BELOVED CONVERSATIONS: VIRTUAL - WITHIN
UPDATED/NEWLY RELEASED
Information for Potential Participants - Fall 2020
September 5, 2020

ABOUT BELOVED CONVERSATIONS

- Beloved Conversations—the signature offering of The Fahs Collaborative at Meadville Lombard Theological School—is a program for Unitarian Universalists seeking to embody racial justice as a spiritual practice. In Beloved Conversations, we are here to heal the impact of racism on our lives, in order to get free together.

- The traditional, in-person version of Beloved Conversations has been offered in more than 200 congregations across the continent over the past decade & many communities made the program a part of their faith formation & social justice work. The Fahs Collective always hoped to expand the program out further & to create an online version, for increased accessibility & to include folks for whom the in-person program was not a good fit. With the in-person program suspended, Beloved Conversations program staff immediately began revisioning a program that could be offered virtually. This original version may or may not be offered in the future.

- First UU was in the middle of our 3rd cohort of the original format (required retreat + 8 2-hour sessions) when in-person congregational activities were suspended. 65 completed the program & 21 were mid-way through when the program was suspended.

ABOUT the BRAND-NEW PROGRAM: BELOVED CONVERSATIONS: VIRTUAL (BCV)

- First UU was pleased to discover that feedback from our Beloved Conversations experiences has been integrated into this new program. Because anti-racism work is a lifelong commitment, we’re excited about this next step in moving our congregation forward in our work. **The significant changes will ensure a different, deeper experience for our Black/Indigenous/People of Color (BIPOC) & our non-BIPOC (White) participants.**

- All are encouraged to attend this entirely new program including those who were in one of First UU’s 3 in-person cohorts.

- BCV is designed & intended for online participation in the 2020-2021 church year, with many updated & improved new features:
  - A digital format that allows users to participate as individuals, to prepare for congregational & community-level systemic work
  - An opportunity to engage in lots of different styles of learning & processing
  - Teaching & learning strategies & small group structures organized by racial/ethnic affiliation ("caucuses"), allowing differentiated learning for BIPOC as well as for non-BIPOC
  - Explicit resources developed to meet the intellectual, historical, & spiritual needs of BIPOC living in a world (& a religious community) that privileges white cultural norms.
  - Separate focused material for religious professionals (ministers/seminarians, religious educators, musicians, church administrators, & other paid staff), including opportunities to meet in religious professional-only spaces
- A framework that acknowledges & honors the spiritual nature of this work & an understanding that it is essential to our personal & religious development.

- **Phased Roll-Out** over the next several church years, beginning in September 2020—released in three phases:
  - **Within** (the individual, personal work we each need to do as we engage in racial justice—which is different for BIPOC & for non-BIPOC folks);
  - **Among** (the institutional, systemic change needed in our congregations); &
  - **Beyond** (the work outside our congregations, with our local communities)

- **Within (Phase 1):**
  - Fall 2020 registration open now
  - Can sign up as an individual or as a congregational group. (*First UU will sign up as a congregation in order to receive a group discount*—if enough folks complete our sign-up form.)
  - Separate courses for BIPOC & non-BIPOC folks done entirely in race-based caucuses in recognition of the vast differences in our spiritual & learning need
  - Includes:
    > individual Lessons using videos, music, & readings, accompanied by reflection prompts & suggested conversations with Critical Friends chosen by participants;
    > bi-weekly small group/Learning Pod conversations;
    > larger, monthly, facilitated Meaning-Making Sessions on Zoom;
    > separate materials, caucus-based Learning Pod gatherings, & Meaning Making Sessions for religious professionals & paid staff.
  - 2 separate terms—Fall & Spring—containing different content. Participants can sign up for one or both & may begin in Fall 2020 or Spring 2021.

- **Learning Goals & Outcomes**
  - By the end of this program, participants will be more clear about their own racial identity & personal history in relationship to racial justice.
  - The curriculum offers tools & strategies to continue to deepen participants’ learning & commitment to racial justice.
  - This first phase of the work will better prepare participants to engage in the next phases—Among & Beyond—where we’ll start to look at how race, racism, & white supremacy impact the systems of our congregations & communities & work together to shift them. Completing Within is required to be eligible for Among & Beyond.
  - While personal work is an essential precursor to systemic work, it’s also a worthy & needed focus in its own right & should not be seen only as a means to an end.
  - The aim of this program is to underline that racial justice work is the work of our lifetime & we engage it in different ways. There is no rush & no deadline. Everyone has work to do & all will have different learning goals & outcomes.

