



ALL SOULS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA

**A CONGREGATIONAL RESOLUTION
REGARDING
THE CURRENT JUDICIAL PROSECUTIONS
OF SIX YOUNG BLACK MEN IN JENA, LOUISIANA**

Approved September 9, 2007

WHEREAS, the congregation of All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church of Shreveport, Louisiana recognizes the inherent worth and dignity of every person and seeks to uphold and promote justice, equity and compassion in human relations; and

WHEREAS, we hold that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere and that violence is the enemy of justice; and

WHEREAS, we condemn physical and psychological violence by any party as an unacceptable response toward resolving conflict; and

WHEREAS, we seek to uphold and promote fundamental fairness in the application of our State criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, we hold that racial injustice does particular violence to that system, and

WHEREAS, we believe the recent judicial proceedings against six young black men in Jena, Louisiana reflect race-based selective prosecutions that run counter to our values and principles, and that such prosecutions represent a shameful racial injustice and are an embarrassment to our State; and

WHEREAS, we seek to address both the judicial fairness of the proceedings and the larger social issues that surround this incident, namely racial attitudes and the shortcomings of the public defense system in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, imbued with a sense of history of Unitarian Universalists standing up for human and civil rights and All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church of Shreveport having taken an active role in past racial justice matters in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, believing that we live in an interdependent world where an individual's actions have far reaching consequences beyond one's local context, and an individual's inactions are tantamount to tacit approval;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the members of All Souls Unitarian Church of Shreveport, Louisiana commit to studying and monitoring the Jena judicial proceedings on a regular basis through:

- appropriate religious education programs for adults and youth, including an exploration of non-violent responses to conflict,
- regular reports to the congregation by the Social Justice committee,
- presentations from invited speakers capable of bringing varied perspectives, including those local to Jena, and
- in such other ways that might be further identified; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we connect more fully to the Northern and Central Louisiana Interfaith association, both the Northwest Cluster as well as other clusters within this organization, to explore with all member churches what individual and collective responses are being planned, including those directed outward toward Jena and inward toward our community to raise awareness and action; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we reach out to Jena area churches to seek their perspective and counsel as to how All Souls might be supportive; explore an invitation to Jena area church meetings regarding these matters; and invite Jena representatives to Shreveport to speak with local parishioners seeking information, understanding and ways to be supportive; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that since judicial proceedings will be ongoing for some time, we will seek to identify community actions both in Jena and NW Louisiana that can demonstrate our abiding concern that justice and reconciliation will prevail; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that we, the members of All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church of Shreveport, commit to taking purposeful action regarding the Jena judicial proceedings.