

Explore. Love. ACT.

Justice Council Newsletter, July 2020

July 2020

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Updates on the work
of our justice and
outreach teams.
Partnerships and
alliances.**

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Almost four months after our last meeting in March, the Justice Council enjoyed a gleeful reunion on Zoom last week. We are happy to note that UUFC’s justice teams have used new ways to connect and communicate and been active and lively in the interim. Y’all are awesome and we are honored to be associated with you!

In our somewhat somber, somewhat giddy conversation, we wondered whether the excitement of the moment we are living in is truly “different this time” or if it will fade out to “business as usual” or worse. I love a strong opinion and a strong argument for it, so I was thrilled to listen in on a talk to Women’s March Network this week by Deva Woodly, Associate Professor of Politics at New School for Social Research, whose specialty is social movements. Professor Woodly gave us hope—and reason for it. She points out that:

-We are nearly 20 years into an Era of Contention in the world, a time when social movements regularly disrupt the business of bureaucracies protecting themselves;

-The protests since the murder of George Floyd have lasted longer and involved more people and communities in the U.S. and the world than any other in history;

-Our health, our economy, our environment and our social system are already disrupted. We have an opportunity to consider more options for how we go forward. And there are many good, well researched proposals on the table.

So let us go forward into the good and urgent fight building in this election year, confident that this is indeed “a moment” that contains the possibility to recalibrate our social contract. We, the Justice Council, rededicate ourselves to supporting you and to being available to hear your needs and requests.

*Ann Pemberton, on behalf of the Justice Council:
Larry Roper, Susan Christie, Jean Townes, Allison Sullivan, Dennis Feeney
P.S. Congratulations to Larry on his full retirement in June!*

Black Lives Matter: The Work of EDI

The world is certainly changing, and in the USA part of that change is the incredible movement of realization of the meaning of Black Lives Matter, in the wake of yet another killing of a black man – the death of George Floyd May 25, 2020 in an act of police violence. Given our existing commitments to Black Lives Matter, the Fellowship has responded; much of that response is being coordinated by our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team.

~On June 6, member of EDI posted lawn signs at the Fellowship, listing names of Black people killed by racist violence in only the past few years. On June 7, a “Say Their Names” event was hosted via Zoom.

~On June 8, more than 50 people gathered via Zoom to discuss what it means and what it looks like to become more anti-racist. A follow-up meeting was held on June 21 – in that meeting accountability partnerships began to form, in which members have made agreements to stay committed to this work.

~A series of reading/discussions has been offered and hosted by EDI, all aimed at encouraging more Fellowship members to make active commitments to becoming more anti-racist. These included reading or viewing:

Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson. Visit Equal Justice Initiative website; (EJI)Link: contact_us@ej.org

White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo. <https://youtu.be/Dwlx3KQer54> or <https://youtu.be/45ey4jgoxeU>

Ava DuVernay’s compelling documentary film, *13th*. (And Michele Alexander’s *The New Jim Crow*.) Accountability partnerships have also been formed from these discussions.

~The UUFC Board of Directors approved making **Juneteenth** (June 19th) a paid holiday for UUFC employees. This is a small step, but a good step. It will help us all to tell more of the stories of our nation, especially stories that have been left out of the dominant culture for too long. From here we can encourage other congregations, and local and state businesses and institutions to take this step as well, and we can take an active part in a movement toward making Juneteenth a national holiday.

Participation in the local Albany/Corvallis branch of the NAACP is a crucial part of the work of EDI; it affords the opportunity to hear Black voices and to recognize and learn from Black leadership within our community. EDI actively supported the NAACP Freedom Fund event, with a \$500 donation from EDI and our presence at the banquet. We provided assistance (as requested) for Juneteenth and the Soul Food Dinner for Black OSU students, two of the yearly NAACP events.

The justice mission of the Fellowship (ACT- to inspire action toward a better world for all) is to encourage as many members of the Fellowship as possible to take an active part in justice work. EDI invites you to join us in making a commitment to becoming more anti-racist, and to making Black Lives Matter a reality.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team Focus Areas for 2019-20 church year

--White fragility and how it sustains racism and white supremacy.

