

Social Justice Team Annual Report 2022

Cathy Solomon, *Chairperson*
Jean Bowen, *Co-Chair*

Social Justice team

1. Zoom meetings were held 10/6 and 2/9 for the full team.
2. UU Legislative Ministry: Cathy is attending monthly meetings of the UU Congregations in RI. They have a long list of legislation that they monitor. Very informative!
3. Penny announced she will step down as Racial Justice chair in June.
4. How to structure and focus the SJ team?

In May a congregation wide survey was sent out via email with four questions.

- a. What are your top three most important Social Justice issues?
- b. What social issues do you want to learn more about?
- c. How would you like to receive Social Justice news? The Weekly newsletter, your own research or a separate newsletter for social justice only?
- d. How often do you want to hear from Social Justice?

The results of the survey will guide me in how and if the team should be structured going forward. If we narrow the focus can we be more effective in supporting our community? Can we improve communication and the sharing of information within the congregation? Can a more active social Justice effort lead to increased membership.

Cathy is a leader in the Womxn Project and The Huddle. The UU and Huddle members sent out over 2000 postcards to area residents to ask for their support of legislation to provide state medicaid funds for abortions to state employees and women eligible for medicaid.

Gail Burchard, Together Women Rise

Our Peacedale chapter of "Together Women Rise" is back to having physical potlucks. The month of May, Carolyn Gilligan hosted and in April, Susan Jordan invited us all to her home in "The Village @ Warden's Pond". Good to see old familiar faces, and happy to see some new folks who are interested. We are no longer doing a formal "presentation" for the grantee of the month, but watching the video at home, and using time to discuss how it relates to us. The Peacedale Chapter has raised \$40,717.08 in the 5 years we have existed....bringing in \$485 last month. We continue to meet on the first Tuesday of the month 6-8 pm, with members bringing a dish to share. Gail Burchard will be hosting on June 7 @ her home, announcing all are welcome. Together Women Rise donate to women and children in developing countries, focusing gender equality, health, nutrition, education, & financial stability, with recipients creating their own progression of the donation.

Jean Bowen, Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense

The RI Chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense invited faith communities to gather for "More than thoughts and prayers." UUCSC members joined with others at the State House, in May to advocate for gun sense legislation which would require safe storage for firearms and limit the size of bullets in magazines. Community volunteers from Moms Demand Action were there to support us in lobbying activities.

Safer Communities for Justice is a program of Moms and offers education, advocacy and support in the Providence area to Mothers who have lost their children to gun violence. In this work we collaborate with the NonViolence INstitute, the Attorney General's office, the Providence Police Department and the Mayor's office.

Jean organized a rally on the Supreme Court's proposed abortion ban. Rallies were held all over the country. We met at the Narragansett Sea Wall in May and over 110 people attended.

On behalf of Johnnie Rodriguez:

South Kingstown School Department: UUCSC members have been very involved and supported TASK and Beloved Community Advisory Board. We attended the school committee meetings in support of the Anti-discrimination policy, supported candidates in the last 6 years, kept informed of the too many coming and going of school superintendents and voted for budgets that kept more teachers and other adults in the classroom. The CRT debacle was of utmost concern and our members were outspoken on this issue. And finally we met with the SK Police on school issues. We continue to support quality education for all students.

Etta Zasloff: Etta and other UU's attend the Anti- Racist Coalition weekly rallies in downtown Westerly. Members are actively engaged and attend meetings of the League of Women Voters and Southwestern Rhode Island Progressives.

Barbara Beckwith, Share the Plate: The Congregation has generously donated to local and RI non-profit organizations that support the work of justice and equity in the areas of concern that UUCSC members have determined as priorities.

- Habitat for Humanity \$674
- AMOR \$432
- Farm Fresh RI \$309
- Thundermist Trans Clinic \$447
- Dorcas International \$587.

Note that the Congregation receives an equal amount from the donations of sharing the plate 50-50. All the organizations are vetted with the IRS tax exemption 501c3.

UUCSC Antiracism Group: 2021-2022 Annual Report

The Antiracism Group has been meeting through Zoom on the second and fourth Mondays of every month. Our mission is (1) educating ourselves by reading and listening to scholars, activists and people who have lived experience of racism,

(2) sharing our learning with the congregation, and (3) advocating and taking action in the wider community.

We began the year reading about Critical Race Theory and supporting the Teach Truth campaign, which was organized by SURJ-RI to protect pupils' right to learn about slavery and its legacy, among other things. We wrote emails to legislators and rallied in North Kingstown to stop the recall of Jen Lima for her advocacy of equity and inclusion.

We attended South Kingstown School Committee meetings on Zoom and in person, to speak and support the Antiracism, Anti-harassment, Anti-bullying Policy the BIPOC advisory team had written for the high school, which passed.

We continued to read and discuss Derrick Bell, Kimberly Crenshaw, Ruby Sales, The Sum of Us by Heather Mc Ghee, The 1619 Project by Hannah Jones, and many other articles and podcasts. We posted relevant titles for the congregation to find in the Black Lives Matter section of our website and the UUCSC weekly newsletter. We discussed and supported the Eighth Principle.

In recent months we have been learning about the issue of reparations. We read Ta-Nehisi Coates, Dave Roos and others and discussed ideas. It has also been illuminating to read A Matter of Truth: The Struggle for African Heritage and Indigenous People's rights in Providence, Rhode Island, 1620-2020, by Keith Stokes and Theresa Guzman Stokes, written to show the basis of the case for reparations.

On May 23 we have invited all who are interested to attend our meeting, when we will discuss The Fire Keeper's Daughter, the read-across-Rhode Island book about a young woman who is half indigenous and half white.

On May 29 we are leading the worship service, centering on Negro Spirituals and ideas about reparations. It's been a full year.

Penny Hall
Facilitator of the Antiracism Group