

# #METOO Task Force FAQs

**Q.** What is the #MeToo Task Force?

**A.** This Task Force was called together by Rev. Morehouse last November when the #MeToo Movement exploded on social media, among friends, acquaintances and all across the U.S. to address multiple needs for healing and sharing stories in safe spaces, education for all ages, public witness and other programming within our congregation.

**Q.** Who is on the #MeToo Task Force?

**A.** Sudha Sankar – TUCWomen, Team Lead; Cheryl Dixon Paul – Worship Associate, Education; Felicia Keeton – Coordinator and Journaling Facilitator; Janet Luongo - Pastoral Chaplain and Lead on Journaling for Healing; Maureen McBride – member; Mary-Megan Marshall, OWL Facilitator; Lynda Shannon Bluestein – Board President, larger UU community; Rev. John Morehouse – Senior Minister.

**Q.** What factors did the Task Force consider when planning a response to #MeToo issues at TUCW?

**A.** The Task Force used UUA Inspired Faith principles - **G**rounding, **A**ccountability, **F**it & **O**pportunity – as foundational frameworks for taking the first steps in responding to the challenges of making plans and taking steps to address #MeToo issues within our community. These are defined below:

**Q. Grounding:** Does the #MeToo issue have authentic and deep Unitarian Universalist roots?

**A.** The answer was a resounding “Yes!”

## Article I: E-Soundings

4/25/2018

- Our Unitarian Universalist faith calls us to respect the worth and dignity of every person and the sacredness of every person's sexuality and place within the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part; and
- Unitarian Universalism also calls us to address the important, widespread, and complex social issues of sexual abuse and interpersonal violence.
- During the past 45 years, the Unitarian Universalist Association has passed 89 resolutions and statements of witness on sexual justice issues that have largely been in response to public events not unlike #MeToo.

**Q. Accountability:** Is the #MeToo issue of concern to marginalized groups in the congregation and in the community?

**A.** Again, the answer was "Yes!"

- Many women who gathered with the TUCWomen's Group for Pot Luck dinners and Brown Bag Lunches talked about the #MeToo Movement and were eager to support a congregational response to the issues raised.
- Rev. John first preached "Reflections on #MeToo" in December of 2017, and more than 100 women came forward to drop a silent grain of salt into a bowl of water symbolizing they too were #MeToo. After that service 45 met over lunch to reflect further on the issues raised;
- In January 2018 a second service dedicated to #MeToo issues, "Our Own Voices: From Pain to Empowerment" involved even more men and women of the congregation who expressed the desire for more education, sharing circles, and advocacy by our congregation. A congregational survey, "A Faithful Response to #MeToo" was distributed during this service.
  - 129 surveys were completed
  - 54% expressed interest in participating in programs on this issue
  - 57% wanted more educational programs for children and youth and 45% want education for adults on #MeToo issues
  - 32% wanted to see sacred healing circles begun
  - 20% expressed interest in journaling workshops
  - 47% want to see our congregation's policies reviewed to make sure they meet sexually safer congregations criteria.

## Article I: E-Soundings

4/25/2018

**Q. Fit:** Is there a match between the congregation's resources, aspirations, and ability to make a real difference?

**A.** Clearly this issue matches what members of our congregation are saying as well as our history of showing up and being a part of making a difference.

- “We as a church, of all places, should be getting this right!” The Women of TUCW have let it be known that it is unfathomable to them that the secular world, e.g. Hollywood, corporations and Congress, have been taking a stand on issues of sexual harassment, abuse and violence. Faith communities like ours should be among the first group to stand up and say, ‘We will not allow this.’
- TUCW has a cadre of informed and inspiring leaders who are now or could in the future publicly represent a UU perspective on the #MeToo issues;
- TUCW has the Institutional Resources needed:
  - 1) there is a Task Group devoted to working on programming and support;
  - 2) The Senior Minister has spoken out on #MeToo;
  - 3) the UUA's President, the UU Women's Federation, and many colleague congregations have also spoken out on the issue; and
  - 4) we have existing curricula in our OWL program that make it possible for our congregation to expand education on these issues for all ages.

**Q. Opportunity:** Is there likelihood that the congregation can be a respected participant in the public dialogue on this issue?

**A.** TUCW has the history of commitment and credibility with the community to make this answer also, “Yes!”

- There are also local interfaith and allied organizations TUCW and the UUA have a history with that are actively seeking partners to extend #MeToo into the #ChurchToo Movement.
- This is a “hot” issue and a good time to act – witness the attention of social media, the print and broadcast media have paid to high profile cases of reaction to #MeToo disclosures.

## Article I: E-Soundings

4/25/2018

- TUCW can make a real difference in the lives of individual women by organizing the Sacred Circles open to women beyond just those in the congregation. Our congregational impact will extend as we are able to share resources and experiences with other congregations in areas such as planning worship, journaling for healing and expanded education for adults on #MeToo issues.
- TUCW's Delegates and Senior Minister will be sponsoring a Networking Session at the UUA General Assembly in 2018 on "A Faithful Response to #MeToo" to identify other partnerships and alliances across the nation in our movement.
- There is an emerging national campaign our congregation may wish to join that is called #Church Too that is trending on social media.

# # # #