

December 2, 2016

Jesse Rodriguez-Hammond
2217 Leness Lane
Crest Hill, IL 60403

Dear Mr. Rodriguez-Hammond,

We deeply appreciate your thoughtful, heartfelt letter and hope this reply helps to clarify the reasons that our UUA Board, Administration, and many Unitarian Universalist congregations stand in solidarity with Black Lives Matter. From our perspective, Black Lives Matter serves as a powerful reflection of our first principle. You are concerned that our support of Black Lives Matter has “singled out one group as more important than another.” We need to understand Black Lives Matter in the context of the larger narrative of American history. Far from fostering exceptionalism as you suggest, Black Lives Matter, may well pave the way for an intersectional approach to movement building. One might say, when black lives matter all lives will matter. We share your concern about creating a hierarchy of oppressions. But our experience is that Black Lives Matter has fostered a broadly-based coalition across racial divides. It may seem counter-intuitive but Black Lives Matter moves us toward “the inherent worth and dignity of every person” by addressing America’s original sin of slavery.



It is important to understand that the 5.3 million dollars voted by the Board is intended to fund a newly formed ministry called Black Lives Unitarian Universalist. It is not a gift to an outside organization. Rather it implies a long-term commitment to helping our faith become a more inclusive, more welcoming religious community. Rather than saying “let’s forget about the others,” we are saying let’s align ourselves with the most hopeful, most effective organizers we know as we do all we can to help build a world where your husband, your son, and all people, especially those most marginalized here in America, will know themselves beloved. Our work is to help to build a more just and peaceful world.

You asked for help in understanding our recent action in support of Black Lives Unitarian Universalist and our public alignment with the Black Lives Matter movement. We hope this response begins to address your concerns. As always there is room for disagreement. We can all be thankful that “we need not think alike to love alike.”

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Eller-Isaacs".

Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs
Secretary
UUA Board of Trustees

Cc: Linda Kremsner, Board President, Universalist Unitarian Church of Joliet