

Social Justice Visioning Session for 2022-23

November 19, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 AM. Attending in person: Linda Stoller (chair), Rev. Amy, Natasha Cruz-Knopf, Barb Czech, Carol Vaughn, Davonne Irion, Carol Hamilton, Eloise Hardman, Marlene Calderone (treasurer), Christina Bellamy, Barb Foley and Anne Burnham (secretary); Trude Diamond was on Zoom.

- 1) Introduction by chair: Where are we as a congregation and how does that affect our Social Justice programming? Linda made 3 particular points:
 - We need to recognize that we have had 2 ½ years of isolation due to the pandemic; that we are now a smaller, older congregation with a different culture.
 - There is strong interest in social justice issues at UUC but some members have other priorities (e.g., worship, music)
 - Coalition building is important; need to keep that in mind when introducing new projects. We have much to offer coalitions. The NAACP, League of Women Voters and Indivisible are a few groups that we worked with during the election cycle. The UUA is an important ongoing resource. UUC has strength in the number of volunteers; groups are already looking to us to help them out.
 - Side with Love is a great resource that we're not currently taking advantage of. It offers inspirational leadership, guides for congregations to use and much more.

- 2) What should be the goals of the SJC as a whole?
 - Pool resources, don't stay in silos (Christina)
 - Use resources of UUA more (Carol V.)
 - Who do we coalition with? (Carol H.)
 - National groups offer guidance, but we have to make local connections (Natasha)
 - We could get together as a group (SJC) to view UUA resources (Linda)
 - Build coalitions with other UU congregations in our area (Eloise)
 - Cluster (of 10 UU churches in this area) is not organized, limited to particular events (Linda)
 - Cluster is not a part of the UUA (Rev. Amy)
 - Don't restrict to UU churches; consider Quakers, synagogues, etc. for ideas (Marlene)
 - Ask UUA to direct us to resources (Carol V.)
 - Ask UUC members what groups they belong to (Linda)
 - UUC members will be more ready to act if we do a survey of their interests (Barb C.)
 - Consider linking up with larger coalitions (e.g., climate change lobby); too much fragmentation among groups (Carol H.)
 - Indigenous congregations, for example, needed to go to groups and find out what connections they have (Rev. Amy)
 - Need to pick the cause and go from there (Rev. Amy)
 - Collaboration provides good practice in breaking down walls (Christina)
 - Decide on projects, ask congregation which of those they prefer (Carol H.)
 - Ask for specific help in events of congregational members (Carol V.)
 - Consider the intersectionality of priorities, rather than be too specific (Linda)
 - Need to remember that not everyone is able to do physical things (Carol V.)
 - FAST is a good example of a directed approach (Christina)

- 3) What steps do we need to take to follow a coalition model?
 - Go to bigger topics for coalition building (Linda)
 - List our ideas, go to congregation to see what they want and what other ideas they have (Marlene)
 - Go to community and see what they offer that we could fit in with (Linda)
 - Get word out to congregation re: various topics SJC is considering, some might come to meetings if they knew about specific issues, need to ask (Christina)

- Join with large groups, ask what they need, then take those requests to congregation (Trude)
- Have to realize that many congregational members are doing other volunteer activities (Eloise)
- Need internal PR (Carol H.)
- Is SJC a leader or representative of membership with other organizations? Not mutually exclusive (Davonne)
- Open meetings for member ideas (Natasha)
- Hub for other organizations, take their needs to membership (Trude)
- Survey what members are involved with, what is needed (Trude)
- Define focus (Linda)
- Any responses to Linda's monthly SJC reports at Sunday services? No
- Have opportunity for members to provide info re: groups they know need help (Rev. Amy)
- Bring in more people (Linda)
- Quakers an example of small and mighty group (Christina)
- Zoom leaders can ask for ideas in the chat (Carol V.); forms are also available to fill out there (Natasha)
- When at other meetings, talk about our social justice activities (Carol V.)
- Need to do outreach at the SJC table, do a survey, get requests via Zoom, have cards to fill out in pews or baskets in sanctuary to get sense of congregational interests and names of groups and interests
- Survey questions: What are your social justice interests? What groups you are you part of? Other info you want to share?
- Note: Kelly Tew will be sending a volunteer interest survey to members shortly after Thanksgiving! (Trude)
- After results come in from volunteer survey (re: leadership interest, participation in, what lifelong learning projects), can send out separate SJC survey (Linda)
- Need to keep survey brief, only a few questions (Eloise)
- Add a question to the volunteer survey re: social justice (Trude)
- SJC members voted to request that a 4th question be added to the volunteer survey: "What social justice groups are you involved with, or participate in, outside of UUC?" (Trude will share survey results with SJC.)

