

Courageous Conversations for our Community: *How to Be an Anti-Racist in Arlington*

A Joint Program with Rock Spring UCC and Calloway Methodist UMC

2020 has been a year of societal awakening and reckoning. 2021 could also be a year of transformation. Now is the time to lean into new collaborations, mutual aid, and collective action to undermine and heal the racism that pervades every level of our institutions, society, and relationships.

The most pressing challenges facing our community today require common understanding, careful listening, and relationship building. Communities of faith, through our shared values and belonging, have a unique opportunity to join together for impact.

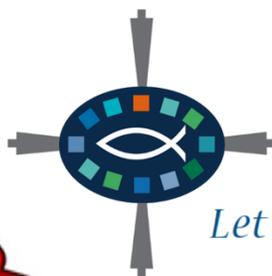
Rock Spring UCC and Calloway UMC share a long and special history of collaboration, dating back to the civil rights movement including efforts to integrate Arlington schools and fair housing testing. Members of Calloway and Rock Spring also fondly reflect on summers of joint Vacation Bible School over the decades.

In January 2021 we will rekindle that special relationship between our two churches to jointly-host a program called **Courageous Conversations for our Community**. It is an opportunity to celebrate the strong historical ties that bond our churches, and to create new connections through our community and faith.

The six, monthly sessions of **Courageous Conversations for our Community** will engage participants from Rock Spring UCC, Calloway UMC, and the Halls Hill-High View Park neighborhood to:

- Learn from local leaders about three (3) racial equity issues directly affecting communities of color: Criminal Justice, Education, and Housing,
- Listen to different perspectives and build new and diverse relationships,
- Engage in meaningful discussions and consider challenges through a faith lens, and
- Develop concrete ways to individually and collectively play an active role for racial equity in Arlington.

Our reflection and conversations will be guided by our shared faith and by the “3 Cs”: Culture, Conscience, and Change. **Culture** represents our individual perspective shaped by our unique experiences and past; **Conscience** represents our present self, our inner sense of ethical and moral principles that shape our current thoughts and action; and **Change** represents our future and where we feel a calling to have impact.



Rock Spring
CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Let all we do be done in love.

Program Outline: Courageous Conversations for Our Community

The sessions will be held the 4th Tuesday of every month from 7:00-9:00 p.m. for six months, January – June 2021. It will be conducted online in a virtual Zoom format unless in-person meeting is deemed safe by both hosts.

Session	2021 Date	Topic	Speakers
Session 1	Tues, Jan 26	Program Launch Rock Spring and Calloway: Our Shared Past and Present.	Hosts: Rev. Kathy Dwyer and Rev. DeLishia Davis. Guest: Arlington NAACP (<i>Invited</i>)
Session 2	Tues, Feb 23	Criminal Justice in Arlington – Restorative Justice, Police Reform, SROs, School-to-Prison Pipeline (TBC)	Commonwealth Attorney Parisa Dehghani-Tafti
Session 3	Tues, Mar 23	Education in Arlington – School Segregation, Achievement Gaps, and Inequity. (TBC)	Black Parents of Arlington. NAACP Education Committee (TBC)
Session 4	Tues, April 27	Housing in Arlington – Residential Segregation, Affordability, and Gentrification. (TBC)	Arlington Housing Solutions Missing Middle Initiative and Arlington County (TBC)
Session 5	Tues, May 25	Special Walking Tour / Field Trip Historically Black Neighborhood Halls Hill	HOST: Wilma Jones, Historian & Halls Hill Resident
Session 6	Tues, June 22	Culminating Event with Special Guest Speaker	Dr. Ibram Kendi, author of New York Times best seller <i>How to Be an Anti-Racist</i> (<i>Invited</i>)

About the Sessions: Each month, participants will be asked to complete pre-session "homework" (book excerpts, articles, video viewings), as well as read sections of our foundational book, Dr. Ibram Kendi's *How to be An Antiracist*.

Each session will feature local experts sharing the current challenges and perspectives of communities of color on key racial equity issues facing Arlington today. Participants will then break out into small groups to reflect on the points raised by the speaker, as well as the insights gained from the pre-session work. In highly interactive conversations, the small groups will consider structured questions guided by the 3 Cs: Culture, Conscience, and Change.

The hosts and lead facilitators of the program are Rev. DeLishia A. Davis of Calloway UMC and Rev. Kathy Dwyer of Rock Spring UCC.

Registration: Interested participants may [register online here](#). Space is limited to the first 100 participants, with slots shared between Rock Spring UCC, Calloway UMC and affiliates, and Halls Hill residents. There is no cost for participation; however, **participants are encouraged to sign-up only if they can attend all six sessions**. Space is limited and relationship-building within the small groups is dependent on consistent participation.



