

A Guide to the Social Justice Reparations Resolution 2026

WORKING DRAFT January 27, 2026

Social Justice Reparations Resolution 2026 | Working Draft

Whereas deep, unresolved harm has been perpetrated against our neighbors—Native Americans, Black Americans, and other People of Color.

Whereas this harm is historical and continuing; it has been perpetrated by our nation and by religious institutions, including our own denomination.

Whereas we, the Boise UU Fellowship, as a congregation and as individuals, have accrued benefits and advantages through these acts of harm, creating a state of spiritual and material imbalance with our neighbors of color.

Whereas we, the Boise UU Fellowship, endeavor to be people of integrity, humility, gratitude and generosity.

Whereas, it is our wish to generate spiritual and material balance and harmony, stand in right relationship with all people, and create Beloved Community by living our Unitarian Universalist values.

Whereas, our Fellowship's mission directs us to hold a passion for social justice, to dismantle systemic racism, and to welcome the wider community as allies in anti-racist work.

Whereas our Fellowship began the work of amending harm by adopting the Eighth Principle in 2019, and we have lived into the principle through acknowledgement of history, self-examination, extensive study, and acts of goodwill.

Whereas reparations are concrete, sustained actions to make amends for harm done to people and their communities; reparations involve intentional acts that recognize and address historical, psychological, cultural, material, and spiritual injuries.

Whereas, reparations can bring us, as a Fellowship, closer to spiritual balance and into right relationship with our neighbors.

Whereas models of reparations exist at the international, national, community, and congregational levels, which can inspire and inform our own reparations program.

Now, therefore, be it RESOLVED that the Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship commits to an ongoing reparations program to amend historical or continuing harm to communities or individuals of color and to take concrete steps to repair relationships and build Beloved Community.

Be it further RESOLVED that

1. The Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship will have a standing reparations ministry team to develop and lead the program and to support continuing education about reparations in the Fellowship.
2. The reparations ministry team will lead an ongoing process to identify communities or individuals who have endured the effects of harm perpetrated, that is, *affected communities* or *affected individuals*.
3. The reparations ministry team will foster relationships with the affected community or individual so that they may consider us good, trustworthy neighbors and may indicate what form of reparations is meaningful to them.
4. The reparations ministry team will have a congregational fund to use for reparations.
5. The reparations ministry team will oversee actions of reparation, generating ever-growing understanding and engagement of the Fellowship in right relationships.

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PART 1: Background

Reparations are not about erasing the past. They are about telling the truth, repairing harm, and choosing a more just future together.

(Cornell William Brooks, Professor, Practice of Public Leadership and Social Justice, Harvard Kennedy School)

This guide is based on discussion, reading, and more discussion by the BUUF Reparations Working Group. It shares some of our common information about reparations. It supports faithful discernment and discussion, not ideological conformity, and it remains open to revision, correction, and growth as our understanding deepens. Above all, it's a living document that will change over time as we learn more. It is not the answer but a beginning to understanding what we as a congregation and individually might do.

PART 2: The Problem We Are Addressing / Historical Grounding

Reparations are about how we choose to live now, not where our ancestors lived. Choosing repair is a way of saying that we want our shared society to be grounded in justice, truth, and right relationship. Participation is an expression of solidarity, not inherited blame.

(Olúfemi O. Táíwò)

A - Why reparations are being discussed now?

- New scholarship, documentation, and social justice movements are raising awareness.
- Moral urgency and generational momentum

B - What harms are reparations responding to?

- Indigenous land dispossession and genocide, cultural genocide, generational trauma
- Chattel slavery, generational trauma and economic injustice
- Jim Crow, segregation, and other apartheid systems
- Colonial extraction and racial caste systems
- Ongoing structural harm, such as:
 - Racial profiling
 - Voting restrictions
 - Immigration policies and enforcement

C - Slavery and settler colonization were not “too long ago.”

- Generational wealth transfer underwrites economic security for Whites, while it is denied to Blacks and Native Americans
- Restrictive legal and policy continuity has been maintained through centuries
- There are living descendants with living consequences.

D - Churches and faith organizations, including UUs, benefitted or participated.

- Through silence, complicity, or active participation
- Through support for and leadership of Indian Boarding Schools (including Unitarians, 1886—1897)
- By breaking commitments to members and friends of color

PART 3: Boise UU Fellowship Should Engage in Reparations

At this stage, reparation conversations include learning, listening, and discerning together. We begin this conversation as a way of asking: What does faithfulness look like for us now?

