ..... Somerville, NJ  
 Beacon UU Congregation in Summit\* ..... Summit, NJ  
 UU Church at Washington Crossing\* ..... Titusville, NJ  
 First UU Society of Albany\* ..... Albany, NY  
 UU Fellowship of Big Flats ..... Big Flats, NY  
 UU Congregation of Binghamton ..... Binghamton, NY  
 UU Congregation of The South Fork Inc. .... Bridgehampton, NY  
 UU Church of Buffalo ..... Buffalo, NY  
 UU Church of Cortland\* ..... Cortland, NY  
 UU Congregation of the Hudson Valley\* ..... Croton-on-Hudson, NY  
 UU Fellowship at Stony Brook\* ..... East Setauket, NY  
 UU Congregation of Queens\* ..... Flushing, NY  
 UU Church of Hamburg\* ..... Hamburg, NY  
 UU Fellowship of Huntington. .... Huntington, NY  
 First Unitarian Society of Ithaca ..... Ithaca, NY  
 UU Congregation of the Catskills ..... Kingston, NY  
 UU Congregation at Shelter Rock ..... Manhasset, NY  
 UU Fellowship of Northern Westchester ..... Mount Kisco, NY  
 Fourth Universalist Society in the City of New York ..... New York, NY  
 UU Society of Oneonta Inc. .... Oneonta, NY  
 First Unitarian Church of Rochester ..... Rochester, NY  
 The First Universalist Church of Rochester ..... Rochester, NY  
 UU Congregation of Saratoga Springs ..... Saratoga Springs, NY  
 First UU Society of Syracuse\* ..... Syracuse, NY  
 May Memorial UU Society ..... Syracuse, NY

UU Church of Amherst\* ..... Williamsville, NY  
 All Souls UU Church ..... Bellville, OH  
 UU Society of Cleveland\* ..... Cleveland Heights, OH  
 West Shore UU Church ..... Cleveland, OH  
 First UU Church of Columbus ..... Columbus, OH  
 UU Church of Akron\* ..... Fairlawn, OH  
 UU Church of Kent\* ..... Kent, OH  
 East Shore UU Church ..... Kirtland, OH  
 Southwest UU Church\* ..... North Royalton, OH  
 UU Congregation of Cleveland ..... Shaker Heights, OH  
 First Unitarian Church of Toledo ..... Toledo, OH  
 UU Church of Athens and Sheshequin\* ..... Athens, PA  
 UUs of the Cumberland Valley ..... Boiling Springs, PA  
 Main Line Unitarian Church ..... Devon, PA  
 UUs of Gettysburg\* ..... Gettysburg, PA  
 Unitarian Church of Harrisburg ..... Harrisburg, PA  
 UU Church of Meadville ..... Meadville, PA  
 Unitarian Society of Germantown\* ..... Philadelphia, PA  
 UU Church of the Restoration\* ..... Philadelphia, PA  
 Allegheny UU Church\* ..... Pittsburgh, PA  
 First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh\* ..... Pittsburgh, PA  
 UU Church of the North Hills\* ..... Pittsburgh, PA  
 UU Church of the South Hills\* ..... Pittsburgh, PA  
 First UU Church Berks County\* ..... Reading, PA  
 BuxMont UU Fellowship ..... Warrington, PA  
 Unitarian Congregation of West Chester ..... West Chester, PA  
 UU Congregation of Wyoming Valley\* ..... Wilkes-Barre, PA  
 The UU Congregation of York\* ..... York, PA  
 Mt Vernon Unitarian Church\* ..... Alexandria, VA  
 UU Church of Loudoun\* ..... Leesburg, VA  
 UU Congregation of Fairfax\* ..... Oakton, VA  
 UU Church in Reston\* ..... Reston, VA  
 Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Sterling ..... Sterling, VA

