



BE *the* **BRIDGE**

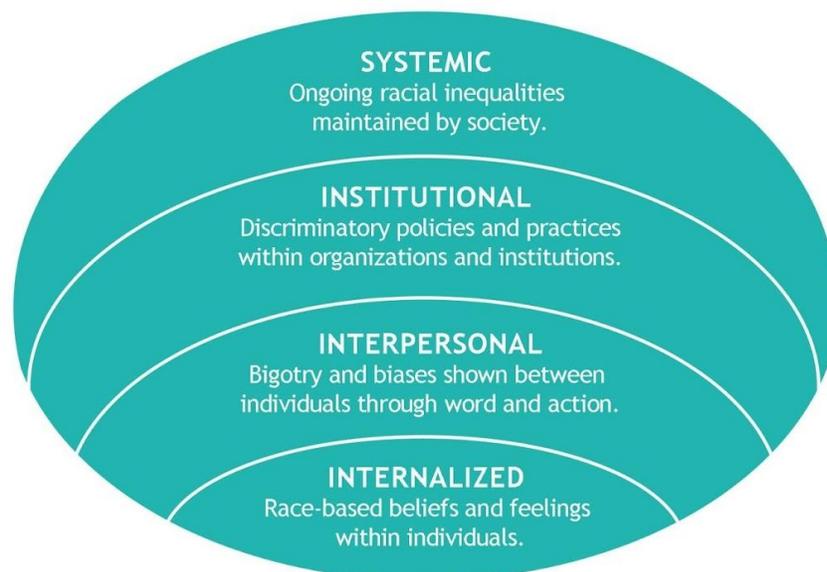
MOVING TOWARD
RACIAL RECONCILIATION

Be the Bridge for Boston Groups - Spring 2021

Purpose of the Groups

- To build on introductory racial justice work that has been done across many churches (such as Be the Bridge) to nurture shared language, theological framework, and friendships with diverse Boston-based Christians towards racial reconciliation and justice as a core part of the Church's mission
- To understand various initiatives that are happening in Greater Boston towards systemic racial equity and justice
- To be life-long reconcilers in holding people accountable and supporting one another in actively working against racism and towards reconciliation, equity, and justice in our day-to-day lives
- To proactively engage in the movement towards racial justice in this crucial cultural moment and see Christians lead in declaring the foundation of racial justice within the gospel
- Highlight & reflect God's justice; work towards being people of reconciliation

LEVELS ON WHICH RACISM EXISTS



Structure

- Monthly Speaker Series from February to June - Locally-focused resources and speakers who are working in a particular aspect of justice (education, housing, racial trauma, and economic disparities) to share with the group.
- Speakers share for 20 minutes, then 20 minutes Q & A, then speakers offer practical action steps and ways of supporting the efforts of that ministry/getting involved, then praying for their ministry efforts to close the time. Speaker series is open for anyone to join. (1 hour total) and will be recorded for future viewing.
- Following the speaker, there will be small groups that will meet for 30-45 minutes with people who have committed to attending the four speaker series talks and meeting at least one other time per month for support and accountability in living out God's call for racial justice in our day-to-day lives.
 - Open to anyone who has done introductory racial justice learning/work with Be the Bridge or another program
 - Group size is approximately 8-10 people with intentional diversity given to age, race, gender, denomination, etc.
 - We will seek to form focus groups based on different communities where individuals are seeking to implement their learning / action steps (workplace, church, family/friends, neighborhood).

Link to all Zoom Sessions:

Speaker Series	Additional Small Groups
<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday February 4 7:00 to 8:30pm</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dr. Charmie Curry on Education Justice</p> <p>Dr. Charmie Curry is a member of Pentecostal Tabernacle and has been an educator for the last 10+ years. She is currently serving in the Wellesley Public Schools as its first equity officer.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday February 18 7:00 to 8:00pm</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday March 4 7:00 to 8:30pm</p> <p>TBA - Incarceration / Housing Justice</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday March 18 7:00 to 8:00pm</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday April 1 7:00 to 8:30pm</p> <p>TBA - Incarceration / Housing Justice</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday April 15 7:00 to 8:00pm</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday May 6 7:00 to 8:30pm</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jamie Mangiameli & James Michel on Economic Justice</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday May 20 7:00 to 8:00pm</p>

