

UUSJ Newsletter – Spring 2016

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice

An affiliate of the Chicago Area Unitarian Universalist Council

Andrew T. Fisher, Editor & Communications Director

1448 East 52nd Street, PM Box 144

Chicago, IL 60615

Phone: 773-595-4921 / E-mail: uusj@sbcglobal.net

Web site: <http://uusforsocialjustice.org/>

Chair's Corner:

Spring is in the air and UUSJ is staying busy advocating for the disadvantaged and disenfranchised among us. Many UUSJ members are travelling to Springfield this month to advocate for a fair budget and laws to protect our environment from needless dangers. There are many opportunities for members and friends to get involved. We welcome all to our next meeting and look forward to seeing new faces and helping more Chicagoland UUs become proud social justice advocates. Please join us. Contact me or any of our members for more information.

Karen M Kortsch

UUSJ Spring Quarterly Meeting

The UUSJ Spring Quarterly Meeting has been booked into Countryside Church UU (in Palatine) on Sunday, June 5, from 2 to 5 p.m. It looks like we will be in Room 1 at the NW corner of their building, which can accommodate 20. UUMUAC will give the program about multiracial opposition to neo-racist movements in East Africa featuring Africa Project coordinator, Dr. Taye Woldesmiate.

UUSJ Economic Justice and Homelessness Task Force Report

This task force's most recent Action Alert was directed to members of the Illinois House of Representatives, in support of SB 2059, which passed the Illinois Senate in March by more than a 2 to

1 margin. This legislation would authorize funding to Illinois' public universities and for other essential services that are currently unfunded due to the budget impasse. SB 2059 makes appropriations and re-appropriations to various State agencies and educational institutions for specific purposes. It provides that all appropriation authority granted in the Act shall be used only for costs for services for which spending authority has not been authorized for fiscal year 2016 by any order of any court. It provides that the appropriation authority

granted in the Act shall be valid for costs incurred prior to July 1, 2016. This legislation would be effective immediately upon enactment, which obviously will not happen until an override of an expected Governor's veto is achieved.

At its meeting on April 2 the Task Force on Economic Justice and Homelessness approved a Home and Hope Booster grant nomination submitted on behalf of the Food and Shelter Team at the Unitarian Church of Evanston. The nomination was in support of the "Our House" program of Connections for the Homeless, a non-profit serving the homeless in Evanston. Our House is a new program of Connections for the Homeless that focuses on providing housing and support for five at-risk young adults, ages 18 to 24. Our House was developed in response to a significant service gap for young, homeless and at-risk males in Evanston.

The program grew out of the observation that young adult men who were being trained at a program at Curt's Café were not likely to succeed in stabilizing their lives, even though they had entered or completed a training program in culinary and hospitality skills, without a place to live. The residents of Our House receive support and services that help them to continue their educational goals and work toward stable career paths and independence. Our House residents are housed for at least a year.

The Unitarian Church of Evanston Food and Shelter Team purchased all new sheets, towels, blankets and pillows for the new residents. The team also provided silverware and other household items for the kitchen. Approximately \$2,000 was spent on this effort. Five members of the congregation are making monthly contributions to Our House expenses, while \$800 was raised through an Open Bowls Soup lunch, and \$120 in underwear and socks was collected as part of a Christmas appeal. Unitarian Church of Evanston volunteers have included the ten members of the Food and Shelter Team, plus other adults and high school youth group members from the congregation who have helped with the fund-raising efforts. In addition, two members of the congregation have helped make quilts for the young men. The volunteer time thus far adds up to roughly 135 hours. We commend the members of the Unitarian Church of Evanston for their financial support and volunteer efforts to assist the "Our House" program. Pledge payments to our Home and Hope Booster grant program, to support what will be the current grant, are in process of being collected.

Each year this task force updates and distributes If YOU or Someone You Know Need Help resource sheets, with information to assist the homeless and other at-risk individuals. One version is for Chicago and one version for Chicago's Illinois suburbs. They are sent out to the UU congregations in the Illinois portion of metropolitan

Chicago, to dozens of non-profit organizations that have interactions with the homeless, to social workers who have asked to receive copies of them, and so some other organizations and individuals. There are roughly 100 recipients for our yearly updates and we are open to adding other organizations and individuals to the database. These resource sheets are something that can be given to homeless individuals on the street who are asking for assistance, or given to those who approach church offices or other non-profit organizations seeking assistance.