**CENTRAL EAST REGION**

**\$155,667.28**  
Total giving

**\$15.12**  
Average per member\*

**83**  
Total congregations

**43%**  
Of Central East Region congregations participated

\*In participating congregations

## Mid-America Region

UU Church of Bloomington Normal	Bloomington, IL
Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship*	Carbondale, IL
Second Unitarian Church	Chicago, IL
Third Unitarian Church of Chicago	Chicago, IL
North Shore Unitarian Church*	Deerfield, IL
Unitarian Universalist Church of Elgin*	Elgin, IL
Unitarian Church of Evanston	Evanston, IL
Prairie Circle UU Congregation*	Grayslake, IL
Unitarian Church of Hinsdale*	Hinsdale, IL
Tree of Life UU Congregation*	McHenry, IL
Unity Temple UU Congregation	Oak Park, IL
Countryside Church UU	Palatine, IL
Universalist Unitarian Church of Peoria*	Peoria, IL
The UU Church*	Rockford, IL
UU Congregation of Rock Valley*	Rockton, IL
UU Church of Urbana Champaign*	Urbana, IL
UU Church of Bloomington, Indiana	Bloomington, IN
UU Congregation of Columbus Indiana*	Columbus, IN
UU Fellowship of Elkhart	Elkhart, IN
UU Congregation of Fort Wayne	Fort Wayne, IN
All Souls Unitarian Church*	Indianapolis, IN
UU Church of Indianapolis	Indianapolis, IN
UU Church of Muncie	Muncie, IN
First Unitarian Church of South Bend	South Bend, IN
Heartland UU Church*	Zionsville, IN
The Peoples Church UU	Cedar Rapids, IA
UU Society of Iowa City	Coralville, IA
First Unitarian Church of Des Moines*	Des Moines, IA
UU Fellowship of Manhattan	Manhattan, KS
The UU Fellowship of Salina	Salina, KS
UU Fellowship of Topeka	Topeka, KS
All Peoples, A UU Congregation	Louisville, KY
First UU Congregation of Ann Arbor	Ann Arbor, MI
Birmingham Unitarian Church	Bloomfield Hills, MI
Community Unitarian Universalists in Brighton	Brighton, MI
First UU Church	Detroit, MI
Universalist Unitarian Church of Farmington	Farmington Hills, MI
People's Church*	Kalamazoo, MI
The Marquette Unitarian Universalist Congregation	Marquette, MI
Northwest UU Church*	Southfield, MI
Beacon UU Congregation	Troy, MI
Pilgrim House UU Fellowship	Arden Hills, MN
Headwaters UU Fellowship	Bemidji, MN
Minnesota Valley UU Fellowship*	Bloomington, MN
Michael Servetus Unitarian Society*	Fridley, MN
White Bear UU Church	Mahtomedi, MN
UU Fellowship of Mankato	Mankato, MN

First Universalist Church of Minneapolis	Minneapolis, MN
UU Fellowship of Northfield*	Northfield, MN
Unity Church Unitarian*	Saint Paul, MN
UU Church	Columbia, MO
UU Fellowship of Jefferson City*	Jefferson City, MO
All Souls UU Church*	Kansas City, MO
Emerson UU Chapel	Saint Charles, MO
First Unitarian Church*	Omaha, NE
Second Unitarian Church of Omaha*	Omaha, NE
UU Fellowship and Church of Bismarck-Mandan*	Bismarck, ND
First Unitarian Church of Cincinnati*	Cincinnati, OH
The Gathering at Northern Hills - A UU Community	Cincinnati, OH
Heritage Universalist Unitarian Church	Cincinnati, OH
St. John's UU Church	Cincinnati, OH
Miami Valley UU Fellowship*	Dayton, OH
Hopedale UU Community*	Oxford, OH
Black Hills UU Fellowship*	Rapid City, SD
Fox Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship	Appleton, WI
Chequamegon UU Fellowship	Ashland, WI
UU Church West	Brookfield, WI
UU Fellowship of Door County	Ephraim, WI
UU Fellowship of La Crosse	La Crosse, WI
First Unitarian Society of Madison	Madison, WI
James Reeb UU Congregation*	Madison, WI
First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee	Milwaukee, WI
Olympia Brown UU Church	Racine, WI
Prairie Lakes UU Fellowship*	Ripon, WI
United UU Congregation*	Waukesha, WI
First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau	Wausau, WI

