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A PRAYER DEDICATED TO MICHELLE BENTLEY

By Rev. Dr. Qiyamah Rahman

Spirit of Life; Unfolding mystery in the Universe and in our lives. Known by many names and no name. Called on in times of celebration and joy; in times of tragedy and distress.

And in gratitude when we are at our best and highest. We assemble today to speak, support and salute our sister Michelle Bentley

Because she has been a faithful servant and warrior for many many years.

And because we are learning to be faithful to those who walk the path of justice and transformation.

We are gathered to remind ourselves that it is the least we can do to speak the names of those who persevere in the midst of adversity and trials over time.

The way forward has not always been easy for her and for many

Yet, she/they prevailed.

There had to be times when she, like so many others on this path questioned and wondered, yet in the morning, she rose with a renewed resolve to keep on keeping on.

She embodies the spirit of the Ancestors that have carried us forward

(you may speak the names of those you choose in silence)

pause

Her willingness and her spirit to speak truth when ever and wherever,

That is one of her many gifts.

We want you Michelle to feel the love, the compassion and yes, the awe we feel for you.

For your dedication and continued zeal in the face of so many obstacles.

You have seen UUism at its best and at its worst.

Whatever label you wear or however you identify you embody the best and highest attributes of those that stand in their truth and spit fire – speaking prophetic words of justice and transformation.

We are better because of you;

We are better as a community because of your presence and your vision of justice and Beloved Community. We hope in some small way you may forgive us for any slights, any times we did not acknowledge or appreciate your contributions. We own that and we say, “We are sorry. Forgive us. We love you.

We are working to be better friends to one another.

We are working to be more humane to one another.

We are working to own all the ways that we have been dehumanized that keep us from acting in integrity and a spirit of love.

But this day, what we claim is our humanness, our fully human selves, free of the relentless oppression that sometimes overtakes us...

We rise up and we fully claim our bodies, our minds and our spirits, And reconnect and rededicate the bonds of friendship that have kept us through trials seen and unseen; that have kept us hopeful when it felt hopeless, kept us reaching out and reaching back.

Michelle, we are reaching back to catch you up in our hearts and in our arms. You labored in the vineyard of UUism so long.

Michelle, we are sorry if it ever appeared that we did not love and appreciate you.

Forgive us. We love you.

May this day and the days to come reflect our awakening to our highest And best selves.

A self that sees you and all the Michelles in UUism,
All the Michelles in the world.

We love you and we appreciate you and may the grace of the Universe and the
love

Of all the Ancestors rain down upon you and from this moment forward may we
covenant to never forget today and what is said here.

May we strive to be our authentic selves, living out the values and covenants we
espouse.

May we make you as proud of us as you have made us so proud and thankful of
you!

May it be so! Amen, Ashe' and Blessed Be!



8TH PRINCIPLE FORUM WITH PAULA COLE JONES

DRUUMM is hosting a forum with Paula Cole Jones, former DRUUMM President and organizer of the 8th Principle Campaign. DRUUMM members are taking new leadership in the effort through a cohort of twenty members participating in the UUA Organizing School with the goal of building our capacity to move adoption and implementation strategies forward. To date, over 125 UU congregations and organizations have voted to adopt the principle, including DRUUMM.

8th Principle Forum with Paula Cole Jones

Tuesday, November 16th, 2021

8:00 to 9:30 PM Eastern

RSVP with Dawn Robinson, administrator, dawn.druumm@gmail.com

“We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”

- 8th Principle

<https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/>

TRAUMA-INFORMED ORGANIZING WORKSHOP

We live in a time where our bodies are in a constant state of survival. Communities who are at the forefront of organizing and mobilizing towards social change are not exempt from enduring the impact of collective and past trauma. Organizers of color have distinct experiences and struggles that are worthy to be addressed and processed while envisioning and building towards collective liberation. DRUUMM believes in a world where all our communities thrive and experience justice.

Join DRUUMM Members interested in connecting and building their analysis, skills, and confidence around trauma-informed organizing.

Diversity of Tactics and Care

A two-part workshop series

Wednesdays November 17 and December 1, 2021

8:00 PM to 10:00 PM Eastern (5:00 PM Pacific)

Register at: druumm.org

In this session, Gabes facilitates a session on trauma-informed ways to organize and mobilize, especially during an ongoing pandemic, I climate catastrophe, the hyperstimulation from ever-changing social media content, and so forth.

This session will focus on but will not be limited to questions like

- How does my past trauma affect the ways I imagine and build the world I want to live?
- How do shame and dissociation show up in organizing spaces and the relationships I have within these spaces?
- How am I allowing myself to be human and finite in these relationships and processes?
- How is my sense of hope doing at this moment in time?
- How can ancestral trauma and healing embolden us towards a world that could be?

The call for more movement work demands a call for more care.



Gabes Torres (*she/they/siya*) was born and raised in the colonized islands of the Philippines, and comes from an ancestral lineage of freedom fighters, musicians, educators, and community organizers.