Task force members Gene Horcher and Karla Chew have completed the checking of information on these sheets, so that this year's version can be produced and distributed in the near future.

The task force is working on creating and Order of Service formatted information sheet with facts on Illinois' level of state spending comparative to other states, with facts on the how Illinois' tax rates compare with other states for folks at various income levels, and with other related information. These sheets will be distributed to UU congregations in Illinois and to other organizations in Illinois that have a focus on economic justice and will also be available electronically and posted to the UUs for Social Justice web site. Members of this task force, as well as other Chicago area UUs, have been lobbying for the Fair Tax and a responsible Illinois state budget with groups such as the Jane Addams Senior Caucus, the Community Renewal Society, the UU Advocacy Network of Illinois, and other non-profits. The next meeting of this task force is planned for Saturday, July 9, 2016,

between 12:30 and 2:00 p.m., at Third Unitarian Church, 301 N. Mayfield, in Chicago's Austin neighborhood. If you would like to join us, I invite you to let this writer know in advance, so that you can receive the meeting reminder along with the proposed agenda a few days in advance of the meeting.

Allan Lindrup, Task Force Chair,
773-595-4921 or uusj@sbcglobal.net

UUSJ Environmental Task Force Report

Congregational Reports:

(1) First Unitarian Church of Chicago
The ministers will be leading an Earth Day Worship Service on April 17, at which time the receipt of Green Sanctuary accreditation will be celebrated and the framed certificate hung in the church. That day there will be a First Forum featuring the Executive Director of Friends of the Parks and include a report on Chicago's parks as well as an overview of the activities that Friends of the Parks is involved in. On Friday evening, April 15, the Green Sanctuary Group is sponsoring a showing of "Flow", a look at the many aspects of water issues, both locally and globally. Their Green Sanctuary Group has a low carbon challenge. Thus far over 15 members of the church have made pledges to reduce their carbon footprint, with more pledges being sought through the April 17 worship service.;

(2) Second Unitarian Church of Chicago The Green Sanctuary is on hold.

(3) Beverly A Hazardous Waste (and some electronics) Collection was held in the historic Pullman neighborhood on Sat. April 9. A truck-load of materials were collected and taken to the city's household hazardous waste collection site on Goose Island. Volunteers included four members of BUC, three folks from the Pullman community, plus one from First Unitarian. The event made a modest "profit" for use by the Green Sanctuary Group at BUC. The collection also collected 260 pounds of old textbooks, which Fran Sowa took to a paper recycler in Blue Island. The next such collection will take place at BUC on the first Saturday of October. That collection will include a Com2 truck, to take 10 large pallet-loads of electronics, at a cost of \$500. That Green Sanctuary Group is sponsoring some mini-forums on environmental issues. It is also leading a lay-lead Earth Day Worship Service.; and

(4) Evanston The church continues to compost and that they are including biodegradable cups, etc. in this composting. Their Green Sanctuary Group is doing stewardship work at Harms Woods, which is 2 to 3 miles from the church. Their group submits a column to the church newsletter roughly every other month.

Since the Winter UUSJ Newsletter, the Environmental task force has issued one action alert in

support of IL HB 5900, the Saving Illinois Pollinators Act

Educational inserts: It was suggested that we try to coordinate educational pieces with forums and/or public activities we are planning.

Next meeting: will be either on Saturday, June 4th, Sunday, June 12th or Sunday, June 19th at Native Foods on Clark between Adams and Jackson (for Sundays), or Bee Zee at 424 S. Wabash for Saturday, from 3 to 5 PM for the maximum possibility of **ATTRACTING AT LEAST ONE NEW MEMBER.** With the passing of Kerry Nelson, this task force only has 4 members – **BELOW THE REQUIRED UUSJ QUORUM OF 5 SO WE NEED AT LEAST ONE MORE MEMBER!**

With any questions, contact:
Andrew T. Fisher – Chair
847-492-1832 or
fishorgn1580@gmail.com

UUSJ Peace Task Force Report

The Peace Task force last met on Saturday, April 2 at People's Church. The group finalized a peace newsletter to be distributed to local congregations, detailing Chicago area and national organizations working to forward peace issues. (See our first edition, attached.

