

# Social Justice Council Meeting/Zoom

Nov 22, 2025

Present: Linda Stoller (chair), Bob Hedlund (treasurer), Trude Diamond, Chris Mueller, Christina Bellamy, Donna Polhamus, Barbara Hammond, Margie Manning, Carol Vaughn, Barb Foley, Maryann Hamilton, Lore Eargle, Anne Burnham (secy. pro tem)

Linda lit the chalice and read words from the UUA for the Transgender Day of Remembrance.

No changes to October minutes.

## Treasurer's report (Bob) and Community Outreach (Trude):

- "For October, ACLU of Florida received \$621.87.
- For November's recipient, UUSC's Guest at Your Table, donations are being made through UUC's collection plate and Breeze, not via UUSC's website.
- December's recipient will be [Feeding Tampa Bay](#), which "connects and convenes solutions, partners, and resources" that nourish long-term food stability."

Linda added a reminder for us that the SJC sent \$1,000 from the Better World Fund to Hope Villages and the Good Neighbors Food Bank (@ \$500) during federal shutdown.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Racial Justice (Trude)

- "For November, the usual notice to the email list provided links to opportunities to support economic and cultural events in racially diverse communities.
- Notices for January events have already garnered attendees and volunteers to serve breakfast at the North Pinellas NAACP Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr celebration on the 19th and participants for the NAACP Youth Council's screening of "Shared Legacies"—a film about the partnerships between African American and Jewish activists during the Civil Rights movement—on the 22nd."

Trude will put a notice about the movie in the *Octagram* closer to the time.

### FAST (Linda)

"FAST had our Annual Assembly on October 27th! With 161 votes, youth concerns is our new issue for 2025-26. This Assembly had the highest in-person attendance since 2019. Last year we had a turnout of 297 network members this year we had 408 network members in attendance—that's a 37% increase over last year!

What's next you may ask? Well, we begin the research process. During this time interested network members will begin to decide what we will be asking for specifically under the large youth concern umbrella. The first step is to meet together at the research kickoff on Monday December 8th at 6:45 at Shiloh Baptist Church, 13255 118th St. Largo. At this meeting you will learn more about the research process as well as the monitoring process for affordable housing and water quality. All are welcome to attend."

### NAMI (Christina)

"NAMI (National Alliance for Mental Illness) Pinellas chapter continues to offer a beacon of support, information, and resources every second Wednesday of every month at UUC. This Family Support Group is for family and friends supporting someone living with a mental illness. Families and other care partners share their struggles, what they have learned, and what is available locally and beyond. A wide variety of conditions are represented: depression, anxiety, bi-polar, addictions, anger management, and other often perplexing lived experiences. This is our third year hosting this meaningful gathering. If you think it might be

helpful for you, please join us in the Patio Room. Two well-trained NAMI facilitators guide the free group each time, and all sessions are in the room and on Zoom." Christina said there were 14-15 at last meeting. The core group commented that they hadn't known anybody who had these problems, so isolating; group provides crucial support and encouragement.

**Interfaith Tampa Bay (Maryann) – no report**

**Teaching Garden (Cibby)**

- "We continue to have our USF interns develop videos about what is growing in the garden. The next video will be released the Saturday after Thanksgiving. It will be about growing Chamomile.
- On December 6, we have an eco-friendly gift wrapping class at 10am in Surti Hall. We will be making beautiful gift wraps created from items from the garden and paper bags. We will do a review of what gift wrapping is recyclable, reusable and not good for the environment.
- On January 18 at 1pm we will do the Mitzvah Day of Service in Collaboration with Temple B'nai Israel and the GCJFCS -refugee center. We will do a continuation of the recyclable gift wrapping class. In this class, we will make molded fiber pots for the garden with gift wrapping that our communities will be collecting through the holidays. Some of the pots will be for the attendants to take home, and the rest will be made to donate to the Martin Luther King Community Garden."

## **NEW AND CONTINUING**

**Call to Action (Chris)**

A new Florida bill threatens to make housing for people on the sexual offender registry nearly impossible. Chris will send the bill number and legislator contact info to Linda so that she can distribute an action alert to the SJC mailing list to encourage members to speak out against the bill.

**Democracy Action Team – DAT (Linda)**

Upcoming event at UUC on Feb. 14th will include a film *Suppressed and Sabotaged* about voter suppression. Mary Fahy from Vote Pinellas will speak about getting out the vote for the 2026 election and others from the NAACP will also be speakers. This event will occur while Florida legislators are meeting.

**Transforming Hearts (Linda)**

The last two videos of the series in December will look at our congregation and ways we can expand our welcoming in general.

**Refugee Program (Barb F.)**

On Dec. 5th UUC will host the GCJFS mobile health clinic for refugee healthcare in the parking lot. Rev. Amy and Anne Gilbert will be in the building in the AM; Barb and Christina have volunteered to be on hand from 12-4 PM. There will be an area by the gardens for children and adults while they are waiting for treatment from the USF medical staff, who generously offer their time gratis. Linda will call GCJFS about other ways we might be able to help.

**Mitten Tree (Anne)**

No one responded to 2 requests for someone to lead this event so UUC won't have its traditional Mitten Tree this year. Anne will check with Directions for Living (the local group we worked with last year) to see if there are still children registered in their gift-giving program and, if so, put a notice in the Octagram about how individual members can choose names easily on their gift-giving website.

### **Interfaith demonstrations (Linda)**

There are still many people demonstrating against immigration policy on Sundays from 4-5 PM in front of the jail on 49th Street in St. Pete.

### **Requests for Sponsorship (Linda, Maryann)**

Linda sent us an email from Sharon Joy Kleitsch prior to today's meeting. She is requesting UUC sponsorship of an event, "Compassionate Florida: Who Are We?" from Jan. 9-11, 2026. Sharon Joy is a well-known networker in Florida and her group is called Connection Partners; Christina has known her for many years. Many UU communities hold these events, which are in keeping with our values. Maryann moved that we sponsor the event and waive the room rental fee; Anne seconded; approved. Maryann will be the UUC liaison and will firm up details with Sharon 3662Joy; Linda will let Anne Gilbert know about our decision.

### **New SJC web page (Margie)**

Social Justice now has its very own tab at the top of the home page!! Margie walked us through all the options in the pulldown menu: Welcome to Social Justice @UUC, Democracy Advocates Team, Environmental Justice, FAST, Racial Justice, Refugee & Immigrant Team, Welcoming LGBTQ+, Partner Organizations (at Christina's request, Margie will update the NAMI info to clarify it is a family support group) and Learn More! A huge job well done!

### **United Faiths Walk of Peace (via email from Carol Hamilton)**

"I attended the UFWOP meeting today at Good Shepherd in Dunedin hosted by Robyn Harker of the Good Shepherd.

United Faiths Walk of Peace for 2026 will be on February 1st. It will be the 10th anniversary, but the agenda is mostly the same. Additionally, there will be a short history of the walk and a peace prayer will be presented at Pioneer Park around 2 pm just before the walk begins. There will be T-shirts for sale at Pioneer Park and also a music program on stage between 1:30 and 2 pm during registration. It is still in question as to whether we will stop at the Mosque on New York Avenue. At Weaver Park, there will be the usual peace rocks and prayer flags, a Tai Chi demonstration and a drum circle. There will be a rickshaw and probably a golf cart or two for transportation.

I will send you the final program once it's available.

I will follow up on the peace rocks with Barb in RE.

### **Other (Maryann)**

Linda agreed to add Maryann's request for new t-shirts with the UUC logo to the Dec. agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 11 AM. Next meeting will be Dec. 20th at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted

Anne Burnham