

**Social Justice Council
Annual Report
2022-2023**

Social Justice Council Members: Brenda Black, Davalene Cooper (Chair), Ellie Handleman, David Murphy, Kate Philbin, Jean Railton, Lisa Sawyer, Patti Smith, and Trish McAleer (Board liaison).

The Social Justice Council (SJC) works to facilitate and support social justice activities and projects at Old Ship Church. At our 2021 Annual Meeting, the congregation unanimously approved our recommendation that the major focus of our social justice work be on racism, dismantling white supremacy, and climate justice. We also welcome suggestions from the congregation for specific activities or projects to support. If you have an idea, contact us for assistance and support.

This past year we have done the following things consistent with the specific issues described above.

- Last fall, we participated in the UU the Vote campaign, a campaign which works to get out the vote in national and state elections. We held a forum after church on the UU the Vote program in September. We thank the 21 people in our Old Ship community who wrote 875 postcards to voters in Arizona, Florida, and Texas as part of the Reclaim the Vote initiative from UU the Vote. We also know other members of our community wrote postcards as part of other community efforts to get out the vote. Thanks also to those who have participated in phone and text banks. We plan to continue working with UU the Vote in future elections, and in the future, we plan to be involved in the primaries as well as the general election. Thanks to Ellie Handleman for leading this effort.
- We continued to sponsor an anti-racism/social justice book group that has met monthly during the 2022-2023 church year. This group has read a variety of books, both fiction and non-fiction, authored primarily by persons of color. This “drop in” group usually had 10 to 12 participants at each session. Our group includes people who have a connection to members of Old Ship, and as a result, we have participants from Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, and Missouri. This has made for richer discussions as the issues of social justice sometimes have different challenges in different parts of the country.
- We continue to support the Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry (UUUM), as Old Ship is a supporting member congregation of this organization. We continue to consider how to be more directly involved with the UUUM, as it fits into our anti-racism work. As a supporting congregation, we are entitled to three delegates to the UUUM Annual Meeting and representing Old Ship as delegates are Davalene Cooper, Lisa Sawyer, and Dianne Walcott. We have continued to advertise their online Artist Catalog as a possible site for gifts during the holidays. We also advertise their Community Conversations

programs in our newsletter and have received feedback that some Old Shippers have attended these programs, which feature the intersection of race, poverty, education, and other social justice issues. Our January special plate supported the UUUM's domestic shelter, Renewal House. Vinnie Myles, UUUM's Director of Development, spoke briefly before this special plate offering, and then stayed for an informal conversation during coffee hour. About 20 congregants dropped by for this conversation.

- We continue to explore how Old Ship can best acknowledge that our Meeting House is on land that was originally the home of the Massachusetts and other First Nation Tribes and on how we might acknowledge our history of supporting white supremacy and slavery. We have been speaking with the Hingham Historical Society as to how we might work together on these issues.
- The congregation supported our recommendation at last year's Annual Meeting to become a member congregation of Massachusetts Interfaith Power and Light. Our Earth Day celebration on April 23 will feature two short films made available to us through IPL, and the Executive Director of MassIPL, Rev. Cynthia Davidson, will preach the sermon during our service and participate in the program that follows the service.
- With the assistance of Ron Pollara, we continue to monitor and support the specific green building design requirements for a new Parish House. The overall goal is to consider the latest sustainable technologies, practices, and products that will make the new Old Ship Parish House Building "green and sustainable" and works toward a Net Zero Environmental Impact.

Finally, we want to thank everyone, including our SJC members and friends, for their support in our efforts to create a more just and peaceful world!

In addition to the efforts discussed above, this year, the SJC has continued to lead Old Ship's efforts to:

- **Provide meals for Father Bill's:** The six cooking teams staffed by Old Shippers and others from the area have continued to provide full dinner meals for those served at Father Bill's Shelter in Quincy. Each group makes dinner for the shelter four times during the year. Father Bill's has expressed deep appreciation for the consistency and commitment from the six teams during these challenging times. Thanks to Brenda Black for coordinating these teams. We also want to thank those who participate in this project, providing meals for the shelter four times per year. Here is the list of our six cooking teams. Thank you all!
 1. Charlotte Champagne (Team Leader), Mary Petrino, Bob Casey, Kathy Lynch, and Kevin Mulvey & Bruce Mauer
 2. Sharon Prehn (Team Leader), Nina Wellford, Erica Goode, Carolyn Locke, Judy Sneath, and Mary Markel & David Murphy
 3. Peggy Weymouth (Team Leader), Nancy Hill, Ronnie Scott, Julie Kembel, Avis Goldstein, Stephanie Connolly, and Kathi Lesko

4. Dave Petrie (Team Leader), Frank Cheney, Mid Walsh, Brenda Black & Ron Pollara, Paul Stone, Stewart Lewack, and Libby Benson
5. Janice McPhillips (Team Leader), Janet Blampied, Susan Read-Brown, Roseanne Bush, Diane Clarke, Caryn Schneider, and Gail Moran Slater
6. Pia Young and Lisa Sawyer (Team Leaders), Allan Greenberg, Fan Leonard, Susannah Thomas, and Davalene Cooper

- **Lunches for the Anderson Veterans Home:** We at Old Ship are part of a community wide interfaith effort to provide six lunches twice a week (Tuesday and Friday) to the Anderson Veterans Home on Fort Hill Street in Hingham. Lunch consists of a deli-meat sandwich, chips, fresh fruit, cookie, and water or juice. Last August, Lisa Sawyer and Jean Railton provided the lunches for these dates. Thank you, Lisa and Jean.

