

# 2022-2023 Social Justice Committee Annual Report

**Cathy Solomon, Chair**  
**Penny Hall, member**  
**Nancy Richman, member**  
**Etta Zasloff, member**

## Background

In May 2022, a survey of the congregation indicated that the three most important social justice topics were Environmental Justice/Climate Change, Racial Justice and Women's Equality.

During the summer, Cathy created an advisory team to help guide the UUCSC Social Justice agenda. The advisory team includes Penny Hall, Nancy Richman and Etta Zasloff. The advisory team generally meets monthly between Sept and June.

## Accomplishments

- Mission Statement: A new mission statement was created: Learn, Educate, Advocate.
- Anti-Racism Committee: Nancy Richman volunteered to lead the twice monthly Anti-Racism discussion group. Her annual summary is included within this report.
- Becoming a Better Neighbor" Several South County social service organizations were highlighted over the year to learn about what services they provide. Those included were The Warm Center, RICAN, and the Jonnycake Center in Peace Dale.
- Communication: The UUCSC Social Justice page was updated to be more relevant. And a Call To Action email was created to alert those members who choose to be on the list of urgent advocacy opportunities going on in our area.
  
- Legislative Action: Monthly participation in the UU Legislative Ministry of RI. During the year, we held legislative forums on climate action and health care.
- Women's Equality: The Social Justice team signed on as a member of a coalition to help pass the Equality in Abortion Care Act which would eliminate health insurance bans that prevented lower income women from obtaining abortion care.
- Social Justice Coalition in South County: UUCSC joined with Peace Dale Congregational Church in reaching out to other faith based organizations to fight hate and support one another in our outreach efforts. Several meetings have been held and discussions continue as to what shape this will take.
- Climate....Changed! A six part Zoom series on environmental/climate change issues took place from March 22 through April 25. Folks from other congregations including Peace Dale Congregational and St. Augustine also attended.
- United Against Hate: UUCSC Social Justice along with the US Attorney's Office and Tri-County Community Action Agency are co-sponsoring a workshop on identifying, reporting and preventing acts of hate on May 31st at the Prout School auditorium.

- Meeting on 6/13 with Westminster UU Social Justice Group to explore areas we can work together.
- Other Community Support
  - Pride Event, Wakefield
  - Trans Day of Joy, Wakefield
  - Earth Day Cleanup in South Kingstown, April 22
  - Peace Parade, Wakefield, April
  - South Kingstown 300th Anniversary parade, June 17
  - Pride Event
- Anti-Racism Committee, *submitted by Nancy Richman*

The anti-racism group meets on the second and fourth Mondays of each month, from September through June. Over the course of the year, the group decided to intentionally include antisemitism under the umbrella of this group. Meetings were regularly attended by a consistent membership of 10-12, with others that attended sporadically throughout the year. Two meetings included attendees who were not UUCSC members or friends. Over the course of the year, we had lively, engaged discussions on a range of topics, readings, books, workshops, and films including:

  - The 3-part PBS series by Ken Burns, U.S. and the Holocaust
  - The Pyramid of Hate and the Pyramid of Love
  - Through role plays we practiced engaging in effective and constructive “crucial conversations” across differences, while avoiding the common traps and flash points.
  - The podcast Breaking our Addiction to Contempt
  - The film: Who we are: A chronicle of racism in America
  - The UU 8th principle
  - The article: New ADL Report Shows Alarming Rise of Antisemitic Behavior in Schools
  - TED Talk: Loretta Ross – Don’t Call People Out, Call Them In
  - The workshop, White Supremacy in Rhode Island
  - The online talk: Antisemitism is Everyone’s Concern

- **Share the Plate**

Barbara Beckwith took charge of STP in August and is doing a great job. For the period of July 2022 through April we have raised \$3,150.78 for local non-profit agencies. These include:

Movement Education Outdoors

Planned Parenthood of Southern New England

Mixed Magic

Southern Rhode Island Volunteers

Friends of the Saugatucket

Jonnnycake Center for Hope (full amount won't be posted until end of June)

## Goals

- Community Support:
  1. Continue to show up in support of community events.
  2. Stand up against hate and prejudice.
  3. Support causes that are in line with our principles.
  4. Learn more about needs in the community. Educate the congregation about it and determine appropriate actions.
  5. Advocate for action. Make a difference.
  
- Environmental/climate Goals
  1. Convene a group to discuss reinstatement of UU Green Sanctuary
  2. Continue to educate congregation and community on good environmental practices
  3. Create a climate resiliency plan for UU and ultimately, for the community
  
- Racial Justice
  1. Continue with discussion group, with more focus on education and advocacy
  2. Expand racial justice education to include the community
  3. Begin to focus on justice for those who have been unjustly incarcerated.
  
- Women's Rights - Get involved in passing the ERA
  
- Other causes - do we have the bandwidth to take these on?
  1. Housing
  2. Immigration
  3. Gun safety

## Challenges

- Will need a new anti-racism committee facilitator if Nancy Richman is elected board president
- Need a person to focus on climate change
- More involvement from the congregation

## Needs from board, staff, congregation

Innovative ways we can offer out our facility to non-profits to help people and to also bring in income?

Investment in audio visual materials that would enable us to host film series or discussions for which we could charge an admission fee.