



**UNITARIAN  
UNIVERSALIST**  
FELLOWSHIP OF CORVALLIS

Explore. Love. **ACT.**

## Justice Council Newsletter, January 2020

### Jan. 2020

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M,W 10 AM to 2 PM,  
T,TH 8 AM-Noon

The mission of the Fellowship is:

“Explore. Love. Act. We gather as an inclusive religious community to search for meaning, build deep connections and inspire action toward a better world for all.”

The Justice Council oversees the third part of this mission – ACT, to inspire action toward a better world for all. The mandate of the Justice Council is to provide support, guidance, coordination, and evaluation of ongoing and proposed social service, charity-related, and other justice programs sponsored by the UUFC, as well as to coordinate emergent justice-related responses.

The primary tasks of the 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.

We invite you to join us! Find your place in the justice work of the Fellowship. All of us are needed.

## **EDI stands for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

The EDI task force is our Fellowship ***anti-racism team***, working to challenge prejudice, bigotry, and discrimination in all forms. We devote ourselves to the mission of justice for those who are marginalized and oppressed. We welcome opportunities to combine efforts with UUFC justice groups as key issues intersect.

In the past year, we have been highly focused on education, including film and discussions events here at the UUFC. We reached out to other local faith communities and together were able to provide opportunities to a broader audience to deepen our understanding of racism and its underpinnings thru workshops.

Training has also been one of our main projects. In February 2019, we had a two part-workshop examining implicit bias, with John Lenssen. In April 2019, we brought Dr. David Campt, author of *The White Ally Toolkit*, to help us more effectively strategize as white allies. These workshops were offered free of charge – in large part because of the generosity of the fellowship along with our interfaith partners. In August 2019, we hosted Dr. Campt again as he offered two more workshops on ways to communicate with racism skeptics and how empathy and compassion are key to making this work successful.

### **EDI Goals:**

- ~ Continuing to educate ourselves, our Fellowship, and the greater community for a deeper understanding of racism and its underpinnings;
- ~ Building coalitions and strengthening our interfaith alliances for action/learning;
- ~ Taking knowledgeable action to support/initiate needed changes in policies and legislation;
- ~ Supporting organizations, such as NAACP, that build leadership & alliances for addressing racial justice
- ~ Being intentional about hearing the voices of marginalized people and people who are struggling to exist in the dominant culture,
- ~ Keeping racial justice work front and center within the UUFC community.

### **Focus areas for church year 2019-20:**

**White fragility**—We'll examine *how white fragility sustains racism/white supremacy*. How might we recognize and address white fragility effectively within ourselves and in the surrounding community?

**Poverty**—It's role in marginalizing and oppressing people; how can we more fully understand and effectively advocate for needed change?

**The criminal justice system and its direct relationship to systemic racism.** How can we support much-needed changes in our criminal justice system? There is a renewed & promising interest in restorative justice. The Black Lives Matter movement provides an opportunity to hear the voices of those oppressed within a justice system that is not working for people of color and those without means. There is much work to do.

As Unitarian-Universalists, we recognize that the anti-racism work we do is directly aligned with our principles. Especially clear is that racism undermines the worth and dignity of every person. Honoring the “right of conscience” and the use of the democratic process are essential to our work; disenfranchisement and a deeply flawed criminal justice system are just two examples of the direct relationship between our 5<sup>th</sup> principle and the work of anti-racism.

We always welcome and invite you to join us, or to make a start in your own anti-racism education, or to take another step. The work needs all of us.

The **Health Care for All team** invites everyone to a film series at the Corvallis Benton County public library meeting room at 6:30 PM on Thursday, Jan. 9; at 4 PM on Sunday, Jan. 26; and at 6:30 PM on Feb. 13. The first one lays out the case for health care for all and the third one discusses how we will pay for it.

Of special interest is the Sunday afternoon film, "Medicare and the Civil Rights Revolution," which will honor Dr. Martin Luther King. It shows how racism prevented the US from considering universal health care at the time that other countries did and even delayed congressional passage of Medicare for elders. We will discuss how achieving universal health care can help us overcome racism in our society.

### **UUFC Strategic Planning for Effective Justice and Outreach Work**

In June 2019, the Justice Council planned and sponsored a strategic planning workshop for all UUFC justice teams. The facilitator was Linda Jaramillo, the Interim Executive Director of Oregon Latino Health Coalition. In the workshop, justice teams reviewed their goals and current projects and articulated new goals for the coming year. In the process, several teams shifted their focus and took on new projects, some even changed their names. Each team began to develop strategic plans for accomplishing their new set of goals, for the coming church year.

