

SJC Meeting/Zoom

January 24, 2026

The Mission of the UUC Social Justice Council is to facilitate communication and cooperation between the Council members, Social Justice committees, UUC Board of Trustees, UUC congregation, and the wider community.

Present: Linda Stoller (chair), Bob Hedlund (treasurer), Trude Diamond, Margie Manning, Sue Hand, Barbara Hammond, Christina Bellamy, Rev. Amy, Carole Vaughn, Cibby Orozco and Anne Burnham (secretary)

The link for the SJC Zoom didn't work this morning; Trude came to the rescue with her Zoom. Linda will check with Anne Gilbert in the office about getting a new link.

Meeting called to order at 9:35. Trude started Fathom AI recording, Linda lit the chalice and offered a reading, check-ins followed.

Dec. minutes: Bob asked for correction re: Feeding Tampa Bay: should have read "\$400 received" rather than "(estimate of \$400)." Minutes accepted.

Treasurer's report (Bob)

We collected and paid \$1,269.38 to Feeding Tampa Bay in November and December.

Linda reported that SJC received \$2,000 from Bob Anderson in memory of his mother Ruth Anderson plus \$250 from her granddaughter. SJC is grateful for this donation every year which is deposited in the Better World Fund, which enables the SJC to donate quickly in emergencies. In her thank you notes Linda said that last year their contributions allowed SJC to send money to Haiti for hurricane relief, to the local food banks during the government shutdown, as well as \$1K to HEP every year.

Bob mentioned that the Refugee Committee had some disbursements. Linda said that Barb Foley is chair and continues to work with some of the refugee families and probably made those disbursements.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Racial Justice (Trude)

For January, the usual notice to the email list provided links to opportunities to support economic and cultural events in racially diverse communities.

UUC had at least seven volunteers to serve at the North Pinellas NAACP Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr celebration breakfast on January 19th, and one volunteer to drive attendees to the breakfast and ride in the march (if needed).

Participants attended the January 22nd 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.

FAST (Linda)

The UUC FAST Justice Ministry Network meeting has been set for February 15th in the Patio room after service. During this meeting Network members will be getting updates on the FAST issues that are being monitored—Water Quality and Affordable Housing—and our new issue, Children and Youth. Two new organizers have been hired and are being trained by lead organizer April Birdsong. Plans are in the works for the FAST rally on March 9th and the Nehemiah Action on April 16th.

Linda also spoke about 2 FAST events she attended: 1) City of Dunedin Council meeting, where the first reading of the water quality ordinance, which FAST has worked with them on,

passed. There will be a second reading in February; and 2) a committee meeting at St. Pete City Hall where Councilman Floyd discussed the affordable housing resolution that FAST wanted, which did not pass. They did, however, pass his second resolution that focuses on low-income housing and says that St. Pete will only give money to affordable housing projects at 80% of AMI or less (not 120%). Linda felt that in both instances there was recognition of and appreciation for the work that FAST is doing.

NAMI (Christina)

Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) Family Support Group (FSG) is in the third year at UUC. Monthly, second Wednesday, free in the Patio Room, noon to 1:30. December had 15 participants, January was 18. Good news on all fronts; the two NAMI facilitators are good at keeping boundaries and managing challenges so that everyone gets a chance to check in, some get specific responses, and all receive grounding, connection, encouragement, support, and resources. The FSG is becoming a valuable community to those who attend more regularly and is still available for those we only see occasionally. NAMI Pinellas is an excellent free resource for all struggling with any aspect of mental illness challenges. Thanks to UUC/SJC for sponsoring.

Interfaith Tampa Bay (Linda)

Maryann Hamilton is unable to continue with the SJC or be liaison with the Interfaith Tampa Bay group due to health issues.

Garden (Cibby)

The "Small Actions = Big Impact" workshop has been cancelled due to weather conditions. We plan to reschedule for February when it is warmer and will add a new segment on making greeting cards from cardboard boxes.

