

**Social Justice Council  
Annual Report  
2018-2019**

**Social Justice Council Members:** Brenda Black, Davalene Cooper, Kate Philbin, David Murphy, Patti Smith, Ann Mantil, Mary Markel, Belinda Arams, Janet Asnes (Board liaison)

This has been the second year of Old Ship's Social Justice focus on **Protecting Vulnerable Communities**.

**The Social Justice Council (SJC) has continued to lead Old Ship's efforts to**

- Hold ongoing **"Feeding Others" food collections** to support the Hingham Food Pantry using the new model of asking for a donation each time Old Shippers come to the Meeting House or Parish House. Donations are recognized each week as the collection basket is brought forward during the service. We are happy to report that our total donations are up and have been more consistent over the church year, actions that are greatly appreciated by the Hingham Food Pantry.
- Provide **meals for Father Bill's Homeless Shelter for Adults:** With help from Sharon Prehn, we have recruited and added new members to several of the six cooking teams each of which cooks and serves dinner meals on a quarterly basis.
- Maintain an action alert network, our **Social Justice Action Alert Network**, to share information about actions members of the list may take to support issues affecting vulnerable populations. The list has about 50 members of the community. Davalene Cooper maintains the list and sends out the alerts. If you would like to join the list, contact Davalene at [davalenecooper@verizon.net](mailto:davalenecooper@verizon.net).
- Continued our support for **UUSC this year through the monthly coffeehouse at Old Ship as well as through the annual Guest at Your Table** fundraising program. Rev. Mary Katherine Morn, the new President and CEO of UUSC, visited the coffeehouse in February and will be preaching at Old Ship in the coming church year. We had an amazingly successful Guest at Your Table program, raising a total of \$7,202.37 for UUSC. We appreciate how supportive our community has been in these efforts. More information about UUSC can be found on its website at [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org). Some of the programs at UUSC are focusing on issues at the southern border, as well as issues in the northern triangle countries in Central America. UUSC is also working on issues related to climate change and its impact on native populations most directly affected now by rising sea levels.
- Provide **holiday gifts for children in foster care** in our area
- Support the **350MA.org node's actions to respond to climate change and the impact on vulnerable populations** through information in the monthly

newsletter and alerts about potential actions through the Social Justice Alert email distribution

- Raise funds through specially designated **Social Justice Special Plate Collections** each month to support organizations who are focused on helping vulnerable communities. Here is the list of recipients for this past church year. We invite members or our community to make suggestions for the recipients of these collections for the 2019-2020 church year.

Month	Recipient	Amount Collected
October 2018	UU Mass Action	\$809.75
November 2018	Friends of the Homeless of the South Shore Dinner	\$1007.00
December 2018	UUSC Guest at Your Table Program	\$5512.10
January 2019	350 Mass for a Better Future	\$496.00
February 2019	Common Cathedral	\$445.00
March 2019	International Institute of New England (IINE)	729.00
April 2019	Old Ship Youth Group (for service trip)	\$829.00
May 2019	Mass Bail Fund	Not yet collected

Note: At the request of the Hingham Food Pantry, we will hold our **Annual Food Drive at Stop and Shop** in early September to help them restock their shelves after the summer.

**The SJC offered opportunities for our congregation to increase our knowledge and enhance our readiness to act for Social Justice with the following programs:**

- ❖ We sponsored a workshop for our congregation and members of our neighboring U.U. congregations on **“Faith in Action: Living Our Values, Building Our Vision” in January 2019**. Our presenters were Heather Vickery from the UU College of Social Justice and Laura Wagner from UU Mass Action. These were our take-aways from the workshop:

*How do we as a faith community organize ourselves to do social justice in the most effective way?*

- We need to engage in service from a place of faith, but we also need to reflect upon our service. Social justice work needs to be grounded in our spiritual lives—we need to act for justice and then reflect upon how we did that work. Was it consistent with our Unitarian Universalist values?

- We need to be willing to put our faith in the public square.
- We need to create sustained relationships with the people we serve. We must form relationships with those who are oppressed.
- We need to be mindful of our capacity to do social justice work; we cannot do everything and we cannot respond to everything. What is our capacity? What is the depth of the work we can undertake? We want to be impactful with our actions for justice.

*Process for committing to social justice work:*

- Connect to Unitarian Universalist values and the mission of the congregation.
- Claim the language of faith and USE IT! This is what grounds our work in our values.
- Cultivate spiritual practice as a group—begin each meeting with a spiritual moment and check in
- Consider covenant groups that do social justice projects together
- Share a meal
- Have fun and enjoy the work! Sing! Play!
- These connections and practices help us to stay calmer and deal with setbacks in our work. This also helps to grow our hearts.

