

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE TEAM REPORT for 2022 Annual Meeting**

The Social Justice Team was established in 1987 and helps to organize events and provide information to and opportunities for church members to participate in, at both local and national levels. Members include Rev. Allison, Caro Barschow, Livia Gershon, Tom Harris, Paul Introcaso, Bob Keating, Hilary Keating, Kate Messner, and Jessica Price.

### **Circle of Concern Study Group**

Starting in September, a group of 9 members of the congregation, led by Rev. Allison, met every other week to discuss the 2020 report of the UUA's Commission on Institutional Change, called "Widening the Circle of Concern." The Commission on Institutional Change was formed in June 2017 and charged with "conduct[ing] an audit of the power structures and analyz[ing] systemic racism and white supremacy culture within the Unitarian Universalist Association." This report was the result of that audit. The group spent 6 months reading and discussing the report, its findings and recommendations. They presented two worship services based on the report, one in February which covered the context of the report and shared some of the stories in the report, and one in May which shared the five recommendations that the Study Group recommends from the report for our congregation. These five recommendations are:

1. Finish and adopt a Land Acknowledgement that we use widely (2022)
2. Research where our wealth comes from. Include an acknowledgement of wealth in 200th anniversary. (finish by 2026/2027)
2. Starting in 2022-2023, each year:
  - a. Offer a training on Anti-racism, anti-oppression, multiculturalism (AR/AO/MC) work for leaders
  - b. Offer an entry level adult program on AR/AO/MC
  - c. Offer a program that goes deeper on AR/AO/MC
  - d. Intentionally include AR/AO/MC in children/youth programs
4. Form relationships around racial justice with other UU congregations (or other local congregations) (2023-2024)
5. Start doing an Antiracism Audit every year - done by the Racial Justice Working Group and reported to the Board (Start 2022-2023)

All of these recommendations have been shared with the Racial Justice Working Group and the Board of Trustees, and some of them are already in the works for this spring and next church year.

### **Immigration**

UUCN members participated in monthly NH Immigration Solidarity meetings. GSOP, AFSC, Never Again, Rights and Democracy were the other key groups we have been partnering with. In September, we joined the Immigration Solidarity Walk from Manchester to Dover to honor the walks asylum seekers make to escape persecution in their native lands. We also participated in policy advocacy writing letters to Senators Shaheen and Hassan in support of immigration reform section of "Build Back Better. We

engaged in “bird dogging” Sen Hassan, on her lack of immigration commitment, and we are currently speaking out against on congressman Pappas’ and Senator Hassan support of Title 42. An Immigration Townhall at the UUCN is in the proposal phase for June 29th.

**UU Sanctuary Team**—UUCN continued its Level 2 support for Chrisma who is being hosted at UU Manchester while he fights a deportation action from ICE. Chrisma continues to await his working papers. He has a Y membership, he is part of a soccer league, and his English is consistently improving. He loves the Celtics, but he can’t wait for the day he can work. The team members visit individually and take him out for grocery shopping, to activist events, restaurants, and ball games. Chrisma plans to visit his brother in Kentucky this summer.

### **Nashua Host Home Network**

Our Church supports and participates in a Neighborhood Support Team that assists a refugee family of 3, Patricia, the mom, son Prime, 10, and their daughter, Blessing, 6 who moved here from the Congo in March. The team is made up of congregants from 6 different churches who are helping this family thrive in our country. The kids are in school, and they are participating in recreation programs and Patricia is developing her English skills at the Adult Learning Center in Nashua. Team members getting this family started with the key community services and commercial connections.

### **UU Action NH**

Members of UUCN continue to be active with our state action network, UU Action New Hampshire. The network has coordinated much of our state-level work on climate change and immigrant rights and is also the parent organization of the NH Community Bail Fund (more on all this below).

This April, UUANH welcomed new executive director Mo Baxley, a longtime New Hampshire activist who helped lead the fight for marriage equality in the state and previously served in the NH House of Representatives. Baxley replaces founding executive director Tristan Husby, who is returning to full-time classroom education.

### **The New Hampshire Community Bail Fund**

Several UUCN members have been very active with the bail fund, which has gotten much busier this year. Between May 1, 2021 and April 30, 2022, the fund bailed out 66 people held pretrial in New Hampshire, mainly at Hillsborough County’s Valley Street Jail, spending a total of \$28,885.

In March, UUCN hosted the bail fund’s Break Every Chain fundraiser event, and the church and its members have been extremely generous with donations. This is much appreciated since the court system continues to operate slowly and it takes months if not years for bails to return as people’s cases are resolved.

The fund is also actively working with partner organizations to address incarceration in Hillsborough County and across the state at a systemic level.

