

Social Justice Group 10/28/2020

In attendance: Luke Stevens-Royer, Gail Bishop, Adrian Federspeil, Molly Dingel (notetaker), Julie Gilkinson, Paula Horner, Phil and Sue Wheeler, Patty Trnka.

Hopes for Social Justice Shared Ministry

Social Justice Team: We are hoping to increase cooperation and coordination among groups, and try to avoid falling into silos. We want to empower congregation members to engage in social justice activities, with support from the Social Justice Team and church staff. We also hope to increase connections with MUUSJA (Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance). The original duties of the Social Justice Council were good goals, but not really feasible. We hope that the current Social Justice Team will take on those duties as described in the bylaws for the Social Justice Council. We want to be intentional in how we help people doing social justice work in the church come together, work together, and learn from each other. We will need to change policy language to reflect these shared ministry changes.

Updates

Immigration and racial justice. The racial justice task group has not met in some time, and lacks a chair. Perhaps the social justice team can help recruit a new chair? NAACP and the Rochester Interfaith Immigration Rights Coalition (RIIRC) has been active, as is the SE Minnesota Interfaith Immigrant Legal Defense (SMILD). SMILD defended 7 people in the last year, and six are out of detention and have had residency rights restored. There is a vigil planned for Thursday, Nov. 5 for the children in detention whose parents cannot be found.

Family Promise Rochester had a move and are in a new facility, but it has been pretty slow because of COVID.

Welcome Congregation is planning to offer transgender inclusion curriculum in January.

Hawthorne Helps (updated after the meeting via email): has provided toiletries to students, who seemed very appreciative. In addition, in conjunction with Family Literacy, winter items left over from the UU Handcrafted Bazaar were given to families. With our participation at the HEC October Flu Clinic, HH Grab and Go and Family Literacy, we reached 114 students.

Video

For their annual meeting, MUUSJA is asking each congregation in the state to create a video highlighting their social justice work. If you would like to take part in this, you can record a 30-60 seconds summary of social justice activities for the year. Erika will compile these so they can be shared at the MUUSJA annual meeting. Deadline: November 15. Erika and Luke can answer logistical or technical questions.

Shared plate ideas

Luke: Through mid-November the shared plate is confirmed. Into the rest of the winter is still looking for ideas. Various options discussed.

Ideas or needs for Justice Forum this winter or spring

There were several ideas regarding potential justice forums this winter or spring. Could provide a SMILD update, more on climate change, continue conversations about indigenous groups in Minnesota, pick an article from UU World Magazine and discuss, work with ISAIAH on their legislative agenda. This is still under discussion, but keep an eye out for more on social justice forums.