<p>Jamie and James are members of New Roots AME Church and will be sharing about Ujima’s work engaging with congregations and communities towards economic justice</p>	
<p>Thursday June 3 7:00 to 8:30pm</p> <p>Pastor Josh Wilson on engaging white family/friends in conversations on race</p> <p>Josh Wilson is Pastor of The Table, a community in Dorchester, and has experienced transformation in his own family through engaging in conversations on race</p>	<p>Thursday June 10 7:00 to 8:00pm Concluding small group session & debrief</p> <p>Saturday June 12 - Time TBA Celebration BBQ with participants from the fall and spring</p>

Commitment

The speaker series is open to the general public, and people are free to come and go with no commitment. For those that are interested in participating in the small groups, we ask that participants commit to attending each of the speaker series and the additional small group sessions. Because developing relationships take time, the more someone is able to consistently come and invest in this community, the more everyone will benefit.

Supporting Organizations



The Race & Christian Community Initiative at the Emmanuel Gospel Center



REUNION



Bethel AME Church



Leaders & Groups

Workplace Focus Group

Dr. Jean Marrapodi, PhD, CPTD



Jean is a pioneering problem solver. Her career spans 30 years in corporate training and includes 11 years teaching graduate classes in HR and change management. She spent 25 years serving in an inner-city church in Providence, moving to Boston when her job changed. She is a learning junkie, and spent most of 2020 in groups learning about

systemic racism and racial reconciliation. She attends Reunion Boston and lives in Quincy with three cats and a persnickity pooch named Arthur.

Contact: jmarrapodi@applestar.org

Dr. Elizabeth Louis



Dr. Elizabeth Louis is a Haitian-American psychologist who is passionate about serving others through global mental health research, community engagement, and volunteerism around social justice issues. Dr. Louis' interest in diversity, incision, equity, antiracism and

decolonization are illustrated in her collaborative work with friends, colleagues, organizations, and peer groups that are committed to sustained change that elevates and affirms marginalized communities and spaces. She is a member of the Evangelical Haitian Church of Florida.

Contact: ef.louis@hotmail.com

Church Focus Group



Seong Park

A greater Boston native, Seong has spent the last 6 years working in the social impact sector in Myanmar. During this time, she served at an international church that brings together Christians from diverse

countries, denominations, and backgrounds, and partners with local churches to support their growth in the ethnically diverse country of Myanmar. Seong finds great encouragement in witnessing God transform messy church families into communities that repent, relearn, and rebuild together to better reflect Christ's love and justice for the world. Since returning home during the pandemic, she's been attending the Korean Church of the Lord in Boston, the same church where she grew up.

Contact: seongkyul.park@gmail.com

Jill MacCully



Jill is a lifelong native of Greater Boston and has been a Grace Chapel member for several decades, and currently attends their Wilmington campus. She has a graduate degree in Social Work. Her career included

providing mental health services to children and families in marginalized communities in Lynn and offering college career services to first generation students of diverse backgrounds in Boston. Jill has a passion for seeing our country's Black people be treated with dignity and respect and for seeing our churches and government mobilized to make long overdue systemic changes that will bring about the equity and justice they need to improve the quality of their lives.

Contact: jilliemac@aol.com

Friends/Family Focus Group



Marian E. Turenne

Marian is an author and the proud mother of two and grandmother of three. She is a native Bostonian and the product of parents who were active in the Civil rights movement beginning

in the 1960's. She graduated from an all-white high school and has been very active in racial reconciliation workshops and forums throughout her adulthood. She is an active member of Bethel Pentecostal Church in Dorchester where she has served for a number of years.

Contact: mturenne@live.com



Elizabeth Grady-Harper

Elizabeth has been the director of the Boston Faith & Justice Network for nearly seven years, she attends Faith Community church in Hopkinton and is the mother of two amazing daughters. Elizabeth wants to be an ally in the pursuit of racial justice and hopes to continue to learn and be an advocate in all of the spaces she occupies.

