

SJC Meeting/Zoom

April 25, 2026

Present: Linda Stoller (chair), Trude Diamond, Donna Polhamus, Christina Bellamy, Carole Vaughn, Margie Manning, Sue Hand, Eliseo Santana and Anne Burnham (secretary)

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

Treasurer's Report (Bob)

"We donated \$934.06 to Tampa Bay Abortion Fund, our March recipient."

Christina had mentioned that RAMWI will be closing soon. Bob told Linda that there is \$146 sitting in the Refugee Fund that had been contributed to RAMWI which should be sent to them before they distribute their money, so that money will now be sent to RAMWI

Community Outreach Report (Trude)

"The April Outreach Recipient, Faith in Florida, donation will be reported in April. Our May recipient will be Community Health Centers of Pinellas (DBA Evara Health)."

Margie mentioned that she will be doing an interview style service on May 3 (in Rev. Amy's absence) with Bill Merchant, Executive Director of the Evara Health Foundation. It will be titled "Leading with Integrity," about the challenges and opportunities the organization faces. Its values are very much in line with ours.

There was a lot of discussion about which organizations we want to be Community Outreach recipients and when for 2026-27; here is the list (full details in attachment with minutes):

June	Equality Florida Action
July	Florida Rising Together
August	Clothes to Kids
September	Boricuas de Corazon
October	Equal Ground Education Fund
November	UUSC Guest at Your Table
December	Feeding Tampa Bay
January	UU Social Justice (UUSJ, national)
February	Sacred Lands
March	Planned Parenthood of Florida
April	1000 Friends of Florida
May	Good Neighbors, Inc.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Racial Justice (Trude)

"Some of us attended the screening of the documentary *Uprooted: The Journey of Jazz Dance* and live African dance performance by the Fethiou Thoissane Cultural Arts dance troupe, attended events like the production of *Streetcar Named Desire* at Studio@620, participated in actions by Indivisible and Mobilize, and supported minority-owned businesses."

FAST (Linda)

"The UUC FAST Social Justice Ministry honors the memory of Bruce Gotts. Bruce served as the first UUC team captain. Bruce was a strong believer of interfaith social justice action and worked hard that first year to establish a strong team at UUC. He helped me set up our FAST team and helped introduce our congregation to the FAST system of congregational organizing. Bruce was truly a social justice warrior.

On April 16th, 48 members and friends of UUC joined 1500 folks from congregations all over Pinellas County at our Nehemiah Action. We were inspired by speeches from some of our FAST leaders and moved by a testimony of a FAST member who lost a teen loved one as a result of suicide. We heard reports from the Water Quality and Affordable Housing monitoring committee. Two county commissioners attended to respond to the question put forth by the Children and Youth Issue Committee. The issue was will they support funding for the “Care About Me” Program at its present level in the new county budget. Our FAST leaders announced that both said YES. However, the work is not over.

On April 30th at 9:30 AM the Board of County Commissioners will be having a work session about “Care About Me”. This will be at the Palm Room at 333 Chestnut Street in Clearwater. There is no public comment at work sessions.

We are kicking off the Investment Drive. Network members are asked to make a financial investment in FAST each year. Investments can be made at the FAST website www.fast-pinellas.org or by mailing a check to FAST, PO Box 10421, St. Petersburg, FL 33733.

Our next big event is the Joshua Assembly on May 18th at Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church in Largo at 7PM.”

NAMI (Christina)

"NAMI Family Support Group is in its third year at our UUC. We meet in the Patio Room on second Wednesdays, and on Zoom, thanks to Lore Eargle. The National Alliance for Mental Illness is usually organized by county, and we are fortunate that our Pinellas chapter is excellent in terms of staffing, diversity, and quality of offerings. Everything NAMI offers is free, and their online webinars are also very informative. The webinars cover a wide variety of topics related to mental illness such as family dynamics, workplace impact, how mental illness is handled in prison settings (usually not well), updated research findings, etc. Join us for the UUC Family Support Group if you are looking for a place that offers respectful, honest, helpful discussions about challenging mental health related topics in our lives."

Garden (Cibby)

No report for this month. See Earth Day entry.

NEW AND CONTINUING

Interfaith Vigil

Linda reported that the Pinellas/Hillsborough Interfaith Coalition’s vigil at the jail is meeting later, from 5-6 PM on Sundays, now that the weather is warmer. Eliseo commented that immigrant detentions at the jail provide a significant source of revenue for the Sheriff’s Department; when he worked there 12 years ago they were getting \$75 per day for “housing” each person, probably much more now. Carol said food and monetary donations are still being collected for the Hispanic Center.

Postcard Projects

Linda noted that all 500 cards & names have been picked up. Donna reviewed the process for finding the precinct with the highest Hispanic vote, where a lot of them might be afraid to go to their polling place. Clearwater was selected, then the Supervisor of Elections sent her to the techies who downloaded the huge list, which Barbara Hammond sorted and printed out for the postcard writers—great organizing, Barbara and Donna!