--Poverty—its role in marginalizing and oppressing people.

--Criminal Justice—its direct relationship to systemic racism.

--Building Alliances—Using interfaith and community coalitions to better understand the issues of racism, support Black leadership within Corvallis, and more effectively address needed changes.

Justice Theater @UUFC

In late February, UUFC's Justice Theatre initiative presented a production of Eve Ensler's groundbreaking piece of activist theatre, *The Vagina Monologues*. Every February, Ensler provides the script rights-free as part of the V-Day movement, which is intended to use theatre to raise money for organizations that fight for women's rights, gender inclusivity, and aid for victims of domestic violence. 22 actors from the Fellowship and the community at large participated in this powerful performance. We also created a pre-show addendum piece to address more gender diverse perspectives, adapted from interviews with trans and non-binary members of our community. Our performance raised \$2,972, which was split evenly between the Center Against Rape & Domestic Violence and the Mid-Willamette Trans Support Network.

This Winter, Justice Theatre @ UUFC plans to go digital with an online pay-what-you-will performance supporting another great cause. Stay tuned for details!

UU the Vote – National and Local : Please Join Us!

UU the Vote is a growing network of several thousand UU's across the country, organizing and mobilizing to make a positive difference in the November 2020 elections, because our lives and our planet are at stake. UU the Vote teams in multiple states have re-configured well-organized plans to knock on doors, register voters at large events, and host community conversations about what's at stake in 2020.

(1) We just concluded our membership drive - increasing our numbers to 80. You can help us continue to grow our membership by joining us. To find out more contact our membership chair: **PeterFStoel@gmail.com**. UU the Vote provides an accessible, effective pathway for participation in impacting the upcoming election. We plug you in to a variety of opportunities and support your efforts.

(2) Our team members have been writing hundreds of letters. Karen Josephson has organized regular zoom sessions on **Tuesdays at 10 AM and Thursdays at 3 PM** to write letters to key states. It's easy and folks have a good time connecting. To find out more contact Karen at: **kjosephson67@gmail.com**.

(3) We raised \$330 to support the national UU the Vote campaign. During the UUA General Assembly, national UU the Vote completed a successful phone banking campaign exceeding its goal, making over 114,000 calls to Texas. When you join and get on our listserv you can join in on the next national phone banking session: Saturday, July 18, 12-2 pm. UU the Vote and Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) are partnering to identify and build connections with anti-racist voters in Pennsylvania. We're inviting white folks in PA to actively join in the urgent work of racial justice and learn what non-partisan racial justice issues are at play in the election this year.

For more information, contact John Swanson, facilitator, Corvallis UU the Vote Team: **jnhf@aol.com**.

New Justice Team Emerging: Native Connections

The emerging Native Connections team is an outgrowth of this year's common read book group at UUFC. Shared interests include (1) creating shared opportunities for education about indigenous issues and perspectives, listening deeply to indigenous voices, (2) shared space to discuss our responses to this education, (3) a commitment to create brave, healing, and accountable space for all to the best of our abilities, and to work on spiritual issues that interfere with this work, and (4) shared action/reflection/action.

To date: Shared education:

Dunbar-Ortiz; AN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' HISTORY OF THE US (The UUA 2019-20 Common Read)

Kimmerer; BRAIDING SWEETGRASS

Shared action: asking what Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians needed in these moments, and responding in partnership with the Corvallis Sewing Brigade to deliver 125 cloth masks and 10 face shields.