A - UUs affirm these values centered around love:

- **Interdependence:** We honor the interdependent web of all existence and acknowledge our place in it.
- **Pluralism:** We are all sacred beings -- diverse in culture, experience, and theology.
- **Justice:** We work to be diverse multicultural Beloved Communities where all feel welcome and can thrive.
- **Transformation:** We adapt to the changing world.
- **Generosity:** We cultivate a spirit of gratitude and hope.
- **Equity:** We declare that every person is inherently worthy and has the right to flourish with dignity, love, and compassion.

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Reparations are a way to live these values concretely.

B - Our UU faith calls us to seek truth, repair harm, and build Beloved Community.

- Many impacted communities in the Americas continue to experience the effects of slavery, colonization, and racial exclusion.
- At BUUF, the topic of reparations rose at every congregational meeting about the Chelan property and in the natural juxtaposition with the land acknowledgment for Native Nations we affirm each week.
- It is about healing relationships, not just redistributing resources

C - Reparations are a spiritual issue, not just a political one.

- UUs believe social issues are expressions of spiritual values. Reparations align our actions with our deepest shared values.
- At their heart, reparations raise important spiritual questions:
 - How do we tell the truth about harm?
 - What does repairing those harms require?
 - How do we live in right relationship with one another?
 - How do we move beyond just acknowledging harm?
 - What does that mean for BUUF? What does it require of us?
- Addressing and understanding what reparations can mean benefits all of us spiritually.
- Congregational discussion and discernment can provide:
 - Healing for harmed communities
 - Moral clarity and integrity for responsible or accountable communities
 - Potential for a stronger, more truthful, and more compassionate society

D - What commitments are we exploring?

- We are not committing to specific actions yet; we are resolving to create a reparations program that will be ongoing. Reparations will become a foundational characteristic of our congregation.
- The resolution calls for creation of a reparations ministry that will guide continued education and commitment to repair.
- The reparations ministry team will suggest and guide reparations actions, considering:
 - What harms are we being called to understand?
 - What forms of repair are suggested by impacted communities?
 - What role might our fellowship play?
- We are also committing to create a fund for reparations

E - How can BUUF members participate in reparations?

- Learn about the communities who have experienced egregious harm in the past and how that harm continues to express itself today
- Engage in dialogue and conversations within BUUF and the greater community
- Provide financial support for repairing activities
- Participate in the varied Racial Justice activities and congregational traditions
- Advocate on behalf of harmed communities
- Incorporate reparations in personal and congregational spiritual practices

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PART 4: What We Mean by “Reparations”

A – How does BUUF define reparations?

“Reparations” are concrete, sustained actions to make amends for harm done to people and their communities. “Reparations” involve intentional acts that recognize and address historical, psychological, cultural, material, and spiritual injuries.

B - What is the role of listening to impacted communities?

- This is critical to our success in relationship-building
- Impacted communities need to define repair for themselves
- We will work to avoid paternalism
- Reparations are about compensating for what was taken or denied. The type of compensations will be defined by impacted communities themselves

C - Examples of reparations already implemented:

- Indigenous land settlements and land returns, i.e., land back (Colville Confederated Tribes)
- Donations to impacted groups, either time or dollars (First Unitarian Society Denver)
- Scholarships (Indiana University Indianapolis; Princeton & Virginia Theological Seminaries)
- Church or university reparations funds (Boise First United Church of Christ; Georgetown University Reconciliation Fund)
- National reparations in the Americas (Japanese internment camp family payments by USA through the US Civil Liberties Act 1988)
- International reparations (Holocaust reparations by Germany, German corporations, Swiss banks, and insurance companies)

PART 5: Foundational and Helpful Resources

- “An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States” by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz (Beacon Press)
- “The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story” by Nikole Hannah-Jones & *The New York Times Magazine*
- Podcasts:
 - *Seeing White*, John Biewen, Scene on Radio <https://sceneonradio.org/seeing-white/>
 - *The Land That Never Has Been Yet*, John Biewen, Scene on Radio <https://sceneonradio.org/the-land-that-never-has-been-yet/>
- Videos:
 - *From Reflection to Reparations*, Center for Repair of Historic Harms (pcusa.org/repair) <https://youtu.be/i4CJAopKh3o?si=zxImWuWYpV8nDRV2>
 - Video: *Landback Movement Explained*, Crash Course, https://nerdfighteria.info/v/7L2cSifRrLk/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Questions, Comments, or Feedback

- Please Email Reparations@BoiseUU.org

This document is the product of many discussions of the BUUF Reparations Working Group (RWG) and reading of a wide variety of source materials and articles available to the RWG. We also use ChatGPT to support how we might structure this document. ChatGPT used resources we provided or suggested and found some we did not yet know about.