

UUC Social Justice Council Minutes

June 22, 2024

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.

Attendees: Linda Stoller (chair), Trude Diamond, Bob Hedlund, Marlene Calderone, Carol Hamilton, Christina Bellamy, Rev. Amy Kindred, Carole Vaughn and Anne Burnham (secretary for June & July)

Chalice lighting and opening words (Dorothy Day) and brief check-in

Acceptance of minutes for May 23 meeting

Treasurer's Report (Bob)

Marlene requested a check from the Better World Emergency Fund (BWEF) for \$1,000, the annual donation to the Homeless Empowerment Program (HEP).

The BLM account will be closed once the BLM sign is replaced (currently about \$200 in the account).

Community Outreach (Trude)

The May recipient, Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas and West Pasco Counties "Faith Build," will receive a check for \$437.21, which will be matched 100%. Other recipients:

June: Community Tampa Bay

July: Clothes for Kids

August: Recovery Epicenter

New and Continuing Programs

Racial Justice (Trude): Some of us attended the Juneteenth Lunch & Learn at the Greenwood Library and participated in other Juneteenth events throughout Pinellas County, including the Shades of Pride Festival panel presentation "Intersectional Politics and Advocacy," about taking action for issues that affect BIPOC people, women, and people with disabilities as well as those with diverse gender identities. Shared causes, multiplied power!

FAST (Linda): FAST has had a long-awaited win for everyone in Pinellas County. Back in 2018, as a result of the feedback we got from folks in our house meetings, we began working on mental health as an issue. During our research meeting we identified that obtaining mental health services was a major problem because there was no central pathway that helped people find the help they needed. A long list of services with telephone numbers from 211 was not very helpful to individuals. At our Nehemiah Action in 2019, we asked the county and mental health providers to agree to work on a central pathway to obtain mental health services in our county. They agreed and we have been monitoring the slow progress ever since. Finally the county has announced CareAboutMe.org, a central pathway to obtain mental health services in Pinellas County. These services can also be accessed by calling 1-888-431-1998. Please share this information widely and let FAST organizers know how the service is working.

Summer is here and the rainy, stormy season has begun. FAST is continuing with its work to get individual cities to pass ordinances that would require all new and renovated developments have a plan to use green solutions to limit untreated stormwater runoff. Yesterday's Green Water Infrastructure Workshop had a number of smaller municipalities attending, of particular note was Dunedin. We will be following up on the workshop commitments that were made. If you have any personal stories regarding flooding or health issues from untreated stormwater, please contact me or Lore Eargle.

Environmental Justice (Eloise):

Our EJ team met Wednesday, June 19th, with 9 in attendance.

- Several members of the EJ team plan on attending the June 21st FAST Green Stormwater Infrastructure Workshop.

- Several articles that were suggested for upcoming *Octagrams* will be posted as part of our educational series.

- We discussed future film series, coordinating with other congregations and NPO's
- Our stash of unused plasticware will be donated to Pinellas Hope as they must use it in their facility. We are using only reusable flatware in keeping with our Green Sanctuary Policy.
- A reminder that our metal beverage pitchers are in the catering closet (bottom shelf, left side as you enter) along with cork pads to collect any moisture ... and a few plastic beverage pitchers are on shelf above. Easy to use and clean for serving needs, parties, meetings, etc.
- Our next meeting will be Wednesday, July 17th ... as always, on Zoom!

NAMI (Christina):

Good news! NAMI has asked UUC to continue the Family Support Group every second Wednesday of the month for a year. That continues the Room & Zoom options, after ten months of free information, resources, support, and connection in the Patio Room. NAMI appreciates our facility with its privacy, parking and easy accessibility. Donations are sufficient to keep the lights on. I'm beating the bushes to get more people out. We'll be sure to discuss CareAboutMe.org, the new pathway for mental health services, at the next meeting.

The MOU for this next year just arrived; I'll present it to the UUC/BOT next week. When all is approved, I'll request Anne Gilbert to add these dates to the UUC calendar. Lauren Logan will add it to the *Octagram* two issues before the date each month. Lore Earle agreed to continue in the tech chair for the Zoom and screen info. Any questions, feel free to contact me.

Interfaith Tampa Bay (Maryann Hamilton): no report

Rev. Amy mentioned that she participated on behalf of UUC in the Interfaith Tampa Bay service at St. Pete UU on June 13th. There were several speakers, most attendees were from Allendale Methodist and black majority congregations. It was well done and well attended.

New and Continuing

Black Lives Matter banner: Linda talked to Bill Newton after our last meeting re: how to best protect a new BLM banner from vandalism. He suggested putting it behind plexiglas, which would allow it to be cleaned up better if it is defaced again. Christina commented that the story gets better if there are more incidents and Trude said that she can call on the same reporters that ran the last story. Moral = Never give up! Linda will let John Fraser know and order the banner from the same African American business that has made the previous banner.

Postcard writing: There will be an event following the service on July 7th for members to write postcards. Linda will be bringing food for the social hour. Everyone will have to hand-write the message, no preprinting possible. There will be postcards available to take home.

SJC retreat: Stay tuned for more info ...

HEP: Anne reported that she will have signup sheets in the lobby before/after the service on June 30 and July 7. SJC has committed to supplying 25 sturdy backpacks for the Back to School Bash at HEP. Half will be for elementary schoolers and half for high school students. Those wanting to have SJC shoppers buy for them can send a check (recommend \$35-40), made out to UUC, with "HEP backpacks" in the memo line or online (Anne checking whether Breeze will be possible). She will submit notices for the next two weeks in the *Octagram*. The last day to turn in backpacks at UUC will be July 21st.

Social Justice Calendar – no additions

Next meeting: July 27th at 9:30 AM on Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Burnham