

UUSJ Newsletter - Fall 2010

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice

An affiliate of the Chicago Area Unitarian Universalist Council

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Chair's Corner:

Creating Peace: The 2010 Statement of Conscience

"We believe all people share a moral responsibility to create peace." These words introduce the Creating Peace Statement of Conscience endorsed in a nearly unanimous vote at the 2010 UUA General Assembly. The wording of the statement, crafted after four years of study and comment by UU congregations is online at

<http://www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/13394.shtml>. 2010-11 is considered the year of implementation, when individuals and congregations begin formulating ways to act on the document.

A Radically Inclusive and Transformative Approach

Throughout the statement, there is an affirmation that our faith "honors the truths of multiple voices from a theology of covenant grounded in love". For example, the document forcefully states, "We all agree that our initial response to conflict should be the use of nonviolent methods". Nevertheless, the statement also acknowledges the right to defend oneself and to offer support to those who respond to aggression. Similarly, the document affirms a "range of individual choices, including military service and conscientious objection". The statement recognizes, "Though we have always held diverse views on the justification of defensive and humanitarian wars, at our best we have worked together...to remove the underlying causes of war."

One of the most strongly-worded parts of the documents repudiates "aggressive and preventive wars, the disproportionate use of force, covert wars, and targeting that includes a high risk to civilians" It also calls for nuclear disarmament and abolishing other weapons of mass destruction.

Resources for Implementing the Statement

The Statement concludes with a series of "Calls to Action". Numerous resources are available for UUs to devise their own ideas. Each congregation has received a DVD entitled *Peacemaking: A Commitment to Study and Action*. Materials at the UUA website include a file with ideas for religious education, "Peacemaking in Congregations: A Guide to Learning Opportunities for All Ages". Information is also available online for creating congregational peace pledges. In the Chicagoland area, one church which has created and adopted its own Peacemaking Commitment is the UU Society of Geneva. The Commitment can be found at <http://content.uusg.org/peacemaking-pledge/>. Congregations interested in the process used in Geneva may contact Jean Pierce through 630-232-2350.

Celebrate International Day of Peace, September 21st

One way in which congregations are implementing the peacemaking statement is by celebrating the International Day of Peace on September 21st. Some UU churches in Chicagoland are inviting speakers and showing films to commemorate the International Day of

Peace, September 21st Two suggested films include "Rethink Afghanistan" and "The Day After Peace" from PeaceOneDay.org. Whether or not your church is sponsoring a formal celebration, individuals can participate in the Odyssey Network's " A Million Minutes for Peace". The purpose is to connect people of all faiths worldwide in a monumental moment of prayer for peace. There is an online pledge at www.AMillionMinutesforPeace.org.

Report of the Task Force on Economic Justice and Homelessness

The Task Force on Economic Justice and Homelessness organized the program, "Your Money in These Times", which was presented at the UUSJ Summer Quarter meeting, held at Countryside Church, U.U. in Palatine, on August 22, 2010. Allan Lindrup presented roughly 20 minutes of highlights from the recently enacted Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. A four page summary of his remarks is available upon request (contact information at the end of this report). Karla Chew provided an assessment of the differences between local banks and large national bank corporations and ways that one could assess whether a particular local bank would be a good place for you to put your money. Credit unions, as an option for where to put your money, were also discussed. If you missed the presentation you can learn of some of the differences and the assessment tools available by emailing Karla at karlachew@aol.com . Karen Noorani explained the "Making the Most of Your Money" financial education program at Countryside Church UU. This is a congregation wide social action project that mainly serves low income persons in the community, with referrals from township and county agencies.

The congregation began with a University of Illinois program, but modified it greatly as it was utilized over several cycles. A key element was to add a mentor from the congregation for each family in the program. Mentors receive significant training and learn much along with the clients. Clients also receive a resource book. Leaders of that program at Countryside Church are planning to write up their experiences, to share with other U.U. congregations, after the present cycle of classes is completed. To secure more information prior to that time, you may contact Karen at kcnoorani@gmail.com .

Nominations for the current Home and Hope Booster grant were solicited from one or more individuals at each of the CAUUC congregations at the beginning of August, with a deadline of October 1. However, as of this writing, no nominations have been received, so the deadline is being extended until this task force holds its next meeting on Oct. 17. If you were not one of those individuals who received the nomination form and cover letter, but would like to nominate an organization helping the homeless, which your congregation has been helping with financial and/or volunteer support, you are invited to write or phone Allan (see contact info below). We would not award a grant to an organization which has received a grant within the past one to two years.