Secure Housing and Food for All Team Receives Justice Outreach Fund Grant

The UUFC's Charitable and Educational Fund for Social Justice, often referred to as the Justice Outreach Fund, has awarded its first large (\$5000) grant to the Secure Housing and Food for All Team on behalf of Unity Shelter – the new non-profit organization that will now house the Men's Shelter and two other organizations. The Housing and Food For All team has been an important and integral part of the work of the Fellowship around issues of shelter and access to housing, especially in their work with and at the Men's Shelter over the past three years. The grant will help Unity Shelter hire an Executive Director, because the work on the ground (providing shelter during the pandemic) is already far more complicated and intense than a volunteer board can direct. The funds will also enable Unity Shelter to solicit funds from other donors. In this way, the Fellowship's Justice Fund is being used to increase local capacity, coordination and impact – literally changing the way people think and talk about an issue, which is one of the criteria of the fund. Great work team!

Immigrant and Refugee Support Team (IRST)

We were busy this year and accomplished a lot. We can't stress enough that this was not the work of our team alone. Everything we've done, we've done with the help and generosity of the members of this congregation. In the January 2020 UUFC Justice newsletter, we shared with you our work for the first half of the church year. We have continued to work on behalf of immigrants and immigration rights and would like to share with you just a few of things we've been doing.

Since January 2020...

~We've hosted mid-Willamette Valley quarterly meetings of the *Interfaith Movement for Immigration Justice* - a statewide non-profit organization working for immigration justice, and we became a sponsoring congregation of *IMIrJ*. We continue to stay engaged with them and their amazing work, right now focusing on making sure farm workers are part of the *Oregon Workers Relief Fund*.

~We worked with *Casa Latinos Unidos* and a new group in Newport called *Acompañar* to host a training for volunteer drivers to take immigrants to their ICE appointments in Eugene and Portland. Our work with them continues.

~We helped get word out for Census 2020 volunteers as support for the efforts of the *Corvallis Multicultural Literacy Center (CMLC)*.

~We joined in the work of *Here to Stay* OSU student group to help educate people about HB 2015 Equal Access to Roads Act.

~We donated money to *Linn Co. Rapid Response Coalition/ Immigration Counseling Services* in Albany to help support their work in bringing legal assistance to immigrants in the mid-valley.

~We invited immigrant vendors to sell their goods at our Holiday Fair. Three vendors participated and went home with money to help support their families.

~We hosted and facilitated the monthly *Interfaith Immigrant Support Group*, where we shared information, hosted guest speakers, planned a table for a conference and gelled into a group that has come to trust and enjoy one another.

~We were part of a group organizing a conference about immigration justice called *Building Bridges - Neighbor to Neighbor*. The conference has been postponed, but we have maintained our contact with the *Building Bridges* conference planners and the *Interfaith Immigrant Support Group*. And the great news is that the two groups have joined together! We represent many different faiths, several non-profit organizations, and people of goodwill who care about justice for all. This is a fantastic group that has formed. We trust one another and we work well together. In May, this bigger group, with the efforts of the *Corvallis Sewing Brigade* and the *Albany Mennonite Church*, Pedro Sosa of *American Friends Service Committee* and many others, was able to get over 800 masks and donations of food to farm workers and their families in less than 2-weeks time! Being part of this larger group has been one of the highlights of our year!

~And some fun to look forward to in the fall - we'll be hosting a social-distanced pumpkin patch! Stay tuned for more news about that!

Charitable and Educational Fund for Social Justice: The Justice Outreach Fund

The UUFC Justice Outreach Fund was established in 2015 to provide grants of up to \$5,000.00 for collaborative, high-impact projects aimed at seeding and creating social, economic, racial, environmental and other kinds of justice change. Proposed projects should create tangible and systemic change toward more justice. The Justice Outreach Fund Committee are stewards of the funds and are looking for projects that support UU principles and meet three primary criteria: 1. Changing how people are thinking and talking about an issue. 2. Engaging people and communities in effective action. 3. Developing or changing public or corporate policy. If you have questions please contact Rev. Jill McAllister. Information and application forms will soon be available on the UUFC web site. We look forward to working together towards a more just and equitable future.