Contact: elizabeth@bostonfaithjustice.org

Neighborhood / School / Other Focus Group



Rev. Kelly Fassett

Kelly is the Executive Director and co-founder of UniteBoston and has been the catalyst for UniteBoston's bridge-building work throughout Christians in the region. She has a certificate

in Christian Foundations from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and her Masters of Divinity in Global and Community Engagement from Boston University. Kelly and her husband Andrew are both ordained ministers with the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts and live in an intentional Christian community in the Dorchester area.

Contact: kelly@uniteboston.com



Pradeepan Parthiban

Pradeepan moved to Boston from Austin, Texas, where he worked to equip local churches in disciple making, house church planting and helping marginalized communities. He continues the same ministry in Boston helping the members of Antioch Church in Greater Boston walk out for biblical justice through discipleship and evangelism. Pradeepan also serves as a consultant for entities seeking to use technology to solve global human rights issues, with a focus on using Artificial Intelligence to combat modern slavery.

Contact: hey.pradeepan@gmail.com

Testimonies from our Fall Be the Bridge Groups

"Partnering with UniteBoston as group leaders in the Be the Bridge Racial Reconciliation group has been a tremendous experience! We have seen the growth of the attendees over these last few months, as they are learning what racial reconciliation truly means in the context of God's word and in the light of history. Each one of the attendees in our group has said that they are taking what they're learning from Be the Bridge back to their families, communities and their churches."



-Brent and Karen Brown, Impact Church

"I am very grateful that a group like Be The Bridge exists through UniteBoston, a staple in the Boston church community. It encourages hard work and commitment to the (costly) racial unity of our city's church across many branches. I've gained many new brothers and sisters, white and people of color, to walk with and co-laboring with on the complex issue of racial justice. It brings the issue local and personal, and encourages us to engage as the church together. I've felt that it creates a well-facilitated and thoughtful space for Christians to begin their journey into seeking racial justice by examining oneself first with prayer and a common goal of restoration and reconciliation through hard work. If you are looking for a way to engage in seeking racial justice in yourself, your family and community, UniteBoston's Be the Bridge group is an excellent place to begin-- I especially commend the resources given to study each week that are very thought provoking and challenging."



-Pradeepan Parthiban, Antioch Church

"UB's sponsorship of BTB was a practical, strategic, and timely activity for fostering unity within the Body of Christ, as well as strengthening the Church's engagement for racial healing in the world." - Gregg Detweiler

"I am so thankful for my experience in Be the Bridge and the blessing it has been! This was such an unique opportunity to come together as the Lord's people and seek to learn and listen, lament and pray, move toward peace and reconciliation. I look forward to how the Lord will continue to use Be the Bridge." - Lisa McDonough

"I am grateful for UB's heart and efforts to bring unity and racial reconciliation in Boston and metro Boston. Be the Bridge was challenging, informative and motivating." - John Lynch

"In the BTB groups, we were able to get to know each other over an extended period of time. People in my group shared experiences of what it could be like to live as a racial minority in this country. I feel now that I have a group of friends and peers living in different parts of the city, from different kinds of churches, who I can reach out to as our churches in the Boston area seek to work together across racial lines and for racial justice." - Morgan Crago

"Be the Bridge was a great opportunity for me to meet brothers and sisters in Christ from different churches and different backgrounds. It was a blessing to hear their stories and their perspectives, and to be challenged by the call to be reconciled to one another." - Michael Oh

"Be the Bridge Groups are a God-send. Christians need a place to come together, learn and grow together, ask questions safely and discuss hard realities, but in a way that is focused on Jesus and His mission. That is the glue that binds us all together. Highly recommend Christians join a group and grow together." - Blake Whitney

What can I expect from engaging in this process?

One of the most daunting aspects of embarking on a journey like this is not knowing what to expect. It may be helpful to think of it as you would any aspect of your Christian discipleship—a Spirit-led rearrangement of categories, assumptions, values, and beliefs:

- You'll develop greater awareness of God's desire for people of every tongue, tribe, and nation to form a united body in Christ.
- You'll be given tangible steps to take in order to transform your current views and vision regarding racial diversity.
- You'll have your assumptions and stereotypes challenged and your worldview expanded.
- You'll begin to bring interracial healing and transformation into your sphere of influence.

