

## **Rapid Response for Justice Policy/Procedure**

10/18/18

Rev. 1/26/2020

### **UUFM Rapid Response Policy**

At UUFM, we have a strong history of social action and social witness, and we need to build upon that history to keep our activism alive. Our faith community expects its values to be expressed by the leadership of the Fellowship. Our greater community needs to know where UUFM stands in terms of its social values and its willingness to side with those most directly impacted by injustice. We do not endorse politicians but rather speak in support of the values that define us as Unitarian Universalists in this city and region. Our faith tradition calls us to respond decisively and publicly in times of trauma and injustice. Through public statements, we can use our privilege to effect change in our larger community.

### **Pre-authorized Conditions**

There are two conditions under which the Congregation has pre-authorized the Board President and the Minister to make statements on behalf of the Fellowship:

- A. When rejecting actions and harm resulting from a crime designed by law enforcement as a hate crime.
- B. When offering support to the LGBTQA+ community or persons identifying as LGBTQA+ following instances of violence, slurs, graffiti, hate mail, or other such actions which erode the safety of a group or the status of a person as inherently worthy.

### **Board procedure for making an announcement to the public and to the Fellowship:**

- A. When they learn of a hate crime or of harm to the LGBTQA+ community or a person who identifies as such, the Board and the Minister will release a joint statement on behalf of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship rejecting the actions. The statement will name the events and the Unitarian Universalist Principles and the UUFM Mission and Vision statements that are violated by the crime. An example might be "The people of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Mankato uphold the inherent worth and dignity of all and the right of each person to grow spiritually in the practice of their religion. And thus, we reject and abhor the murders of Jewish congregants by the hand of White Supremacist Robert Bowers. We lament with the families and friends of the victims, with the people of Tree of Life Synagogue, with the people of Pittsburgh, PA, and with all of those who reject murder of people killed for their religious expression."
- B. The Board President and/or the Minister is authorized to issue such a statement in writing or verbally.

- C. The congregation is informed that the Board President and/or the Minister had made such a public statement. The Minister or Board President will provide the text of the statement through multiple platforms, including but not limited to email, the Weekly Update, and the UUFM Website.

**Board Process for Determining Need for a Rapid Response Statement**

- Only the Board authorizes the use of the Rapid Response Policy
- Any member or friend of the Fellowship and the Minister may request a Rapid Response of the Board
- Email/phone poll of Board members may be used when a need or request for a Rapid Response becomes known
- Board votes (5 of 7 required) agreement that the request to make a Rapid Response falls within the agreed-upon conditions
- Either the Minister, the Board President, or a designee of the Board President will speak publicly and/or in writing (e.g., newspapers, Twitter, online media) on the issue on behalf of the Fellowship
- In keeping with the Board Covenant to speak with one voice, Leadership (Board and Minister) will support the designated spokesperson and each other if a Rapid Response precipitates negative feelings or actions either internally (within the Fellowship) or externally (from the larger community)