

Council of Churches Proposal

In keeping with our congregational desire to reach out more effectively to our social justice partners, I would like our congregation to join the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport <http://www.ccg.org/CCGB/>

This remarkable organization is doing ground breaking working on issues close to TUCW's mission including stemming gun violence, education and food safety.

I met with the executive director, Rev. Cass Shaw (who spoke at my installation) and she enthusiastically invited us to join. Even though their current mission statement refers to this as a Council of Christian Churches, it is her hope that we, as a non-Christian congregation (or perhaps post-Christian) would join and pave the way for the Council to become inter-faith.

One program in particular is of interest to us both. The Council has been bringing together white and black congregations for "beloved conversations" on race and oppression. It is a very well designed program that matches congregations first through their ministers and then through selected and trained lay teams who enter into moderated conversations. This has been successful with three pairs of congregations in Bridgeport and those congregations are in a continuing relationship.

David Vida and I think this would be just the focus we need to reach towards justice as allies of privilege. There is a great deal to digest here so I am sending this packet out far in advance of our next board meeting. I would suggest we discuss this in person rather than over email and vote to join either at our February or March meetings. I would like us to join before the annual meeting in May. A board action is required to join.

Our commitment is threefold; first, to appoint two delegates to the Council (I would like David Vida to be one of those), second to participate in the Council's programs with volunteer time and third to make a financial pledge. Dorothy and I have reviewed the budget and I think we could afford a \$5000 annual pledge in the coming fiscal year (the Council follows the same FY). I have asked Dorothy to add that line into our draft budget so we might consider this. A smaller pledge is allowed, however, given our comparative wealth to other congregations, this amount seemed appropriate as an initial pledge. I made no indication of the size of our contribution to Rev. Shaw.

I do hope we will join the Council and live out our mission to "To Inspire, Connect and Act."

Yours faithfully,

Rev. Dr. John Morehouse, Senior Minister