

SJC Meeting/Zoom

December 20, 2025

Present: Linda Stoller (chair), Bob Hedlund (treasurer), Rev. Amy, Donna Polhamus, Eliseo Santana, Carole Vaughn, Trude Diamond, Christina Bellamy, Maryann Hamilton, Sue Hand, Cibby Orozco and Anne Burnham (secy. pro tem)

Meeting called to order at 9:30; Trude started AI recording.
Linda lit the chalice and offered a reading, followed by check-ins.
Anne reviewed 2 small changes made to Nov. minutes.

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

- November's Community Outreach was the UUSC Guest at Your Table drive: \$687.29.
- December's Community Outreach recipient is Feeding Tampa Bay, which hasn't yet been tallied for the month" (estimate of \$400)
- January's Community Outreach recipient will be the Neighborly Care Network (Meals on Wheels)."

Rev. Amy mentioned that she believes RE will be making Valentine's cards for people who receive Meals on Wheels.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Racial Justice (Trude)

- For December, the usual notice to the email list provided links to opportunities to support economic and cultural events in racially diverse communities.
- January 19th: UUC will have at least seven volunteers to serve at the North Pinellas NAACP Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr celebration breakfast and one volunteer to drive attendees to the breakfast and ride in the march.
- January 20, 5:30-8 PM: National Day of Racial Healing with The St. Petersburg Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Center—a free inspiring evening of connection, storytelling, and community building at Stetson University College of Law. More information at www.eventbrite.com.
- January 22, 7 PM: 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. Tickets \$10. Register: www.jewishgulfcoast.org/calendar/jcrc.
- Trude will put a notice about the MLK Week events in the Octagram for January 2 and 9.

FAST (Linda)

We had a very successful research kickoff meeting on Dec. 9th. We learned about how we will begin to research the broad topic of Children and Youth and narrow it down to an issue cut. During the months of January, February and March we will be meeting with experts in the field to determine what our focus will be. After the new year we will be letting folks know about these meetings and invite folks to attend. The next FAST board meeting will be on January 12th at UUC.

Linda added that another associate organizer has been hired—Lana, who will be coming in January; another may also be hired.

NAMI (Christina)

Christina said that they've been having about 15 attend meetings regularly, a nice core group that keeps it strong; also a good location, even for people across Tampa Bay. Some participants can be in serious crisis and the staff handles everything so gracefully. NAMI is also extraordinarily good at getting funding.

Interfaith Tampa Bay (Maryann)

Maryann did not have a report because she was not able to be at the last meeting. She said that new officers were elected; she will continue to be liaison with the group but no longer secretary.

Teaching Garden (Cibby)

- Eco-friendly gift wrapping workshop: This month we had the eco-friendly gift wrapping workshop on Saturday, December 6. We had 10 people attending. We had a lot of fun trying new ways to use nature to wrap presents. A few presents went to be placed under the Christmas tree in the sanctuary. A big thank you to Soledad for helping with this workshop.
- USF interns: The last day of our USF interns and last video was December 19th. We are very grateful to USF for giving us the chance to have the interns helping us in the garden.
- Small Actions, Big Impact Workshop: On Sunday, January 18th at 1 PM we are partnering with Temple B'nai Israel and the Gulf Coast JFCS to use old gift wrappings and cardboard boxes to make fiber pots for the garden. We are expecting around 30 people to attend the workshop. A big thank you to Soledad for helping us with this workshop.

Linda asked if Cibby would like UUC members to donate wrapping paper and boxes; she said that would be great, as long as everything is recyclable (wrapping paper that is scrunchable indicates it can be recycled—no shiny, glittery or plastic coated and no scotch tape; plastic pots of various sizes are also welcome). Rev. Amy or Sue will announce it at the next day's Sunday service and Cibby will place a box in the lobby for donations. Cibby expects 60-70 pots will be made, $\frac{1}{2}$ to go to attendees and $\frac{1}{2}$ to be donated to the Martin Luther King Community Garden.