These postcards encourage voters to go to votepinellas.gov to make sure that they are still registered and to request a vote-by-mail ballot. We will be writing postcards to the same people two more times before the November election. Eliseo said that he recently talked to Sasha, who works for the Supervisor of Elections, and she is very interested in our nonpartisan Get Out the Vote action; there’s a possibility that the Board of Elections might work with us. Eliseo will send Sasha’s contact info to Donna for her to share with Barbara.

Jazz Dancing Movie

Carol heard many favorable comments about the event. There were 63 attendees in the Octagon for the film plus family and friends who came in support of the entertainers. The children seemed to win the show with their exuberance and skill. It was lots of lively fun for everyone who attended. Kudos to Barbara Hammond for a great job organizing the event!

Mobile health bus for refugees

Dennis Thomas and Carole did the April shift at UUC. It was an unusually slow afternoon for the clinic. Christina commented that the low turnout may have been because refugees are afraid to go out. Eliseo mentioned that he talked with the USF staff there and they indicated they were open to anyone using their medical services at no charge. He suggested broadening the program beyond refugees but Linda said that this is a project of the Jewish Family Services Refugee Program so we can't change the focus. If Eliseo or Rev. Amy knows of individuals in need of care, they can let Linda know and she can see if there are appointment times open. Linda will check with Jewish Family Services to find out why they didn't have any people signed up this month or social service professionals in attendance.

Dunedin Pride

UUC will be participating in Dunedin Pride's Family Day again this year. Barbara Tobin (RE) will be the point person in charge of coordinating volunteers. The event runs from 12-5 PM on May 31st. Unfortunately, that is the same time as UUC's 75th anniversary potluck, so it may be difficult to sign up volunteers.

There will also be a Dunedin Pride Block Party this year on June 6th from 10 AM to 8 PM with vendors paying \$100 for a booth. Discussion ensued about whether this is something UUC would want to be a vendor: always good to have exposure in the community, the event might attract young people who are looking for community, we should participate more in Dunedin's progressive events, we could talk about UUC with people who stop by and hand out PFLAG info, concern that it would be difficult to get enough volunteers for such a long day. The decision was to not be a vendor but Linda will talk to Wendy at PFLAG to see if they are having a booth and offer to help them with theirs.

Linda will also check into renting a golf cart for the parade, as we've done in the past, which would just involve four volunteers to ride in the cart. Tarpon Springs will not be working with us this year on the Dunedin Pride events.

Margie spoke with Robert Wallace (UU St. Pete) about St. Pete Pride events. So far he hasn't found anyone to take the lead, so their participation in the Family Day or parade looks iffy. If Pastor Andy Oliver (Allendale) organizes the parade of churches again, where the churches hold signs and walk together in the St. Pete parade, she would be interested in representing UUC.

Internship

Rev. Amy reported to the board that there is an opportunity to have an intern at UUC again. The potential internship would be for Jeanay Johnson, currently RE director at UU St. Pete. Linda said she has heard her preach at UU St. Pete and when meeting with her found her to be a dynamic person. Eliseo said she is a social justice warrior, great to work with. Janae wants to focus on social justice and lifelong learning, along with helping Rev. Amy. The UUA Intern Program requires 1,000 hours; her tenure would probably be for 10 months (or whatever the minister and intern work out). In order to hire an intern, the UUA requires the congregation to come up with funding for the intern's compensation and then it matches that amount. Rev. Amy asked if the SJC could contribute some money. Trude said that there is \$2,000 left in the Pat McGiverin Fund that could be put towards hiring Jeanay. Margie made a motion to appropriate the remaining money in the Pat McGivern Fund towards the internship

compensation; Trude seconded, vote was unanimous. Linda will let Rev. Amy know the results of the vote.

Earth Day

Carol said the event from 5-7 PM on April 22nd (actual Earth Day) was fun and joyful. About 30 people attended, some from the community. It was relaxing to sit in the grove and listen to Ladies of Uke play to start the evening off. Other activities included a walking meditation, native plant tours, Food Forest tours, making plastic upcycled bracelets, raised garden beds and irrigation advice and composting info. Eliseo suggested that we leaflet the neighborhood when we have special garden events to let them know what's happening next door and Sue suggested involving the STEM school across the street also (Linda will email these ideas to Cibby). Kudos to Rev. Amy and Cibby for organizing a successful community event.

Backpacks for HEP

Anne mentioned that HEP's backpack collection for the start of the new school year will be starting up the end of June. She said she would be willing to head it up at UUC and asked for someone to help with it; Sue kindly volunteered. Eliseo said that Alianza was considering a backpack project so they might be able to work with UUC on this. Eliseo will get back to Anne about Alianza's decision.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM. The next meeting will be on May 23rd at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Burnham