

The Social Justice Committee and the Community Council appreciates everyone who participated in the Community Conversation (via Zoom) on October 8 about Racial Inequity and Black Lives Matter. Our community participants broke into small groups to facilitate a manageable discussion. We have condensed and compiled some of the responses to the four questions we discussed, in an effort to report share a flavor of the responses:

Why did you join the conversation this evening?

Racism is a religious issue
It's time to come off the sidelines
Unpacking how we were raised
There is no other issue as important as this right now
Racism was part of my growing up and my life has been impacted by racism
To hear what others think
To understand, and to learn
I want to be part of the community
Discussing together critical to understanding, the first step towards healing

What does Black Lives Matter mean to you?

Black lives have never mattered
To be Black in America is to live in fear
Recognition that "the system" is built on the backs of Black Americans
Life, the world, is different for Black men
It raises awareness of the Black experience in America
Racism is embedded in our society and institutions
We are trained to fear Black men
We are not listening, we are blind
Black voices must be heard
Whites are impoverished
Such limited ways in which Black lives matter (e.g. sports)
I need to know more about the movement

How is racial inequality a social justice issue to you?

Structures, 'the system', set up to maintain those in power: white Americans
White people experience 'whole citizenship'; not so for Black Americans
Black Americans live in fear every day
I want to live in a world everyone participates in society
Wealth inequity, housing inequity, education inequity, school-to-prison pipeline
Black Americans, Black families suffer vast inequities in opportunities
Any injustice makes us all suffer: injustice anywhere threatens us all
If I'm privileged, someone else is suffering injustice.
All the roadblocks to Black people thriving in our society makes us poorer: this is a waste of talent.

What should our DMIEC community do to respond to the call for racial equity?

Have additional conversations, education opportunities such as book groups, 'movie night', take advantage of study groups that already exist—e.g. JustFaith, SURJ (Standing Up for Racial Justice).

Find ways to learn, educate each other and gain a better understanding of these issues.

Support racial justice events: demonstrations, vigils, marches

Develop a relationship with a Black faith community or other organization.

Display a banner at DMIEC that supports anti-racism/Black Lives Matter

Focus on Black organizations for 1st Sunday collections

Support local Black-owned businesses

Create a scholarship fund to support advanced education in the Black community

Select a specific issue (such as criminal justice reform) that significantly impacts the

Black community and work for justice on that issue

Incorporate awareness of racial justice into our liturgy

Create/develop a project that would benefit our Black community

I feel so overwhelmed and helpless re: what steps to take