

## **SJC Meeting/Zoom**

March 21, 2026

*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.*

Present: Linda Stoller (chair), Trude Diamond, Bob Hedlund, Rev. Amy, Barbara Hammond, Donna Polhamus, Christina Bellamy, Margie Manning, Carole Vaughn, Cibby Orozco, Dennis Thomas and Anne Burnham (secretary)

Meeting called to order at 9:30 AM. Trude started AI recording, Linda lit the chalice and offered opening words, check-ins followed.

### **Treasurer's Report (Bob)**

"We donated \$477.76 to the Southern Poverty Law Center, our February recipient. We received a thank you note and donation receipt from Feeding Tampa Bay."

### **Community Outreach Report (Trude)**

"The March Outreach Recipient, the Tampa Bay Abortion Fund, donation will be reported in April.

The April Outreach Recipient will be Faith in Florida."

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Racial Justice (Trude)**

"Some of us attended the screening of the video "Tampa's Chapter in the Civil Rights Movement," attended events at The Studio@620, participated in actions by Indivisible and Mobilize, and supported minority-owned businesses."

### **FAST (Linda)**

"This Sunday, March 22nd we begin the countdown to FAST's largest social justice event of the year, the Nehemiah Action. Over 1500 social justice seekers from various congregations in Pinellas County, come together to demand that our elected officials support programs and laws that make our community more just. This year we will be hearing about FAST's successes in getting new requirements in Dunedin's building codes that promote clean water and new resolutions in St. Petersburg to use city funds only to build housing for people making 80% or less of the Area Median Income. We will also demand that Care About Me, a mental health program that FAST fought for a few years ago, continue to get funded by the County Commission.

- On Monday, March 23rd we are having our last research meeting before the Nehemiah at UUC at 6:45 PM. Then on March 24th we are attending the County commission meeting at 2 PM to support our speakers who will be talking about continued funding for Care About Me.
- The Nehemiah will take place on April 16th at 7:00 PM at the First Baptist Church, 1900 Gandy Blvd. A bus will be leaving from the UUC parking lot. Seats are limited so sign up this Sunday after church. Invite your family and friends. All are welcome. Wear your UUC T-shirt."

### **NAMI (Christina)**

"NAMI Family Support Group chugs along in our third year at UUC. Every second Wednesday, always free, in the Patio Room and on Zoom, thanks to Lore Eargle. We are averaging over a dozen participants each month; mostly family members, and also friends and allies. There

aren't a lot of places where these discussions can be safely held, where there is understanding, respect and honesty. NAMI offers us excellent facilitators, with vast lived experience, to keep things going in a useful direction. If you are wanting a brave space to unburden yourself about difficult connections with someone you care about who struggles with a mental illness, please consider joining us."

### **Garden (Cibby)**

- "Zero Waste Workshop: On behalf of my nonprofit Building My Veggie Garden/Se Luz Productions, I want to thank UUC and Soledad for their partnership. This past weekend, we hosted a class on upcycling cardboard boxes for gardening with 12 attendees. Notably, half of the participants were visiting the UUC campus for the first time after connecting with us through my nonprofit's social media.
- Earth Day Celebration: On Sunday at 5:30 PM we will have a volunteer Zoom meeting to solidify the plans for Earth Day, April 22 from 5-7 PM."

Linda asked Cibby about an email that Anne Gilbert forwarded from a refugee. Cibby thinks it may be from the group that used to have plots in the Food Forest (before Cibby came to UUC). Rev. Amy said we can't go back to having individual gardens because there's no way to get water to that area. Rev. Amy will respond to the person who sent the email and include info about Earth Day and the possibility of having a teaching garden.

### **NEW AND CONTINUING**

#### **Immigrant Interfaith Vigil**

The Hispanic Center is grateful for the food that Carole collects at the vigil and also the LWV "Know Your Rights" cards that she put together for them. Linda reported that last Sunday a woman appeared very upset in the vigil circle. She related that her undocumented father had been arrested for driving without a license and ICE had sent him to detention. All that group members could do was express sympathy and provide a list of attorneys, while clergy offered ministerial support. It was heartbreaking. Linda noted that people will be going to the vigil at Alligator Alcatraz tomorrow, so it is important that as many of us from UUC as possible show up for the vigil at the jail in St. Pete.

#### **Postcard project**

Donna said that 50% of the postcards are done. Barbara will oversee the project now that Donna is in Maryland for the summer. Some members have had difficulty fitting the long message into such a small writing space; Barbara will shorten the English part of the message and send it to Linda. Some members may also want to photocopy & paste the Spanish portion to make it easier.

