

UUSJ Newsletter - Spring 2010

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice

An affiliate of the Chicago Area Unitarian Universalist Council

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Chair's Corner:

In the January Newsletter in this space I described a number of social justice initiatives which can be found in the UUSJ Databases at

<http://www.uusforsocialjustice.org>.

The Databases are now better organized and more searchable. But we still need to hear from more congregations so that we can include their efforts. The database has begun to serve at least two important functions: 1) facilitating communication as well as 2) preventing social justice committees from "recreating the wheel".

But to date we have only heard from one fourth of the CAUUC congregations. I know that some exciting Social Justice efforts are happening at other Unitarian churches in the Chicagoland area which are not yet included in the databases. For instance, the DuPage UU Church hosts Just Views movies on the 2nd Friday of each month. People's Church sponsors Two Li'l Fishes, which serves meals four days a week to between 120 and 180 homeless people. Unity Temple organizes an annual Spring Music Festival which benefited Haiti this year. And the UU Fellowship of DeKalb adopted a congregational

Resolution for Peace, Justice, and Civil Liberties.

At this point, we have only heard from 1st, 2nd, and Beverly in Chicago, as well as the following suburban congregations: Countryside, Elgin, Evanston, Geneva, and Northshore. This is a terrific start, but we need to hear from the rest of you in the Chicago Area Region. Please contact me, Jean Pierce (630-232-1891 or jeanpierce@aol.com) so that I can send you the database questionnaire.

UUSJ Board Meeting

Sunday, May 23, 2010, 2:00 PM

First Unitarian Church

Moore Parlor

5650 S. Woodlawn Ave.

Chicago, IL 60637-1623

Program "Peacemaking
Congregational Study/Action,
What it Means to You and
Your Congregation"

Presented by Sharon Welch,
Provost and professor of
Religion and Society at
Meadville Lombard Theological
School

Report of the Task Force on Economic Justice and Homelessness

If your congregation is considering submitting a nomination for a Home and Hope Booster grant, the deadline has been extended from April 12 to April 16, since no nominations had been received by April 6. The next grant recipient will be selected on April 17, when this task force holds its next meeting. That upcoming meeting of this task force has been shifted from Third Unitarian Church, which did not have space for us on April 17, to the home of Ron and Karla Chew, 512 N. Ridgeland Ave., Oak Park. The meeting will occur between 1 and 3 p.m. and all are welcome.

Members of this task force have been gathering updates for our next versions of the Chicago and Suburban Chicago "If YOU or Someone You Know Need Help" resource sheets. We anticipate producing and mailing out those updates in May, to the Chicago area U.U. churches, many other organizations, social workers, and others, who have requested copies when they become available.

This task force initiated one Action Alert since our last newsletter. That Action Alert, which was limited to those living in Illinois, had our Action Alert participants sending letters to their state representative in support

of HB 0174, which would increase the state income tax as part of the steps needed to have a responsible budget for the State of Illinois. As of this writing, the Illinois House has still not brought that measure up for a vote.

When the UUSJ Summer Quarter Meeting is held, in late August, this task force has the responsibility for the program. We are planning to have it focus on issues related to the reform of the banks and other players in our country's financial system.

If you will be a delegate to the UUA General Assembly in Minneapolis, MN, in late June, we ask you to support National Economic Reform as the UUA's next Study Action Issue.

Allan Lindrup, Co-Chair, 773-643-8061 or uusj@sbcglobal.net
Ron Chew, Co-Chair, 708-524-9695 or ronnkarla@aol.com

UUSJ Environmental Task Force Report

Action Alert: The Environmental Task Force issued one action alert on March 12, 2010 to the Illinois General assembly. It urged them to support a bill that would change the net metering law, requiring greater compensation from utilities to non-utility entities that generate electricity with photo voltaic systems.

Educational Insert: We're about to mail another educational insert about proper ways to dispose of medications.

Individual Congregations:

North Shore Unitarian Church – Andy Singleton emailed an extensive report. Their ETF must track and pay IL sales tax for any sales, according to the church's audit committee. They sponsored the first Winter Solstice Celebration in December, and started a regular column in the church's weekly e-newsletter, focusing on the 4 R's. They held a Family Event at a wildlife center. The ETF plans to wrap up Green Sanctuary projects this spring, which include numerous conservation initiatives both inside and outside the church. Andy mentioned that institutionalizing green changes is challenging without the appropriate "project champion"

Second Unitarian Church – Gene reported that there is nothing new to report, as the congregation is in transition.

Beverly Unitarian Church – Allan shared Fran Sowa's report. The GS Group made a donation to the "Black Oaks" sustainable living community near Kankakee. They hosted the program "Take Responsibility for your Energy Consumption" on January 29th. They are cosponsoring a spring equinox service. In 2010, they will organize three electronics and household hazardous waste collections: March 6, July 3, and November 6.

Unitarian Church of Evanston – The GS Committee is discussing a rain garden as well as Earth Month demonstrations calculating your CO2 "footprint" using a laptop computer. They plan to show the video "The Story of Stuff".

First Unitarian – Allan reported that the church is improving its energy efficiency by installing a new heating system and upgrading the windows.

Elgin – Mary Alice and Dave reported that the GS Committee had a facilitated visioning meeting in January, in which they examined past efforts and results and explored how to proceed in the future. They will start the GS recertification process this year. A winter farmer's market is planned for 3/21/10. More than forty energy surveys were completed by individuals and will be reviewed by committee members.

Next meeting is Sunday, June 6, 2010 from 2:30 to 4:30 PM at the Unity Temple, 875 Lake Street, Oak Park. All are welcome.

With any questions, contact:

Andrew T. Fisher – Chair
847-492-1055 or
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UUSJ Peace Task Force Report

The Peace Task Force meeting scheduled for April 17 has been **CANCELLED** due to scheduling problems a Third

Unitarian Church. This meeting will be **rescheduled in May**.

Please contact Gene Horcher at (773) 561-5236 or e-mail horcher@att.net to be invited to the rescheduled meeting.

Readers are urged to attend the UUSJ quarterly meeting scheduled for Sunday May 23, 2 PM at First Unitarian Church, Chris Moore Parlor, 5650 S. Woodlawn, Chicago. The program will be "Peacemaking Congregational Study/ Action Issue, What it means to you and your congregation", presented by Sharon Welch, Provost and professor of religion and society at Meadville Lombard Theological School.

The Task Force has joined the Illinois Coalition for Justice, Peace & the Environment. Many of our members participated in the Peace Rally and March held March 18 at the Federal Plaza in the Chicago Loop. An Action Alert on S. 1524, the Foreign Assistance Revitalization and Accountability Act was sent out in January urging Senator Burriss to cosponsor and support the Act.

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