

# UUC Social Justice Council Minutes

July 27, 2024

*The Mission of the UUC Social Justice Council is to facilitate communication and cooperation between the Council members, Social Justice Committees, UUC Board of Trustees, UUC congregation, and the wider community.*

Attendees: Linda Stoller (chair), Marlene Calderone, Carol Hamilton, Eloise Hardman, Davonne Irion, Margie Manning, Cibby Orozco, Carole Vaughn and Anne Burnham (secretary pro tem)

Chalice lighting and opening words: "Affirmation of Hope," Loretta Williams and brief check-in

Acceptance of minutes for June 22nd meeting

No treasurer's report. Community Outreach: Clothes to Kids (July) and Recovery Epicenter (August)

## **New and Continuing Programs**

**Racial Justice** (Trude, email): The Racial Justice team is on hiatus in July and August. Members will email the group with information about any event we may be interested in attending.

**FAST** (Linda): FAST is having an Affordable Housing Prayer Vigil this coming Thursday, August 1st, at 10:00 AM on the steps of St. Petersburg City Hall (175 5th St. N, St. Petersburg, FL 33701). It will begin at 10:00, but we recommend planning to arrive around 9:30 AM in order to find parking and gather at the steps of City Hall. There is a City Council meeting happening at the same time, so the parking lot at 463 Second Ave N will be open, but it will fill up quickly.

When you arrive, we will gather on the right side of the stairs under the awning to try and stay protected from the summer heat! This will be our opportunity to publicly turn in our blue postcards to Mayor Welch with our handwritten stories of how the affordable housing crisis has affected each of us personally. The corporate investment drive is continuing throughout the summer.

**Environmental Justice** (Eloise): The EJT is on hiatus until Sept. We will continue to check websites of other groups to determine what activities they might be doing that we join. Linda praised the resource links that the EJT has been providing in the *Octagram* for members to read. Beyond Plastics has had good info about corporations that have knowingly hidden health risks associated with their products. Linda asked Eloise to put a warning in the *Octagram* about the coatings in popcorn packaging; can popcorn in another container to avoid that risk.

**NAMI** (Christina): no report

**Interfaith Tampa Bay** (Maryann Hamilton): no report

## **New and Continuing**

**Black Lives Matter banner update:** Linda reported that the new banner is being purchased with the remaining funds in the BLM Account. Carl Hansen and Bill Newton will provide their labor gratis to encase it in plexiglas, with a wooden frame, in order to minimize defacing. Davonne expressed concern that the plexiglas could be smashed but it seems like that will be a lower risk. Double layers of plexiglas will allow the banners to be interchanged with others representing UUC's social justice values. We voted to approve taking \$300 from the SJC Account to cover the cost of plexiglas/wood supplies.

**Postcard writing update:** Linda was so pleased that the 500 postcards she purchased initially went quickly, so she ordered 500 more. Eliseo's list targeted Hispanic homes in the Clearwater area, many of which have multiple residents (i.e., 1,000 postcards could reach 3,000 potential voters). Carole V. joined a group of 5 people at UUC that Sue Horvatt organized to write cards. Linda asked to be reimbursed for the second batch of postcards (\$70), Marlene seconded, approved.

After the Primary we will be writing postcards for Yes on 4. Anne asked what Indivisible will be doing with postcard writing and at Linda's request will check with Mike Hughes, who has been a leader for GOTV in the Safety Harbor group. Linda and Margie reminded us to be careful to protect UUC's tax exempt status: activities must be nonpartisan—i.e., no endorsement of specific candidates (unless all candidates have been invited), issues are always okay.

**SJC retreat:** Linda said that Christina had signed up previously to be on the planning committee; Carol H., Carole V. and Cibby volunteered to help today. The retreat will probably be in September.

**HEP update:** Anne reported that 20 members donated \$819.24 for backpacks and 13 more bought backpacks. Carole V., Eloise and Anne shopped for 13 additional backpacks to meet our commitment of 25 (yes, one extra jumped in our shopping cart, so we actually gave them 26). Dale has sent a check to HEP for \$512.37 for them to use for more backpacks and/or school supplies, as they see fit. The Back-to-School Bash, where the kids will choose their items, will be in early August. Carole V. agreed to send photos, taken on her phone when we delivered the backpacks, to Margie, Linda, Eloise and me.

**Welcoming Congregations Renewal:** Margie reported that the UUA is asking congregations to renew their commitment as Welcoming Congregations. UUC was one of the first in 1991, a year after the program was initiated. We have never had an annual plan for this, however, and this past year did not meet the criteria. We were able to recount having one service devoted to LGBTQ+ in June, participating again with the Pride Parade in St. Pete, designating a Community Outreach for Equality Florida, and Rev. Amy incorporating mentions of Transgender Day and other events in her sermons. It was decided to wait until August to complete the UUA certification form when Rev. Amy would be able to help with it. Anne suggested that we put the topic on the agenda for the upcoming retreat and that was agreed to. Cibby mentioned that at her workplace someone speaks periodically about LGBTQ+ terms, as they can change from year to year. What was used previously may actually be considered offensive language later on. The group agreed this should be added to the SJ retreat agenda and Linda is considering having a webinar for our group about the issue. See <https://www.uua.org/lgbtq/welcoming/program/five-practices-welcome-renewal> to prep for discussion at the retreat.

**Alianza:** Eliseo is actively involved with this Latinx grassroots organization that works with faith-based groups that legislate for UU values locally, statewide and nationally. We look forward to hearing from Eliseo about his work with the group. Anne mentioned that Eliseo has also just been elected as a trustee at UUSJ!

**Social Justice Calendar** – no additions

**Next meeting:** August 24th at 9:30 AM on Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anne Burnham