As a person who has experienced a great deal of geographical movement, Gabes aims to teach the message of international solidarity and global liberation from imperial forces and cultures. She is a therapist, singer-songwriter, and organizer whose work pays attention to community care and safety, and anti-colonial ways of healing and (un)becoming. Gabes founded and co-facilitates the Heritage Workshop, a virtual workshop for the people of the global majority, where they collectively explore and bear witness to ancestral lineage, stories, and medicine. <https://gabestorres.com/about/>



ELDER SPIRITUAL ODYSSEY WITH DR. LEON SPENCER

We are honored to be hosting Dr. Leon Spencer, a long-time DRUUMM member and anti-racist activist from South Carolina who has been a teacher, mentor, and friend throughout our organization's history. He will be sharing his spiritual journey in a special members-only gathering and there will be space for community affirmations and appreciations. This will be recorded, and reshared with the broader community at a later date.

Dr. Spencer served on the UUA Board of Trustees, and previously was a member of the Black Concerns Working Group that helped lead the creation of the Journey Towards Wholeness resolution adopted by the General Assembly in 1997 shifting our focus to addressing systemic and cultural racism within Unitarian Universalism. Co-author of "The Arc of the Universe if Long", Unitarian Universalists, Anti-racism, and the journey from Calgary.

Save-the-Date

DRUUMM member-only session with Dr. Leon Spencer

January 7, 2022 at 7pm Eastern

Look for registration information at www.druumm.org or contact Dawn Robinson directly at dawn.druumm@gmail.com

REV. DR. MICHELLE BENTLEY



Gratitude to Rev. Dr. Michelle Bentley for sharing her spiritual odyssey with our DRUUMM community and beyond. Thank you also to Rev. Yielbonzie Johnson for the introduction and Rev. Dr. Qiyamah Rahman for the prayer (see page 1). This program was supported by DRUUMM member dues and sponsorships from the Sankofa Special Collection at Meadville Lombard, UUA Ministry Department, Sister SoUUrce, First Unitarian Church of Chicago and Third Unitarian Church of Chicago. We invite you to view video recording of her storytelling and the affirmations sharing from family, friends, and colleagues at

www.druumm.org.

PASTORAL NOTE

Rev. Leslie Takahashi of the DRUUMM Chaplain Team

So many of the words I wrote during the height of this not-yet-over-pandemic were for you, my beloved BIPOC family. And you didn't even know it...

So many times as I lead worship I was trying to speak to you, feeling the ways we were touched and the sorrows and angers we were bearing.

We are just past All Souls Day, one of the parts of our Universalist heritage I appreciate and how important to honor our relationships with our beloved dead in these times and to hold one another in our collective sorrow.

Together may we hold one another in gratitude and in sorrow: gratitude at another day with its ordinary pleasures now made extraordinary, and sorrow at a swarming of loss we fear will swamp us. Grief is our insistent buzzing guest whose presence demands acknowledgment.

How do we form together that circle of infinite strength and hold one another in remembering that the losses of these days do not live apart from us?

How do we acknowledge the lost as our siblings, our cousins, our kin? How do we circle to embrace and not to exclude, trusting that the strength of our common grief will be its own solace?

Be not hesitant to weep, to connect, to engage. For every soul lost, we cry. For those afraid, we reassure. For every heart broken, we weep. Against every loneliness and isolation, we reach out a hand. And for every life saved, we rejoice. For this is how we mend our own heart, through the strong thread of connection and the sharp needle of awareness. No badge is given for undiluted cheerfulness in these times—instead, within the embrace of community, let us hold together the truths of our times, with the resounding of resilience and lamentation for our loss.

See? I wrote them for you, for us all and for our beloved and departed.

Rev. Leslie
Mt Diablo, CA



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

November 7	Member Orientation
November 9	Asian Pacific Islander Caucus Coffee Hour
November 10	Pacific Cluster of DRUUMM
November 16	DRUUMM Peer Network with Paula Cole Jones
November 17 & December 2	Trauma Informed Organizing Workshop with Gabes Torres

2022 DRUUMM Worship + Fundraiser May 4th, 2022

Guest Preacher: Rev. Byron "Tyler" Coles

We are honored to have Rev. Coles deliver the message for our annual public worship service and fundraiser for our community ministry. This event is open to all. We will be inviting congregations and UU organizations to visibly co-sponsor and make a pledge to contribute financially to DRUUMM. More details forthcoming in December 2021.

Save-the-Dates

Spring Racial/Cultural Caucusing

April 30th, 2022

Connect and build community as part of a half day virtual retreat, meeting in racial/culturally specific caucuses for African Descent, Asian/Pacific Islander, Indigenous/Native, Latinx, Middle Eastern/Arab members. Look for registration information in January 2022 and be sure to update your membership record at wildapricot.druumm.org.



The DRUUMM Beat Issue 23, Volume 2

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The DRUUMM Beat is published under the direction of the DRUUMM Steering Committee and the Communications Portfolio. Join in the conversation with DRUUMM on Twitter and follow us on Facebook for the latest news.

Read online at www.druumm.org