What will be required of me?

- Humility and openness to learning new things, recognizing your own biases and how you could be participating in systems of harm
- Interest in becoming aware of your own racial/ethnic identity and its impact in the world
- Listening to—and really hearing—others
- Willingness to trust God and take risks
- Commitment to the process, even when it gets difficult
- Disconnecting from privilege and power
- Showing up on time, being present, and completing small homework assignments to incorporate our learnings into our daily lives

Communication Guidelines

People are incredibly complex. Their worldview is shaped by a variety of factors including: ethnicity; family of origin; religious upbringing; hometown; and life experiences. In a community group, we bring this diverse group of people together to hopefully work towards a shared objective or destination. Much like a congested interchange, we must recognize that everyone is not coming from the same starting point and some travel (process) at different speeds.

Tensions tend to ratchet up when discussing the issue of race in America. Most often, people of color are introduced to the topic of race at an early age while white individuals begin these discussions at a much later age. This creates a difficulty when digging deeper into these conversations. Often, viewpoints on race may be wrapped up in one's personal identity, influenced by family members or upbringing, and/or connected to one's religious/spiritual/moral beliefs. Unfortunately, challenging ideas around race may be seen as a personal challenge or an indictment on America.

The following communication guidelines are meant to help all of us journey together towards racial righteousness and justice in a brave and rewarding way. They help each of us to establish brave

spaces while discussing race. We affirm that each of us are fearfully and wonderfully made and have a variety of unique backgrounds, values, and experiences.

We will:

- **STEP UP, STEP BACK**

- Be mindful of taking up much more space than others. On the same note, empower yourself to speak up when others are dominating the conversation.

- **BE ENGAGED IN THE JOURNEY, NOT JUST THE MOMENT**

- Acknowledge each other's perspectives, even if you disagree with them.
- We encourage you to participate in discussion, activities, reflection time, and outside readings to the fullest of your ability.
- Sometimes, we will have to hang out in uncertainty and not rush to quick solutions, especially in relation to racial understanding.

- **FIND COMFORT IN DISCOMFORT**

- It can feel daunting to dive into the unknown abyss of racial conversations. It takes courage to move toward what is uncomfortable and unnatural but honest conversations help bring healing and reconciliation.

- **BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER**

- Allow everyone the opportunity to speak.
- Ask questions when you don't understand; don't assume you know what others' thinking or their underlying motivations.
- Listen deeply to, and honor, the feelings of anger, pain, and joy in those who have been the targets of racism.
- Listen deeply to, and honor, the feelings of shame, fear, and grief in those who are waking up to the reality of racism in our churches, neighborhoods, and nation.
- Be aware of the fact that tone of voice and body language are powerful communicators. Some postures or facial expressions (e.g., crossed arms, eye rolls, loud sighs) can silence, provoke, intimidate, or hurt others. Others (e.g., facing and looking at the speaker, staying quiet, nodding) can show you are listening respectfully.

- **SPEAK FROM YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE INSTEAD OF GENERALIZING**

- Don't expect any individuals to speak on behalf of their gender, ethnic group, class, status, etc. (or the groups we perceive them to be a part of).

- Don't generalize or project onto others. Use "I" statements instead of blaming, accusations, or becoming defensive.
Example: Instead of "You never listen to anyone, and you're not really listening to me now" use "I feel that my concerns are not being heard"
- Avoid inflammatory language, including name-calling. Be sensitive to words or ideas that may trigger racial trauma for marginalized individuals.
Example: "thugs" "welfare queens" "drug dealers" "You took it the wrong way," use "That was just one person" "Everybody is not like that"

- **ASSUME THE BEST OF EACH OTHER**

- **KNOW WHAT IS INSIDE THE CIRCLE AND OUTSIDE THE CIRCLE**

- Observe confidentiality and don't share someone else's story without their permission