
Social Justice Shared Ministry Team Meeting Notes

Date/Time: 1/7/2024 12:30 – 1:30 PM

Attendees: Aleta Borud- Boad, Brianna Berg- Board, Alex Higano- member-at-large, Sara Felts- member-at-large (via zoom), Shelly Rohe- Social Justice Coordinator, Rev. Luke -ex-officio, Sandy MacLaughlin, John MacLaughlin, Paula Horner, Jade Joyce, Lynn Degerstrom, Rhonda Lenz, Julie Gilkinson, Sue Wheeler, Phil Wheeler, Joan Hinds, Fletcher Hinds, ?

Shelly talked about what the Social Justice role will entail.

- Social Justice partners- make contact with the organizations each month. Get a paragraph to Erika for the enews and Order of Service as well as information for the website. Invite a representative to speak for 2-3 minutes at both services and greet members at the Social Justice table between services. Ask the representative to bring flyers to set out on the SJ table.
 - See the calendar below
- Forum on the 4th Wednesday of the month- plan and/or execute a forum each month. This may be an extension of the monthly Social Justice partner, or something else entirely. Shelly reports being approached about this a lot, showing there is quite a bit of interest.
- Update/upkeep of social justice website pages- this will be a work in progress but should reflect what is current and some pages are out of date.
- Creation and upkeep of Google doc for SJ Actions:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LLu-Kg5QjKnJc_J1GED1-ne2rK4-KJdBxcdhOQX6nOI/edit?usp=sharing
- Post opportunities on Realm for the General Social Justice Group (open to anyone to do so)
- Work with the Shared Ministry Team on policy updates and Social Justice opportunities.

Monthly Justice Partners 2024

January – **MLK Jr. Day, Jan. 15, 2024**, CERT Rochester, Rev. Andre Crockett/Lisa Ross

February – Hawthorne Helps

March – **International Women’s Day**, Rochester for Reproductive Freedom through Planned Parenthood Minnesota

April - The Village Agricultural Cooperative

May – **LGBTQIA2S+ PRIDE (in Rochester)**, *Wide Welcoming Team collaboration

June - Southeastern Minnesota Interfaith Immigrant Legal Defense (SMILD) or Immigration Justice Fund

July – **Disability Pride and signing of the ADA**, *Wide Welcoming Team collaboration

August - Jeremiah Program

September – Take Action MN or TBD voting campaign

October - Children’s Dental Health Services (CDHS)

November – **National Native American Heritage Month** – Community Food Response (CFR)

December – Family Promise

- SJ Shared Ministry policy updates – Leaves- there was discussion about the Social Justice Shared Ministry policy and categories that should be listed on each leaf of the shared ministry tree of our governance. The first six are the current leaves. The proposed categories follow. There was quite a bit of discussion on Environmental Justice as a current leaf or more aspirational. The vote was not unanimous on all of the leaves. Another meeting will be scheduled to finish the policy update.

Social Justice program area subgroups

Currently:

1. Welcoming Congregation
2. Racial Justice
3. Accessibility & Inclusion
4. Immigration & Sanctuary
5. Environmental Justice
6. Community Volunteering
(Make these match the tree - Any changes or others?)

Proposed:

1. Wide Welcoming Team
 - a. Welcoming Congregation program
 - b. Disability Inclusion Group
 - c. Racial Justice
2. Immigration & Sanctuary
 - a. Immigration Justice Fund
 - b. Refugee Resettlement Program
 - c. First UU Housing Aid, LLC
3. Environmental Justice
4. Community Volunteering
 - a. UU programs
 - i. ISAIAH
 - ii. MUUSJA
 - iii. Clara Barton Guild ?
 - iv. VITA
 - v. Hawthorne Helps
 - vi. Family Promise
 - b. Other Volunteer Opportunities
 1. Riverside Reading program
 2. Community Food Response
 3. Saturday Noon Meals
4. Social Justice partner
 - a. Shared Plate
 - b. Forum
 - c. Social Justice table
 - d. Holiday giving

- A survey of the congregation has been suggested as a way to see where social justice efforts should be concentrated. The following has been offered as a start:

SJ Survey

'Our work for a better world calls us to unexpected places as we harness love's power to stop oppression. From grassroots community organizing to interfaith state, national, and corporate advocacy; in protest marches, prayer vigils, and press conferences; in homeless shelters and in prisons, Unitarian Universalists put our faith into action.' -UUA

- 1- What issue are you holding close to your heart? i.e. Immigration, Identity Oppression, democracy, abortion, incarceration, addiction...
- 2- Where should we focus our efforts?
 - a. Here at First UU and the surrounding community, we have to first help each other to be able to reach out anywhere else.
 - b. Minnesota- so much of what affects us is decided at the state level. We need to have a voice at the table.

- c. UUA- To utilize the resources available to us as a fully contributing congregation, we need to align our Social Justice efforts with those of our association i.e. becoming a Local Love Congregation.
- d. A mixture- We can do something in all of these areas through education and action. All of the above is typically the right answer.

3- How should we spend our time on Social Justice causes?

- a. Letter writing
- b. Educational forums
- c. RE
- d. Picketing/Protesting
- e. Seeking meetings with congressional representatives
- f. Attending City Council Meetings
- g. Offering personal support (Asylum seekers, immigrants, unhoused, etc.)

Nothing has been decided at this time.

- Website updates- Shelly has been working to update the website. There has been a request by the Clara Barton Guild to be removed from the Social Justice menu of the website. It was determined that since they have been meeting far longer than other groups, do not propose to forward any type of social justice agenda, have their own bank account and gather for connection to one another they should be able to choose NOT to be under the Social Justice tab on the website.
- Immigration Justice Update- the family from Ecuador has moved into their apartment. An LLC has been suggested as a means of absorbing any potential liability from the church. The name that was suggested is First UU Housing Aid, LLC. An article has been written for the Post Bulletin and our Immigration Fund will serve as the entity to accept donations for this family.
- Other Business
 - Social Justice Fair plans- there was a question if there would be a fair yet this year. The fair typically takes place in the fall. There wasn't time to get one going, there will definitely be another one next year. *Update- there was a 'sign-up Sunday for interested members to ask questions and sign up for groups they are interested in.
 - 'Follow up on new members who indicate an interest in Social Justice. I usually get a list of names interested in HH but have received nothing for several months. HH definitely needs to increase our volunteer base. Due to age and health, we have had several older members drop out.' It was reported that information about all groups and opportunities are given to new members.
- All business was not concluded. Another meeting will be scheduled.