

Social Justice Report to the Congregation for 2022

Social Justice action was a part of the beginning of this Congregation!

Back in the 60s and 70s when integration was happening all over the U. S. several people who had started meeting on the UF Campus as UUs took a lead role in picketing a restaurant across from the University, and helped financially support others in racial justice work.

Social Justice work is still front and center for many of our UUs!

In 2022 the Social Justice work of the Congregation was facilitated by a Social Justice Council, Action Teams and Liaisons, and the Social Justice Circle, all with co-chairs Mary Bahr and Alice Primack. The Council had 4 FOCUS GROUPS, with the main Focus on Democracy as voted on by you last year at our Social Justice Congregational Meeting.

- CLIMATE/ENVIRONMENT/IMMIGRATION, headed by Alice Gridley;
- DEMOCRACY, headed by Nancy Parkinson;
- POVERTY/INEQUALITY/HOUSING, headed by Lisa Renner and Joy Avery;
- RACE AND RACISM, headed by Zoharah Simmons and Madelyn Moyer.

Activities of our Focus Groups included:

- arranging a speaker and putting together a Sunday Service, Common Read, or other educational opportunity
- keeping the Congregation members informed about opportunities for local actions and learning
- leading congregational participation in local events such as the MLK March.

Our ACTION TEAMS are busy all year with hands-on work:

EARTHKEEPERS, headed by Fred Judkins, keeps us on a good track protecting the environment here on our campus;

FAMILY PROMISE, headed by Pat Caren, works with others in Gainesville to house and feed homeless families while they work to be self sufficient

FOOD4KIDS HUNGER BACKPACK PROGRAM, headed by Chris Vulpe, sends home healthy food for the weekends for needy school children at Westwood Middle School

PINERIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD PROJECT, headed by Kirsten Flamand, works with residents of this neighborhood to the north of us, mainly helping with an after-school program for eight elementary and middle school children

Our LIAISONS TO COMMUNITY GROUPS attend local meetings and report on needs.

We have REGULAR MEETINGS EACH MONTH to plan our work and report on our activities.

WE WOULD LOVE TO HAVE YOU GET INVOLVED IN ANY OF THESE ACTIVITIES!!!

TO BEGIN,

Contact our church administrator Cam Pierce, to join the email list for Social Justice
(email him at UUOffice@uufg.org)

Then you will receive emails about meetings and activities, calls for help, and you can communicate to the group.

THEN,

Watch announcements on the email list for activities, meetings, and requests.

AND

Check the listings in the Gazette each month and each week for activities.

HIGHLIGHTS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVITIES IN 2022

MAJOR ACTION FOR OUR CONGREGATION

Three solar companies, arranged by Alice Gridley, Solar Impact, Pure Energy Solar, and Power Production Management (PPM) Solar, visited our site and submitted their estimates May-September. An energy audit was conducted by GRU resulting in a new meter installed to better gauge spikes in usage. The Federal government announced plans to grant up to 30% to nonprofits for energy efficiency. Due to the Board's focus on operating income, solar plans were put on hold till early 2023.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES AND ACTIONS

Day of Remembrance and Action: Vigil and Demonstration about Democracy, organized by UUFG and joined by other local groups.

Participated in annual MLK March from downtown to Citizens Field on MLK Day

Gainesville Interfaith Friends of Baker organization visited those detained by ICE at Baker Detention Center in MacClenny FL and continued contact through the mail and

ICE system for emails and video visits. An ACLU 10-page report, dated 7/26/2022, was sent to the ICE field Office Director located in Miami (*with copies to related agencies in Washington*). In December, Baker Friends delivered bags of paperback books, including some in Spanish.

Co-sponsored Cultural Arts Coalition 5th Avenue Arts Show

Co-sponsored Susan B. Anthony Lunch and Program

Non-Partisan Petitions to get candidates on the ballot for upcoming State and Local elections

Tree planting after a Service in April, to celebrate Earth Day

Co-hosted Family Promise guest families at Westminster Presbyterian Church

Tabled after UUFG Sunday Services most Sundays in the fall, to register voters and give voter information

Wrote Letters and Postcards to Encourage Voting: This Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, working nationwide with UUtheVote, sent 1200 nonpartisan letters and postcards to promote voting! These went to registered but infrequent voters in Virginia, Georgia, and Florida.

Registered New Voters; produced and distributed voter information; created buttons; did phonebanking and textbanking; and staffed our Voter Information Booths at various events. Several members served as Poll Workers

Booth at Pride Festival and Ad in Pride Guide brochure

Co-Sponsored UNA-USA annual UN Day program, on Peace

Trans Day of Remembrance booth

Cookie Caper annual fundraiser in December

Winter Solstice Concert co-sponsored by Social Justice Council with ad in program

Guest At Your Table to support work of UUSC

DRUUMM Fundraiser (online) co-sponsored by UUFG Social Justice Council

Demonstrated for Voting Rights, Wednesday afternoons, corner of N W 23 Avenue and 43rd Street

Collected and Delivered items for GRACE Marketplace

SHARED THE PLATE (collected donations during Sunday Services)

Family Promise

Florida Rights Restoration

Food4Kids

Bread of the Mighty

Planned Parenthood

GRACE Marketplace

UUA Climate and Environment

Peaceful Paths

Southern Poverty Law Center

HumanRights Coalition

MOVIES

“Boycott” about the Montgomery Bus Boycott

“Eyes on the Prize: March from Selma to Montgomery”

“Disclosure”

“Summer of Soul”

“John Lewis: Good Trouble”

documentary film on Voter Suppression in Georgia

“Ice on Fire”

COMMON READS/PLAYS AND DISCUSSIONS

My Grandmother’s Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies by Resmaa Meachem

“Fahrenheit 451” play at the Hippodrome

Hidden in Plain Sight: A History of the Newberry Mass Lynching of 1916, by Janis Owens (followed by attendance at public reading by the author in 2023)

Loaded: A Disarming History of the Second Amendment, by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

Moving to Higher Ground, by John Englander

SUNDAY SERVICES

Feb. 6: Panel of Gainesville Civil Rights Activists on the Movement here in our City and County, and the role UUFG played in it.

May 1: John Englander, a renowned sea level rise expert, presented via zoom for the Sunday service arranged by Alice Gridley. He stressed that we not only take steps to conserve energy but that we must prepare for the inevitable.

June 5: Sunday Service on Democracy, with speaker Ken Cornell, and Social Justice Council kicked off our focus on Democracy, as voted on by the Congregation, and how all can help make UUFG a winning “Good Trouble Congregation” with UUtheVote

November 6: Social Justice Service at which we Celebrated UUFG’s work with UUtheVote to promote Voting! And we took a realistic look with Nancy Parkinson’s sermon on the present and future state of Democracy in Florida and the United States.

**We appreciate the support we have received from
Rev. Lunsford and from the Congregation.**

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT ALICE PRIMACK OR MARY BAHR