- **Centering the SPIRITUAL needs of BIPOC:**
  - BIPOC work has been a neglected conversation, as much anti-racism work has been focused on the learning needs of non-BIPOC/white folks. For those who identify as BIPOC, there’s a need to understand the impact of racism in their lives—particularly their spiritual lives—and the choices made to survive. This is very exciting work—conversations some of the writing team have been waiting FOREVER to have!
  - In this curriculum, BIPOC will look at issues such as:
    > how & why Unitarian Universalist values matter to them,
- how race has shaped their personal & communal lives,
- the dynamics of why & how they stay in the faith, &
- what a theology for people of color in a white world might look like.

- Non-BIPOC work focuses on gaining a deeper understanding of how they’ve been indoctrinated by patterns of white supremacy culture to believe in their superiority & to not understand their own complicity in structures of racism & oppression.

- In this curriculum non-BIPOC will look at:
  > the ways they benefit from structural racism,
  > endeavor to deeply understand the spiritual harm of white supremacy on their own lives, making it impossible for them to see the world as it really is & very challenging to engage in healthy relationships across difference.
  > What are the barriers to & complexities of following the leadership of BIPOC in racial justice?
  > How can they gain courage & learn practices for sitting with discomfort?
  > How are spiritual skills for resilience & long-haul commitment to liberation developed?

### PROGRAM STRUCTURE & PACING

- **2 Within Terms** - Fall 2020 & Spring 2021:
  - Each contains different content.
  - May begin either in Fall or in Spring.
  - ONLY Fall 2020 registration open now.
  - Must complete Within to be eligible to participate in Among & Beyond.

- **Each term consists of:**
  - **6 online Lessons** with resources for learning, including videos, readings, music, & artistic resources, as well as questions for reflection & projects to explore your inner landscape vis-a-vis racial justice:
    > Available via the learning platform Teachable
    > New Lessons become available approximately every 2 weeks, starting October 1.
    > Participants may take as much time as needed with each Lesson.
    > Lesson content will be available for up to a year following the start of the term.
    > Estimated 2.5 hours for reading/watching/listening to Lesson resources & doing personal reflection.
    > Given the additional challenges of leading anti-racism work in congregations & communities, religious professionals will be sorted into & gathering in caucus-based religious professional-only Learning Pods & Meaning-Making Sessions.

  - **6 Learning Pod Gatherings** where participants engage this material in small groups of 4-5 other folks from the Fall Term learning community.
    > Pods will be self-facilitated & meet approximately every two weeks online.
    > A suggested agenda & discussion questions for your Learning Pod will be included in each Lesson.
    > 2 ways to form Learning Pod:
      - Random placement by Beloved Conversations staff with others in your time zone & racial caucus (from other congregations) OR
      - Participants send names & email addresses for those they’re already in relation with who they want to be in a Pod with.
You'll receive an email with contact information for the members of your Learning Pod after
9/20.
Your Learning Pod determines day & time to meet.
Estimated 1.5 hours with your Learning Pod (every 2 weeks).

- **4 Meaning-Making Sessions** where racial caucuses come together in a large caucus-based group
via Zoom to worship, learn, & share our evolving understanding of this journey:
  > Facilitated by members of the Fahs Team & their partners.
  > Participants choose 1 of 2 Zoom meeting dates/times designated for their racial caucus. (See
  “Important Dates” section for specific dates & times.)
  > Recording of presentation parts of the sessions will be made in case a participant can’t make
  either date.
  > Estimated 1.5 hours for each live session (4 times over 3 months).

**IMPORTANT DATES - WITHIN - FALL 2020**

**Overview:**
- **September 1 – 10:** First UU Sign-Up Form registration. (If you miss the 9/10 due date, contact
  Jan Garbosky (jgarbosky@cox.net) & she'll try to add you to the First UU group. If it’s not
  possible, you can still register as an individual.)
- **September 11 – 14:** First UU submits # of participants to Beloved Conversations & requests
discount &/or sliding scale & scholarships.
- **September 15 – 20 & based on instructions from Jan Garbosky:**
  - Registration & payment for participation in the Fall Term.
  - A Welcome & Orientation Lesson will be available on the learning platform to those who have
    registered & paid.
- **October 1:** The first Lesson drops onto the learning platform for individual study & reflection at
  your own pace (followed every two weeks by Lessons 2-6).
- **Ongoing:** Small Group Learning Pod gatherings, every two weeks online

**Specific Meaning-Making Session Dates by Caucus Group & Participant Group:** When registering
online with Beloved Conversations, participants must choose one date/time per session (1-4) to
participate in a Zoom gathering. Presentation parts of the sessions will be recorded & posted for
those who can’t make either Session date. The discussion/conversation portions will not be recorded.
When registering with Beloved Conversations, you must select a date/time for each session. Pick one &
know you’ll really watch that session’s recording once it’s posted.