Chareane Wimbley Gouveia, Peter Stoel, Jim Gouveia

Café Justo – Fair Trade Coffee

We sold 672 pounds of Cafe Justo coffee in this church year, supporting indigenous farmers on their own land. Almost all of these farmers had left their home and community to seek work. The Café Justo cooperative has enabled them to return home and support their families. Coffee is available during the pandemic at Nancy Kyle's house. Contact her at n.kyle12@gmail.com or 541-602-1930.

Gender and Sexual Diversity Task Force

The Mid Willamette Trans Support Network has been cultivating community during these trying times. We have regular Zoom meetings that include our Support Group, a Trans D&D game, and Nonbinary Meetups. Looking to the future, we are going to be adding regular support groups for trans and gender diverse BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), as well as a Transmasculine Support Group.

You can find an updated list of our events at [:Facebook.com/MidWillametteTransSupport](https://www.facebook.com/MidWillametteTransSupport) or by viewing our calendar at tinyurl.com/tsncalendar.

Partner Church Team

Romania has been as badly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic as the rest of the world. The minister of our Partner Church in Körispatak, Transylvania, Romania, Rev. Kátalin Szász-Cserey, attended the Fellowship's Zoom "coffee hour" a couple of weeks ago and described how she and her congregations have been - and are continuing to be - tightly contained. Fortunately, a member of our PCTeam is a native Hungarian speaker and was able to translate for Rev. Kati. In the spring, people in Romania were forced to shelter at home and could only go out if their destinations were approved by police. She was able to call her congregants in both her home village of Firtosmartinos and in Körispatak. Unfortunately, when the curbs were starting to loosen, a little village located on the road between her two churches had several active Covid cases and was quarantined - so she could not travel to her second church in Körispatak until recently. Things are getting somewhat better with restrictions being eased. Rev. Kati described these trying times as also times of positive experiences. She felt closer to her family and the village inhabitants, gardened a lot, worked around the house, repainted old furniture, and improved her English skills.

We are staying in touch with Rev. Kati through emails and occasional Skype and Zoom meetings. Our first planned event to have a congregation-wide Zoom meeting between the two congregations was thwarted due to the covid19 pandemic. We plan to follow through with this once larger meetings become safe again. Six high school students started school last fall with our help. Parents and children are especially grateful for the scholarship aid the UUFC sends. Since there is no high school in the little village of Körispatak, students who have completed the eighth grade, passed the required tests, and want to continue their education must attend boarding schools in larger cities. Our financial support has been crucial to provide a way out of poverty for these children. We don't know exactly what happened when the country shuttered itself in the spring, but we will find out.

Health Care for All

We in Health Care for All perhaps busier than usual. Given the pandemic, which has exposed the crisis in health care, we have noticed one absolutely LARGE problem. People who lose their employment lose their health care. And costs are still rising. If we had a form of Medicare for All—this would not be the case.

So, WA State Rep. Jayapal and others devised a bill, HR 6906 that, when passed, would provide every resident in the country with health care. This would last until an effective vaccine is available. It would supplement medicare and medicaid and other insurances and provide insurance for all others who lack any form. It would take care of deductibles and co-pays as well, for all. It is supported by Rep. DeFazio and most other Oregon reps, and Sen. Merkley. The good news is that Sen. Wyden has also pledged to support it. This is a first for him and it deserves a special thank you. (I sent mine!)

Meanwhile, the Oregon legislature needs to be encouraged to start its Task Force on SB 770, which is to develop a health care plan for Oregon. It was passed in the last regular session and has been formed but was not activated in this past spring as it had been planned, due to Covid. So, at the next special session, to start later this month, it must be encouraged to start meeting. We all have our jobs—to encourage our state legislators to get the 770 Task Force underway, and nationally, to encourage our Congress-folk to pass HR 6906, the Health Care Emergency Guarantee Act.

Climate Action /Climate Justice

Members of the Climate Action Team are working on a variety of projects:

Solar energy: Michael Hughes, Jack Elder, and Deborah Clarke finished a successful campaign to raise money to offset UUFC's 2019 energy carbon emissions. The money was donated to *Seeds of the Sol* to install solar panels for low-income families. Despite the Covid interruption, we not only reached our goal of \$1920, but also exceeded it! A check for \$2,118 was mailed to *Seeds for the Sol*.