Please reprint it and distribute to members of your church.) *

The group also is in the process of developing a mission statement. We'd like to develop a pithy statement, suitable for printing on a tee-shirt.

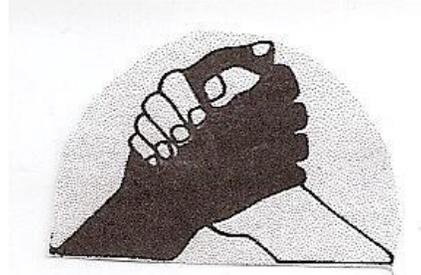
We also decided to develop a program on peace circles to present at the August, 2016 quarterly UUSJ meeting. Peace circles are being used both at elementary and high schools and in the judicial system to help those estranged from their communities make amends and reconcile with their neighbors.

At the meeting the group also voted to co-sponsor the demonstration at Chicago's Federal Plaza on Monday, April 18 condemning excessive spending from our taxes for the military. Each year on "Tax Day" the peace task force has joined in raising awareness in this way. They're hoping for a good turn-out again this year.

The UUSJ Peace Task Force has issued a new newsletter, "PEACEMAKING" which is either enclosed or you can easily view or print by [clicking here](#).

Justice – Peace Task Force – contact
Chair Jane Bannor,
jbannor@sbcglobal.net

Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus (UUMUAC) Report



“The Unity of the Light and Dark Skinned People of the World.”

By Rev. Dr. Finley C. Campbell,
Member, the Executive Committee

1. To begin with I was privileged to speak in the name of UUMUAC on two key occasions recently. First, I was invited to speak at the morning forum of the DuPage Unitarian Universalist Church by Rev. Capo on my involvement in anti-racism/anti-oppression struggles beginning in 1968, my participation in Unitarian Universalism, and my evaluation of the Black Lives Matter Movement. I pointed out that I would work with the BLM on the issue of police brutalities, but I would oppose them on the issue of black power/black liberation ideology, which I consider a form of neo-racism. I was warmly received and made many short-term contacts with long-range potential. Rev. Capo indicated in his church newsletter that I offered many useful insights for the anti-racist work at DUU.

UUMUAC member, Prof. Allan Spector, also invited me back in March to be the Black History speaker at Purdue University Calumet campus. My topic was "How Anti-Black Racism Hurts White Members of the Rank and File." A reporter, Ms. Mary E. Webster also interviewed me for the Gary Post-Tribune. The point is that multiracial Unitarian Universalism got a wide hearing. In both instances my remarks were heartily welcomed and some interest was shown in doing follow-up.

2. On April 18, 2016 Three members of UUMUAC – myself, Gene Horcher, and Jerry Parker -- took part in the in the annual Tax Day Protest down at the Federal Plaza, an event we agreed to endorse in order to show solidarity with our Peace Action Task Force.

The War Resisters League and other progressive organizations sponsored this event. The featured guest organizations were Jewish and Muslim Coalition groups in support of the oppressed Palestinian minority in Palestine-Israel. I passed out a leaflet detailing the horrors of the racist imperialist wars, which were so instrumental in destabilizing the Afrasian region (the correct name of the so-called Middle East). I was also invited to speak for a moment at that event, using the text of my leaflet as the basis of my remarks. Here is a copy of that document: Oppose Racism-Imperialism with Multiracial Unity this Earth Day, A Homily
In the movie EYE IN THE SKY, we see how our tax money is being

used to target terrorists and innocent civilians.

We see the use of drones, complex computerized audio-visual surveillance systems, and Hellfire missiles, worth millions of dollars, to kill six people, five terrorists and one child.

We should ask ourselves this simple question: what kind of system has caused the rise of terrorism in the first place, thereby causing the need for billions to be spent trying to kill those very same terrorists? And the answer is a racist imperialist system which in its international quest for profit, privilege and power, has created a military industrial complex spanning continents.

