

UUFC Justice Council

January 2018
Volume 1

Welcome.

Welcome to the Fellowship's first Justice Council Newsletter. This is an experiment to explore how we can showcase all the great justice work that is being done. We hope to produce these newsletters quarterly.

This first volume is as much an overview of the multitude of justice work being done as it is a call to join us in this work.



Justice Council

Mission Statement:

The Justice Council exists to provide support, guidance, coordination, and evaluation of ongoing and proposed social service, charity-related outreach, and other justice programs of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis (UUFC), as well as to coordinate emergent justice-related responses.

The primary concerns of the council are (1) the Fellowship and its ability to engage efficiently, effectively, and

appropriately with the needs of the world in which we live and (2) the Fellowship's ability to meet its justice/outreach goals. The issues the Justice Council agrees to address are the work of the social justice teams and task forces.

The primary tasks for the UUFC Justice Council include:

~Creating a context through which groups doing justice-related work are supported and can sustain themselves;

~Developing a communications vehicle through which we describe the work of UUFC justice-related groups and bring visibility to the engagement of UUFC members in community-based justice work;

~Identifying the appropriate structures, processes, and procedures to support UU and Fellowship justice-related goals, values, and commitments and to exercise the necessary leadership;

~Talking frequently with those doing justice-related work to ensure we are aware of their activities and needs;

~Ensuring that knowledge of all justice-related groups is easily available to members and friends who want to get involved.



Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.
~Martin Luther King, Jr.



Current members of the Justice Council are: Anne Pemberton and Larry Roper - co-chairs; Susan Christie, Alison Sullivan, Dennis Feeny, Jean Townes, and Claudia Keith.

For more information on all the current Justice teams, visit the UUFC website: http://uucorvallis.org/?page_id=4754.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) anti-Racism Task Force.

Mission Statement: We will provide leadership in addressing racism and white superiority and their impact on relationships with the wider community.

Actions: We will provide training, educational materials, and build coalitions with the wider community.

Activities: This past year, the EDI team supported the Mark Hicks workshop and follow-up session; supported the NAACP Juneteenth Celebration, Soul Food Dinner and their Annual Banquet, and presented a workshop, "Cracking the Codes."

Future Activities: We plan to offer a series of facilitated video workshops, explore the feasibility of hosting a community premiere on "Healing Justice," and publish a list of educational resources. The EDI team will explore additional opportunities. Contact: Lee Holt leeholt46@gmail.com or 541-753-8125.

Meetings: We meet monthly on the fourth Thursday at 7 PM in Room 7. Please join us!

Climate Justice Task Force (CJTF)

Guided especially by the UU Seventh Principle, the Climate Justice Task Force addresses the climate crisis as a serious threat to the wellbeing of our world—to human communities and all other species.

The task force met recently for an extended planning session to help us prioritize our work for this year. CJTF will continue to oppose the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure and work to support carbon pricing, especially the clean energy jobs bill for Oregon. As part of this major task, CJTF will continue to provide the congregation with information updates.

CJTF is planning a workshop this Spring on personal divestment from fossil fuels and re-investment in clean energy. CJTF also hopes to work with the Corvallis Interfaith Climate Action group on reducing food waste. CJTF will continue to support and encourage solar power in our community. Some of us are interested in building resilience in our congregation and wider community and in making connections with UU regional and national groups.

As always with urgent issues, things happen quickly and unexpectedly, thus CJTF expects to participate in other projects, events, and activities that are not known yet.

UUFC members and friends are always welcome at the CJTF regular meetings, which take place from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM the first Thursday of each month, in the UUFC library. Everyone is invited to informal conversation and sharing at 6:15, before the formal meeting begins. The next meeting is scheduled for February 1. For more information, contact Karen Josephson: kjosephson67@gmail.com; 541-738-2872 or Susan Christie: crypto716@gmail.com; 541-908-4597.

Café Justo

This team supports small farmers and their communities in the Chiapas region of Mexico, and a coffee roasting/distribution center on the USA/Mexican border, by selling coffee on Sunday mornings; profits return to the farmers and employees of the coffee center.

Criminal Justice Action Group.

The Criminal Justice Action Group recently began, with the former name of Prison Ministry Group. The updated name indicates the broad goals of this work. Primary goals for this year include:

1. Explore: Education about pertinent issues related to the local, state and national prison systems.
2. Love: To support UUFC member Coleman Ward during and after his incarceration in Nevada (his parole date is in October 2018).
3. Act: To investigate areas where the group can act effectively to meet some local needs of persons who are at risk of being, or who are already, caught up in the criminal justice system.