NEW AND CONTINUING

Democracy Advocacy Team (DAT)

Linda reported that the team met again and is planning an event for Feb. 14th or 21st, which will pivot to working on fair elections and voter turnout. There will be a movie on kinds of voter suppression in this country, a panel of speakers and food. Carole mentioned that she thought the 21st might be in conflict with a Run for Something event that day as well as a folk concert at UUC in the evening; Carole will check and let Linda know.

Transforming Hearts

There was a third meeting in early December; people felt they weren't done talking, so there will be another meeting after the first Sunday service in January. The discussion will continue about trans inclusion and especially congregational welcoming. Linda will contact Anne G. to request a room.

PFLAG will be having its holiday party this month and continuing with meetings in Jan. Drag Bingo is scheduled for Jan. 31st and even more people are expected to attend than the last time, which had a very large turnout; Carole and Judy Toth are working on a flyer.

Immigrant Interfaith Vigil

A number of UUCers having been attending the Interfaith Coalition vigils in front of the jail on 49th Street in St. Pete on Sunday from 4-5 PM. There is discussion about how to get the word out to more people about it. Rev. Amy said that many congregations have a lot of Democrats and Republicans in them and they have to work hard to keep their members together in this time of division. Donna is making a banner to clarify what this group is about, that it's interfaith. Eliseo praised this activity that gives like-minded people more energy and helps them feel they are not alone.

USF Mobile Health Unit for Refugees

Christina gave an update about the Gulf Coast JFCS mobile health van that came to the UUC parking lot early this month. USF medical staff provided free health screenings and scheduled appointments, if needed, and even made sure they had transportation to the appointments. Christina and Barb Foley were there as volunteers that afternoon and both were extremely impressed with how kind, patient and respectful the Gulf Coast case managers were. Christina emphasized that this is a wonderful service. The van will be at UUC quarterly. Eliseo added that it is important to maintain the property so that larger vehicles have access and we are mindful of the trees.

Contacts with Rev. Amy

So many groups (16 that she listed, and counting) are interested in having Rev. Amy be involved with their activities and there's no way she can be everywhere and also carry on all her ministerial duties for UUC. In the interest of the best use of her time, she asked us what we thought should be her highest priorities (i.e., what we thought most important) and a few gave their thoughts. She was then asked which organizations she thought would be most effective for her to show up for. The four she chose were FAST, Bread and Roses, Equality Florida and FUMA (FUMA, the Florida UU Ministers Association, which works really hard to let each other know what's going on and if possible coordinate activities). Linda mentioned that many congregational members may not even realize what Rev. Amy is doing, e.g., with Bread and Roses; she suggested we maybe need to think about how the minister and congregants can be together for the benefit of all.

Event with Sharon Joy

Maryann said that she will be there for both days "Compassionate Florida: Who Are We?" but isn't part of the planning process. Linda said that unlike some other congregations, we are already meeting a lot of Sharon Joy's objectives. She also pointed out that we are not responsible for such things as attendance, e.g., it is not our project.

Rice and Beans

Eliseo expressed his desire to honor Harriet's Ha-Sidi's rice and beans legacy. He is in contact with different organizations that can utilize rice and beans and he has offers of money to pay for the product. We would do the buying and package it for distribution. He would like to expand to year round to include local groups that are in need as well as farm workers. Rev. Amy suggested that we might be able to deliver to people in our community who are afraid to leave home because of ICE. Eliseo cannot do it alone, is looking for someone to help him. Linda asked Eliseo to draft a proposal and send it to her to put on the January agenda.

Community Interns

This program is similar to the one Cibby has had with interns for the garden. Trude is waiting to hear back about the cost to have a table at the opportunity festival USF has each semester. We certainly qualify as an organization they would partner with and there is a broad range of opportunities at UUC for students to get the credit they need for community service. Trude's intent is to take this to the board and have them fill out the necessary paperwork.

UU Social Justice (UUSJ)

Eliseo would like our Community Outreach to consider the UUSJ in support of its D.C. work. Linda reminded Eliseo that Trude has a very long list already and Trude responded that we generally support local/state groups. Trude requested that Linda put it on the January agenda; Linda asked Eliseo to provide information re: the group.

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 AM. Next meeting will be on Jan. 24th at 9:30 AM.