

Empowerment Workshop

Social Justice Structure/Process/Function Breakout Group

Members:

Betsy Devlin-Foltz (facilitator)	David Devlin-Foltz
Anne Fretz (recorder)	Duncan Ferguson
Andy Streich (reporter)	Cheryl Fossum Graham
Perry Seiffert (time keeper)	John Gubbings
Dian Belanger	Connie Nissley
Abraham Brody	Dianne Seiffert
Ernie Carlson	Debbie Trent
Marian Carlson	Julie Walkup
Val Carter	Cherry Wunderlich

Goal

Determine ways to maintain momentum toward improved social justice structure, process, and function beyond the workshop.

Proposal

1. Examine and propose improvements to current task force structure including communications, staffing, fundraising, planning, accountability, evaluation.
2. Hold periodic large church-wide SJ recognition/celebratory events (open house, church-wide service day, festival...)
3. Include a “social justice minute,” led by a member of the congregation, in every worship service
4. Encourage all Cedar Lane groups, committees, activities to adopt a spiritual practice of considering social justice in the work they do.

Next Steps

1. Created task force to research, discuss, and make a proposal to SJC for improved task force structure (Andy, Connie, David, Betsy) *Note: After the workshop, this group merged with members of other breakout groups who had similar interests.*
2. Form a committee to explore a church wide event celebrating our social justice work (Val, Betsy, and an army of volunteers)
3. Facilitate inclusion of social justice (at least a social justice minute?) in every worship service (Dianne & Cheryl will help get this started)
4. Breakout group members invited all at the workshop to encourage all Cedar Lane groups to adopt a spiritual practice of considering social justice in the work they do.

Other issues raised (in the breakout and large group)

- **Governance:** How to clarify role of social justice council? Should we continue to elect SJC members or do we need another selection process? Should we hire a paid staff person?
- **Worship:** How to increase integration of social justice into worship services?

- **Communication:** Need still more, including use of technology being mindful of not leaving people out.
- **Involvement:** How to involve more people in social justice activities? In choosing issues? How to use the skills of the congregation to promote social justice work? How to include youth? Connect with RE? Create easy options to involve families with young children?
- **Money:** How does the way we distribute money reflect our values? Do we want to spend more on social justice, including support of the social justice endowment?
- **Partnerships with UU Organizations:** How to work with UU Legislative Ministry, UUSJ, UUSC, UUA, and other UU social justice organizations?
- **Partnerships with wider community:** How to create/enhance them?

The "Other Interests" table

Participants

Len Adler	Peter Henderson
Sylvia Banderas-Saari	Laura-Leigh Palmer
Bonnie Beavers	Marybeth Nowinski
Pam Gehrke, facilitator	Tracey Stein
Karen Goozner	Susannah Vesey

Each participant raised an issue they feel compelling:

1. Len described the plight of uninsured and/or indigent veterans living in MC who cannot obtain dental care and who sicken and die from dental and gum disease as a result
2. Sylvia described the large number of stuffed animals her daughter has outgrown, and the desire to send them to active duty soldiers in Iraq to give away to children.
3. Sylvia described the impulse to give support to veterans in Walter Reed
4. Marybeth talked about providing early childhood educational interventions to at risk children to keep them out of the prison system later in life
5. Laura-Leigh talked about the need to lobby for changes in laws in Maryland that limit the rights of individuals to form groups to buy insurance at discounted rates
6. Bonnie Beavers talked about the death penalty and gun control
7. Karen Goozner talked about working with Cedar Lane youth on a project to combine kids, animals and mercy
8. Peter Henderson talked about concerns about abuses of policing and surveillance by the state and county governments during the Ehrlich administration. He expressed the need to pursue justice, and make sure illegal and harmful actions are redressed, and individuals protected.

This variety of worthy concerns, all of which lend themselves very neatly to the GAFO planner, led Pam to observe that we should consider an "Issues Incubator" activity for the SJC. This would be a coming together of SJC-ers at the behest of a congregant interested in pursuing a Social Justice issue. We would apply the GAFO, ask intelligent questions, help the inquirer make connections with other activities dedicated to similar needs inside and outside the church, and help them try to get something started if that is the appropriate path. It needn't be a standing committee, but a revolving responsibility. We could regularly advertise our interest in congregant concerns, and our readiness to meet with folks who think they might have an issue of interest to others. This is a bit similar to how Connection Circles are developed. It would be linked also with the new member staff.