About Rock Spring Congregational United Church of Christ: On the night of January 8, 1912, a group of neighbors living near the Vanderwerken stop on what was then the Great Falls and Old Dominion Railroads trolley line to Great Falls Park gathered in a home to consider organizing a church. They had been gathering for a weekly Sunday School class and wanted to expand to have a pastor and regular worship services. That first building was called ‘Neighborhood House.’ From the start, Neighborhood House served as both a church and a community center. It held the first public library in Arlington and was home to the first Boy Scout troop, both of which Rock Spring still hosts. Neighborhood House provided a place where black civic associations could meet with white civic associations, in defiance of Virginia’s so-called “Massenburg Bill,” passed in 1926, which mandated segregation of public assemblies. Throughout the years, Rock Spring has been active with civil rights and social action — a continuing primary focus for Rock Springers today.

Today Rock Spring is a progressive Christian faith community that strives to discern God’s still-speaking voice through worship, study, fellowship, and service. We work for peace, as well as social, economic, and ecological justice. We seek a greater understanding of others, and thus ourselves, recognizing that all persons are members of our one human family.

Rev. Kathy Dwyer, Senior Pastor

Rock Spring Congregational United Church of Christ | 5010 Little Falls Road, Arlington, Virginia 22207
kathy@rockspringucc.org | www.rockspringucc.org | 703-538-4886



About Calloway Methodist Church: Calloway Methodist Church is a faith community located at 5000 Lee Highway in High View Park, formerly Halls Hill, Arlington, VA. Established at the end of the Civil War, Calloway’s rich and fascinating history serves as a proud foundation for today’s diverse and multi-cultural community.

In 1866, a small group of Halls Hill residents began meeting for prayer service in a neighboring home as a way to develop their spiritual life together. As more people started attending the service, the need arose to build a church. Through great personal sacrifice, the people raised enough money to purchase land and build a church for the growing faith community. The church was named in honor of one of the early pastors, Rev. Winston Calloway, and has been a beacon of hope for over a century. It was at the forefront of social change, serving as a meeting place for the community’s efforts to fight for integration with its members active in the Civil Rights movement. It served as an auditorium for the John M. Langston School, hosting school plays and graduation ceremonies. It hosted and provided meals for those who attended the March on Washington. Today its members are heavily involved in historical preservation activities for the 150-year history of the church, the adjoining historically designated cemetery, as well as preservation of the Halls Hills neighborhood and local African American stories.

Rev. DeLishia A. Davis, Lead Pastor

Calloway United Methodist Church | 5000 Lee Highway, Arlington, VA 22207
delishiadavis@vaumc.org | www.callowaychurch.org | (703) 525-4472



About Halls Hill – High View Park: One of three historically segregated neighborhoods, Halls Hill – High View Park is located in North Arlington, bound by Lee Highway (north), N Glebe Road (east) 17th Street N (south) and N George Mason Drive (west).

High View Park, originally known and still known as Hall’s Hill, was the oldest enclave in Northern Virginia settled by newly freed slaves in 1866 shortly after the Civil War. By the early 20th century, Jim Crow laws restricted African-Americans from patronizing most local restaurants and businesses — a reality that prompted the neighborhoods to become self-sufficient. Until the 1950s, it was separated from white neighborhoods by an 8-foot high segregation wall, some of which still stands. Only African Americans resided in the neighborhood until 1979.

The neighborhood includes some of Arlington’s most notable historical landmarks: Fire Station 8, the Segregation Wall, Calloway Methodist Church and Cemetery, Mount Salvation Baptist Church, and Langston Brown Community Center. Its residents fought for civil rights and today both new and long-term residents work together to maintain the historical, cultural and aesthetic values of the neighborhood. A walking tour of Halls Hill is planned for the fifth session of the Program.



About Ibram X. Kendi and *How to Be an Anti-Racist*: One of America’s foremost historians and leading antiracist voices, Ibram X. Kendi is a National Book Award-winning and #1 New York Times bestselling author. Kendi is the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities and the Founding Director of the Boston University Center for Antiracist Research. Kendi is a contributor writer at The Atlantic and a CBS News Racial Justice Contributor. He is also the 2020-2021 Frances B. Cashin Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for the Advanced Study at Harvard University. In 2020, Time magazine named him one of the 100 most influential people in the world.

Kendi is the author of *The Black Campus Movement*, which won the W.E.B. Du Bois Book Prize, and *Stamped From The Beginning: The Definitive History Of Racist Ideas In America*, which won the National Book Award for Nonfiction in 2016. Kendi is also the author of three #1 New York Times bestsellers, including ***How to Be an Antiracist*** and *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, And You*, co-authored with Jason Reynolds and a Kirkus Prize Finalist. *How to Be an Anti-Racist* also made several Best Books of 2019 lists and was described in the New York Times as “the most courageous book to date on the problem of race in the Western mind.” It is an essential book for anyone who wants to go beyond an awareness of racism to the next step of how to play an active role in building a truly just and equitable society. Dr. Kendi is invited as a special guest speaker for the sixth and final session of the program.