In September, 2019, the justice teams, and all interested Fellowship members and friends, gathered for the **Justice Summit**, to present their goals and projects to all who attended. The theme for this year's Summit was ***Aligning Advocacy With Strategy***.

The goals of the summit were to:

- ~Showcase strategic plans and groups' efforts
- ~Share information on how others can connect with the work of various groups
- ~Strengthen the sense of community and spiritual connection among those doing justice work
- ~Demonstrate the breadth and depth of our work
- ~Share information on future learning and leadership development opportunities.

The summit beautifully highlighted the scope of crucial work being done by our social justice leaders and teams, gave clarity to intersections among our efforts, revealed opportunities for future collaboration among them. It made clear that the justice council and teams are engaging effectively in helping us live out one of the primary parts of the UUFC mission: "to inspire action toward a better world for all."

## Partner Church Team

The Partner Church Team (formerly committee) has managed the UUFC's relationship with our partner congregation in Transylvania for more than 30 years! When the partnership began, Transylvanian Unitarian churches were in great need of material and moral support, having just emerged from more than 30 years of a Communist dictatorship. Over the past several decades, the state of life in Transylvania (part of Romania) has improved markedly. Two years ago, the Unitarian congregations in Transylvania rejoined with their partners in Hungary to become the Hungarian Unitarian Church, which is the second largest Unitarian organization in the world, after the UUA. As part of the Hungarian Unitarian Church, Transylvanian Unitarians now help to support emerging Unitarian groups in many other parts of the world.

Our partnership has evolved as well. Under the leadership of the Rev. Katalin Szas-Czerey, the congregation in Bozod Korispatak, a relatively small village, continues to thrive. Our support helps provide funds for building repair and renewal (of the several-hundred-years-old church), for congregational life (especially for elders), and scholarships for high-school students which continue to be the biggest need. Rev. Kati has visited Corvallis twice, and Rev. Jill has visited her once. With the help of Ildiko Overbay, a Hungarian-speaking member of the Partner Church team, regular skype meetings with Rev. Kati are now very easy!

### **Russian-themed Dinner in Support of UUFC Justice Work**

Ernest Cardona will once again work his magic in the kitchen, this time with a Russian dinner menu. The dinner will take place at the Elks Lodge in Corvallis  
**Friday, February 8, beginning at 5 PM. Tickets are \$20 each.** Proceeds will support the work of UUFC Justice Teams.

### **The Secure Housing and Food for All Team**

Formerly the Homelessness and Access to Housing Team, our focus is now to provide information opportunities for service, and connections for UUFC for UUFC members and friends.

Some of these connections include:

Winter Shelters - Men's and Women's; Jackson Street Youth Services; McKinney Homeless School Children Project, South Corvallis Food Bank, and the Corvallis Daytime Drop In Center.

We participate in several local coalitions and advocacy groups, including the Sustainable Corvallis Housing committee, HOPE, Corvallis Downtown Advisory Board, and the Housing and Community Development Advisory Board. Join Us! Or contact us for more information.

## Immigrant and Refugee Support Team (IRST)

### **Sanctuary Ready**

Following the congregational vote last May to declare the UUFC a Sanctuary Church, the IRST's top priority has been to accomplish the tasks needed to make us ready to provide sanctuary if asked to. To

that end, two notebooks have been compiled. For now, we hope to keep both in the Church office. The notebook includes sections on: Steps in Giving Sanctuary; Sanctuary criteria & agreements (in English and Spanish); Public Relations & Deportation Defense Guide for Faith Communities; Legal Assistance Resources; What to do if ICE shows up (in English & Spanish); UUFC Sanctuary Space, Items, and Volunteers; Emergency Planning Guide for the Guest (in English & Spanish). **Thank -you to the IRS Team and all who helped to craft the Criteria!** We're now in the process of announcing to the wider community, UUA, etc. that we are ready to offer sanctuary.

Details for offering sanctuary are just part of our work. We've been very active in state-wide efforts, led by IMIrJ, to address the activities of **ICE at Courthouses** in Oregon. Some good news: "Seeking to halt federal agents from arresting people in courthouses for immigration violations, a panel of judges on the Uniform Trial Court Rules Committee in Oregon has asked the state's Supreme Court chief justice, Martha Walters, to impose a rule stating that no one should be subjected to arrest without a warrant." (The Bend Bulletin, Oct. 20, 2019). **Thank you to all who signed petitions, sent postcards, made calls, sent emails, organized and/or showed up for the photo op!**

**Know Your Role Training:** An attorney from the Civil Liberties Defense Center in Eugene presented the information. We learned a lot about what to do if ICE shows up at our home, workplace, or place of worship. Melinda Sayavedra wrote up notes taken at the training, and has included the ones most pertinent to giving sanctuary in our Fellowship in our Sanctuary Notebooks which will be kept in the church office and in the living space if we have a guest in sanctuary.

