I am grateful that UUFR members have made Living the Pledge possible for our Fellowship. Being an anti-racist doesn't happen overnight, but 12 hours of training and facilitated discussion moves you in the right direction! I was initially hesitant to sign up because of the time commitment. I have taken diversity trainings through my work and lead a national diversity, equity, and inclusion community of practice in my professional life. And yet the experience I had at UUFR further grew my commitment to anti-racist action. We created a timeline of racist history in this country, revealing just how deeply ingrained racism is to our institutional fabric. As much as we disavow such history, we are a result of it. And thus, it is the responsibility of every individual to combat racism to create a new future.

What I've learned through Living the Pledge is to quickly recognize my own racist biases and those around me. It is a continual practice to acknowledge the differences we falsely set between us, and discard them. Masks that stay on too long indeed stick to the skin. As long as we permit our sleepy prejudices to permeate our thinking, we are ignorant to their damage. Think you're a 'good' person? So, do I. We all have the capacity for compassion and empathy, for fair treatment of others. But the color of our skin dictates who we will be in close contact with, who our family members are, who our neighbors are, who are co-workers may be. This defacto segregation deeply saddens me. One because it limits the relationships that easily come into my life, and two because that separation leads to assumptions, to false thinking about one another. We must share our joys and sorrows, our aspirations, our struggles, and our lives to truly walk alongside one another.

Jane Harrison

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