- **BIPOC Laypeople**
  - **Session 1:** Sat, **October 3** at 2:00 - 3:00 pm (EDT)/11:00 am-12:00 pm (PDT)
    OR
    Tue, **October 6** at 8:00 - 9:00 pm (EDT)/5:00-6:00 pm (PDT)
  - **Session 2:** Thu, **October 22** at 8:00 - 9:00 pm (EDT)/5:00-6:00 pm (PDT)
    OR
    Mon, **October 26** at 2:00 - 3:00 pm (EDT)/11:00 am-12:00 pm
  - **Session 3:** Thu, **November 19** at 8:00 - 9:30 pm (EST)/5:00-6:30 pm (PST)
    OR
    Sat, **November 21** at 2:00 - 3:30 pm (EST)/11:00 am-12:30 pm (PST)
  - **Session 4:** Thu, **December 3** at 8:00 - 9:30 pm (EST)/5:00-6:30 pm (PST)
    OR
    Sat, **December 5** at 2:00 - 3:30 pm (EST)/11:00 am-12:30 pm (PST)
BIPOC Religious Professionals
- **Session 1:** Thu, October 1 at 10:00 - 11:00 am (EDT)/7:00-8:00 am (PDT)
  OR
  Fri, October 2 at 1:00 - 2:00 pm (EDT)/10:00-11:00 am (PDT)
- **Session 2:** Mon, October 19 at 2:00 - 3:30 pm (EDT)/11:00 am-12:30 pm (PDT)
  OR
  Thur, October 29 at 2:00 - 3:30 pm (EDT)/11:00 am-12:30 pm (PDT)
- **Session 3:** Mon, November 16 at 10:30 am – Noon (EST)/7:30 am – 9:00 am (PST)
  OR
  Thur, November 19 at 2:00 - 3:30 pm (EST)/11:00 am – 12:30 pm (PST)
- **Session 4:** Mon, November 30 at 10:30 am – Noon/(EST)/7:30 – 9:00 am (PST)
  OR
  Thur, December 3 at 2:00 - 3:30 pm (EST)/11:00 am – 12:30 pm (PST)

Non-BIPOC/White Laypeople
- **Session 1:** Sat, October 3 at 2:00 - 3:30 pm (EDT)/11:00 am – 12:30 pm (PDT)
  OR
  Tue, October 6 at 8:30 - 10:00 pm (EDT)/5:30 – 7:00 pm (PDT)
- **Session 2:** Wed, October 21 at 8:30 - 10:00 pm (EDT)/5:30 – 7:00 pm (PDT)
  OR
  Sat, October 24 at 2:00 - 3:30 pm (EST)/11:00 am – 12:30 pm (PDT)
- **Session 3:** Sat, November 21 at 2:00 - 3:30 pm (EST)/11:00 am – 12:30 pm (PST)
  OR
  Mon, November 23 at 8:30 - 10:00 pm (EST)/5:30 – 7:00 pm (PST)
- **Session 4:** Wed, December 16 at 8:30 - 10:00 pm (EST)/5:30 – 7:00 pm (PST)
  OR
  Sat, December 19 at 2:00 - 3:30 pm (EST)/11:00 am – 12:30 pm (PST)

Non-BIPOC/White Religious Professionals
- **Session 1:** Thu, October 8 at 2:00 - 3:30 pm (EDT)/11:00 am – 12:30 pm (PDT)
  OR
  Fri, October 9 at 5:00-6:30 pm (EDT)/2:00 – 3:30 pm (PDT)
- **Session 2:** Wed, October 21 at 5:00-6:30 pm (EDT)/2:00 – 3:30 pm (PDT)
  OR
  Thur, October 22 at Noon - 1:30 pm (EDT)/9:00 – 10:30 am (PDT)
- **Session 3:** Thu, November 19 at 5:00 - 6:30 pm (EST)/2:00 – 3:30 pm (PST)
  OR
  Fri, November 20 at 1:30 - 3:00 pm (EST)/10:30 am – Noon (PST)
- **Session 4:** Wed, December 16 at 5:00 - 6:30 pm (EST)/2:00 – 3:30 pm (PST)
  OR
  Thur, December 17 at 2:00 - 3:30 pm (EST)/11:00 am – 12:30 pm (PST)

**TENTATIVE Dates for Spring Term 2021 - Within:**
- **February 1 - 20:** Registration & payment for participation in the Spring Term
- **Beginning of March:** First Lesson drops onto website, Meaning Making Session 1
- **Mid-March:** First Learning Pod Meetings, Meaning Making Session 2
- **Mid-April:** Meaning Making Session 3
- **Mid-May:** Meaning Making Session 4/Spring Term Wrap-Up
- **Ongoing:** Online Lessons, released every two weeks
- **Ongoing:** Small Group Learning Pod Meetings, every two weeks
QUESTIONS YOU’LL EVENTUALLY NEED TO ANSWER WHEN REGISTERING
with Beloved Conversations (after Jan Garbosky gives the go-ahead)

**QUESTION 1:** Do you want to be in a Learning Pod (small group of 4-5 people, who you’ll meet with virtually every two weeks) with people you already know who are also signing up for the program? Or sorted into a Learning Pod with people you may not already know?