In December, the CJAG created an "Angel Tree" project to raise funds to support UUFC member Coleman Ward. More than \$700 was raised to help Coleman buy necessary items to help him maintain some dignity and emotional support during his incarceration. CJAG members appreciated talking with many people to raise awareness of some of the harsh realities of the court and prison systems.

Immigrant and Refugee Support Team.

The goals of the immigration and refugee support team are to:

1. connect with and support the local immigrant community;
2. share information about immigrant concerns with the UUFC community;
3. support Burundian UUs;
4. explore becoming a sanctuary church.

In working towards these goals, the team has: hosted and attended trainings on how to support immigrants in danger of deportation; attended events organized by immigrants in our community; and connected with groups that work with immigrants locally. Members of the team are currently volunteering to help Casa Latinos Unidos with their fundraising gala, The Flight of the Monarch, this spring. More volunteers are welcome, as well as donations for the silent auction, and attendees for this beautiful event. This UUFC team helped create and now meets monthly with an interfaith group focused on supporting local immigrants. It is part of an international UU network supporting Burundian refugees here, in Canada, Africa and Europe. It plans to help the UUFC explore sanctuary status, and will host a Town Hall meeting in February as the first step. It advertises local events that support immigrants to the UUFC community encouraging everyone to learn more and take action, and has compiled a list of books and documentaries for UUFC members to learn more and share with others.

The next meeting will be on January 29, 2018 at 2:30 PM in the Library at the UUFC. Newcomers are welcome. Contact: Melinda Sayavedra, sayavedl@peak.org.

Other groups that extend UUFC's Mission:

Adopt-a-Highway

This team helps clean up our local environment on a quarterly basis by picking up trash along the stretch of Highway 20/34 between Corvallis and Philomath.

Interfaith Climate Justice Corvallis

This is a group of representatives from several faith communities in Corvallis who work together on climate justice (creation care).

UUFC Social Justice Loan to Seeds for the Sol Reduces CO2 Emissions:

The UUFC has a policy (3.11) to accept donations and to then use collected funds to create revolving loans to assist organizations conducting justice-related projects. A UUFC committee may propose a loan fund to the Justice Council for approval. If approved, the committee can then collect funds and follow the policy requirements in loaning money to the project. The loan contract will last one year or less, after which the UUFC Board of Trustees has the right to renew the contract, approve a new contract for a different use, or convert the money to UUFC use in accordance with another policy (3.9) that outlines use of donated funds. You may read about UUFC policies, here: http://uucorvallis.org/?page_id=421. There is currently one social justice revolving loan, to Seeds for the Sol (SFS). This loan provides financial assistance for installation of solar panels in the mid-Willamette Valley – see <http://www.seedsforthesol.org/>. SFS has helped install 378 KW of solar panels since 2014. That saves over 700,000 lbs. of CO2 every year. SFS experienced its strongest year ever in 2017. They helped 34 new solar clients purchase 175 KW of rooftop solar. They provided solar grants for three low-income homeowners, buying their systems outright for each. They helped find pass-through partners for two Habitat for Humanity homes with a third still in the works. They provided grants for three other Habitat homes in 2016.

In the assessment of the Social Justice Council, the Investment Committee, and Board, the revolving loan to SFS is working exactly as planned in our policy. If SFS can make a continued case for loan continuation in future years, such will certainly be considered. Social justice loans are just another way in which the UUFC “lives” its principles and values. If you have questions about our social justice loan policy or procedures, please contact Russ Karow, russell.karow@oregonstate.edu.

Environmental Reading Group.

This group meets twice a month to read and discuss timely books and classics addressing environmental issues. Elizabeth Waldorf: dewaldorf@comcast.net; 541-207-3613.

Transgender Support Group.

This group meets the 2nd Thursday of each month in Room 10, from 7-10 PM, and recently applied for status as a UUFC justice team. It is part of UUFC's ongoing commitment to 'Living the Welcoming Congregation.' Transgender people and those close to them meet to discuss current issues for the participants. Open to the larger community.

Social Concerns Team:

This team works to involve the congregation in justice and outreach efforts by raising funds and awareness for different local and international charities and organizations each month. Activities include monthly Action Lunches, weekly Sunday bake sales, fundraising dinners, blood drives, food and hygiene supply drives. For more information, contact Sylvia Yamada [yamadas@science.oregonstate.edu](mailto:yamadadas@science.oregonstate.edu).

