

WHITE PRIVILEGE AND ENDING RACISM FOCUS GROUP

Zoom: Thursday, June 18, 2020

Chair: Sandy Yost

Recorder: Gerrie Grandpre

Participants

Barbara Finch, Mary Frances Grasinger, Diane Cauley, Sharon Costello, Cynthia Prezkop, Sandy Yost, Kari Pohl, Gerrie Grandpre, Anne Clifford, Rosanne Oberleitner, and Mary Louise Wessell (welcomed new member)

Opening Prayer led by Sandy

Agenda

Copies of the CRG responses, as well as their collated version, were e-mailed to the members prior to the meeting as a help to focus our conversation about them. Our input was guided by the following questions:

1. *Is there any helpful information we can glean from the responses?*

- It was encouraging that the CRG responses from all the groups seemed to line up perfectly with our Chapter Directives
- There was recognition that we have all made some movement in this area of racism awareness
- The responses were, to some degree, disappointing as they were very "generic". However it is our reality that we are all on different places on the journey and moving at our own pace.
- All groups affirmed the importance of engagement with each other
- Kari recommended considering using "The White Allies Toolkit Workbook" as a way to move forward

2. *What can we learn from this information?*

- Important to personally and congregationally check our unconscious biases
- There is a desire across the board to keep educating ourselves and to use our collective voice to call out injustices
- Important that the whole congregation, not just our focus group, is attentive to this end. The hatred in the world is frightening. We need to be united on the issues of these issues. The recording of George Floyd's death has begun to change history!
- We weren't as open to Sisters of color as we may have thought
- Kari shared references that we may helpful from FSNE and YWCA related to racial justice that she will e-mail to us.
- We don't feel safe (across the board) to have challenging conversations about racism with each other as defensiveness is inclined to emerge. The ability to stay in the conversation, even if someone drops out, is essential. Anti-racism conversations are successful when both parties are willing to continue to have another conversation.
- Fear that the disruption by COVID will make it difficult to resume what has been started with the Unity Choir and Undivided in Christ.

3. *How might it inform that we need to do next?*

- This focus group is a *working* group vs. an *interest* group. It is inherent in our directive from Chapter that the entire congregation be engaged in this.
- Everyone needs to understand White Privilege and White Supremacy.
- Continue to use CRG groups to read a book (perhaps with workbook for facilitator) to address white privilege as to help us to move forward. Our core energy is dissipated despite some individuals among us doing great things.
- The book, Me and White Supremacy, geared toward people just learning about White Privilege, was highly recommended by Sandy for its invitation to reflective journaling. Other resources were cited but this one seems to be the ideal "starter." Diane just got it on Kindle and offered to read the whole book this week so that she, Sandy, and Kari feel confident recommending that it be used first by CRGs

- Our focus group could ask all CRG groups to intentionally engage in a process to address White Privilege through monthly meetings. Congregation will supply resources. If not all members are able to commit and the group becomes too small, two small groups may choose to get together.
- Members of CRG groups find it helpful to have something *concrete* to work with. A "tool" is helpful to get under the surface of the issue.
- There is value in all of us doing the same process together.
- We always need to start "at home" with ourselves but our hope is to take this beyond ourselves in a few years. To some degree, this is beginning as the Spirituality Group is using White Fragility with others outside of the congregation.
- All agreed that we should focus on just this one effort for now.

Meeting frequency:

Our focus group believed it is important to meet monthly. This is urgent work. At our next meeting, we will confirm the CRG book process.

We will then schedule a 2 hour meeting to look at our charge from Chapter in terms of progress, re-organization, what needs to be done.

Other: Sandy explained value and use of the [BadenCSJ-WP@ groups.io](mailto:BadenCSJ-WP@groups.io) that she set up for us.

Closing prayer offered by Sandy

Next meeting: **Thursday, July 16, 2020 from 6:00-7:30 pm. (Zoom) Kari volunteered to lead prayer.**