Politics: *"The ability to vote is how you tackle climate change. We cannot have climate legislation simply by wishing it."* (Stacey Abrams, American politician and voting rights advocate).

1) In partnership with *UUtheVote* members and *Vote Forward*, several CAT members are I am writing personal letters to encourage Democratic-leaning registered voters in the Super-Swing States to vote this November. The goal is to write 10 million letters by November. *Vote Forward* has 2.3 million letters written so far.

2) In partnership with the *League of Women Voters* and *People not Politicians*, I am advocating for getting a petition on the Oregon's November ballot to address gerrymandering.

Carbon fee and dividend (not to be confused with "cap and trade"): *"An alternative to getting rid of fossil fuel subsidies is by adding a price to carbon. It levels the playing field by allowing renewable energies to compete equally."* (Katharine Hayhoe, climate scientist).

As part of the local chapter of the Citizens' Climate Lobby team, Deborah Clarke is lobbying Representative DeFazio for his support of HR 763 the *Energy Innovation and Dividend Act*, which puts a fee on carbon and returns the entire fee as a monthly dividend check to every American to spend as they see fit.

Clean Energy Economy: Michael Hughes is keeping up with the work of Interfaith Power and Light, and shares this info from IPL: "Since March, we've lost 600,000 clean energy jobs, and another 250,000 may be lost by the end of this month. We can reverse those losses and create jobs now by investing in clean energy tax credits. "That's why it's so important that we keep environmental justice issues and climate crisis issues at the forefront of every discussion that we're involved in, no matter what the crisis of the day might be, because these crises pale in comparison to the deadline that we face in 2050. We need people of faith and conscience across the country to advocate for a stimulus bill that will cut pollution, invest in clean energy, protect the health of our communities, and lay the groundwork for an inclusive, clean energy economy." Hughes is also participating in the leadership training provided by Al Gore's Climate Reality Project.

UUFC Youth Leading Justice Work

Two members of our YRUU are highly active and visible in local justice work and beyond.

Rising high-school senior **Mali Gottfried** (a youth of color at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis) is a lifelong UU involved in leadership—UU and non UU related—locally, regionally, and nationally. In the last few months, she has been active in the community supporting the Black Lives Matter Movement and local environmental justice movements. She has spoken at several climate rallies, and in June spoke at a Black Lives Matter demonstration and vigil. She has been an advocate for change in the Corvallis School District, and has met with members of the School Board and City Council to discuss and begin to take action in protecting students—particularly Black students, Indigenous students and students of color—by removing their school 'resource officers'. She is currently spending the month of July at an online UU youth program called *Faith Lab*, as well as another program called *Thrive*, for UU youth of color.

For recent YRUU bridger **Natalie Walter**, imagining any future is filled with anxiety about the state of the planet, worry about the health and wellbeing of my global family, and pain for the loss of what is inevitable. However, she notes that there is a lot to look forward to, locally. As one of the leaders of the Corvallis Climate Action Alliance and Sunrise Corvallis, she is helping take steps in the right direction. The CCAA is planning a Week of Action in September around the theme Healthy Planet=Healthy People (find out more by emailing us at corvallisclimatealliance@gmail.com) and Sunrise Corvallis is focusing in on City Policy, with a special interest in a Corvallis Green New Deal (email us at sunrisecorvallis@gmail.com with any questions or interest. Natalie feels driven to engage in this work because she feels it is the only way forward. She's aiming for a degree in Public Policy, with the goal to work on the city and state level to build Green New Deal supported policy to cut our emissions to zero and make our communities more resilient to the Climate Crisis, make reparations to BIPOC communities, and throughout all this, creating Green jobs, and better lives for all of us.

