

Social Justice Update
January/February 2023
Cathy Solomon, Social Justice Chair

The UUCSC Social Justice Team continues on many fronts to Learn, Educate and Advocate.

Current Actions

Social Justice South County Coalition Initiative

On February 26, over 40 individuals from surrounding faith and social justice organizations met at the Peace Dale Congregational Church to discuss the merits of forming a social justice coalition in South County. There was an abundance of ideas and a lot of energy in the room! By supporting each other's efforts, we can be more effective in the community.

An initial steering committee was formed, on which Nancy Richman and Cathy Solomon will participate.

Environmental Action: CLIMATE...CHANGED!

A series of virtual presentations are planned for March and April to address environmental issues and what can be done at the local level. They will include:

- Wed. March 22, 2023 7-8 PM Environmental Policy in Rhode Island
- Tues. March 28, 2023 7-8 PM Recycling Right
- Tues. April 4, 2023 7-8 PM Reducing Food Waste
- Tues. April 11, 2023 7-8 PM Composting Part 1 (Introduction)

- Tues. April 18, 2023 7-8 PM Composting Part 2 (Green Burials)
- Tues. April 25, 2023 7-8 PM Climate Emergency Preparedness

The UUCSC is also scheduled to participate in South Kingstown's Earth Clean Up on April 22.

In keeping with the environmental focus, the Share the Plate recipient for March and April is Friends of the Saugatuck, a local non profit, which promotes the well-being of the Saugatucket River, its surrounding watershed, its natural community, and the people who treasure their local river.

Ongoing Actions

Anti-Racism Committee

The Anti-Racism group has spent the last two months continuing its work to dismantle our individual biases and understanding others. Following are some of the topics we have discussed:

- The Pyramid of HateThe power of contempt
- How to Have Difficult conversation about Race, by Kwame Christian
- Depolarizing Conversations about Race and Public Policy, Braver Angels
- Courageous Rhode Island, an initiative that will help people identify, analyze and resist harmful forms of propaganda and disinformation presented in the media.
- Documentary - *Who We are: A Chronicle of Racism in America*

We have begun a discussion around the new UUA principles, specifically Justice. The outcome of this discussion will be in the form of suggestions to

our delegate/s to the UUA General Assembly, where Article II of the UUA bylaws will be presented and discussed.

Below are some opportunities that are coming up in the next few months that some of us will be attending:

- United Against Hate, URI, March 2
- Black Movement Thought, Cross Cultural Solidarity, March 1/2
- A Witness to History: the Big Business of slavery in Little Rhode Island, Witness Stones Project, Kingston Congregation, March 4
- Movie Screening/discussion: Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America, SKCares, Peace Dale Elementary, March 12
- Anti-Hate Summit, to be presented by the Jewish Alliance on May 16
- Courageous Rhode Island, an initiative that will help people identify, analyze and resist harmful forms of propaganda and disinformation presented in the media.

If you have any ideas, suggestions or recommendations on the topic of racial justice, please consider joining our next meeting. All are welcome to drop in anytime. The meetings are every second and fourth Tuesday at 7pm via Zoom. The Zoom link can be found on the UUCSC website calendar. If you are not a meeting person, reach out directly to Nancy Richman with your ideas.

UU Legislative Ministry Legislative Forum - Focus on Health Care

UU principles support the belief that health care should be a right, not a privilege, as stated by our [UUA Resolution for Universal Health Care](#) (1992), What can we do about it here in Rhode Island?

On Sunday, January 29th the UULM-RI sponsored a program to explore that question with special guests State Senators Linda Ujifusa and Sam Bell, Rep. David Morales, and Dr. Mark Ryan.

The UULM is planning another forum on March 26 to learn more about Same Day Voting and Ranked Choice Voting.

[HERE](#) is a spreadsheet that is maintained by UULM-RI that shows the current status of bills in the General Assembly that are a part of our focus. It is early in the season so no bills have been passed as yet.

Woman's Reproductive Health

The UUCSC Social Justice Team is a part of a state-wide campaign to pass the Equality in Abortion Care Act bill ([EACA](#)). At present, although the right to an abortion is protected under RI law, thanks to the passage in 2019 of the Reproductive Privacy Act, some public health insurance programs do not cover the cost of the procedure. This includes people on Medicaid and state employees. The EACA asks the state to remove these bans and adjust the state budget to cover these expenses. The bill has been introduced each year for the past two years but with the new sponsors, Rep Edie Ajello and Sen Leonela Felix, there is momentum. The bills have been assigned to the Judiciary Committees in both the house and the senate and the governor has included the cost of adding this coverage to the state insurance in his proposed budget.

Supporters are encouraged to show up at the State House on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3-4 until the bill is passed. There will also be several postcard campaigns, the first of which is underway. If you are interested in supporting this bill, contact Cathy Solomon to get on the postcard mailing list.