**Interfaith Immigration Conference "Building Bridges: Neighbor-to-Neighbor": April 24-25 2020, Albany.** Several team members are involved in the planning. We hope to include Linda Carroll and her work "One Story At A Time" in the conference. Here is a link to the Sunday service Linda did at the Fellowship this summer to talk about her experiences at the border:

[https://media.oregonstate.edu/media/t/0\\_ibyckvbr/2528392](https://media.oregonstate.edu/media/t/0_ibyckvbr/2528392) Linda Carroll's *One Story at a Time* Sunday Service, July 14, 2019, in case you missed it.

A variety of special fundraising efforts, have been successful in adding to our resources available for immigrant and refugee support. The Pumpkin Patch & Chili Ristras sales raised nearly \$500, and sales of Potheolders & fused glass raised nearly \$1000.

The Fellowship and the IRST continue to support **Burundian UU refugees in Rwanda** through an international ministry led by the Rev. Fulgence Ndagijimana, who was the founding minister of the UU Church of Bujumbura, Burundi, before he was forced to flee the country several years ago. The Fellowship sends monthly support for the UU refugee house in Rwanda, and provides a monthly stipend for four refugees who still struggle to make an income they can live on. (Several of the refugees living in the house have received visas to immigrate to Canada this year.) The IRST will host Fellowship Sunday coffee hours in December, with a portion of the proceeds going to support this refugee program.

And there's more! We're connecting to the new Climate Action Team for some joint programming though Connect Up; we managed the Sunday morning bake sales in December, with proceeds going to

our Burundian UU refugee partners in Rwanda; we supported several immigrant vendors to participate in the UUFC Holiday Fair, and we'll help produce a **Coffee House evening with Fellowship musicians on January 26**, in support of all the justice work at the Fellowship.

### **Climate Action and Climate Justice: The New Climate Action Team (CAT)**

The climate emergency in which we find ourselves provides the context for everything we do as the UU Fellowship of Corvallis. In September 2019, two Fellowship groups working on climate-related issues (the Climate Justice team and the Green Sanctuary team) decided to join together under the new name of the UUFC Climate Action Team.

Building on more than a decade of climate-related work at the Fellowship, this new team will use the structure of a UUA-level climate effort, known as the Green Sanctuary program. This program aims to infuse UU culture with bold, collaborative, and increasingly effective action to (a) mitigate the climate change crisis, (b) build resilience to that crisis, and (c) help secure justice for those least responsible for, most affected by, and with the fewest resources to adapt to the crisis.

The Climate Action Team will use the Green Sanctuary re-accreditation process to assess, build, extend, and UUFC's work to respond to the urgent threat to the web of life as we know it. The work will include priority task areas (each of these priority areas has a dedicated work group within the Climate Action Team) already underway, including the following.

- ~ Legislation and advocacy efforts related to carbon pricing (Karen Josephson)
- ~ Support for and participation in the movement to build a Green New Deal (Susan Christie)
- ~ Active participation and leadership in the local climate alliance (Jean Townes)
- ~ Direct action toward deconstructing the current fossil fuel infrastructure (Charlie Miller)
- ~ Building resilience for long term commitment to climate-related work (Susan Christie)
- ~ Green Sanctuary re-certification and participation in the UUA's Green Sanctuary efforts (Michael Hughes)
- ~ Continued and increased support for Seeds for the Sol (Martha Clemons, Louise Ferrell)
- ~ Sustainability (Susanna Priest)
- ~ Possible projects focused on use of plastics, food production and food waste. (Looking for some leaders)

New initiatives in climate action will be undertaken by new sub-teams (such as the environmental sustainability projects suggested above), or undertaken as Fellowship-wide initiatives. The Climate Action Team will continue to offer connect-up activities and educational opportunities and to partner with other justice teams and Fellowship programs. As we have heard many times from UUFC member Bill Ripple, in this crisis which affects us all, we need "all hands on deck."