Men's Shelter Becomes Part of Unity Shelter

When the UUFC Board of Directors agreed in August 2017 to become the fiscal agent for the Corvallis Men's Shelter, we assumed this would be a temporary role, until a new organization could be found or created. In June, Unity Shelter was officially launched. It's a collaborative effort an umbrella organization including the men's shelter, women's shelter (Room at the Inn) and the new Safe Places organization which is managing SafeCamp at the UCC, plus micro shelters at a few other churches. During this pandemic, the city and county have come to rely on the work of these three organizations.

The Fellowship is still the fiscal agent until the last step is complete, which is for Unity Shelter to be approved for 501C3, non-profit status. The application is in the works. Shawn Collins has been hired as Executive Director. He says "Unity Shelter represents a unique opportunity to have a comprehensive approach to low-barrier shelter and transitional housing, to address the needs of men, women and families. The need for this is not new, but it has certainly been highlighted by the experience of the COVID-19 emergency.

We can be very proud of how our UUFC justice and outreach work around issues of homelessness have had and continue to have an impact in Corvallis.

UPDATES: Due to the pandemic, shelters have had to change and adapt. The Men's Shelter did not close in March, but remained open as 'Hygiene Center' for people camping in tents and vehicles in the vicinity. Snacks and hot food are provided several times a week. Showers are available, and laundry (also out at the Fairgrounds one day a week).

The women's shelter, Room at the Inn, also expanded its season indefinitely and increased hours to 24/7.

Social Concerns Team

Our mission is to involve the congregation in social action causes by raising funds and awareness for different local and international charities each month. Activities include action lunches, bake sales and Sunday collections. We want to thank everyone who helped with the fundraising effort this year. We supported the Men's Cold Weather Shelter, We Care and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee with action lunches, bake sales and Sunday collections. Our group is now on hiatus but feel free to donate to the cause of the month after the Sunday services. We hope to see everyone when the pandemic is over and we can interact normally.

Submitted by Sylvia Yamada for the Social Concerns Team
yamadas@science.oregonstate.edu

Goss Bequest: A Legacy of Justice Work

Marjorie Goss was a beloved member of the Fellowship. When she died in 2019, she left a beautiful bequest. That bequest included \$50,000 which she asked to have distributed to justice organizations, in line with her life-long values, interests and commitments. Janet Farrell (Marjorie's Personal Representative) and Marilyn Walker (Power of Attorney) along with Louise Ferrell, Jean Gilbert, and Jill McAllister, agreed to the following donations, which have now been made to carry out Marjorie's wishes:

Gifts of \$1000.00 each were made to: ACLU, CARDV, Chintimini Wildlife, Community Outreach Inc., Corvallis Housing First, Environmental Defense Fund, Greenbelt Land Trust, International Rescue, Mercy Corps, Mid-Valley Health Care, Natural Resources Defense Council, Planned Parenthood, Population Connection, South Corvallis Food Bank, Southern Poverty Law Center, UU Service Committee, Vina Moses, Oregon Cultural Trust, Immigrant Justice – IMIrJ, and OSU Symphony.

Gifts of \$5000 each were made to Unity Shelter, We Care, Corvallis Drop - In Day Center, McKinney Homeless Children's Educational Fund, Jackson Street Youth Services and Meharry Medical College, Nashville Tennessee (which educates Black doctors.)

UUFC Justice Partnerships and Collaborations

Local

Corvallis Climate Action Alliance, Corvallis Sustainability Coalition, Seeds for the Sol, Unity Shelter, 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)

UUFC 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: Nancy Kyle
Secure Food and Housing for All: Roz Keeney, Roberta Smith, Dawn Jones
Partner Church Team: Beverly McFarland, Janet Throop
Climate Action Team: Rev. Jill McAllister, Susan Christie
Social Concerns Team: Sylvia Yamada
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: Elona Meyer
Justice Theatre: Rachel Kohler
Gender and Sexual Diversity: Kedo Baye, Teddy Gerrish
Health Care For All: Bobbi Hall, Louise Ferrell
Native Connections: Jesse Ford

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.