We have had one Action Alert in recent months. It was in support of an ordinance before the Chicago City Council, which currently has the support of 22 Alderman, which would obligate 20% of each year's aggregate tax increment finance (TIF) revenue for the development and preservation of affordable housing. Between 1995 and 2007 only 4 percent of TIF funds were targeted for the development of affordable housing. This Action Alert

only involved those Chicagoans on our Action Alert network who live in one of the wards where the Alderman has not signed on to sponsor or co-sponsor that ordinance.

This task force endorsed and participated in a demonstration, held on July 29, the date Arizona's S.B. 1070 was to have taken effect, in support of comprehensive immigration reform and humane treatment of America's current undocumented immigrants. This demonstration was held outside Cook County Jail, where many of those arrested by ICE are being held pending hearings and deportation.

The next meeting of the Task Force on Economic Justice and Homelessness will be held on Sunday, Oct. 17, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. It will be held at Third Unitarian Church, 301 N. Mayfield, Chicago. All are welcome to join us. If you would like to come and receive a copy of the agenda in advance, please write or phone Allan at the below contacts.

Allan Lindrup, Co-Chair
uusj@sbcglobal.net 773-643-8061

Ron Chew, Co-Chair
ronnkarla@aol.com 708-524-9695

Formation of Anti-Death Penalty Task Force Continues

During the thirteen weeks between the 2010 Spring and Summer UUSJ meetings fourteen people were executed by our government. The immoral and abhorrent practice of state killing continues. In Illinois one of the candidates for Governor would end the moratorium on executions and restart the killings in Illinois. We must repeal capital punishment in Illinois and not give any governor the option to restart executions.

Progress toward the formation of an anti-death penalty task force is moving forward. Since the Spring UUSJ quarterly meeting two of the three requisite congregations - Second Unitarian of Chicago and Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Woodstock - committed to working within the task force. UUSJ by-laws require at least three separate **U.U.** congregations to be part of a task force with **at least five active** members. Anti-death Penalty Task Force programs would support UU churches as they continue to respond to the 2000 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association urging for congregations to "engage actively in efforts to eliminate the death penalty, to work with other organizations in this effort, and to increase efforts to persuade governors to forgo capital punishment."

If your passion issue is abolition of the death penalty please contact Paul Konkoly (e-mail: pkonkoly@yahoo.com or cell: 312-350-0163).

UUSJ Environmental Task Force Report

Action Alerts:

One supports the Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act S1733. This involves (1) federal support for many more clean energy - solar, wind, geothermal - projects, (2) energy cap and trade, and (3) nuclear. The issues of nuclear and the problems of its waste vs. the greater problems of oil (with spills like the terrible BP one in the Gulf) and coal, and the need for a legislative act instead of mere EPA regulation were discussed.

A second action alert supports the Chicago Clean Power Ordinance, which has 14 cosponsors and addresses the issues of 85 and 100 year old power plants that spew particulates in the city where the asthma rate is double the national rate.

The Environmental Task Force will be presenting the program at the UUSJ annual meeting on November 14 at 2:00 PM

at Unity Temple. This program will be about Ethical Eating.

Next meeting is Sunday, 10/10/10 from 2:30-4:30 PM at the Unity Temple, 875 Lake Street, Oak Park. All are welcome. With any questions, contact:

Andrew T. Fisher – Chair at 847-492-1055 or fisher.a@sbcglobal.net

UUSJ Peace Task Force Report

The Peace Task Force will meet Saturday, 10-16-70, 2:30 PM at Third Unitarian Church 301 N. Mayfield, Chicago. All CAUUC church members and friends are invited to attend

in person or by conference call {dial 1-800-704-9804 then enter code 892781 followed by #}

Call Gene Horcher, {773}561-5296 if you have questions. The Task Force is concentrating on the Creating Peace: The 2010 Statement recently passed by the UUA General Assembly. You can view this statement at uua.org/socialjustise/socialjustice/statements/13394. The statement is comprehensive, inclusive, has information for education and action. We urge all CAUUC area church members to read and discuss this document and to take action if you are so moved.

If you do not have a computer call Gene Horcher with your name and complete address and he will send you a copy

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