## **JUSTICE COUNCIL AND JUSTICE TEAM LEADERS**

**Justice Council:** Members: Ann Pemberton and Larry Roper, co-chairs;  
Allison Sullivan, Dennis Feeney, Jean Townes, Susan Christie

### **Justice team contacts:**

Immigration and Refugee Support Team: Melinda Sayavedra  
Secure Food and Housing for All: Roberta Smith, Dawn Jones  
Partner Church Team: Beverly McFarland, Janet Throop  
Climate Action Team: Michael Hughes, Susan Christie  
Social Concerns Team: Sylvia Yamada  
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: Wendy Sutton  
Justice Theatre: Rachel Kohler  
Gender and Sexual Diversity: Kedo Baye, Teddy Gerrish, Doug Booth  
Health Care For All: Louise Ferrell, Bobbi Hall

## **New Justice Teams Join the Good Work**

### **Gender and Sexual Diversity Task Force**

Over several decades, the Fellowship has made commitments to inclusivity and to welcoming all. These commitments included becoming a Welcoming Congregation in the 1980's – part of the UUA's program to help congregations become educated about homophobia and inclusive of LGBTQI people. In the 1990's, that commitment was updated with further congregational work, as we signed on to Living the Welcoming Congregation. For several years, a LTWC team facilitated ongoing congregational education and involvement, and planned at least one Sunday service each year, with a focus on extending our welcome.

Since 2014, the Fellowship has been without a Living the Welcoming Congregation committee or team, until September 2019. This fall, a new group has emerged to carry on and expand this work. The new team is the Gender and Sexual Diversity Task Force. They plan to expand our years of good work for queer/LGBT/trans folks by becoming more aware of and involved in the perspectives and needs of trans and non-binary people.

Tasks for this new work include more conversation and education about the use of diverse personal pronouns and support of the Corvallis Trans Network (which meets regularly at the Fellowship). All are invited to join in. For more information, contact Doug Booth, Teddy Gerrish, or Kedo Baye.

### **Justice Theatre @UUFC**

This new team is undertaking a community theatre venture aimed at staging small-scale productions with pay-what-you-will performances supporting justice causes. Fellowship members and friends, and others are the players, directors, set-designers, etc. The mission of this team is to create theatre that fosters discussion about the world around us, to stage theatre that is completely open and accessible to audience members of any income level, and to generate donations for good causes. Past beneficiaries have included the ACLU and the Corvallis Cold Weather Men's Shelter. Staging an adaptation of **The Vagina**

**Monologues** is on the agenda for this team, in February. Auditions are scheduled for January 14 and 15. For more information, contact Rachel Kohler, [reassociate@uucorvallis.org](mailto:reassociate@uucorvallis.org)

**UUFC Justice Coffeehouse  
Sunday, Jan. 26 4-6 PM**

**Featuring Fellowship musicians with a  
variety of styles and songs.**

**Join in an afternoon of fun and music in  
support of justice work at the Fellowship.**

**Justice teams will highlight their work and  
compete to offer the tastiest snacks!**

**UUFC Justice Partnerships and Collaborations**

Local

Corvallis Climate Action Alliance  
Corvallis Sustainability Coalition  
Seeds for the Sol  
Safe Camp Steering group  
Mid-Willamette Valley Healthcare for All  
Oregon UU Voices for Justice  
IMIrJ - Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice

National

UUA Side with Love, UU the Vote, Green Sanctuary,  
Black Lives UU (BLUU)

International

UU United Nations Office  
UU Partner Church Council  
Flaming Chalice International (Francophone ministry,  
Burundian refugees)

**JUSTICE CONNECTIONS IN THE WIDER UU WORLD**

**UU the Vote**

**In moments of moral crisis, Unitarian Universalists know we are called to show up. And 2020 is one of those moments.** If we are to survive—as a human species broadly and as a UU religious community specifically—we are called to speak with moral courage and act with prophetic clarity, making our lives and our actions an embodied example of the relevance and saving power of our values and our faith communities. As fascism and white nationalism rise both domestically and around the globe, and as corporations barrel the planet toward irreversible climate collapse, the stakes are incredibly high.

What is UU the Vote? It is a collaborative and distributed effort by individual Unitarian Universalists, committees in our congregations, our ministers, State Action Networks, advocacy groups, the national association, Love Resists, Side with Love, and multiple partner organizations representing and organizing frontline communities. UU the Vote is about integrating electoral engagement into our strategies for change so that we are advancing our vision of a just world and beloved community in every arena available to us.



**#UUtheVote launches on January 12, 2020 with a nation-wide Zoom call!**  
**Join a viewing at the UUFC, Sunday, January 12, 2020 at 1 pm PT**

The January 12th watch parties will bring UUs together who are bringing our passion to the polls through issue-based advocacy, voter registration, outreach, and organizing around the 2020 elections to #VoteLove and #DefeatHate. On the call, we'll hear from the National UUtheVote Team, from UUs already organizing in their communities and states, and from partner organizations who are working with UUs. We'll introduce you to organizing tools and spiritual grounding resources the UUA Organizing Strategy Team has put together to support your efforts and let you know about key moments coming up in 2020.

