

SJ Council Meeting

November 20, 2021

Meeting called to order on Zoom at 10:05. Present: Linda Stoller (chair), Barb Foley, Davonne Irion, Susan Allen, Trude Diamond, Marlene Calderone, Harriet Ha-Sidi, Carol Vaughn, Eloise Hardman (board liaison), Anne Burnham (secy.)

October minutes were approved by consensus.

Marlene reported that \$300 was sent to Community Tampa Bay and \$560 will be going to the ACLU for Community Outreach; \$1,161.22 remains in the Outreach budget. Jeremy will be paid from the Racial Justice budget for technical work he did for the 8th Principle video. Marlene said that she used to get a breakdown of each deposit, but hasn't been lately; she and Eloise will discuss further. Marlene also said that it is best to make contributions online (checks accepted, but discouraged).

The UUC Covenant of Right Relations was reviewed in accordance with a suggestion from Bill Norsworthy at the recent leadership workshop that each committee do so.

New and Continuing Issues:

- 1) Toy Collection: Marlene spoke with Susan Conrad at the Shepherd Center about UUC having a holiday collection for families they work with. Susan recommended specific toys and places to get gift cards (see e-Octagram for list). We will collect the gifts as follows: before Sunday services on Nov. 28th (Linda) and Dec. 5th (Barb), with an additional Saturday, Nov. 27th, from 12-2 (Susan and Carol). Gifts will be stored in the Westwood Rm., not sure yet whether Shepherd Center will be able to pick them up.
- 2) Open Issues: Lore Eargle and Bill Norsworthy are co-leaders. Linda suggested a movie about misdemeanors to inform the congregation about the work FAST is doing on that issue, which would also tie in well with dismantling racism and the 8th Principle proposal. On March 6th a Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) representative will speak. Other ideas that came up in later discussions included inviting Amy Weintraub (Reproductive Rights Program Director at Progress Florida) and someone from Mi Vecino to speak.
- 3) Reproductive Justice: The UUA and Standing on the Side of Love is participating in SACRed (Spiritual Alliance of Communities for Reproductive Dignity). There will be a gathering in January to mark the anniversary of *Roe v Wade* and in support of Texans seeking abortion. On Jan. 15th, the first day of the new legislative session, there will be buses going to Tallahassee for a pro-choice demonstration; Linda will post in the e-Octagram to see if any UUC members are interested in going. In January the local Planned Parenthood will also have a protest; Carol will get more info on that.
- 4) Voter initiative: Linda has been in touch with Mi Vecino (My Neighbor), an organization that is working in conjunction with the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition (FRRRC) to write postcards to people eligible to vote but not registered because they were incarcerated. MV has a list and postcards ready to send to those who volunteer to write a short message on the cards and mail them. MV is also available to do a short Zoom training; Linda will post on the e-Octagram to see who is interested, need at least 10 people (almost that many with those attending mtg. today); Susan will schedule training. Felons will register with MV and FRRRC will follow up with them, including in some cases paying outstanding fines so that former felons can vote.

Committee Reports:

- 1) Migrant Justice: Harriet spoke about Welcome with Dignity, which is a conglomerate of organizations committed to helping migrants; one way is through the donation of airline miles to help migrants get to the U.S. She also mentioned "Songs for Justice," a benefit concert for the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) on Zoom at 7 PM tonight (Nov. 20).

- 2) Racial Justice: Susan reported on good feedback re: the 8th Principle at the Halloween service; followup with every covenant group this month. Trude said that she would send a list of organization websites that will be holding events and/or protests re: suppression of voter rights to Linda for distribution to each of us; asterisks on the list indicate which are tax deductible for donations. Susan will be checking where we can help for MLK birthday in Jan., not sure about cancellations because of COVID.
- 3) Refugee Task Force. Barbara said the group will be meeting next week. There are not many students right now. The Gulf Coast Jewish Services and Lutheran Family Services have not returned calls, not sure whether there will be a family from Afghanistan coming to this area. It has been difficult to find affordable rentals but someone in Dunedin has offered a short-term studio rental.
- 4) Compassion & Choices: Anne cancelled the Nov. and Dec. meetings. She is hoping to connect with Nicole Reyes-Palma soon and gather information from other sources to help with planning for the future of C&C Clearwater.
- 5) FAST: The Nov. 15th kickoff was well attended, and about 10 people from UUC signed up to work on different committees; Davonne on Water Quality and Linda on Affordable Housing; the other committee is Criminal Misdemeanors.
- 6) LULAC: Eliseo was not present (but is very active with getting people vaccinated, Thanksgiving meals, etc.

Community Outreach recipient ideas:

Feb: FL Rights Restoration Coalition (for Black History Month)

UU the Vote ??

FLOC (which could be considered a 501c3 because of its affiliation with the AFL-CIO)

Discussion ensued about the Guest at Your Table service in January, for which Barbara and Marlene are point persons. Linda assured them that the UUSC supplies everything they'll need (20-min. sermon, etc.) and a Worship Associate will coordinate.

The meeting adjourned at 11:50. The next meeting will be on Dec. 18th at 10 AM on Zoom <https://zoom.us/j/97869604806>.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Burnham