**MID-AMERICA REGION**

**\$144,162.27**  
Total giving

**\$8.51**  
Average per member\*

**70**  
Total congregations

**38%**  
Of Mid-America congregations participated

\*In participating congregations

## New England Region

Unitarian Society of New Haven\* .....Hamden, CT  
 Unitarian Society of Hartford\* .....Hartford, CT  
 Shoreline UU Society.....Madison, CT  
 UU Society: East .....Manchester, CT  
 All Souls UU Congregation of New London\* ..... New London, CT  
 Mattatuck UU Society..... Woodbury, CT  
 First Universalist Church of Auburn, ME, UU\* ..... Auburn, ME  
 UU Community Church ..... Augusta, ME  
 The UU Society of Bangor ..... Bangor, ME  
 UU Church of Belfast..... Belfast, ME  
 UU Church of Brunswick\* .....Brunswick, ME  
 Midcoast UU Fellowship\*..... Damariscotta, ME  
 First Parish UU Church\* .....Kennebunk, ME  
 First Universalist Church of Norway UU\* ..... Norway, ME  
 UU Meeting House of Pittsfield, Maine\* ..... Pittsfield, ME  
 Allen Ave UU Church\* ..... Portland, ME  
 The First Parish in Portland Maine UU ..... Portland, ME  
 First Universalist Church in Rockland\* ..... Rockland, ME  
 UU Church of Saco & Biddeford.....Saco, ME  
 Sanford UU Church.....Sanford, ME  
 UU Society of Amherst ..... Amherst, MA  
 First Parish UU of Arlington, Massachusetts\* ..... Arlington, MA  
 Murray UU Church\* ..... Attleboro, MA  
 First Parish in Bedford ..... Bedford, MA  
 First Church in Boston.....Boston, MA  
 First Parish Brewster UU..... Brewster, MA  
 First Parish Church Unitarian-Universalist\* .....Bridgewater, MA  
 First Parish in Brookline ..... Brookline, MA  
 First Parish in Cambridge (UU) ..... Cambridge, MA  
 UU Meeting House ..... Chatham, MA  
 First Parish in Concord\* ..... Concord, MA  
 Northshore UU Church..... Danvers, MA  
 UU Fellowship of Falmouth .....East Falmouth, MA  
 UU Society of Fairhaven.....Fairhaven, MA  
 UU Society of Grafton & Upton.....Grafton, MA  
 First Congregational Unitarian Church of Harvard ..... Harvard, MA  
 UU Church of Haverhill\*.....Haverhill, MA  
 Hopedale Unitarian Parish .....Hopedale, MA  
 Unitarian Church of Marlborough & Hudson\* ..... Hudson, MA  
 First Congregational Society of Jamaica Plain UU\* . Jamaica Plain, MA  
 First Parish in Kingston ..... Kingston, MA  
 First Parish in Lexington ..... Lexington, MA  
 Follen Church ..... Lexington, MA  
 First Church Unitarian Littleton.....Littleton, MA  
 First Parish in Malden Universalist\* .....Malden, MA  
 Melrose UU Church\*..... Melrose, MA  
 First UU Society of Middleborough\* ..... Middleboro, MA  
 First Parish in Milton UU\* ..... Milton, MA  
 First Religious Society, UU in Newburyport\* .....Newburyport, MA

The North Parish of North Andover\* .....North Andover, MA  
 First Parish Church UU\* .....Northborough, MA  
 First Parish of Norwell\*..... Norwell, MA  
 United First Parish Church.....Quincy, MA  
 UU Church of Reading ..... Reading, MA  
 Unitarian Church of Sharon\* ..... Sharon, MA  
 UU Area Church at First Parish Sherborn\* ..... Sherborn, MA  
 UU Society of Greater Springfield.....Springfield, MA  
 First Parish Universalist Church ..... Stoughton, MA  
 First Parish Church UU of Stow & Acton\* .....Stow, MA  
 First Universalist Society of Wakefield\*..... Wakefield, MA  
 UU Society of Wellesley Hills ..... Wellesley Hills, MA  
 Theodore Parker UU Church\*..... West Roxbury, MA  
 UU Congregational Society of Westborough\* ..... Westborough, MA  
 First Parish Church United of Westford..... Westford, MA  
 Winchester Unitarian Society\* .....Winchester, MA  
 Keene UU Church .....Keene, NH  
 UU Church of Manchester\*..... Manchester, NH  
 UU Congregation in Milford .....Milford, NH  
 UU Church of Nashua New Hampshire\* ..... Nashua, NH  
 Peterborough UU Church\* ..... Peterborough, NH  
 Starr King UU Fellowship\* .....Plymouth, NH  
 South Church .....Portsmouth, NH  
 Religious Society of Bell Street Chapel\*..... Providence, RI  
 First UU Society of Burlington VT Inc.\*..... Burlington, VT  
 First Universalist Society of Hartland ..... Hartland Four Corners, VT  
 Mount Mansfield UU Fellowship\* .....Jericho, VT  
 Champlain Valley UU Society ..... Middlebury, VT  
 The Unitarian Church of Montpelier\*..... Montpelier, VT  
 UU Congregation of the Upper Valley ..... Norwich, VT  
 Unitarian Universalist Church of Rutland..... Rutland, VT  
 All Souls Church, Inc.\* ..... West Brattleboro, VT