The organizations supported so far in this church year include: Vina Moses, the McKinney Homeless Education Program, Community Services Consortium's YouthBuild Program, the South Corvallis Food Bank, Community Outreach, and the Sagebrush in Prisons Project.

Justice and Outreach Fund.

The UUFC maintains a Justice Outreach Fund for grants that are focused on high-impact projects, aimed at seeding and achieving social, economic, racial, environmental and other kinds of justice.

Purpose: The Justice Outreach Fund promotes the application of the seven Unitarian Universalist principles.

Proposals: The Justice Outreach Fund makes grants that are focused on high-impact projects that are aimed at seeding and achieving social, economic, racial, environmental and other kinds of justice. For more information, visit the UUFC website, here: http://uucorvallis.org/?page_id=4013. For more information, feel free to contact the Justice Outreach Fund Grant Committee directly at uufcjusticeoutreach@gmail.com.

Partner Church Team.

The Partner Church Team advocates for support of the UUFC's Partner Church, the Unitarian Church in Körispatak, Transylvania, Romania, and promote international understanding, social justice, and our commitments to our relationships.

Beverly McFarland: bfmcfarland2@yahoo.com; 541-908-7408 or Janet Throop: throopj@peak.org; 541-753-1804

Task Force on Homelessness & Access to Housing:

This group began working in early 2017, following a Sunday service focused on homelessness in Corvallis. The first tasks were to find out what was happening in the community already – who was working on issues of homelessness and access to housing. The Task Force on Homelessness and Access to Housing began to attend meetings of the Corvallis Housing Opportunities Action Council (HOAC), studied approaches to housing and homelessness around the state and the country, and interviewed local people who were already invested in these issues and making a difference. Relatively quickly, opportunities were realized for effective action, by joining other efforts already underway. These included inviting Fellowship members to volunteer at the Drop In Day Center for homeless folks in Corvallis, and working with a city task force to help make the Cold Weather Men's Shelter possible again.

In May 2017, the task force agreed to propose to the Board of Trustees that the Fellowship take on the role of Fiscal Agent for the Cold Weather Men's Shelter, a role which was needed in order for the shelter to operate this year. Members of the task force also volunteered to take on several important volunteer roles for this effort. After a wide-ranging discussion of the risks and benefits of taking on this role, the Board agreed. Since then, working with the Men's Shelter has been a major Fellowship-wide effort, with more than 60 volunteers participating in a variety of ways. This work has earned praise from the wider community and has enabled the Fellowship to become more effective in building relationships for justice work in many areas.

The task force continues to be active in supporting the Drop- In Day Center, in exploring ways to provide more access to more kinds of housing, and in building interfaith and community relationships around these issues.

Newcomers are always welcome! For more information, contact Roz Keeney rozkeeney@comcast.net.

Micro-Credit Team

The Micro-Credit Team provides loans to women around the world to enable them to start businesses or improve their existing businesses. The goal is to help them to provide food, shelter, clothing, and education for their children.

Healthcare For All.

Several years ago, the Fellowship voted at a congregational meeting to affirm the idea that health care is a human right. This work is the continuation of that affirmation. Many Fellowship members are on the mailing list and attend meetings of Mid-Valley Health Care Advocates. The UUFC Health Care for All group does not have regular meeting times, but the group has had 2 video showings and will have others. There are also videos available for sign-out: "Big Pharma", and "Health Care at the Tipping Point" (sub-titled "Fix-It") and an excellent introductory video comparing Stockholm and Seattle in respect to culture AND health care. These can be viewed on a computer or dvd player at home and shared with friends. The major current focus is to help all Fellowship members and friends be informed about ballot measure 101, which arrived in mailboxes in the first week of January and must be turned in by Jan. 23. A YES vote will affirm the tax that our legislators worked out last session to cover health care needs for children and for Oregon Health Plan members and to stabilize insurance markets. This plan was crafted with positive input from Oregon hospitals, the Coordinated Care Organizations that provide care for health plan members, and medical insurance companies; it passed with bi-partisan votes. Do you want to be notified of other health care meetings and actions? Contact one of the five committee leaders of UUFC Health Care for All: Bobbi Hall, Louise Ferrell, Jack Elder, Chinh Le, and Dick Behan, or send a note to acting chair, Bobbi Hall, rlhall@peak.org.