This coming August, we would like to involve more Old Shippers in this project. If you would like to be a part of this effort, by agreeing to provide lunch for one or two days during the month of August, please contact [Davalene Cooper](#). You could do this individually, as a family, or as a group of friends. The lunches are left in a cooler outside the side door of the home.

- **Support the Hingham Food Pantry:** We have reminded the congregation of how to support the Hingham Food Pantry during COVID. We have resumed collections as part of our Sunday morning services and hope our collection will increase as more people return to the Meeting House. We also supported the Hingham Food Pantry through one of our special plate collections. The Pantry's Executive Director, Susan Kiernan, attended the service and spoke briefly about the work of the food pantry. We hope we will be able to hold our annual Stop and Shop food pantry collection next year, something we have not done since the pandemic.
- **Maintain the Social Justice Action Alert Network:** We share information about actions members of the list may take to support issues affecting vulnerable populations. The list has about 65 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.
- **Support the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC):** This year, as was true last year, our support was primarily through the annual Guest at Your Table fundraising program. The latest UUSC Annual Report includes the following awards for Old Ship for the last fiscal year: Creating Justice Banner Award (25-50% of the congregation are UUSC members) and a special recognition for our Guest at Your Table program. Our action alert network also sent out action alerts from UUSC.

The Coffeehouse Off the Square was unable to take place given COVID 19 protocols, although we did help to host a special memorial coffeehouse in honor of long time volunteers Jim Watson, Sherman Whipple, Carol Schuler, Jim Richmond, and Joan Cellini. Jim Watson coordinated the coffeehouse with enthusiasm for many years, Sherman designed posters, helped get the word out to the community, and often performed during the open mic

time. Carol baked and then served refreshments during intermission, Joan greeted coffeehouse fans at the door and handled ticket sales. Jim Richmond helped with the coffeehouse set-up. Thanks also to our musicians who volunteered to perform as a way to honor these volunteers. Southern Rail, one of the Coffeehouse's regular performers for almost 15 years headlined the show. Other performers included Bob Hawes & Jeff O'Neil, Marc Meyer, Duncan McLore, and Eric Cornetta, as well as Marty Blumberg, Bob Uvello, and Dave Jackson. It was a festive evening full of good music and many remembrances of these fine people. We raised \$1011, which was donated to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee in memory of these volunteers. Additional thanks to Marc Meyer and John Leonard for organizing this wonderful tribute!

- **Support for the South Shore Friends of the Homeless:** This year, we were able to provide the space and the meal for a holiday dinner serving those living in shelters or temporary housing through the South Shore Friends of the Homeless (SSFH). Old Shippers prepared and served the food—an amazing feat given the lack of a working kitchen!

Thanks to Brenda Black for organizing the food! Thanks also to our many volunteers who helped prepare and serve the food and then to clean up the kitchen and Fellowship Hall, including Asher Baynes, Bonnie Baynes, Liz Bienfang, Davalene Cooper, Abby and Mary Diamond-Kissaday, Kate Doyle, Diane Jordan, Trish McAleer, Karen Plaskon, Ron Pollara, Jean Railton, Lisa Sawyer, Gail Moran Slater, Patti Smith, and Carol Valentine. Thanks also to everyone who donated to the November special plate that provided funds to purchase the food and supplies for the dinner. Finally, thanks to the Hingham Women's Club who provided crafts, decorations, table centerpieces, and boxes of cookies for the families to take home. And to Santa who brightened everyone's evening!

SSFH will be looking for a new site for the dinner given that we no longer have the space—at least at this time—to host, but we will have an opportunity to cook and serve the meal again, if we choose to do so. This is ultimately a project of the Old Ship Board of Trustees, but this year, the SJC agreed to organize the dinner given the sale of the Parish House, which was a major focus of the work of the Board.

We again participated in SSFH's holiday gift program. We adopted 9 families for the holidays, consisting of 7 fathers, 10 mothers/grandmothers, 5 teenagers, 18 children, and 2 infants. These families were either currently living in shelters or had just moved into more permanent housing. All together, we purchased about 126 presents for these families. It was an incredible success, and we were so excited to deliver these gifts to the SSFH. We plan to participate in this holiday gift program again next year. Thanks to all of you who participated in the program and made the holiday a lot brighter for those being served by the SSFH!

- **Old Ship Website:** Thanks to Dave Murphy, we have kept social justice information, including organizations and programs in need of financial

donations and/or volunteers during the pandemic, updated on the Old Ship website.

- **Social Justice Special Plate Collections:** As was true last year, the congregation has been especially generous in supporting our special plates. We thank everyone for this incredible support in a time of increased need, and at a time when many in our congregation are dealing with increased costs due to inflation. Here is the list of recipients for this church year, with the amounts donated as available.

Month	Recipient	Amount Collected, if known at the time of this report
October 2022	UU the Vote	\$1725.45
November 2022	Friends of the Homeless of the South Shore Holiday Dinner	We collected a total of \$963.88, and after deducting the expenses for the holiday dinner, we sent a check for \$544.93 to the Friends.
December 2022	UUSC Guest at Your Table Program	\$7889.54
January 2023	UU Urban Ministry—Renewal House	\$1771.81.
February 2023	Hingham Food Pantry	\$1,757.77
March 2023	International Institute of New England for the Unaccompanied Minor Program	Not yet determined
April 2023	Mass Interfaith Power & Light	To be determined
May 2023	Holly Hill Farm's Farm Food to Food Pantry Program	To be determined

In addition, our Christmas Eve Offering of \$1602 was evenly split between UUSC, Father Bill's and Urban Ministry (\$534 each). We are deeply appreciative of these special plates and Christmas Eve donations that serve to lessen the suffering in our world. This is one of the ways we are making a difference in our world. Thank you!