

Social Justice Council Meeting

April 16, 2022

This—the first hybrid SJC meeting—was called to order at 10:05 in the Patio Room! Attending in person: Linda Stoller (chair), Eliseo Santana, Barb Foley, Trude Diamond, Barbara Czech, Natasha Cruz-Knopf, Meredith Olson, Anne Burnham (secy.) Attending on Zoom: Davonne Irion, Eloise Hardman (board liaison), Harriet Ha-Sidi, Larilyn Pittman, Marlene Calderone, Carole Vaughn, Susan Allen, Christina (just a few minutes—feel better soon, Christina!!).

Minutes: Approved. Anne asked to revisit the group's decision at the last meeting to not post the SJC minutes on the member page of the website. After discussion the group decided it would be better to archive the older minutes and post the 2 current years in folders for each year to save space. Linda will give Anne Gilbert permission to archive everything before 2021 and Anne will post the minutes for 2021 and 2022.

Treasurer's Report: Marlene is waiting for more information in order to finalize her March report. After the expenditure for the postcards, \$516.65 remains, with the Pride Parade still needing to be funded. The Better World Emergency Fund will have only \$2,596 left after sending \$1,000 to HEP (Homeless Empowerment Program) in Clearwater.

Community Outreach: UUC members will be asked to give to the Better World Emergency Fund in May and will learn about the importance of having that money readily available to respond when crises occur near and far. Given the increased need families have for food over the summer, it was decided that June & July Community Outreach will go to Feeding Tampa Bay; August donations will be for Clothes for Kids.

Upon reporting the total Social Justice philanthropy for 2021-2022, Marlene said the donated amount was \$10,954.82. This includes amounts from the Better World Emergency Fund, Community Outreach/Share the Plate and donations from the SJ budget. When discussing the totals, Marlene mentioned that the months of April and May are not included because we do not have these totals yet. She suggested that including the figures from the previous April & May (which were never reported) might give a better picture of a full year's donations in the financial report to the congregation. As it stands now, the amounts from April & May for last year or this year would not be included in any reports. Eloise, as our representative to the board, will check with the board about including those months.

Marlene sent in the budget request for fiscal year 2022-23: \$1200 for SJC, \$500 for Racial Justice and \$3,000 for FAST (same as last year).

New and Continuing Issues

- 1) Film Series: Christina Bellamy was ill today, so discussion about films was tabled until the next meeting, giving us more time to come up with recommendations.
- 2) New Policy for Unhoused on Campus: Natasha reported that the board has requested that SJC assemble small-sample hygiene kits and a list of community resources to give to any unhoused people who come to the campus. Barb C. agreed to collect and assemble the kits with samples that she has and other SJC members

donate. Anne Gilbert needs to know where the kits are, as well as Jay Hardman, who is often working in the community garden area.

- 3) Pride Parade: Linda reported that the parade will be in the evening in St. Pete on June 25th. UU Cluster congregations did not express interest in participating when Linda asked at their recent meeting. A rep was not present from UU St. Pete at that meeting and Rev. Ben will be at GA on the 25th, but he said members of that congregation would like to join with us and presumably split the \$150 registration fee; Linda will follow up with them to confirm. We want to have a float or cart for those who can't walk the route. Those who said they would help Linda with the event: Trude, Larilyn, Davonne, Marlene, Eloise and Anne. Marlene will put a notice in the e-Octagram about the parade. Larilyn will submit a message from the St. Pete Interfaith group for the e-O. We decided we could not be involved with the LGBTQ Youth & Family Day on June 18th, but Meredith will contact UUC families to let them know about it.
- 4) Linda mentioned that the SJ table is set up again in the Social Hall for people to visit after Sunday services.
- 5) Open Issues: Meredith spoke about the importance of Open Issues in spreading the word about social justice issues; perhaps there could be an Open Issues that focuses on how the SJC works. She also recommended collaboration between the SJC and Lifelong Learning and suggested that the SJC put some of its info in the Lifelong Learning section of the e-Octagram.

Eliseo thought community officials could speak at Open Issues about their programs; Barb C. questioned whether there would be enough members attending at 9:30 AM to warrant that. Eloise suggested informing our members about presentations going on elsewhere. Trude thought that evening Lifelong Learning programs could include presentations from community agencies. Partnering with other groups can avoid fragmentation; perhaps we can be cosponsors instead of trying to do everything ourselves.
- 6) Get-out-the-Vote postcards: Davonne had to leave the meeting early, so Linda reported on the great turnout (including some guests) at the postcard writing "party" following last month's SJC meeting. We have received 400 more addresses for voters in the area. Linda suggested having the postcards available for pick up at the SJ table each Sunday. Barb C. questioned people having to buy their own cards & stamps. The group felt that we should supply postcards and make paying postage optional. Delivery of postcards to members will be possible and address lists can be mailed to snowbirds during the summer months. Barbara C. hopes that we will continue to make postcard writing a fun social event by setting certain dates to get together. Other groups contacting voters: Eliseo said LULAC is writing to residents in the Greenwood area, perhaps we could help there, and Larilyn said the NAACP is doing Get-out-the-Vote, perhaps invite to a future Open Issues.
- 7) SJC report: Better World Emergency Fund, Pride Parade, postcards, amount of UUC donations for the year.

Committee Reports

- 1) Migrant Farmworkers: Harriet said that 800 people marched with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) in Palm Beach to urge Wendy's to join the Fair Food

Program. On April 24th a CIW member will speak at Open Issues and also briefly at the Sunday service.

- 2) Racial Justice: Trude expressed pride in the congregation for voting to adopt the 8th Principle. She is making a list of informational activities for UUC members and the public; suggestions for additions to it are welcome. The team will be ready to “hit the ground” in September.
- 3) FAST: Linda reported that the logistics of planning the event this year were challenging and apologized for some confusion. The negative response from some officials in Pinellas indicated that Criminal Justice needs more work. There was an excellent writeup in the *Tampa Bay Times* (check the e-Octagram). The Joshua Assembly will be on May 9th.
- 4) Compassion & Choices: Anne reported that the April & May meetings are focusing on videos Arwyn Elden (LCSW) prepared in response to questions members submitted about palliative care, hospice care, CPR/DNRs and VSED (voluntarily stopping eating and drinking).
- 5) Refugee Task Force: Barb F. said that Westminster has provided three houses on their St. Pete campus for refugees and she will be working with the tutors, presenting a workshop on teaching ESOL to the Afghan children. Jewish Family Services has asked how many Middle Eastern refugees UUC can tutor, so she is checking with former tutors in the ESOL program.
- 6) LULAC: Eliseo reported that Clearwater will receive \$22.5 million from the American Rescue Plan; residents will have a chance to say how they want it spent on April 21st and Council will meet on May 5th for discussion. Other upcoming events are:
May 7: Gun Safety Educational Program, 8-12 PM
May 13: City of Largo Career Fair, Largo Library, 10-2 PM
May 21: LULAC statewide convention
May 30: Voter Education Brunch, Manhattan Casino, 11-1 PM

Note: The SJC is changing the monthly meeting date to the 4th Saturday in order to have totals from bookkeeping in time for the SJC treasurer to prepare her report. Linda will check with the worship associates to be sure they can accommodate her report on the 4th Sundays. The next SJC meeting will be on May 28th at 10 AM in the Patio Room and on Zoom. Meeting adjourned at 12:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Burnham