

Live Oaks Friends Meeting

This report lists 3 examples of what Live Oak Friends Meeting has done in 2019 to help make LOFM Friends aware of, and propose mitigating approaches to, structural racism in which we are immersed.

1. LOFM's Worship and Ministry committee **held a one day retreat titled "What is the racial Condition of our Meeting?"**

About 25 people attended. We discussed how the structures of white privilege are often unspoken and followed reflexively, how we all know and carry with us harmful stereotypes, and examined some examples of different ways that we can harm others despite good intentions when we are not looking at interactions through a racial lens.

There was general agreement that we needed to do more work. Bill Mize felt led to a book discussion centered on "White Fragility" by Robin DiAngelo later this year. There was also discussion around forming individual relationships and how to step beyond just intellectually looking at this problem, but leading from the heart.

2. Leada Dietz **led a workshop titled "Systematic Racism and its Affects"** at SCYM 2019. A short description follows:

Much as we like to think of ourselves as independent operators in our own lives, many of us have been acculturated in an environment of white privilege that affects our ability to practice our testimonies of equality and integrity. This workshop hopes to explore where members of SCYM find themselves in relationship to awareness of what those societal messages are and how they may be impacting our ability to interact with people from other races and cultures. Please bring your own experiences of interaction and discovery to share.

3. LOFM has had a **White Privilege/Racism Series as part of Adult First Day School.**

The series started in September 2018, it was something that a member was led to pursue after reading the book "America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege and the Bridge to a New America" by Jim Wallis as well as interaction with the work that AFSC is doing. The request was made to do the series with the AFDS Committee, and it was approved by the committee members.

The intent was to see how our Meeting might be able to start addressing Racism and how White Privilege plays a role. Once we prepared ourselves that we might have a dialogue with people of color to learn from them, their perspectives and how we might work together. To that end, various topics were introduced and explored through queries, short videos, book excerpts, etc. once a month to educate ourselves. As a predominately white group of people, we began to understand how our world view is different from people of color. We tried to prepare ourselves to hear the sometimes-difficult message that what we say and do can be considered by others to be racist whether we mean it that way or not. Understand how society is set up to give white people privilege, the unequal treatment of non-whites and how we play a role in it. Learning how we are unknowingly participating in racism by our implicit bias without ourselves being conscious of our racism.

Eventually, once we are somewhat ready, the intent is to reach out to one or more communities of color, to learn from their perspective on how they feel and view society including what we might do

together to create a difference. Getting to know each other, learn about issues we have no idea about that are being faced by others. Finally, how we might use our white privilege in a way that might help to overcome these issues.

Session 1:

Discussion on white privilege/racism perception differences. Used portions of the book “America’s Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege and the Bridge to a New America” by Jim Wallis.

A story about a young black professional sitting in his car on the street outside of his house and how his neighbors call the cops putting him in peril of being hurt for no reason other than being of color. We also discussed “The Talk” that parents of color tell their children to keep them safe out in the world and how it differs from a white parent’s talk, which illustrated how different perspectives can be with the same issue.

Session 2:

Discussion on being open to the possibility that what we say could be interpreted as racist but that someone pointing it out to us is not saying that we are racist. Being able to talk about racism without becoming defensive.

"How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Discussing Race" a Ted Talk by Jay Smooth, followed by queries and discussion.

Session 3:

Systemic Racism – What are all the ways in which white privilege and racism permeates our lives in the institutions that govern our society.

Discussed several different institutions that are steeped in systemic racism such as a Wealth Gap, Employment, Housing Discrimination, Government Surveillance and Incarceration using a series of videos put out by the Race Forward organization featuring Jay Smooth.

Session 4:

Implicit Bias – Exploring the subject through the book “Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think and Do” by Jennifer L. Eberhardt, PhD.

Dr. Eberhardt’s experiences with and about unconscious thought processes that affect our daily interactions with people of color ourselves and her work training law enforcement to be aware and help prevent these biases from influencing their decision making.

Session 5:

Exploring: Standing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ)

We will be exploring SURJ, a national network of groups and individuals working to undermine white supremacy and to work toward racial justice. SURJ provides a space to build relationships, skills and political analysis to act for change.

For decades, communities of color have urged white folks to "organize our own" -- to talk with our friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers directly about race and racism in an effort to disrupt and dismantle white supremacy. And while there have been some efforts to do that over the years, none have done so at the scale needed to both own up to the racist roots of this country or to forge a new path forward.

SURJ is committed to moving white folks into the movement for collective liberation -- a movement led and shaped by people of color and by poor, working-class, disabled, queer, transgender, and other white folks who are directly impacted by the divisive politics and policies of the ruling class. And there are a lot of different ways to participate in and support that movement.

Session 6:

Recap of the Live Oak Friends Meeting retreat: Worship and Ministry invites friends to join us at our annual retreat at the Meeting House to consider "What is the Racial Condition of Live Oak Friends Meeting?"

We will examine the racial condition of our Meeting in the context of race in America. We'll consider structural dynamics and depth of unspoken context. This self-examination is in pursuit of making our Meeting a more welcoming place for all. Teens will join with the adults for initial activities. Activities and Dialogue led by Nell Warnes and Cherry Steinwender, Executive Director of the Center for Healing of Racism.

Session 7:

Homelessness and the correlation between homelessness and white privilege/racism. Regular attendee Kelly Pruitt will be speaking about her work with the Coalition for the Homeless in Houston and help us to understand the correlation.

Future sessions may include subjects like work being done by AFSC, 39 questions for White people and the FGC including a book study on White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo.

This document was downloaded from the website of Friends General Conference. To explore the many resources and opportunities we offer for Quakers, Quaker meetings, and all interested individuals, go to www.fgcquaker.org.



