

SJ Council Meeting

December 18, 2021

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

The November minutes, with two corrections, were approved by consensus. Note: from here on, Anne will send the minutes out to council members as soon as she has finished them. Requests for any corrections should be sent to Anne no later than one week before the next meeting so that Linda will have final copy to enclose with the next meeting's packet.

Treasurer's Report: Marlene said that she needs financial info in a more timely fashion; she has spoken with Eloise about it and will continue discussion with Sue Boone. \$398.30 was collected for the Southern Poverty Law Ctr.; \$210 has been set aside in Soc. Action In & Out for blankets; Jeremy was paid from Racial Justice leaving \$200 in that account. Marlene requested we make a donation from the Better World Emergency Fund for victims of the tornadoes in Kentucky and that it be given directly to one of the frontline communities. We approved sending \$1,000 to whichever agency Marlene recommends after she finishes researching. (Note: Linda announced in her SJ report to the congregation on Dec. 19th that the money will go to Americares.)

The Community Outreach collection for Jan. will be for the UUSC Guest at Your Table.

New and Continuing Issues

- 1) Toy Collection Update: Email blast to congregation helped bring in more donations of toys and gift cards; not as much as last year but respectable. Susan Conrad (Shepherd Center) will send us the thank you notes she has received from families; Marlene will let Linda know when she receives them so that Linda can post them for the congregation to see.
- 2) Reproductive Justice: Linda said that Amy Weintraub (Reproductive Rights Program Director at Progress Florida) will make a special presentation at Open Issues on Jan. 30. Linda will put a notice in the e-Octagram and publicize more widely to the community. Linda will also post in the e-Octagram to see if there is interest in going to Tallahassee for a pro-choice demonstration on Jan. 15th. Carol mentioned the *Roe v Wade* Reproductive Justice rally that will take place on Jan. 22 from 12-1 PM at 277 Central Ave., St. Pete (corner of Central and 3rd St.).
- 3) Voter Work: Linda has had no response from the Mi Vecino contacts she had. Davone offered to see if she could connect with someone through their facebook page. Trude's list may help us find another group if Mi Vecino doesn't work out. Anne thinks postcard writing is a good fit for UUC member involvement.
- 4) Unhoused on Campus: Margie has had one person from Property Committee sign up to be on a task force to address this problem; Linda will let Margie know that Natasha would also like to be on the task force. It was suggested that the St. Pete and Tampa UU churches may have had a similar issue and might be able to share how they handled it.
Note: Linda asked us to respond when she emails for help with something like this, even if it is a negative, so that she can make timely plans.
- 5) Social Justice Report (12/19): Linda will talk about the 8th Principle and invite congregants to go to the website to learn more; the "accountability" workshop that had low attendance earlier will be repeated; upcoming Open Issues that have been scheduled; donation from Better World for tornado victims in KY.

Committee Reports

- 1) Migrant Justice: Harriet said that the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) is seeking more meaningful police reaction to the death of Nicholas Morales. Migrant Justice in Vermont is working on rights for farmworkers. A representative from the CIW will give a 5-minute talk about its activities at a future UUC church service.
- 2) Racial Justice (written report from Trude Diamond): On Jan. 9th Bill Foley and Aryna Ryan (UUC Racial Justice Task Force) will be leading a reading group on racial justice articles and the 8th Principle, starting with the 1960s and problems within UUA.
Dr. King's family has asked congregations to focus on passing Voting Rights legislation in honor of MLK's birthday this year, so plans that were already made for a traditional UUC service will have to be changed, with explanation provided at the beginning of the service. The local NAACP breakfast and march that UUC members have participated in will take place, pandemic permitting; watch e-Octagram for update.
Trude asks that UUC members continue to write to senators (in particular, Rubio, Scott, Manchin, Sinema) re: filibuster reform.
- 3) Refugee Task Force: Barb reported they have met two times since our last meeting. ESL classes will start in Jan.; need 8 students (have 5 now), must be vaccinated, will meet outside. She has started talks with Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services re: Afghan family placement. Lutheran Services Florida is only helping families in Tampa, too far for our members to drive.
- 4) Compassion & Choices: Anne had nothing to report at this time.
- 5) FAST: Linda said that they're starting to gear up for Nehemiah in March, will probably be on Zoom again. Open Issues will show a film "Racially Charged: America's Misdemeanor Program" on Feb. 20 (with followup on Feb. 27), which encompasses expanding civil citations, racial injustice in the criminal system and the 8th Principle.
- 6) LULAC: Eliseo is continuing the vaccination project.

The meeting adjourned about 11:30. The next meeting will be on **Jan. 22nd at 9:30 AM** on Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/97869604806>. Note: Jan. 22nd is the 4th Sat. (this meeting only) and the earlier start time is so members can go to the St. Pete Reproductive Justice rally afterwards.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Burnham