

*UUCR Adult Faith Formation Common Read*  
**Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption**

**Discussion:                      Weds 24 Feb at 7pm                      Room 44**

*Covenant Points:*

We covenant to speak from our own experiences and perspectives.

...to listen respectfully to the experiences and perspectives of other people.

...to pay attention to the group process, making sure that everyone has the opportunity to speak and to listen.

...to use this time as an opportunity for ethical, religious, and spiritual discernment.

We covenant to listen to one another for understanding rather than to debate, even when the conversation touches on politics or public policy.

As a result of his extensive work with low income and incarcerated people, Stevenson concludes that “the opposite of poverty is not wealth; the opposite of poverty is justice” (18). What does this statement mean? What examples in the book inform Stevenson’s position on poverty and justice? What is justice? What does ‘Just Mercy’ mean?

Bryan Stevenson’s grandmother told him, “You can’t understand most of the important things from a distance, Bryan. You have to get close.” Just Mercy helps us to get close and to understand more deeply:

What is it about stories of individual suffering that make it hard for us to turn away? Do you respond with more compassion to individual stories than you do to information about injustice in the entire system? Why is that?

What are the forces that distance us from those we as a society incarcerate and those we as a society condemn and put to death?

Is it morally right that those on the margins need those in the mainstream to champion their causes in order to be treated fairly?

In the epilogue, Stevenson writes, “The real question of capital punishment in this country is, do we deserve to kill?” Did reading Just Mercy change your opinion and/or position regarding whether or not the United States has the right to execute its citizens? Is your stance on capital punishment an ethical, spiritual or socio-political understanding, or a combination of each of these?

“There is a strength, a power even, in understanding brokenness, because embracing our brokenness creates a need and desire for mercy, and perhaps a corresponding need to show mercy. When you experience mercy, you learn things that are hard to learn otherwise. You see things you can't otherwise see; you hear things you can't otherwise hear. You begin to recognize the humanity that resides in each of us.”

What in your Unitarian Universalist faith demands that you respond to what you now know more after reading Just Mercy?



Just Mercy courageously takes on the role of capitalism and the privatization of the U.S. criminal justice system. And finally, the most egregious behaviors of law enforcement individuals, against juveniles will leave you aghast that any one could treat a child so abhorrently. I would love to attend the conference in Alabama the end of April along with the opening of the EJI Museum. Thank you Bryan Stevenson and all of your colleagues for your courage. It is challenging, informative, frightening, and life-changing while telling a story that made me keep reading when I really wanted to just go into a corner and crawl into myself. This book should be read by every politician and every voter. It is eye-opening and should be required reading for everyone in a leadership position of any sort. Just Mercy is his inspiring and powerful story. "John Grisham "Bryan Stevenson is one of my personal heroes, perhaps the most inspiring and influential crusader for justice alive today, and Just Mercy is extraordinary. The stories told within these pages hold the potential to transform what we think we mean when we talk about justice." Michelle Alexander, author of The New Jim Crow. Year: 2014. He started forgetting things he had done just a few hours earlier. The details of his business slipped away from him, and managing work became complicated in ways he couldn't understand, which depressed him. At some point I went over his records with him, and he'd been selling things at a fraction of their worth and losing a lot of money.