The MLK Community Center land is currently being sold by the city of Clearwater to the Church of Scientology. While the garden leadership wishes to remain at the site, my nonprofit is evaluating whether we will continue our partnership once the ownership changes. We have sent letters of support, but we believe a formal partnership with the new owners may not be advisable. For now, we are collaborating but remaining uncommitted as we wait for further developments.

My nonprofit is also adjusting its mission and researching how to achieve our new vision.* Consequently, we may not be as active for the next few months, though we hope to reestablish our full activities in about three months. As part of this transition, our USF internships for this semester have been paused.

*Later in the meeting, Cibby mentioned that her nonprofit members have been reading a lot about anxiety and depression among Gen Zers and Millennials. They would like to find a way to steer the young people away from technology and into the real world that the garden offers. Christina lauded all the great activities that Cibby has brought to UUC and the greater community and said that perhaps the SJC can support her in some way during the time her nonprofit has to scale back.

NEW AND CONTINUING

Democracy Advocacy Team (DAT)

Linda reported that the Democracy Advocacy event at UUC will be on Feb. 14th from 12-3 PM. There will be 2 main speakers (Mary Fahe and Tanya Landry) and the head of the Florida League of Women Voters will be Zooming in; Indivisible members will also be in attendance. The focus will be on fair elections and voter turnout. SJC members agreed to spend \$200 for the lunch and other costs.

Transforming Hearts

Linda urged us to view the excellent videos from the sessions if we haven't already done so. There was so much good information from the meetings, including welcoming and inclusion, that it seemed it should be shared with the rest of the congregation. Margie thought it could be included in a Sunday service; she will bring it up at the next worship associates meeting in March. Drag Bingo will be at UUC on Jan. 31st and a huge group is expected to attend. PFLAG is continuing to meet at UUC on the 3rd Thursday.

Immigrant Interfaith Vigil

There are usually several UUCers at the interfaith vigil in front of the county jail each Sunday from 4-5 PM to show our support for our immigrant neighbors. Carole asked whether there is a need for escorts or food deliveries to those who are afraid to leave their homes; perhaps people at the vigil would be able to answer that. Carole also mentioned that there will be a meeting of volunteers on Jan. 25th to discuss how to get St. Pete to abolish 287(g) that currently partners police departments with ICE.

Movie – Jazz Dance (Rev. Amy)

Rev. Amy found a film about the history of jazz dance on a site where nonprofits can rent films. She showed a short trailer and said she felt that since the topic is directly tied to Black history, it might have a broad interest. Christina mentioned how the Bridge of Tampa used to attract large audiences for films and they had a panel of experts speak afterwards. Trude thought that someone from Gibbs High School's arts program might bring some dancers and encourage audience participation. Linda mentioned that the director of an arts group in Clearwater, who teaches African dance in an after-school program, might want to be involved with the event. Linda asked who would take the lead for planning the event; Barbara Hammond said she would and Carole offered to assist; Rev. Amy said she would be willing to order the film. Christina made a motion to rent the movie for \$135/afternoon; all SJC members were in favor. It looks as if there would be time available in March for the program.

Play – Building the Wall (Anne)

Anne learned that the Sarasota UU invited the public to a two-person play about a former warden at an immigration detention center who is interviewed during his subsequent incarceration about his activities. One of the UU members played the role of the warden and said he "wanted to present a piece that said something about what's going on today in terms of immigration and deportation." Linda asked Anne to contact the Sarasota church to get more info and see if there would be a way to have the play enacted at UUC.

Earth Day

The Nursery/Belcher Rd. clergy group is counting on UUC to do some kind of interfaith activity in recognition of Earth Day on April 22nd, perhaps 4-6 or 7 in the afternoon. Cibby said that she had actually been thinking about doing something like a farmer's market for Earth Day, where we could invite local gardeners to trade or barter their vegetables. Linda said that she would like to help with that.

The chalice was extinguished at 11:10 AM. Next meeting will be on Feb. 28th at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Burnham