

SJC Meeting

August 22, 2026

Present: Linda Stoller (chair), Trude Diamond, Barbara Hammond, Donna Polhamus, Christina Bellamy, Carole Vaughn, Chris Mueller, Margie Manning, Marilyn Magee, Eliseo Santana and Anne Burnham (secretary)

Meeting called to order on Zoom at 9:35 AM. Trude started Fathom (AI) recording, Linda lit the chalice and offered opening words, check-ins followed.

Minutes from June meeting accepted without any changes.

Treasurer's report (Bob Hedlund)

July donation to Florida Rising Together: \$460.79.

(Email Bob, bobh.uuc@outlook.com, any questions.)

Outreach (Trude)

Our August recipient, [Clothes to Kids](#), donation will be reported in September. The organization provides new and quality used clothing to low-income or in-crisis school-age children, free of charge. Clothes to Kids envisions a community in which every school-age child has quality clothing so that he or she may attend school with the confidence and self-esteem needed to achieve academic success.

Our September recipient, [Boricuas de Corazon](#), provides emergency response support to local families in the Hispanic and other underserved communities in natural disasters. Teams help victims of all natural disasters to reorganize their lives before, during, and after the event. They provide resources and training to the community and connect them with housing agencies, food, shelter, and sustainable services in their native languages.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Racial Justice (Trude)

In August, some RJ members supported Indivisible activities, attended racially diverse arts and cultural events as well as online presentations about voting effectively. Please note monthly presentations by Equal Ground (our October 2026 outreach recipient): <https://www.equal-ground.com/>.

FAST (Linda)

The team leaders for the UUC FAST Justice Ministry met to plan the kickoff for this year's UUC Justice Ministry. This year our team leaders are Linda Stoller and Kristin Geeslin, with Lore Eargle mentoring. Team leaders will attend the FAST House meeting training on Monday August 31st. Then on September 6th the SJ report will focus on Kristin's reflections on the DART Justice Ministry conference she attended this July. UUC FAST will host a social hour and provide a signup opportunity for folks interested in attending small group meetings this fall. They will be held on 9/10 and 9/15 at 7PM. In-person meetings will be held on 9/13 and 9/16.

NAMI (Christina)

NAMI Family Support Group continues to meet the second Wed. of every month, in UUC's Patio Room and on Zoom, thanks to Lore Eargle. We continue to gather a dozen to fifteen participants in our circle, even in the summer months. The support group is facilitated by two NAMI facilitators with extensive lived experience. Usually a NAMI staffer is also present, to answer questions about resources in our area at the end. We draw an ongoing core group

each time, as well as new people of all ages, searching for a place where those present listen and share their own experience, strength and hope. No voiced advice, judgements or monopolizing, due in part to the written guidelines, agreements, and affirming culture that has developed over three years. If you know anyone struggling with a family member, or friend living with mental health issues, let them know about our group, listed on the UUC calendar and in the *Octagram*.

NEW AND CONTINUING

Under G-D documentary and abortion panel (Aug. 29th)

Barbara said that everything is ready to go: doors open at 3:30, film at 4, panel discussion at 4:45. Barbara will discuss Linda's emcee duties with her. In addition to the extensive PR that she has already been done (260 emails and print media), Eliseo offered to send the flyer to 75 local groups that he is influencer for on Facebook and Instagram.

Welcoming Congregation Update, PFLAG, movie

Linda announced that UUC's Welcoming Congregation for LGBTQ+ has been renewed and reiterated the importance of updating it each year.

Because PFLAG has grown beyond the space that UUC is able to provide them, they will be moving to the Mattie Williams Center in Safety Harbor. Wendy said that they couldn't have grown so much without UUC's help. We will continue to keep connections with them.

The date for showing the *Stories of Intersex and Faith* film has been changed to November 14th. Rev. Amy may have someone come to speak at the service the Sunday before. Barbara offered to send Linda her master PR list when she is ready to send notices out.

Trip to Eatonville

Margie said that Eatonville is a small community just north of Orlando, founded and governed by people who were formerly enslaved. The town has a festival in late January each year in honor of Zora Neale Hurston, who grew up there. Margie will let us know when the date is announced; many of us expressed interest in going.

287(g) Proclamation and petition

Linda reported that the Pinellas Coalition for Human Rights and to End 287(g), in solidarity with the national "Talk to Your Sheriff" initiative, is a local campaign focused on ending law enforcement cooperation with ICE. Many of the community members currently meeting at UUC every other Sat. afternoon have been participating in vigils and protests in front of the jail and the sheriff's department. This newest action involves gathering petitions and reading the proclamation at city council meetings. Linda will have the petition for members to sign after the service tomorrow.

Mitten Tree

Marilyn announced that the Serenity Seekers covenant group has adopted the Mitten Tree as a service project. The group decided that, instead of gifts for children this year, they would like to designate seniors. Silver Santas (under the auspices of Better Living for Seniors and the Area Office on Aging) is the organization that will provide UUC with wish lists for low-income and isolated seniors in Pinellas County. It is very well organized and has many churches participating. The RE children at UUC will make the mittens and the covenant group will set up the tree; Nov. 3 & 10, members will select mittens (with wishes affixed); Nov. 17 & 24 shoppers will return gifts to UUC; all gifts will be delivered to Silver Santas no later than Dec. 1.

Florida Action Committee

Chris spoke about FAC, which educates and advocates for reforms to the Florida Sex Offender Registry that has over time proved ineffective in preventing sexual offenses while forcing individuals who are charged as “sex offenders” to be registered for life and have their information made part of the public record. The stigma associated makes it almost impossible for registrants to get a job, find housing and regain status in the community after serving their sentence. Christina stated that the punishment is often disproportionate to the offense and that there is a need to demythologize the issue. FAC’s legislative committee is crafting legislation for the 2026-27 year to allow youth 18-24 years of age to petition to be removed from the registry after 10 years. There is some bipartisan traction and hopefully it will be sponsored. FAC has also hired lawyers and earlier this month filed a federal lawsuit charging that Florida’s sex offender registration and onerous restrictions are unconstitutional.

Discussion for SJC action: We could put FAC on UUC’s Community Outreach list, but Linda suggested that we would need to educate our membership about the registry before doing that. We could have a movie/discussion and publicize as a social justice issue to draw an audience; or have speakers from FAC and NAMI (Christina pointed out the overlap between the two groups); or just have a panel, perhaps in conjunction with postcard writing if there is legislation pending. It looks like January 2027 will be earliest availability for event at UUC.

Social Justice Retreat

We will try to find a time in Sept. or Oct. for an SJC retreat and we would like to involve our new ministerial intern.

The chalice was extinguished at 11:10. The next meeting will be on September 26th at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Burnham