### NEW ENGLAND REGION

**\$140,419.40**  
Total giving

**\$8.75**  
Average per member\*

**85**  
Total congregations

**37%**  
Of New England congregations participated

\*In participating congregations



## Pacific Western Region

UU Fellowship of Fairbanks	Fairbanks, AK
Beacon Unitarian Universalist Congregation*	Flagstaff, AZ
UU Congregation of Phoenix*	Paradise Valley, AZ
Prescott UU Fellowship*	Prescott, AZ
Sky Island UU Church*	Sierra Vista, AZ
Mountain Vista UU Congregation	Tucson, AZ
UU Church of Tucson	Tucson, AZ
Emerson UU Church	Canoga Park, CA
UU Church of the Monterey Peninsula*	Carmel, CA
Orange Coast UU Church*	Costa Mesa, CA
UU Church of Davis*	Davis, CA
Chalice UU Congregation*	Escondido, CA
Mission Peak UU Congregation*	Fremont, CA
UU Church of Fresno	Fresno, CA
UU Community of the Mountains*	Grass Valley, CA
Starr King UU Church*	Hayward, CA
UU Community of Lake County*	Kelseyville, CA
UU Church of Berkeley	Kensington, CA
Tapestry, a UU Congregation	Lake Forest, CA
UU Church in Livermore*	Livermore, CA
UU Church of Long Beach*	Long Beach, CA
Napa Valley UUs	Napa, CA
Chalice, UU Fellowship of the Conejo Valley*	Newbury Park, CA
First Unitarian Church of Oakland	Oakland, CA
First Universalist Parish of Pasadena, DBA Throop Memorial	Pasadena, CA
Universalist Unitarian Church of Riverside	Riverside, CA
UU Society of Sacramento*	Sacramento, CA
First UU Church of San Diego	San Diego, CA
First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco*	San Francisco, CA
First Unitarian Church of San Jose*	San Jose, CA
Unitarian Universalists San Luis Obispo*	San Luis Obispo, CA
UUs of San Mateo*	San Mateo, CA
UU Congregation of Marin*	San Rafael, CA
UU Community Church of Santa Monica	Santa Monica, CA
UU Church of Studio City	Studio City, CA
Palomar UU Fellowship*	Vista, CA
Mt. Diablo UU Church*	Walnut Creek, CA
UU Church of Boulder*	Boulder, CO
First Universalist Church of Denver	Denver, CO
UU Fellowship of Durango	Durango, CO
Foothills Unitarian Church	Fort Collins, CO
Jefferson Unitarian Church*	Golden, CO
UU Congregation of the Grand Valley*	Grand Junction, CO
First Unitarian Church of Honolulu	Honolulu, HI
UU Church in Idaho Falls*	Idaho Falls, ID

