

To: Congregational Leaders

Date: April 1, 2009

Online Training announcement from ARE (Allies for Racial Equity)

Transforming Our Whiteness

An on-line class offered through the Church of the Larger Fellowship May 4 – June 5
More information can be found at <http://www.uurgl.com/learn/> (people do not need to be members of the CLF to participate)

White people don't experience the racial oppression that people of color experience. Whiteness is the norm in our society. As a result it is hard for those of us who are white to see our own white power and privilege. When we as whites talk about race we talk about other communities: African Americans, Hispanic Americans, or Asian Americans. But there is a taboo about talking about our own white racial identity.

In this workshop we will identify what whiteness is, clarify the ways it operates on our lives, and explore ways of transforming whiteness into a force for justice. Whiteness is a social construct with a 500 year history. We will explore how whiteness took shape in colonial times and how it has changed over time. We will be particularly interested in the racialization of European immigrants into whiteness.

One of the dilemmas we face as whites is how to feel good about our racial identity—our whiteness—in a culture of white supremacy. The challenge here is to develop a positive white identity that will empower us to work for change. We will discuss being a good ally to People of Color, working to end racism in white controlled institutions, and nurturing a positive white racial identity in our children.

This course will be taught by the Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer and the Rev. Bill Gardiner. They serve as co-chairs of the Unitarian Universalist Allies for Racial Equity Education Committee and lead transforming whiteness workshops for congregations and community organizations.