#### **Jazz Dancing Movie**

Barbara discovered that *Uprooted: The Journey of Jazz Dance* is on YouTube and that by using her account it saves having to pay the \$135 licensing fee. She has confirmed with Jeremy that he can download that version okay. Barbara has taken care of the advertising and media and is using Google Mail Merge to email a large number of congregations, art studios, etc. She will send emails to the entire UUC congregation as well. Christina and I agreed to help the day of the event. Barbara made a motion to give part of the donations from the film showing to the Fethiou Thioassane Cultural Arts dance troupe; Carole seconded, all approved. Barbara will email us a copy of the flyer so we can share it with others who might be interested; she will also check with Mike Freedman to see if he can include it with his monthly promotions. Linda asked all of us to spread the word on social media as the event gets closer.

### **T-shirts for No Kings and Nehemiah**

Small, medium and large UUC shirts will be available for purchase this Sunday after the service. Other sizes can be ordered at the Social Justice table; Linda asked Christina to email her the sizes to order for her and Ned.

### **Mobile Health Bus for Refugees**

Linda asked for volunteers who could be in the lobby in the afternoon (noon to 4 PM) in order to provide a comfortable place for refugees to wait for their appointments when the health van makes its monthly visit to the UUC parking lot; Anne Gilbert covers mornings. If there is time available, it is possible that others Rev. Amy knows are in need may be able to be seen as well. List of volunteers: April 10: Carole/Dennis; May 15: Christina; June 12: Barbara/Carole; July 10: Dennis, maybe Christina). Linda will send list of dates/volunteers to Anne G.

### **Earth Day**

The celebration of Earth Day will be on the official day, April 22nd, from 5-7 PM. Cibby and Rev. Amy are leading an idea-gathering meeting tomorrow (March 22nd) on Zoom; the link is available from Barbara for those wanting to participate. This event is not an interfaith activity but other congregations and groups in our neighborhood will be invited to come. Some of the ideas put forward so far: renting a golf cart to show members what a treasure the Food Forest and garden are; tastings; planting microgreens; walking meditation with Barb Shimer; making bracelets from plastic bags; and Christina fielding questions re: composting. Cibby mentioned that in the future she would like to have us share our ideas for upcycling clothing. Linda suggested we invite refugee families; see note in the garden report above. Cibby will also contact Millie at PFLAG (again).

### **No Kings**

Linda would like to have a UUC group gather together for the No Kings on March 28th. She suggested the protest on Gulf-to-Bay, by Jared Jewelers on the east side. Some members may wish to sit in chairs in a front row while others stand behind them with signs.

### **Trans Day of Visibility (March 31st)**

Christina said that Barbara, Nickie McNichols and she will lead one of the Community Sunday workshops next Sunday (March 29th). The exercise will be called picture books and she will bring hundreds of images she has saved from magazines, etc. related to the LGBTQ theme. Participants will choose a picture and speak about what it means to them, thereby raising awareness and deepening understanding. Christina will send info to Wendy at PFLAG and Jessica at NAMI (who oversees the queer community at those meetings), as well as others in the community. Linda bought some heart stickers with trans colors; Margie agreed to give them out at the Welcome Table and Carole will distribute them as people come in for the service. Linda will post on the website's Joys & Sorrows about how this day honors trans joy.

### **Evara**

Rev. Amy will be off on May 3rd so that seems like a good day to have a spokesperson from Evara Health speak during the service, as that agency will be the Community Outreach recipient-of-the-month. Margie will be worship associate that day and offered to do a Q&A, as she has done before, with the Evara person in order to highlight the agency and increase donations. Trude will contact Evara to find someone who can participate. Donna mentioned that she would like to have more in-depth info each month about the Community Outreach participants. Trude came up with the idea of including some of the videos and still shots that are on the respective recipient websites with the announcement slides that are shown before

the service; Margie agreed and Trude will send whatever she can find to Margie for her to add to the announcement slides about Evara and future Community Outreach recipients.

### **Building the Wall**

Anne mentioned that she spoke with Katie Green, local activist and storyteller, about this play and they plan to get together to discuss further over coffee.

### **Other**

Christina spoke about RAMWI (Refugee and Migrant Women's Initiative) closing on May 1st because the members don't feel safe going out in the community. Christina has been actively involved during the group's 13 years and was moved by the many stories told at the celebratory gathering recently. All leftover funds will go towards scholarships for refugees with the greatest need. The Sew Much Hope Program (<https://www.ramwi.org/sew-much-hope-project>) still has products to buy; Christina suggested those women consider forming a coop. Radiant Hands, Gulf Coast JFCS and Lutheran Social Services will continue with their support locally.

The chalice was extinguished at 11:15 AM. Our next meeting will be on April 25th at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anne Burnham