Pocatello UU Fellowship*	Pocatello, ID
UU Congregation of Las Vegas*	Las Vegas, NV
UU Fellowship of Central Oregon	Bend, OR
UU Fellowship of Corvallis	Corvallis, OR
First Unitarian Church*	Portland, OR
West Hills UU Fellowship	Portland, OR
Wy'east UU Congregation*	Portland, OR
UU Congregation of Salem	Salem, OR
South Valley UU Society	Cottonwood Heights, UT
Cache Valley UUs	Logan, UT
First Unitarian Church, Salt Lake City	Salt Lake City, UT
Cedars UU Church*	Bainbridge Island, WA
East Shore Unitarian Church*	Bellevue, WA
Kitsap UU Fellowship*	Bremerton, WA
Saltwater UU Church	Des Moines, WA
Cascade UU Fellowship	East Wenatchee, WA
Edmonds UU Congregation*	Edmonds, WA
Kittitas Valley UU Congregation*	Ellensburg, WA
UU Congregation of Whidbey Island	Freeland, WA
Northlake UU Church	Kirkland, WA
Evergreen UU Fellowship*	Marysville, WA
Community UU Church*	Pasco, WA
University Unitarian Church*	Seattle, WA
Tahoma UU Congregation	Tacoma, WA
Woodinville UU Church*	Woodinville, WA
UU Church of Cheyenne	Cheyenne, WY

**PACIFIC WESTERN REGION**

**\$149,043.67**  
Total giving

**\$10.82**  
Average per member\*

**68**  
Total congregations

**37%**  
Of Pacific Western congregations participated

\*In participating congregations

## Southern Region

UU Church of Birmingham	Birmingham, AL
UU Church of Huntsville	Huntsville, AL
UU Fellowship of Fayetteville, AR	Fayetteville, AR
UU Church of Hot Springs	Hot Springs, AR
UU Village Church*	Hot Springs Village, AR
UUs of Clearwater FL Inc.	Clearwater, FL
UU Congregation of Lake County	Eustis, FL
UU Church of Fort Myers Inc.	Fort Myers, FL
The UU Congregation of Lakeland	Lakeland, FL
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Miami, Inc.	Miami, FL
UU Congregation of Fort Lauderdale*	Oakland Park, FL
First Unitarian Church of Orlando	Orlando, FL
UU Fellowship of Charlotte County	Port Charlotte, FL
Friendship Fellowship at Pineda Inc.	Rockledge, FL
UU Church of Sarasota Inc.	Sarasota, FL
UU Fellowship of Athens Inc.	Athens, GA
First Existentialist Church of Atlanta*	Atlanta, GA
The Unitarian Universalist Church of Augusta	Augusta, GA
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta	Brookhaven, GA
Unitarian Universalists of Coastal Georgia, Inc.	Brunswick, GA
Georgia Mountains UU Church*	Dahlonega, GA
UU Congregation of Gwinnett*	Lawrenceville, GA
High Street UU Church*	Macon, GA
UU Metro Atlanta North Congregation*	Roswell, GA
UU Church of Savannah	Savannah, GA
UU Fellowship of Statesboro	Statesboro, GA
Community Church UU	New Orleans, LA
First UU Church of New Orleans	New Orleans, LA
UU Congregation of Oxford	Oxford, MS
UU Congregation of Asheville	Asheville, NC
UUs of Transylvania County	Brevard, NC
Piedmont UU Church	Charlotte, NC
Eno River UU Fellowship*	Durham, NC
UU Fellowship Hendersonville NC. Inc.*	Hendersonville, NC
UU Church of Greensboro*	Jamestown, NC
UU Fellowship of Raleigh*	Raleigh, NC
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Wilmington	Wilmington, NC
UU Fellowship of Winston-Salem	Winston-Salem, NC
All Souls Unitarian Church	Tulsa, OK
UU Fellowship of Beaufort	Beaufort, SC
Tennessee Valley UU Church*	Knoxville, TN
Westside UU Church	Knoxville, TN
Foothills UU Fellowship*	Maryville, TN
Greater Nashville UU Congregation*	Nashville, TN
Oak Ridge UU Church	Oak Ridge, TN
UU Church of Tullahoma TN*	Tullahoma, TN