*Identify a grassroots organization for partnership:*

- Who is the most affected group of persons for this specific type of project?
- Important to build relationship with oppressed people.
- Most of us live privileged lives. “If you have not lived it, you do not know it.” The experts about injustice are those who are living it.
- We need to make sure we are not prioritizing our needs over those whom we are serving or for whom we are advocating. We have to give up some decision-making and some power. We need to trust that those who are oppressed know what they need.
- Look for groups where you already are doing some of this work—UUMass Action, UUSC, UUUM, Father Bill’s, Wellspring, UUA Side of Love, Climate groups.

*Set achievable goal.:*

- Education and Service—UUs are already really good at these things
- Witness—taking a stand
- Advocacy—working to change laws and practices
- Direct Action or Civil Disobedience—this is the riskiest action

*Describe three different modes of actions to achieve those goals.*

- Imagine what could be done and how

*Build in ways to reflect on those actions.*

- Importance of reflecting on the work and actions taken. We must learn from what we did. What was good? What was not good? How did we fail? What can we do differently next time? How do we repeat what worked best? Think about starts and wishes
- Consider the Rose (good), the bud (possibility), and the thorn (pain).
- Important to confront our difficult and uncomfortable moments, and to admit our vulnerabilities

*Consider the capacity of the congregation to do the work.*

- “Pick Something.” “We are a piece of the puzzle.” We cannot do everything!
- In some congregations, the idea is that 5-7 people are needed for a project or issue to be undertaken. It must be the priority for the church year.

❖ In late March, we held a **Forum to allow follow up discussion to consider the following questions:**

1. What gets you excited about social justice work?
2. What issues do you care most about under our umbrella of "protecting vulnerable communities?"
3. How can we join together to live our values in the public square?
4. What are your questions and hopes for social justice work at Old Ship?

And we invite anyone who would like to discuss these questions to contact a member of the SJC.

❖ Provided the soup lunch in November to support the **Forum hosted by our Green Sanctuary Committee** to understand and begin to address the impact of climate change on our area and ways to further our work as a Green Sanctuary.

❖ Offered a **Forum on how “regular people” can act to support immigrants** to our area with Andrea Spake, Community Relations Manager for IINE (International Institute of New England) and Meg Glazer, Hingham resident who founded the Meals and Conversations program for IINE students.

In addition, we are happy to report that we were able to support several **new areas of social justice interest and action** which have been brought to us by members of the congregation, specifically:

- Promoted two collections of specific clothing, home goods and gift cards needed by recent immigrant families to our area through **Together and Free** (an organization supporting immigrant families who were separated at the Border and have been reunited).
- **Common Art** Show and Sale in support of homeless artists whose efforts to express themselves through art are being nurtured by the Common Art

- program within Common Cathedral (the faith community based on the Boston Common for individuals who are homeless and their friends).
- Promoted **UUUM' s Fair Foods volunteer opportunity** providing surplus foods at low cost or no cost to those in need.
  - Promoted supporting immigrants through **Meals and Conversation**, a program providing a lunch and lunchtime English language conversation to English as a Second Language learners.

### **For 2019-2020**

We envision continuing many of our recent social service actions which have received support from the congregation, and we will offer guidance and support to any in the congregation who would like to lead an action or learning opportunity to help a vulnerable community. We will help with communicating opportunities to act in service to such vulnerable groups through the newsletter, announcements and the Social Justice Action Alerts email distribution. Contact Davalene Cooper [davalenecooper@verizon.net](mailto:davalenecooper@verizon.net) to be added to the alert email distribution.

We plan to:

- Lead the Annual Spring Food Drive to restock the Hingham Food Pantry at Stop and Shop
- Follow-up from the Faith in Action workshop discussion by holding a survey about social justice work at Old Ship this coming fall.
- Provide information about ways to act in support of vulnerable populations via the Social Justice Alert Action Network
- Organize and administer eight monthly Social Justice Special Plate collections, expanding potential recipients to organizations serving a range of vulnerable populations.
- Support our 350MA.org node and Green Sanctuary Group in their efforts to educate our congregation about ways to reduce the human impact on climate change and to act for climate justice for communities currently experiencing the impact of climate change.
- Support the UUSC through the Guest at Your Table fundraising and educational program
- Program a recognition of U.U. Justice Sunday

We hope the Children's RE program will continue to provide bag lunches for Father Bill's residents on a monthly basis and that the Youth Group will continue to identify actions they can take to serve others.