**Oregon UU Voices for Justice**

Oregon UU Voices for Justice (ORUUVfj) is a statewide advocacy network that mobilizes UUs and their congregations to work for public policies in the state of Oregon that embody our UU principles. UUFC justice teams and task forces attend ORUUVfj annual meetings and regular Zoom meetings to participate in the advocacy work and stay abreast of the latest information on bills we care about in the Oregon State Legislature. The 2019-2020 work is organized in four areas, highlighted below:

**Deepening Democracy.** Oregon citizen advocates were able to pressure legislators to refer to voters a ballot measure (SJR18) to amend the Oregon constitution to allow limits on campaign contribution.

“Money is not speech and corporations are not people.” This will be on the ballot in November 2020.

**Human Rights.** This campaign will support HB2631, which establishes a pilot program to provide legal services for women who are incarcerated at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility, and SB770, introduced to create a universal affordable health care system for everyone in Oregon. The campaign will also continue to work for immigrant rights.

**Economic Inequality.** This campaign will focus on two issues in particular: (1) living wages and (2) affordable housing and homelessness. The campaign will work with the Oregon Housing Alliance and the Interfaith Alliance on Poverty.

**Environmental Justice.** Among many interests, two have gotten much attention: (1) the Clean Energy Jobs Bill, HB2020, the carbon cap and invest bill designed to reduce carbon emissions in Oregon; we're not giving up! (2) the Jordan Cove LNG export terminal and pipeline. ORUUVfj is tracking and supporting actions to oppose the project.

**More information.** If you're interested in learning more, contact Susan Christie ([crypto716@gmail.com](mailto:crypto716@gmail.com)), Jean Townes ([townesj@peak.org](mailto:townesj@peak.org)), or Claudia Keith ([ca.keith@comcast.net](mailto:ca.keith@comcast.net)).

**UU Voices for Justice website.** <https://www.uuvoicesoregon.org/> At the website, you can join the organization, participate in the Weekly Action, donate, get information on bills in the legislature, and follow on Facebook!

**The UUA 2019-20 Common Read: An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States**

In 2015, Beacon Press published an extraordinary book by Indigenous scholar and activist Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz that challenged readers to learn US history through a narrative that centers the story, the experiences, and the perspectives of Indigenous peoples. In 2019, Beacon Press published an

adaptation for young people by Jean Mendoza and Debbie Reese. Upending myths and misinformation that have been promulgated by leaders and media, it asks readers to reconsider the origin story of the United States taught to every US school child.

The year 2020 marks the 400th anniversary of the much-mythologized encounter at Plymouth between colonists and those native to the land. The UUA General Assembly 2020, in Providence, RI, will speak to the truths that contradict the mythology. At the same time, movements in response to global and local environmental emergencies, many involving UUs, are increasingly recognizing the connection between Indigenous rights and climate justice. This Common Read invites UU congregations, communities, and individuals to learn the story of trauma and resilience that is the Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States.

UUFC member Jesse Ford will lead a reading group of adults and youth at UUFC, beginning in January. Watch the weekly announcements for details.

### **Flaming Chalice International: A Francophone Ministry**

Flaming Chalice International is the francophone ministry developed and led by the Rev. Fulgence Ndagijimana, the founding minister of the UU Congregation of Bujumbura, Burundi. When civil unrest broke out in Burundi in 2015, Ndagijimana was abducted, tortured, and jailed. With widespread support from UUs around the world, through the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists, he was finally released, and fled Burundi, eventually settling in Saskatchewan, Canada. One of the other leaders of the Bujumbura congregation was Blaise Ntakarutimana – when he fled the country, he was welcomed by the Fellowship and spent two years in Corvallis with us, eventually being reunited with his family and moving to Portland.

Flaming Chalice International supports Burundian Unitarian refugees now living in other African countries, in Europe, Canada, and the USA. Most of them fled with nothing – leaving families, jobs and careers. Now they are still working to rebuild their lives. At the same time, with the support of Rev. Ndagijimana, they are staying connected to Unitarianism, and helping the congregation in Bujumbura continue to exist.

The Fellowship is a partner in the work of Flaming Chalice International. We directly support up to 4 refugees a year, mostly young men living in Rwanda. We help provide funds for education and small business opportunities. We also help provide rent for a house in which Burundian Unitarians can live and meet, including for worship. In addition, we act as a fiscal agent for contributions to the work of Flaming Chalice International from other UU congregations and individuals in the USA. For more information on the work of Flaming Chalice International, check out the website at [www.flaminginternational.org](http://www.flaminginternational.org).

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