

UUC Social Justice Council Minutes

June 29, 2025

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, Maryann Hamilton, Soledad Vaquer and Anne Burnham (secretary *pro tem*)

Reading from UUA UPLIFT re: this month's Supreme Court ruling (UNITED STATES v. SKRMETTI) that allows a ban on gender-affirming care for trans youth to remain in effect. This hits queer and trans communities hard across the country and is "not an outlier. It's part of a broader, coordinated assault rooted in white supremacy, Christian nationalism, anti-blackness, misogyny and ableism."

Check-in followed.

Minutes for May accepted. Linda asked if having reports submitted ahead of the meeting and having AI recordings make taking minutes easier; Anne said that reports are extremely helpful and she appreciates the Fathom AI transcripts that Trude forwards, especially as a reference for clarity. Linda asked Anne about her use of quote marks in the minutes (reports are quoted verbatim whenever possible, with any significant additional info presented at the mtgs w/o quote marks). Trude mentioned that she finds Fathom's Action Items and Meeting Summary especially helpful.

Treasurer's Report

- "May Community Outreach: UUC sent RAMWI (Refugee and Migrant Women's Initiative) \$488.06.
- Some mis-allocated collections/donations during the 2024-25 fiscal year are being reconciled." Bob asked Anne for her accounting of distributions for the 2024 HEP backpack donations, unclear why there is \$215 remaining in the SJC in/out fund. Anne will email him her info.

Community Outreach:

- "June's Community Outreach recipient has been [Equality Florida](#) Action, the largest civil rights organization dedicated to securing full equality for Florida's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community. Donation total not yet calculated."
- July Community Outreach recipient will be the Poynter Institute. Its mission is to elevate journalism in service of democracy. It supports local news; trains journalists; houses PolitiFact, the global leader in international fact-checking. Its MediaWise program trains people of all ages to tell fact from fiction online. It helps journalists increase audience trust. Lastly, Poynter owns the Tampa Bay Times, the largest daily newspaper in Florida (from Breeze).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Racial Justice (Trude)

"Racial Justice opportunities are detailed in a monthly newsletter to its mailing list. In June, members participated in Indivisible activities and attended exhibits at Creative Pinellas and the Woodson Museum."

FAST (Linda)

"On June 16th FAST held a Board meeting. At this meeting we got issue updates where both committees recommended that they move their issues to a monitoring status which opens space for new issues to be considered during the small "house meetings" which will start at the end of August. On August 10th April Birdsong, lead organizer for FAST will be the speaker at the UUC Sunday service. After service UUC Team leaders Linda Stoller and Lore Eargle will host social hour and UUC members will have an opportunity to sign up for small 'house meetings' to kick off the FAST listening process.

UUC continues to be strong supporters of FAST. We had 58 people at the Nehemiah this year which was an increase of 10 people from our 2024 turnout. The 2026 Nehemiah Action will be on April 16, 2025.”

NAMI (Christina Bellamy)

“NAMI Pinellas Family Support Group continues in the Patio Room and on Zoom monthly. Lore Eargle faithfully sets up our Zoom every second Wednesday at noon, and I show up every time as our UUC/NAMI liaison. We have a new facilitator who joins the one who has been with us for nearly 2 years. Also, a NAMI program staffer who appears every month with wonderful resources for the participants. Ongoing community building along with a wonderful sanctuary for those who need it.”

Interfaith Tampa Bay (Maryann)

- “Pride Service at the Unitarian Universalist Church of St. Pete June 29 at 3:00 PM.
- General meeting July 17, 2025 – speaker new St. Pete Fire Chief Keith Watts
- Earth Day that was planned for September is postponed to next year.”

Beacon Garden and Food Forest (Cibby)

Cibby reported that the gardens and food forest have become a magnet for the neighborhood community, especially kids; one of the neighbors has also volunteered in the gardens.

- “Our monthly meetings have changed day and time. We will meet now on the first Wednesday of the month at 5:30 PM in the Patio Room.
- In June and July, The First Saturday of the Month and gardening classes will be on hiatus due to climate conditions.
- In the last year, between the gardening classes and the First Saturday of the Month events, we have engaged more than 350 people in Pinellas County.”

Cibby has been in touch with Mary at the JFCS Refugee Trauma Center and they are discussing forming an alliance. One possibility would be to show refugees how to do balcony gardening here in FL so they don’t have to leave home; another is to offer meditation meetings.

- “We received a grant (\$4,456) from the FruitGuys Community Fund that will allow us to plant 34 new trees in the food forest.
- On Saturday June 14, we had a volunteer family day. We planted 16 trees (citrus, mangoes, bananas, etc.).
- We will aim to have a volunteer day once a month. We are in the planning stages trying to figure out how we can achieve this goal.”

NEW AND CONTINUING

Celebrating Pride in St. Pete (Margie Manning)

“UUC joined with UU St Pete and UU Tarpon Springs to participate in St Pete Pride on Sat., June 28. As of this writing on Friday, June 27, there were expected to be 15 or 16 total participants including 3 from UUC: Margie Manning, Sue Hand and Judy Preuss. It is possible Elijah Preuss also will join us. The 3 congregations and the UU Fellowship in St Pete paid about \$800 to enter a float (\$250 from UUC) and there also was a motorcycle entered. Renting the truck and trailer for the float cost about \$120 and was a more economical choice than a golf cart. We planned to distribute beads and hard candy to people on the parade route. Tarpon and UU St Pete are covering those costs. There will be a tag on the beads inviting everyone to the Interfaith Pride worship service at UU St Pete on Sunday.

There is consensus among the planning committee (myself and Robert Wallace from UU St Pete and Greg Rosasco from Tarpon) that next year we will not participate in the parade but will have a booth in the festival which is on the same day as the parade. It costs less and is a more effective way to get out our message of love and acceptance.”

Summer of Service Projects

- Hurricane packets (Linda)

The collection for hurricane supplies is finishing up; money has been collected to fill in the gaps of supplies that are needed. On July 8th at noon members of the various neighborhood faith groups will

put together the packets at UUC; Margie, Linda and Anne signed up to bring snacks for people to eat while they work on packets.

- HEP backpacks (Anne):

"Eloise Hardman (bookkeeper) is sending me updates on checks received; Joe Pace (financial secretary) is letting me know the amounts donated thru Breeze. We had 6 members sign up to buy backpacks, so that means the Kiwis team will need to shop for 19. We have received \$475.36 in donations so far. I have informed Lori Thorn and Brady Warnock (Kiwis) about the current status. Last date to turn in backpacks and make donations is July 6th."

SAGES Theatre Project (Soledad)

Soledad has been involved with SAGES (Senior Actors Guild & Education Services) for the last couple of years. She would like to offer a reading of one of their plays on preventing falls (*Defying Gravity*) in Spanish at UUC and asked for SJC support. Soledad would be point person and then payment to rent the Patio Rm. would be waived. Linda suggested she speak with Lore Eargle re: Zoom setup for it. We are all encouraged to promote the event; other suggestions for spreading the word would be the Hispanic Outreach Center, Christina (RAMWE) and Mary (JFCS). Trude made a motion to accept, Cibby seconded; motion passed.

Next meeting: July 26th at 9:30 AM on Zoom. Anne will take minutes in July; Trude will take minutes in August, Sept. and Oct.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Burnham