

SOCIAL JUSTICE TEAM REPORT

JUNE 2025

The central purpose of the Social Justice Team is to be a touchstone for our efforts individually and collectively in working for a better world. Working for a better world is, in turn, grounded in our Unitarian Universalist history including our Bylaws in Article 2, in the Values and Covenant section which states “Love is the power that holds us together and is at the center of our shared values. We are accountable to one another for doing the work of living our shared values through the spiritual discipline of love”. Later in this same section under our value of Equity, it states, “We declare that every person is inherently worthy and has the right to flourish with dignity, love, and compassion.”

While many of our actions line up more frequently with one political party, we strive to be nonpartisan. Drawing from the 16th Century Transylvanian Unitarian Francis David to which the following phrase is attributed to, although others attribute it to John Wesley, founder of Methodism, in any case it resonates with our UU Heritage, “We don’t have to think alike to love alike”. Likewise, we do not have to vote alike to love alike.

The following is a snapshot of some of our efforts. Hopefully it will give you a feel for the work of the Social Justice Team. Much of the work on social justice done by members of our church is not seen. Here are some of the activities and organizations the SJ Team and the Congregation have worked with, donated to, advocated for, and generally supported.

- NH4Ukraine presentation by Brian Nolan about his organization deeply involved in providing to hard hit Ukrainian towns and villages along the border near Russia whatever they need. We had over 30 people attend his recent presentation after Church.
- Community Outreach
- Build a Better Budget rally in Concord
- Meals on Wheels of Hillsborough County
- Guns to Gardens
- UU Disaster Relief
- GSOP and Micah Award dinner
- Annual CROP WALK

- Support of the **Elm Street Winter Warming Station** in Nashua for guests to allow them to sleep on cots/mats rather than their having to sleep on chairs. We see this as a basic human right and very important for their health and well-being. Unfortunately, this was not changed despite allies on the Board of Aldermen. We will continue this advocacy for the next winter season. However, the broader goal is much larger, as it has been for decades... to have for all a home to sleep in!
- Week after week, when our state legislature is in session, UUCN members, particularly through our **Granite State Organizing Project** (GSOP, of which we are a founding member), express their views in person and via the internet. We do so on issues of immigrant rights, LGBTQIA+ rights, a free and open education environment for our students, free and open elections, and more.
- Immigrant support efforts, which include supporting an immigrant family in getting housing, jobs, tutoring, and raising money for reliable transportation for the mother.
- The **New Hampshire Community Bail Fund**, started by several members from UUCN and hosted by the UU Action Network, has bailed out 532 people during this church year and a total of 1271 since the fund began in 2019. Since the beginning, this group has worked to improve conditions in the jails and prevent incarceration in the first place. Thanks to Paul Introcaso, Jessica Price, and Sarah Widhu for all the time and effort they put into this work.
- We have continued our work with the statewide **UU Action Network**, which has done much work, including on environmental issues. At our own Church, it is important to note here the important work of the **Green Sanctuary** team and Erin Scott's leadership of it.
- **Affordable Housing** unfortunately has only grown in the need for more. There are some bright spots including new housing that is more affordable like on Main Street that Neighbor Works developed. Note we housed an earlier Neighbor Works affiliate out of our Church back in the late eighties, which highlights our Church's longtime involvement on this critical issue. We continue to be active, as in supporting the Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter including their Annual Run/Walk. GSOP is once again a key advocate as is our own Reverend Allison through her work on the Interfaith Housing Group. We have been involved with GSOP in supporting the resident council, the Voices of Major Drive, in Nashua, a development of Nashua Housing and Redevelopment Authority on Major Drive. The residents of Major Drive are facing relocation as their homes are to be demolished if the project is approved as part of redevelopment that will add

considerably more affordable housing. However, it will mean the residents will have to relocate for two years, not an easy thing for sure.

- Through weekly donations to the **Community Outreach** recipient, we donated more than \$29K from June 2024 through March 2025 and around \$429K since its inception. Groups that received Outreach funds during this period include: Seacoast Outright, Guns to Gardens, Gate City Bike Coop, Community Hospice House Gardens, Meals on Wheels of Hillsborough County, Children's Law Center of NH, UUA Disaster Relief Fund, NH Community Bail Fund, Southern NH Fuel and Energy Assistance, Minister's Discretionary Fund, and the Donna Purkhiser and Gregory McDevitt Scholarship Fund. Thanks to Kate Messner for her leadership on this.
- The Racial Justice Working Group held their first annual **Campbell Day of Action** on March 16, honoring Rev. Jeffrey Campbell, Marguerite Campbell Davis and Lillian Campbell with a day of remembrance and action. There were three workshops after the service: one on the NH Legislature, one on the various social justice opportunities and one with multigenerational protest sign making. The day ended with a short service at Edgewood Cemetery where the family is buried. The group is also working on a **workshop video for the UUA General Assembly** about our project with uncovering and honoring the Campbell Family legacy.
- The Welcoming Congregation Working Group helped lead two services this year, one in October for Coming Out Day and one in June for Pride. They also led a discussion group on the year's **UUA Common Read "Authentic Selves,"** and partnered with UU Concord to host a NH site for the **Building Beloved Community Beyond the Binary conference** on April 26. Once again this year, we will be participating in the **Nashua Pride Festival** with a booth and a contingent marching in the parade.

These were some snapshots of the work the Social Justice Team has been doing, but much else is done by so many of us in our church without fanfare. Thanks for all those unreported efforts to make a better world.

Our meetings are held monthly. We have been meeting right after Church on the 1st Sunday of the month. All are welcome, so please join us at any time. We would be glad to have you!

Respectfully,

Bob Keating, Chair, and Hilary Keating, Recorder

SJ Team members and contributors: Kate Messner, Paul Introcaso, Jessica Price, Hilary Keating, Bob Keating, Christal Lloyd, Joe Delin, Kenna McLeod, Diane Wolf, Lynn Roberts, Cheryl Carroll, Ann Green, Libby Masek, Carolyn Eversole, Tom Sheehan, and Paige Beauchemin