We applied the GAFO to Len's idea, and it worked very, very neatly. Unfortunately, Len himself is too overloaded with work and commitments to follow through. However, Stephanie, a retired social worker with a background in the health care industry, said she would like to be involved if we can get something started. (I think this is a reasonable issue for AIM, if we can hook up Andy's technical prowess - our GAFO model was to educate ourselves about the provider base and the potential client base, then witness to the need for service, then see what happens. As Nancy Jansen would say, "I love it.")

Peacemaking Breakout Group

Dear Peacemakers:

We are celebrating this week the new voices, new energies, and new ideas generated by our "Rekindling Social Justice at Cedar Lane" workshops. I want to name and thank each of you, who joined me on Saturday, January 10, 2009, to begin a conversation about Peacemaking. I would like you to help me create options and choices for our next steps at Cedar Lane.

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The "Peacemaking" breakout group included the following people [alphabetical]:

1. Michael Benefiel, facilitator, former U.S. diplomat, member Social Justice Council
2. Laura Henderson, trusted email list organizer, birthright Quaker
3. Terry Hoffeld, Board of Trustees member
4. Jim Hostetler, Kiplinger Committee, lawyer and mediator
5. F. "Knick" Knickerbocker, coordinator, Social, Economic, and Political Issues, Adult Programs, former senior Federal Government official
6. Ralph Krause, former chair, Board of Social Concern, activist, research chemist
7. Marion Torchia, co-chair, Sunday Morning Forum Committee
8. Deborah Vollmer, former member, Social Justice Council, candidate for U.S. Congress, political activist and organizer
9. Becky White, member, Social Justice Council

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In the course of our Saturday afternoon conversation, we made the following observations, as recorded by Knick, and later reported by Laura to the plenary:

1. CLUUC [Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church] needs to commit to robust support for peacemaking;
2. But, CLUUC is not yet organized to formulate a robust and action-oriented stance;
3. Peacemaking is an extraordinarily complex and demanding topic;
4. Therefore, we require systematic, deep, and sustained attention to the peacemaking issue;
5. We need to focus CLUUC's resources on the peacemaking issues;
6. We recommend CLUUC form a task force on peacemaking to collect and energize our efforts on this topic.

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During the plenary session following the Peacemaking break-out, Michael reported with a large sheet of poster paper:

"Proposed Task Force on PEACEMAKING"

- ❑ Survey the members and friends of CLUUC
- ❑ Do more congregational outreach to invite engagement on this issue

Social Justice Empowerment Workshop
Break out Group Proposals

- ❑ Identify the issues around peacemaking and consider our options for a strategy to guide us
- ❑ We already have strong programs at CLUUC and can build upon these strengths: Kiplinger Lecture, Adult Programs, Sunday Morning Forum, Worship Committee, Ministers' Voices from the Pulpit, Religious Education and raising awareness.
- ❑ We may wish to use technology to enable inclusive and mutually respectful conversation among many.
- ❑ We may wish to collaborate and learn from others, including the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, the American Friends Service Committee, the Commission on Social Witness, and many others.
- ❑ We intend to create a structure to allow us to discuss and choose positions on issues, then act collectively in the name of CLUUC.

The actual wording of the poster was much simpler, so this is a little tweaking [I claimed editor's privilege].

Where do we go from here?

Will you give 10 minutes more to a well-designed, specific survey about your experiences on Saturday, and your dreams and proposals to increase our options for work on Peacemaking at Cedar Lane?

If you will give 10 minutes, please click on this link, which takes you to “Survey Monkey” for a 9 item survey:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=sX_2fORLKSPnNHpKSfRlb8_2fw_3d_3d

Peace,

Michael Benefiel

By the way, if you have not yet had a chance to see the draft Peacemaking Statement of Conscience, please see below:

Commission on Social Witness A Draft Unitarian Universalist Statement of Conscience – November 2008 Peacemaking

War is abhorrent. Violence is reprehensible. Human history has been marked by both. For the full text click on: http://www.uua.org/documents/csw/pm_soc_0811_draft.pdf

**Environmental Issues Breakout Group Notes by N. Janssen
Social Justice Empowerment Workshop, January 9 & 10, 2009**

Attendees:

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ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES SUGGESTED IN ORDER OF VOTES RECEIVED:

