

News from the Social Justice Council

The Social Justice Council (SJC) met recently to discuss how best to serve Old Ship during this time of pandemic and social distancing. We decided we would use the Old Ship Newsletter and Constant Contact to inform the congregation of opportunities to engage in helping those most in need during this challenging time. We also will use the Social Action Alert Network to inform Old Shippers of opportunities to engage in advocacy on behalf of those persons or those issues. Finally, we will continue our “special plate collections” in a somewhat different format for as long as we are meeting online and not in person.

Another issue we discussed is our focus for social justice work at Old Ship. In the past decade we have identified a specific focus for our work for a three-year time period. Last spring would have been the time to discuss whether we continue the focus on protecting and serving vulnerable populations since it was our third year with that specific focus. As you may recall, our first focus was on access to education and our second focus was on those experiencing homelessness and hunger. We like the broader focus of as it permits us flexibility in responding to issues that arise. For example, given the recent ascendancy of racial justice issues, we provided support for the UUA’s Reconstruction class this summer and we are sponsoring an antiracism book group this year at Old Ship.

However, we have come to realize that the specific naming of our work is a bit off the mark. The populations experiencing social injustice are not themselves vulnerable people. They are strong and resilient! And it is not our role to protect them, but to work with them in creating a more just and equitable world. We are beginning the conversation as to what our focus should be for the next three years and how we name it. We would like to engage the congregation in this conversation, and we are planning for a Zoom forum sometime this fall to discuss these matters.

Until then, here are updates about our current projects and plans for this year.

Father Bill’s Cooking Teams: Our Old Ship Cooking Teams have continued to provide meals for Father Bill’s in Quincy throughout the pandemic. Due to social distancing and occupancy rules, Father Bill’s is serving fewer people, but our cooking teams continue to cook the same amount of food as before, which allows for another meal to be available at the shelter. Thanks to all who cook and deliver these meals to Father Bill’s.

Hingham Food Pantry: As you may recall, each year we have held a food drive at Stop and Shop for the Hingham Food Pantry. Pre-pandemic, we were anticipating a September food drive. We realize that a food drive is not feasible with the current need to wear masks and social distance—and we imagine it is better for everyone’s safety to support the Food Pantry in other ways at the present time. For those of you who shop at Stop and Shop in Hingham, there is a collection bin for the Hingham Food Pantry and you can always purchase items for the food pantry and drop them off in the collection box. The food pantry is most in need of the following foods: beef stew, gallon bottles of juices, 24+ oz jars of pasta sauces (marinara or meat), non-saltine crackers, and hearty soups. Finally, the SJC is planning to designate the Hingham Food Pantry as our recipient of our October special plate collection. Money donations are always welcome and in fact, the food pantry can buy \$3 worth of food for every \$1 donated. More information about the process of our October special plate will be in the next newsletter.

Anti-Racism “Drop-In” Book Group Starting in September: Would you like to learn more about how to be an anti-racist activist? Learn more about how our society, our world, is structured around white supremacy? Learn more about our racist American history? Learn how we could advocate for a more diverse future? And one that is safer for all people, but especially for persons of color. This fall, we will begin a monthly “drop-in” book group at Old Ship (via Zoom) that will explore these questions, and many others. The group will alternate between fictional and non-fictional works, written primarily, if not exclusively, by persons of color. The first two books are Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi (fiction) and How To Be An Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi (non-fiction). We will discuss Homegoing at our September meeting and How to Be An Antiracist at our October meeting. After these first two meetings, participants will choose the books we will read. Since this is a “drop-in” group, you may decide to read and discuss some books and not others. If you would like to join this book group, contact Davalene Cooper at davalenecooper@verizon.net or 781-749-0790. The first meeting will be on Sunday, September 20, at 7 p.m.

UU the Vote: The UUA has launched a new initiative for the 2020 elections. The “UU the Vote” webpage and resources can be found at <https://www.uua.org/liberty/electionreform>. We will be sending out action alerts and other information related to this campaign as appropriate.

Old Ship Social Justice Action Alert Network: Sign up for the Old Ship Social Justice Action Alert Network to find out about specific advocacy opportunities such as letter writing, advocacy calls, participating in educational/advocacy events with local legislators. Send your email address to Davalene Cooper, Keeper of the List, at davalenecooper@verizon.net. Also, if you have an action alert to share, contact Davalene Cooper and she will send it out, as long as it meets our criteria. (If it doesn’t, she will discuss it with you.)

Ways to Help During the Pandemic: During this pandemic, SJC invites you to continue to Serve Others and protect vulnerable populations by helping in any of the following ways. Updates will be posted on the Old Ship website.

- **Hingham Food Pantry:** The Hingham Food Pantry is accepting unexpired, non-perishable and unopened food donations on the following dates:
 - Mondays, September 14 and 28, and October 12 and 26 from 2:30 to 4 p.m.
 - Wednesdays, September 25 and 30, October 14 and 28 from 12:30 to 2 p.m.
 - The food pantry is most in need of the following foods: beef stew, gallon bottles of juices, 24+ oz jars of pasta sauces (marinara or meat), non-saltine crackers, and hearty soups.
 - Donations can be left in the carts outside the pantry (behind 2nd Parish) during the above times. Alternatively, you can order donations online via Instacart.com. Any such orders should be sent to Brooke Bartletta (note the “t” in Bartletta), 52 Fearing Road, Hingham, MA 02043.
 - Donations may be dropped off at the collection box at the Hingham Stop and Shop.
 - Monetary donations are also always welcome. Checks may be made out and mailed to: Hingham Food Pantry, 685 Main Street, Hingham, MA 02043 or Venmo @Brooke-Bartletta (note the “t” in Bartletta) with a note of Hingham Food Pantry in the “What’s It For” section. Brooke will provide Hingham Food Pantry with a check.
 - The Hingham Food Pantry would like to offer help to any local family who may need assistance during this difficult time. Please help get the word out that should anyone need help, please call the Pantry at 781-740-8180.

- The **Weymouth Food Pantry** is accepting monetary donations to allow purchases of the foods needed at this time when their usual supply of rescued foods from grocery stores is severely reduced. <https://www.weymouthfoodpantry.org/donation-page>
- **Wellspring in Hull** is open, masked required. For hours and updated information regarding donations to the thrift store or the furniture annex, go to <https://wellspringmultiservice.org/>. Additionally, Aunt Dot's Kitchen, the Wellspring food pantry continues to need extra help. They need non-perishable foods, as well as fresh produce. Gift cards to supermarkets and monetary donations are especially helpful and greatly appreciated. To donate, go to <https://wellspringmultiservice.org/donate/>
- **Medical Care for the Homeless:** Boston Health Care for the Homeless provides health care to the homeless. They continue to care for the homeless during the COVID crisis. To learn more about their work or to donate, go to <https://www.bhchp.org/>.
- **Cradles to Crayons** in Boston has established an Emergency Essentials Fund to help its community partners meet urgent needs for new diapers, school and art supplies, hygiene items and other essentials for children. The Emergency Essentials Fund will allow them to leverage their logistics expertise and bulk purchasing power and serve thousands of families in need. For more information or to donate online, go to <https://www.cradlestocrayons.org/boston/>.
- **UUUM (UU Urban Ministry)** needs funds to continue to meet the needs of the women and youth they serve. Donations can be made on their web page at <http://www.uuum.org/>.