

## **SJC Meeting/Zoom**

February 28, 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), Trude Diamond, Barbara Hammond, Donna Polhamus, Christina Bellamy, Carole V., Cibby Orozco, Dennis Thomas and Anne Burnham (secretary)

Meeting called to order at 9:30. Trude started AI recording, Linda lit the chalice and offered opening words, check-ins followed.

January minutes accepted.

**Treasurer's Report** (Trude, for Bob Hedlund):

"We donated \$274.06 to Neighborly Care - Meals on Wheels, our January recipient."

**Community Outreach Report** (Trude):

"We received thank-you messages from HEP, the ACLU, and HOPE Villages of America. The March Outreach Recipient is the Tampa Bay Abortion Fund."

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Racial Justice** (Trude)

"Some of us attended UUC's "Resist, Love, Vote" event and/or the "UNITED Mural" ribbon cutting at the Studios@5663 (Park Blvd, Pinellas Park). We are sharply aware of the intersection of racial justice with all aspects of human rights and civil rights. United is how we need to take action."

**FAST** (Linda)

"Members of the UUC FAST Justice Ministry met to get an update on the issues we are working on and to discuss the Care About Me program that FAST helped get established a couple of years ago. At our house meetings people were still talking about the unmet mental health needs of children and youth so we decided to check in on the Care About Me Program. The monitoring found that the program is being underutilized and was not being advertised as it should be. FAST was concerned that funding for this program might not continue. Therefore, as part of our children and youth issue we will address the problem of mental health of children and youth and ensure that children and youth have access to the Care About Me Program. UUC FAST members are getting ready for a successful Nehemiah Action on April 16th at 7PM at First Baptist Church of St. Petersburg by inviting members of the congregation and other friends to the event. We will again have a bus leaving UUC to take us to the event. Network members will also be attending the FAST rally on March 9th at St. Michael's the Archangel Catholic Church at 2281 FL 580 in Clearwater."

**NAMI** (Christina)

"Pinellas continues to offer a wide range of free learning and support activities, online and in person. Our free monthly Family Support Group is a welcoming, safe space for those who need it. Also, NAMI USA offers many informative options on their website, as well as ongoing webinars and other ways to deepen practical knowledge and wisdom. Last week, there was a free 90-min. webinar that featured 3 mothers of adult children who are living with Severe Mental Illness (SMI). There were 1100+ people on the Zoom, from all over the US and beyond. Well worth watching, and I can forward the recording if you want to see it."

Christina will check with NAMI to see if they know about the Care About Me program.

## **Garden (Cibby)**

- “Eco-Friendly Workshop: Originally scheduled for January, this workshop has been rescheduled for Saturday, March 14, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Participants will create fiber pots and animal-repellent containers.
- Earth Day: Planning is underway for Wednesday, April 22, from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM. We are organizing four main activities to engage our local neighborhood and the broader community. These include a planting activity for children, food forest tours via golf cart and, weather permitting, tastings of herbs, sprouts, and microgreens.
- May Garden Activity: We are planning an event to encourage local gardeners to visit UUC to barter vegetables. This event will also feature a keynote speaker. This activity is still uncertain and may not happen.”

Linda said that her understanding was that Earth Day is something that’s being done as part of the interfaith collaboration that Rev. Amy is involved in. She wondered if people from the other congregations might be volunteers in the garden as well as our congregants. Cibby said that she’s pretty sure Rev. Amy plans to be in touch with the interfaith group to extend an invitation. Linda and Cibby will touch base with Rev. Amy about planning when she returns.

## **NEW AND CONTINUING**

### **Democracy Advocacy Team (DAT) (Linda)**

Linda reported on the “Resist, Love, Vote” event re: voter suppression on Jan. 14th. There were about 50 attending, the film was well received, the speakers (Mary Fahe from Vote Pinellas Now and Tanya Landry, president of the League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County) were excellent and the food was delicious. The team will be meeting next week to discuss next steps.

### **Immigrant Interfaith Vigil (Carol)**

Carol reported that there has been steady participation at this Hillsborough/Pinellas Interfaith Coalition event. There was discussion about the mutual aid collection there each week for the Hispanic Outreach Center, which Carole delivers each Friday. We considered whether we might have a collection box at UUC but decided that it would work best to encourage members to go to the vigil and support the mutual aid collection there. Christina mentioned that RAMWI (Refugee and Migrant Women’s Initiative) is closing because they are afraid to go out; attendance at meetings is down to 8-10 where it used to be 50-60 women from all over the world.

### **Postcard projects (Donna and Barbara)**

Members will have the opportunity to write postcards to Hispanic voters after the service on March 8th. The recipients live in Precinct 519 in Clearwater, which has the most Hispanic voters in Pinellas County. The message will be to vote by mail and will be in both English and Spanish. Donna said that everything is ready to go: postcards, labels, list of voters, some stamps and a flyer was posted in the *Octagram* this week. Barbara, Linda and Carole will pass out the flyers at the vigil. Linda will invite Nicki McNichols to bring her postcards on the 8th so they will also be available to write.

### **Jazz Dancing Film (Barbara)**

The film “Uprooted: A Journey of Jazz Dance” (94 minutes) will be shown at UUC on April 11th at 2:30 PM. Lori Thorne made a flyer that has been posted on the UUC Facebook page. Barbara has been able to locate an African drummer group that can perform (details pending). Once Barbara confirms with the drummers, she will send the updated flyer to Linda to post on UUC’s Facebook and Instagram and to Cibby to post on her TikTok and Instagram. Trude will do the PR and also introduce the film at the event.

## **No Kings Day**

Linda would like to have a UUC group gather together for the No Kings on March 28th. She suggested the protest on Gulf-to-Bay, by Jared Jewelers on the east side. Some members may wish to sit in chairs in a front row while others stand behind them with signs. Barbara pointed out that our March SJC mtg. will be in conflict on that date and everyone agreed to meet on March 21st instead; Linda will let Anne Gilbert know about the change.

## **T-shirts**

Linda has had requests for UUC t-shirts in larger sizes. She would like to have them for No Kings and the FAST Nehemiah. Linda will post in the Octagram so those wanting a shirt can let her know.

## **Building the Wall play (Anne)**

This dystopian play has only 2 actors: Rick, the former warden at a detention facility, subsequently imprisoned while awaiting sentencing for what happened under his watch; and Gloria, a historian, who comes to the prison seeking the truth about how the unthinkable became the inevitable.

Anne contacted UUs of Sarasota, where it was recently enacted, for more info and was put in touch with Maria Robayo, president of the Sarasota Immigration Coalition. She related that they had about 130 in attendance, that it was well received. There was no admission charge, donations only. She said that the same actors could come to UUC for a daytime or evening performance, we would just need to find 2-3 times for them consider. There would be a \$200 charge for royalty rights, which they would set up for us; she agreed that small honoraria for the actors would be appropriate. The UU Congregation of Venice may be offering it. Linda suggested that this might be something that the Hillsborough/Pinellas Interfaith Coalition would be interested in, with UUC providing the place; Anne will go to the vigil ahead of time tomorrow to see if there is interest in collaborating. Barbara mentioned she could provide a list of about 50 congregations and other groups to use for marketing.

## **Social Justice report**

Linda will give the SJC report on March 8th. Topics: postcard writing that day, the jazz dance film, Earth Day activities, No Kings

The chalice was extinguished at 11:15 AM. Note change: the next meeting will be on **the 3rd Saturday**, March 21, at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anne Burnham