



FROM THE CEO, DREW DYSON

Justice in Our Community

*“The arc of the moral universe is long,
but it bends toward justice.”*

— Martin Luther King Jr.



“What, to the American slave, is your Fourth of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim.” — Frederick Douglass

Dear Friends,

As we prepare as a nation to celebrate the Fourth of July, we do so this year with increasing awareness that the journey toward justice, the ideals of liberty and justice for all, continue to be more out of reach for some than others. Over the course of the past year, we have seen amplified the injustice of racism in our nation while also marking some modest steps of progress. We have been reminded of King’s quote about the ultimate bend of the universe toward justice.

The celebration of the Fourth of July should be a reminder of both the ideals for which we strive, and the importance of intentional, deliberate acts that move us closer to those ideals. When King spoke those words, he was paraphrasing Harvard Divinity School alumni and abolitionist Theodore Parker’s sermon from 1853 that did not passively accept the ultimate bend of the universe towards justice, but coupled the hoped-for future with the intentional justice-filled action and advocacy of

the abolitionist movement. Similarly, King’s intent was not to call people to passive waiting, but to call forth just action that contributes toward the universe’s arc bending toward justice.

The Fourth of July is an opportunity for us to celebrate the ideals that first inspired the birth of our nation — as well as to mark the progress that has been made towards realizing those ideals for all people. It should also be an opportunity for us to listen and to learn, to hear the voices of those who have been marginalized, and who still experience the oppression and injustice woven into the fabric of society. And, it should be an opportunity for us to commit once again to the work of justice and anti-racism efforts in our own community.

Towards that end, we are delighted to participate in, and invite you to share in a virtual community reading of Frederick Douglass’s speech, “The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro,” first delivered on July 5, 1852. This community reading will be an opportunity to come together and speak, hear, and consider Douglass’s powerful and prophetic message. Following the community reading (held on Zoom at 5:30 p.m. on July 5), participants will be invited to join the 7:00 p.m. virtual program with Not In Our Town Princeton where we will have the opportunity to reflect on the speech more deeply in small groups.

I am truly grateful for the wonderful community organizations that have formed the planning committee to bring this powerful opportunity to our community: Nassau Presbyterian Church and Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church Joint Mission Committee; Not In Our Town Princeton; Paul Robeson House of Princeton; Princeton Public Library; and the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Princeton Racial Justice Task Force. We will share registration information in our e-newsletters. I look forward to sharing with you in this important virtual gathering to strengthen the work of justice in our community!

All the Best,

Drew A. Dyson, PhD, Chief Executive Officer