## **Climate Justice**

Church members have been working with the statewide NH Renews campaign and with UU Action NH on climate justice issues. One priority on climate justice is the shutdown of the Bow power plant, the last remaining coal-fired electricity source in New England.

In October, UU Action NH held a webinar in which panelists from different towns, including Kate Messner, Nancy Dowey, and Anne and Joel Huberman, shared information on local Sustainability Committees. In November, it officially relaunched the statewide UU Climate Action Team, bringing UUs from across the state together to work on local and statewide efforts on the climate. And in April, UU Action NH hosted an interfaith climate justice conference, uniting people of many faiths around our common concern for the planet and its people. This event included a screening of the documentary *Swimming Upstream* and a discussion with its subjects, Paul and Denise Pouliot of the Cowasuck Band of the Pennacook Abenaki People.

## **Granite State Organizing Project**

Granite State Organizing Project, New Hampshire's largest faith-based grass-roots community organization, seeks to strengthen communities, empowering them to find their voice and affect change. GSOP is comprised many faith communities, including our congregation, labor unions, community groups, and individuals who care deeply that justice and equity is available to all. The focus of the Nashua Chapter this church year has been on promoting the creation of safe, affordable housing. Members worked with the city of Nashua to ensure that residents of Bronstein Housing were informed at all stages as the city made plans to find alternative housing for them in order to raze the development and increase the affordable housing stock. The chapter was also instrumental in the Nashua Board of Aldermen voting to create a Housing Trust Fund with seed money of \$10K.

## **Welcoming Congregational Renewal**

The Team's goals are actions to achieve Welcoming Congregation Renewal designation from the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), demonstrating its commitment to affirming and centering the experience of congregants and community members with LGBTQ+ identities.

Team members are Brian Ibsen-Johnson, Tiffany Holmes, Jenn Morton, Dan Murphy, Amy Norton-Curran, Joyce Trudel, Robin Trudel and Diane Wolf. Ministerial Intern Caro Barschow supported the formation of the group by holding 2 interest meetings in December and January and facilitating monthly meetings.

In addition to the activities below, this team is also taking the lead on UUCN's participation in Nashua Pride Parade and Festival, planned for June 25, 2022.

The Team is committed to complete these 5 Acts of Welcoming Renewal in 2022:

1. Become a Welcoming Congregation
  - a. done in the 1990s
  - b. Met with UUA LGBTQ and Multicultural Programs Director Michael Crumpler in March 2022 to learn about the UUA renewal process
2. Hold 2 Worship Services about LGBTQ+ Issues (in coordination with Worship Associates and Minister)

- a. Pride Worship Service on June 19, 2022
  - b. Second Worship TBD in Fall 2022
3. Honor 6 Days of Observance (in coordination with the Pastoral Care Associates, these dates are recognized during Sunday Worship Caring Candles)
    - a. 3 dates observed in Spring 2022, 3 dates will be observed in Summer/Fall
  4. Hold 1 Religious Education Workshop (in coordination with Faith Formation)
    - a. Parenting and LGBTQ Identity Conversation, April 2, 2022
    - b. Gender Identity 101 Workshop on May 15, 2022
  5. Support 1 Local or National Community Project (in coordination with Outreach Offering Committee)
    - a. TBD Fall 2022

**Outreach**

The UU Church of Nashua has community outreach at the center of our core values. We strive to have an active presence in the community and look for areas where we can lend a hand and make a difference. Our goal is not just to provide financial assistance, but also to encourage congregational participation, and to raise awareness among members of the associated social and economic issues.

Since 2003, we have donated our entire collection plate to organizations doing important work in our community. The Outreach Team organizes the yearly calendar, receives and reviews requests, selects the monthly recipient and arranges for speakers at Sunday Services. To date we have raised and given away over \$400,000 for dozens of different community organizations.

**Our Recent Collections:**

Month	Recipient	Amount
May 2021	NH Bail & Bond Fund	\$2,908.87
June/July 2021	Stepping Stones	\$3,080.91
August/September 2021	SNH START Resource Center	\$3,346.55
September/October 2021	ABLE NH	\$1,506.92
October 2021	Children's Resiliency Retreat	\$1,138.26
November 2021	UUA Disaster Relief Fund	\$1,734.99
December 2021	Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter Capital Campaign	\$3,976.15
January 2022	The Asylum Seeker Sponsorship Program	\$1,640.09

January 2022	The PONY League	\$1,069.64
February 2022	SNH Fuel Assistance	\$2,263.55
March 2022	Donna Purkhiser/Gregory McDevitt Scholarship Fund	\$2,819.30
April 2022	Boston Area Campus Ministry Fund	\$1,826.98
May/June 2022	UUSC Emergency Response for Ukraine	_____
TOTAL, excl May/June 2022		\$27, 312.24