



Living Together with Differences

BARRINGTON NATIVES LEAD A MONTHLY SERIES THAT ENCOURAGES A STRONGER SENSE OF COMMUNITY

A FRIEND AND FELLOW NATIVE of Barrington, Claire Nelson, and I found ourselves bonding over the mutual struggle of trying to talk with our families about important social issues. As founder of Urban Consulate, a network of parlors for exchange, Claire is no stranger to engaging in difficult conversations. Yet, we both found that the polarization and division we see at the national level was being played out at our dinner tables. We suspected that we are not alone.

Claire and I set about discovering what others were experiencing. We listened to our neighbors and nodded in quiet agreement as they shared

experiences of being unable to engage in conversation within their families. We also learned that the stories of division and polarization were pervasive, showing up in work environments, classrooms, and sacred spaces, too. People shared their sadness and frustration, overwhelmed with this divisive climate.

We agreed that if we wanted to change this climate, it would have to start with us. So together, with trusted local advisors and community partners, we are launching a monthly series of learning and exchanges to explore our greatest challenge: how to live together in difference. We've been looking locally and nationally to leaders

who can help us spark critical inquiry, awareness, and growth in ourselves and with each other. We hope you will join us in *A Year of Courageous Conversations*.

To launch this series, we invited Krista Tippett, founder of the Civil Conversations Project, author, and host of the "On Being" podcast to speak to our community on May 23. Ms. Tippett will also engage with Reverend Dr. Zina Jacque of Barrington Community Church at the event, for a more intimate dialogue including questions from the audience. Through her years of interviews and rich dialogue with guests, Ms. Tippett has not only practiced and perfected the critical art of listening, but she has also leaned deeply into difficult conversations in search of finding the common threads of our humanity. This event is open to the public and we encourage you to come and bring a friend, a colleague, a family member, a parent, or a partner to learn with us!

Rev. Jacque's inspired remarks at the recent Barrington Town Warming included four characteristics she believes must guide our community: Boldness, Imagination, Perseverance, and Hope. I know we are capable of *imagining* another way of being in community together. I believe we can be so *bold* as to practice courage even when we stand in fear. I *hope* that we have what it takes to engage with one another from a place of curiosity and not just conviction. And I trust we can *persevere* together through these divisive times to find our way. I hope you do, too. 

The Barrington Area Library will host a book club featuring Krista Tippett's book "Becoming Wise" led by librarian Sam Adams-Lanham and Rev. Dr. Zina Jacque on May 9 at 7 p.m. Register at BALibrary.org.

The "A Year of Courageous Conversations" series will be hosted every second Wednesday at Barrington's White House from 7-9 p.m., beginning in September 2019. On-line registration for the series opens after the Krista Tippett event May 23, 2019.

Registration for the May 23 Krista Tippett event at BHS can be completed at www.CourageousConversations.us.