Home and Church Energy Savings (16 votes):

Accountability: use small groups with knowledgeable leaders
Fit: is do-able for CLUUC as well as helps our planet
Opportunity: use small groups

Green Sanctuary Status for CLUUC by mid-June '09 (12 votes):

- A. How to promote/provide further emphasis and support?
1. Potential Beacon House project leading to certification
 2. Leadership
 - a) CLUUC Board commits to stronger environmental policy
 - 1) double pane CLUUC windows
 - 2) survey congregants re their issues & to ID more participants (including cup washers, weather strippers)
 - b) involve all our ministers, committee & group leaders
 3. Have Vision & Understand It
 4. Keep an attitude of flexibility and open mindedness

Accountability: Has the ETF done what our congregation wants (hold meetings in library after church services). How else can we find out?
Fit: Resources at CLUUC are available - including money?
Special projects: status capital funds; need information & forecasts
Opportunities: gifts of money? Press releases on Green Sanctuary

Ethical Eating & Environmental Justice (12 votes):

- a. animal rights
- b. nutritional eating
- c. educational aspects
 - 1) agricultural issues: sustaining the soil, etc.
 - 2) growing your own food
 - a) container gardening

Accountability: food distribution; local and global opportunities; Fair Trade; CSAs & farmers markets

Fit: CLUUC ready bakers; growing of food; Green Tree Shelter; Youth interest in animal rights; RE and Adult Programs

Opportunities: UUA resources; other churches; green activities

Health of Chesapeake Bay (2 votes):

Invasive Plant Species - getting rid of (2 votes):

National Parks – support of (2 votes):

County's Sustainability (0 votes):

- a. taxing gas/electricity to get funding for environmental issues

Energy Alternatives (0 votes): how do we promote?

Energy Efficiency (0 votes) - can we start a group to discuss energy savings?

Global Warming (0 votes) - work with State legislation; thank Gov. O'Malley; ask for interested person to advocate

- a. marine health
- b. acid rain
- c. carbon dioxide output

Heath Maintenance (0 votes)

Nuclear Power (0 votes)

Over Population/Family Planning (0 votes)

Pollutants (0 votes): coal

Water Conservation (0 votes)

Global Poverty Breakout Group.

Participants and their Interests and Concerns:

Annette Scarpitta: Currently chair of the Global Task Force, Annette is concerned about dwindling membership of the Global Task Force. Is it time to throw in the towel and fold, holding on to key ongoing services such as the annual alternative giving program and hosting of Kabultec's Afghan dinner and silent auction fundraiser? Other international efforts through the Alternative Giving program include raising money for the Kakenya Center for Excellence (a middle school for girls in Maasai Kenya), Pueblo a Pueblo (school lunches and other community empowerment in earthquake-ravaged Guatemala), The Catalyst Foundation (Vietnamese orphans), Water for People (7th-grade project for clean water in developing countries), Darfur (specially developed stoves for refugees). (See also Partner Church Committee and UU Holdeen India, below)

Carol Bertaut: Representing the Partner Church Committee (PCC), looking for ideas for expansion and possibly consolidation/partnership with the Global Task Force, pending consultation with the PCC. The Partner Church program in Transylvania offers an exchange between U.S. funding for high school and college students in Transylvania, and our enrichment from Transylvanians sharing their UU roots, traditions, and faith.

Carol suggested expanding the focus of the Partner Church Committee to include all UU Partner Churches.

Don Cleary: Member, National Board of Chernobyl Centers, U.S. Inc., whose mission it is to pledge professional and financial support for community development in Chernobyl. Currently, he is working on a hosting project, which is trying to bring a delegation of professionals here from Chernobyl in October. Funded through Open World Leadership Institute, which is subcontracted by the National Peace Foundation.

Don also has an interest in supporting the UU Holdeen Project in India (self-empowerment women's cooperative) as well as Kabultec, which supports couples literacy in Afghanistan.

Julie Walkup: Teaches Festivals and Celebrations to 3rd-grade RE students; adopted a child from Russia, so has an interest in helping orphans. She suggested and may be interested in teaching a Spring Bee course on international concerns (details below).

Lou Mayo: astronomer with NASA's Science and Technology Education division, which brings real-time NASA education, usability, and access to tens of millions of students worldwide.