**Reminder:** It’s important to note that since the entire Within Phase will take place in racial identity-based groups, you’ll only be in a Learning Pod with other people who share your racial identity (BIPOC or non-BIPOC/White).

Being in a caucus-based Learning Pod with people you ALREADY KNOW might look like:
- Forming a Pod with up to 4 other folks from your congregation or community
- Forming a Pod with up to 4 other religious professionals who you’re already in conversation with on this topic
- Forming a pod with up to 4 people who you only get to see at GA or other national gatherings

**NOTE:** If you choose this option, you’ll need to indicate on your registration form the names & emails of the other people you’d like to be in a Pod with & you’ll eventually need to figure out amongst yourselves when the best times/dates to meet will be.

Being in a caucus-based Learning Pod with people you may NOT ALREADY KNOW might look like:
- Being sorted into a pod with other people who share the same time zone
- Being sorted into a pod with other people who share your same date/time preference for your meetings
- Having a chance to talk with people whose perspective or experiences may be different from the folks with whom you already discuss these topics

**NOTE:** If you choose this option, you’ll pick a preference for a day & time on your form & we will do our best to place you into a Pod with other people whose schedules are complementary.

**QUESTION 2:** What are your day & time preferences for meeting in a Learning Pod?

If you choose the option to be sorted into a Learning Pod with people you DO NOT ALREADY KNOW, you’ll need to indicate your best option for a day of the week to meet & whether you prefer Daytime or Evening. With this information, Beloved Conversations will do their best to place you into a Learning Pod with other people whose schedules are complementary.

**QUESTION 3:** Which of the two time/date options for the Meaning-Making Sessions will you sign up for?

For each of the four Meaning-Making Sessions throughout the Fall, indicate which of the 2 time/date options (listed above under Important Dates for Fall Term 2020) you plan on joining so Beloved Conversations can send you the information when it comes time to join the Zoom call for that Session. If neither date/time work for you, select one anyway. When the recording for that session is posted, you’ll be able to watch on your own.
Notes/Caveats:
- Prices are per term—Fall Term & Spring Term will have different content. Spring 2021 prices may differ from Fall 2020.
- You may participate in one or both but only Fall 2020 registration is open now.
- Sliding Scale & Scholarships available. No one will be turned away. (JTW will do everything possible to raise funds to defray per/individual cost.)
- Discount of 10% overall if First UU has a group of 10-19 or 20% of total of 20 or more register.
  - MUST sign up FIRST via First UU form.
  - If we qualify for a discount, Jan Garbosky will let Beloved Conversations know & will receive a coupon code to enter when you register with Beloved Conversations.
  - DO NOT register on the Beloved Conversations until you hear from Jan Garbosky!

Phase 1 Individual Pricing:
- Laypeople (18 & older):
  - $150 base/$200 with reparations (see below)
  - Sliding Scale = whatever you can pay
  - Full Scholarship = $0
- Religious Professionals/Paid Staff:
  - $200 base/$250 with reparations (see below)
  - Sliding Scale = whatever you can pay
  - Full Scholarship = $0

Pricing Notes:
- Reparations Note: Non-BIPOC/white participants are encouraged to consider paying an additional $50, in recognition of the historic legacy of racist economic policies & the ways in which generational wealth & greater access to economic opportunity have privileged non-BIPOC/white people as a group for hundreds of years to help to provide scholarships to those who couldn’t participate otherwise. Beloved Conversations will use these extra funds to provide scholarships to those who need it to participate in this program.
- Interdependence Note: Regardless of your racial identity, if your class privilege/professional expense budget allows you to pay more so others may pay less, please consider adding an additional contribution to your total. Beloved Conversations will use these extra funds to provide scholarships to those who need it to participate in this program.
- Equity Note: Regardless of racial identity, sliding scale pricing & full scholarships are available to those who need them. This includes religious professionals who do not have access to professional expenses or whose professional expense budget is limited.

Please complete & submit the First UU Sign-Up/Interest form to Jan Garbosky (jgarbosky@cox.net)
NO LATER THAN Thursday, September 10, 2020.
??Questions?? Contact Jan