First UU Church of Austin	Austin, TX
Horizon UU Church*	Carrollton, TX
The First Unitarian Church of Dallas*	Dallas, TX
UU Church of Oak Cliff	Dallas, TX
Red River UUs*	Denison, TX
Denton UU Fellowship	Denton, TX
Westside UU Church*	Fort Worth, TX
Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston	Houston, TX
First UU Church of Houston	Houston, TX
Unitarian Fellowship of Houston*	Houston, TX
Pathways Church*	Hurst, TX
Timberland UU Fellowship*	Lufkin, TX
UU Church of Midland	Midland, TX
First UU Church of San Antonio	San Antonio, TX
UU Church of Victoria	Victoria, TX
UU Congregation*	Blacksburg, VA
Unitarian Universalists of Charlottesville	Charlottesville, VA
UU Community Church, Inc.	Glen Allen, VA
Harrisonburg UUs	Harrisonburg, VA
First Unitarian Church of Lynchburg UU	Lynchburg, VA
UU Fellowship of the Peninsula	Newport News, VA
First UU Church of Richmond VA*	Richmond, VA
UU Church of Roanoke	Roanoke, VA
Coastal Virginia Unitarian Universalists (CVUU)	Virginia Beach, VA
UU Fellowship of Waynesboro*	Waynesboro, VA
UU Fellowship of the Rappahannock*	White Stone, VA
Williamsburg UUs	Williamsburg, VA

**SOUTHERN REGION**

**\$139,771.20**  
Total giving

**\$8.07**  
Average per member\*

**77**  
Total congregations

**36%**  
Of Southern congregations participated

\*In participating congregations



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Members of the President's Council at General Assembly 2019 pictured with Rev. Lauren Smith, Director of Stewardship and Development and President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, The Rev. Dr. Susan Frederick-Gray.

## The President's Council

The President's Council is a body of donors and volunteers who work with the UUA President to advance the mission of the Association. Members of the President's Council committed over \$1 million to the Promise and the Practice of Our Faith Campaign, over and above the \$1 million cornerstone gift made by President's Council members Brad and Julie Bradburd. We thank them for their commitment to BLUU and to Unitarian Universalism.

Several members of the President's Council made two gifts to the Promise and Practice Campaign. They gave to support BLUU. Several made additional gifts to support the UUA's institutional change work. Giving to Promise and Practice: Institutional Change advanced the UUA's efforts to dismantle white supremacy at the UUA, in leadership structures, and in UU faith communities. Institutional Change funds have helped the association better embody practices of equity, justice and inclusion. While a great deal of work remains, funding through the Institutional Change component of the Promise and Practice Campaign has already made a transformational impact in our association.

## Our Institutional Supporters

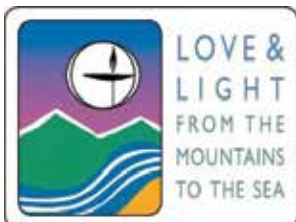
Institutional supporters gave over \$375,000 to support the Promise and the Practice of Our Faith campaign. We thank them for their generosity and commitment.



### Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA)

LREDA works for the liberation of all people through transforming systems of oppression and engaging in shared ministry with other professional religious leaders and lay leaders.

From LREDA's current President Aisha Hauser:  
 "LREDA has been a proud supporter of Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism. We supported the Promise and the Practice especially because we believe in the commitment to support BLUU's ministry by and for Black people seeking a liberal and affirming religious home."



### Northern New England District (NNED)

The Northern New England Board gave \$100,000 to the BLUU Endowment Fund and set up a \$100,000 match program to match all Promise and Practice gifts from the Northern New England District congregations.

Ultimately, the NNED awarded over \$44,000 in matching funds to support BLUU in addition to their original gift of \$100,000.

### Unitarian Universalist Funding Program

#### Unitarian Universalist Funding Program

The UU Funding Program (UUFP) is a grant-making entity of the UUA. It supported the campaign by matching all gifts from individuals between \$500 and \$5,000, up to \$125,000.

The match goal was met in the summer of 2019, doubling the impact of 120 qualifying donors.



#### UU Women's Federation (UUWF)

The UU Women's Federation (UUWF) funds programs that advance equity and justice for women and girls in both action and theology, through their grants program.

UU Women's Federation gave \$25,000, through their Equity & Justice Grant. This gift reflects over \$150 per official member. UUWF's gift to BLUU represents their commitment to equity and justice and their hope of serving as a resource for collaboration and support for BLUU.