We are forced by the threat of law to pay our taxes this April 18th to finance this system. But we can still protest how our taxes are used to destroy rather than create. The ultimate solution, on this Earth Day, is the creation of the Beloved Community as an historical reality. Join the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus along with others as we protest taxation for the purpose of imperialist exploitation and oppression.

(Some 48 of these leaflets were passed out to what I would call morally conscious passersby).

3. UUMUAC also sent out an Action Alert about reforming sentencing in the criminal justice system, in light of the fact that the Prisons and

Restorative Justice Task Force recently dissolved itself as a member of UUSJ. Since many issues of incarceration, including the incarceration of white brothers and sisters, reflects neo-racism, we felt that it was important for us to do so. UUMUAC initiated an Action Alert in support of S. 2123, the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2015. This legislation, introduced by Sen. Grassley, with Sen. Durbin as the chief co-sponsor, has broad bi-partisan support (15 Dem. cosponsors and 13 Republican cosponsors). It is one of the few areas where bipartisan support should lead to legislative progress this year. For those of us in Illinois, we were asking you to write to Sen. Kirk to ask for him to join in co-sponsorship S. 2123. We are pleased to report that, after our Action Alert Sen. Kirk did join in co-sponsoring S. 2123.

4. Some personal notes:

I will not be going to this year's MidAmerican regional (annual) meeting – for the first time in 15 years -- because of the neo-racist way that I, as a representative of UUMUAC, and our position on multiracial Unitarian Universalism, was treated last year by the leadership at plenary session.

Many neo-racist ideas were put forward at the Friday night plenary, supposedly reflecting the so-called New Path of the Region. I tried, unsuccessfully, to put forward our multiracial unity position. When my turn came to speak, they announced the end of the session. Many people were upset about this, and one person, in authority, assured me that

there would be a chance to for me to make my remarks at an extended session the next day during the question and answer and comment section.

Well, the next day I was only permitted to ask a single question, despite the fact that others had been allowed to make full-fledged statements. The question was, do you think that white brothers and sisters are hurt by anti-black racism? One of the keynote speakers, an African American woman, said no; the other speaker, a white minister said that he did not understand the question. And that was it.

Looking at this year's key workshop, I noted that both a morning and an afternoon workshop would be devoted to the Black Lives Matter Movement. So until such time that we are once again allowed to have workshops on multiracial Unitarian Universalism, I will personally boycott the MidAmerican regional meetings. Perhaps if there were other members of UUMUAC going, I might have gone, but not to be a lone representative of our organization, even though many rank and file people support us.

Here is my overall view of the situation of our association on the issue of racism, based on what Abraham Lincoln, the leader of the Republicans in Illinois, once said, and I paraphrase:

A house divided against itself cannot stand, (referring to the issue of slavery and freedom in 19th century US America). He said, I do not

expect the house to fall but I do expect that it will either be all slave or all free. It will be one or the other; it will not continue to be both.

This is the same with the issue of neo-racism versus multiracial Unitarian Universalism in our denomination. Either neo-racism in the form of racially segregated activities and anti-white ideology will dominate or multiracial Unitarian Universalism will be dominant. It will not be both.

5. To conclude: I recently took a Viking cruise down the Rhone River for a week, a cruise which was multiracial but predominantly white. As the only black American on that particular cruise, I felt somewhat uneasy at the beginning, but only for

a moment. The spirit of multiracial unity prevailed, and we in many ways became as one, in French *comme une*, with our shared middle class privileges. At our table we had white, Asian, Jewish, and interracial couples (me and Bobbi Campbell). So there we all were, some 120 of us, in the middle of Southern France, we reflecting the distant future, the time when the Beloved Community – multiracial, multicultural, and international -- will finally be established as an historic reality. This is the vision, which sustains UUMUAC. Join us.

Rev. Dr. Finley C. Campbell,
Member, Executive Committee of the
UUMUAC
773 752 4019 for more information.

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
1448 East 52nd Street / PM Box 144
Chicago, IL 60615