Group Concerns: The Global Task Force, the Partner Church Committee, and the Cedar Lane Friends of Chernobyl are all spread too thin; would be great to combine forces for strength and continuity. May also be interested in involving/soliciting the Forum Committee except that no funds can be raised at CL forums.

Common themes found among us: global education (Kakenya Center for Excellence, Kabultec, support of Partner Church students in Transylvania, Catalyst Foundation in Social Justice Empowerment Workshop

Break out Group Proposals

Vietnam, school lunch program in Guatemala through Pueblo a Pueblo, and Chernobyl) and health and social services support in different parts of the globe (Chernobyl, Kenya, Guatemala, Vietnam, etc.).

Actions:

The group wants change. Suggestions and possible goals:

- Make connections between global issues we support.
- Aim for meetings on international issues
- Gather lots of resources
- Early task: Who are international resources in the congregation? Don Cleary volunteered to cull member surveys and pull out resources to widen our partnership.
- Hold a meeting with a firm agenda to coordinate: Publicize. Purpose of meeting would be to promote greater awareness of global issues as well as to identify resources and connections to organizations
- Focus becomes a facilitating group; connections across members
- Discover global resources we can tap
- Spring B class offering: Promote awareness of global issues by presenting a different organization each week, such as those listed above, with multimedia. Nancy Derr could be invited to show pictures and talk about her trip to Guatemala volunteering for Pueblo a Pueblo. The class could be offered for older kids and adults; level taught would depend on who signs up.
- Could do an expanded version as an Adult Programs offering
- From Cedar Lane web page, build our own page with links to working groups (Chernobyl, Transylvania, Kenya, Guatemala, Afghanistan, Vermont, etc.). Feature a project a month or a quarter.
- Publicize new web page in newsletter and in SJC e-newsletter
- New listserv can relate international concerns to people's interests in and actions for change.
- Build a resource bank. Post an idea and ask for help/support of experts and volunteers
- Invite participation and involvement
- Group would serve at the pleasure of the congregation and/or of SJC. Defined by interest in the community.

Instead of the Global Task Force, we felt that the International Concerns Committee better reflects this newly proposed role. International: outside our boundaries; global: affects the planet.

Next steps:

- 30 days of web searching needed to build repertoire of resources (UN committees, government, NGOs, etc.)
- Build web page with descriptions, photos, and links, including a link to a new listserv
- Create a Yahoo listserv

International Concerns Committee Global Solutions for a Global Community

Purpose: To provide information and resources to facilitate action on global concerns

Next Steps:

- **Inspire Cedar Laners to help jump-start the committee**
- **Hold a well publicized, clearly defined kick-off meeting**
- **Develop a resource bank linked to the Cedar Lane web page**
- **Create a listserv for dialogue among Cedar Laners interested in international concerns**

Grounding: Cedar Lane has ongoing involvement in international concerns

Accountability: International concerns include education, health, social services, and other issues brought forth by Cedar Laners

Fit: Many Cedar Laners have international interests and experience

Opportunity: Global concerns are on people's minds as well as volunteerism, which this entity can provide. "Think globally, act globally" is appropriate in an increasingly web-connected world.

The success of this group will depend on the efforts and interests of the congregation. RE kids and youth are encouraged to participate.

Local Poverty Breakout Group January 10, 2009

Attendees:

Adler, Coralie	cladler@verizon.net
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Thompson, Anne	thompson_kunin@comcast.net

Goal: Get more members of congregation of all ages involved in hands-on local poverty

Strategy 1: Do more with what we are currently committed to
Add 2nd week (summer) for CBS (Community Based Shelter)
Increase amount of food to Martha's Table
Add 2nd team for Bethesda Men's Shelter

Strategy 2: Improve communication about programs & when opportunities are available -
AIM

Do a better job of making opportunities available to everyone
Provide details about other activities such as Rebuilding Together, A Wider Circle
(Neighbor to Neighbor)
Post such information on website of bulletin board in church

Strategy 3: Get involved with more agencies & provide micro-loans
Task Force to find out local micro-lending programs

Assignments:

Rebuilding Together – Mike Burski & Kay Gottesman

Micro-Lending – Gretchen Nobahar & Sandy Shaw

A Wider Circle – Anne Thompson

Bethesda Men's Shelter – Peter Nissley

Community Based Shelter – Sandy Shaw

AIM – Helen Strang

Next Meeting – February 24th?