New Programs

- 1) Adopt a Family (Natasha): a holiday gift program through Directions for Living (where Natasha is a caseworker), which would replace the Mitten Tree. Barb F. expressed concern about it being too expensive for some members to do alone. Options: to adopt a single child or divvy up the toy requests amongst members. We voted to adopt 20 families. The toys need to be delivered to the agency by Dec. 12th. Linda will announce in her SJC report on Nov. 27th; Natasha will put a notice in the next e-Octagram and ask Loren Logan (editor) to include a signup link.
- 2) United Faith Walk for Peace (Carol H.): The walk is one of two yearly events a small group in Dunedin organizes around the United Nations' International Day of Peace. It will be on Jan. 29th and will start at Pioneer Park, stop at Masjid Al-Salaam mosque and end at Weaver Park. This is a good interfaith event for coalition building. We will supply water & ice in the 3 large water jugs that we own and perhaps help with setup and distribute flyers. Carol will see if the UUC kids would want to do rock painting. We agreed to give \$100 from our budget for misc. costs (e.g., ice, paint).

January events

- 1) Martin Luther King Day (Linda): The NAACP will host their annual breakfast & march at the North Greenwood Aquatic Center on Jan. 16th. Linda has spoken to Meghan re: having the UUC children participate in the march and UUC members can volunteer to help with the breakfast; anyone going to the breakfast pays for their ticket. Linda will check about putting an ad for UUC in the event booklet and email us what the cost for that would be so that we can vote on it.
- 2) NAMI (Christina): At 10 AM on Sat., Jan. 21st, Denise Bjurholm, Executive Director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, will give a presentation at UUC on what NAMI Pinellas County is doing in

regard to mental illness. Some UUC members have personally been affected by mental illness in their families and this is a way for UUC to take a stand on the issue. Help may be needed for flyers and parking lot signage, as well as people to assist if anyone is triggered by the discussion. Christina will ask Kelly Tew to put a notice on Facebook so that members can “share” info about the event. Other churches may be invited, as well as the AA group that meets at UUC. Linda will reach out to uptown churches and NAMI may be able to do PR also. Rev. Amy will make sure the event gets on the UUC calendar. Linda suggested serving coffee and pastries; Christina said she would pick some up for the event. The goal is to have 30-40 UUC members, families and caregivers attend. Natasha, Eloise, DaVonne and Linda volunteered to be on team to help with the event.

New Issue

Community Outreach: Eloise reported that the Board wants us to recommend the best way to collect donations from the congregation each month for Community Outreach now that we are meeting in the sanctuary again. She and Marlene provided some history of how it has been handled in the past. Before the pandemic, collections were made to Split the Plate, check or cash, with half for the general fund and half for the charity of the month (designate for charity or not) 1x/month, then went to 2x/month. Share the Plate generally took in more for both the congregation and the charity. During the pandemic, with Zoom services only, giving online became the preferred way to donate to the charity of the month but not everyone knew how to do that; checks by mail remained an option. Marlene made a motion to recommend having Share the Plate once a month total split (other than pledges), with online or checks by mail for charity of the month only; we voted in favor, goes back to board for final vote.

The meeting adjourned at 11:55. The next meeting will be in the Patio Room and on Zoom on Dec. 17th at 10 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Burnham