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Announcing the BLUU Award at General Assembly 2019, from the left. Rev. Mykal Slack BLUU's Community Minister; Rev. Lauren Smith and Cheri Taylor, UUA Staff; and Leslie Mac

## Individual Support

By Cheri Taylor and Rev. Lauren Smith

Four years ago, the community of Black UUs called our faith to fulfill a promise—a promise that touches the heart of what it means to be Black, Unitarian Universalist and alive to our historical moment. Giving money, whether as an individual or as part of a collective, is more than a transaction. It begins as an act of faith. It begins with belief that a cause is worthy and faith that dreams can become reality. It begins with trust in the skill and integrity of change leaders.

The ask for Black Lives of UU was not small, nor are the challenges BLUU seeks to address or the possibilities BLUU seeks to open. The Promise and the Practice of Our Faith Campaign invited donors to give both financially and spiritually. Supporters were asked to trust the vision and integrity of BLUU leaders so that our faith could grow in ways it never had

before. Leaders and donors were asked to imagine new ways of collaborating across racial differences. The campaign opened old wounds, times when UU commitments have fallen short, but the campaign also allowed us to make new promises and fulfill old ones.

The outpouring of generosity to support this campaign is one expression of UU commitment to Black thriving and leadership in our faith. To invest in BLUU is to invest in a vibrant, creative and relevant future for Unitarian Universalism. BLUU has already impacted our faith, in the way we engage in social justice work, lean into our spirituality, expand and deepen our theologies, and care for one another.

Thank you for supporting the Promise and the Practice Campaign and our faith's ongoing work toward liberation.

---

Cheri Taylor and Rev. Lauren Smith are members of the UUA's Stewardship and Development team.

## Our Individual Supporters

Unitarian Universalists from around the country supported the Promise and Practice of Our Faith Campaign. Individual gifts ranged from \$5 to \$1 million. Each gift helped us reach our goals. Individual donors are listed below in alphabetical order.

Donors who supported the Promise and Practice: Institutional Change campaign in addition to supporting Promise and Practice: BLUU are noted with ^. Donors who are deceased are marked with an \*.

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Lena K. Gardner accepting the President's Award for Volunteer Service on behalf of Black Lives Unitarian Universalist (BLUU) during General Assembly 2017.

## Looking Forward

The future of BLUU's programming, community building, and organizing is bright. We've been committed to developing new ways to embody our goals: to Expand the power & capacity of Black UUs within our faith; Provide support, information & resources for Black UUs and UU-adjacent folk; and Justice-making & liberation through our faith.

BLUU Havens applications have launched, empowering Black Unitarian Universalists across the country to connect and build together locally on a regular basis. Establishing Black UU spiritual communities of this nature marks a tremendous shift for the BLUU community and organization as a whole.

We started the BLUU Northside Housing Cooperative Initiative in summer of 2019, and are currently planning a multi-year project that should offer between 30-36 units of affordable housing in eight different lots around North Minneapolis. Creating

new, permanently affordable housing that can help build wealth for families is a small drop in the bucket but it's a drop we want to make to help change the material conditions for some of our people. We think liberation comes in many forms, but we know how important stable, clean, aesthetically beautiful housing is to any collective liberation work. We seek to create something that doesn't exist in the Twin Cities, working in partnership with other groups and organizations that have experience in housing development.

It is our hope and dream that this initiative will change the material conditions for some of our folks and for some Indigenous folks as well. In the coming years we hope to establish our annual funding program, and stabilize our operational finances so that we can eventually work on rebuilding our endowment and replacing the start-up funding we have used to establish BLUU. Financial stability is a critical part of building the future of BLUU so that we may continue offering a spiritual home for Black UUs and continue justice-making through our faith.

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Holding hands during the BLUU Anointing event. © Adja Gildersleve

Lena K. Gardner, Co-Founder and Executive Director of the BLUU Organizing Collective Board at the Fall 2019 Harper-Jordan Memorial Symposium. ©#byCHuBBZ photo courtesy of BLUU

Sophia Okumu lighting chalice during General Assembly 2019 © 2019 Nancy Pierce. UUA

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Rev. Mykal Slack, BLUU's Community Minister with daughter, Zora at the Fall 2019 Harper-Jordan Memorial Symposium. ©#byCHuBBZ photo courtesy of BLUU



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